

# ***“Really BE-Ready”***

John 16:16-33

September 8, 2014

**INTRO: VIDEO: *Gospel of John 15:25 – 16:16***

## **CONTEXT:**

- A. **Private vs. Public** (“Farewell Discourse” – Jn. 13-17)
- B. **Purge** (Judas)
- C. **Purify** (“love as I have loved you”)
- D. **Promise** (grace & forgiveness for passionate followers)
- E. **Paracletes** (Jesus, Spirit, Saints)
- F. **ProDUCE/PROduce** (noun & verb both in the Vine)
- G. **Persecution** (“love is hated”)
- H. **Purpose** (S.P.I.R.I.T. comprehensive view of the Spirit)

**BIG IDEA:** *Jesus yearns for you to BE-ready!*

**PREVIEW:** Note: numerous “*themes*” are woven into this text:

*Crescendo*

*Time/Urgency*

*Prayer*

*Trials*

*Joy*

With that said, see our Lord passionately pouring into these men:

**Jesus wants His disciples to... BE!**

- BE-Ready... **KNOWING** by faith.
- BE-Ready... **GROWING** by faith.
- BE-Ready... **GOING** by faith.

OUTLINE:

**Really BE-Ready!**

# I. ***BE-Ready... KNOWING by Faith!***

A. ***BE Prepared*** (v.16) *KNOW the plan!*

**Jesus went on to say,  
"In a little while you will see me no more,  
and then after a little while  
you will see me."**

Key terms: ***"in a little while" & "see Me***

- 1). O.T. foretold it... Isaiah 53
- 2). Jesus foretold the masses
- 3). Jesus foretold the disciples
- 4). Scriptures foretell us!
- 5). (Jesus proved to you & me)

B. ***Don't BE Perplexed*** (v.17-19) *REALLY know it!*

***<sup>17</sup>So some of his disciples said to one another, "What is this that he says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'; and, 'because I am going to the Father'?" <sup>18</sup>So they were saying, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We do not know what he is talking about." <sup>19</sup>Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'?"***

- 1). Remember: no Spirit yet...
- 2). Remember: no N.T. yet...
- 3). Realize: we'd be there too

C. **BE one who Perseveres** (vv.20-22)

➤ *Expect* **REMORSE** (v.20a)

***Truly, truly, I say to you,  
you will weep and lament,***

➤ *Expect* **REJECTION** (v.20b)

***you will weep and lament,  
but the world will rejoice.***

➤ *Expect* **REWARD** (v.20c)

***You will be sorrowful,  
but your sorrow  
will turn into joy.***

## **Jesus offers us an ILLUSTRATION:**

*“Remorse to Reward”*

(vv.21-22)

***21 A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. 22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.***

- *Worshipping the Lord is like a Woman in labor*
  
- *“Joy” = (3X) & “rejoice” = 1*
  
- *Persevering by faith = the joy of delivery*

See Isaiah 56... connects “in a little while” & “labor pains”

## II. BE-Ready... GROWING by Faith!

A. *We grow... by living what we KNOW* (v.23a)

***In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.***

B. We grow... by developing our personal relationship with God. (v.23b)

***...Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name...***

D. *We grow... by staying & praying "in Jesus' name"* (v.23c)

***Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.***

E. *We grow... by asking, receiving, and rejoicing "in Jesus' name" (v.24a)*

***Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.***

F. *We grow... by producing more fruit (v.24d)*

***...that your joy may be FULL.***

G. *We grow... by maturing in truth/love (v.25-27)*

***"I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. 26 In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; 27 for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.***

H. *We grow... by increasing in our faith...  
in Jesus THE Christ* (v.27c)

**because**  
**you have loved me and have believed**  
**that I came from God.**

I. *We grow... by growing in the Gospel* (v.28)

***I came from the Father and have come into the world,  
and now I am leaving the world and going to the  
Father.”***

(see John 3:16 in John 16:18!)

J. *We grow... by improving our listening* (v.29)

***His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly  
and not using figurative speech!***

K. *We grow... by being honest & humble* (v.30)

***Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.***

- When you don't know... ***just admit it.***
- If you're still confused... ***just admit it.***
- If & when you struggle... ***just admit it.***
  
- > *THEN... ask the Lord to help you with it!*

L. *We grow... by truly testing ourselves* (v.31)

***Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe?”***

***2 Corinthians 13:5 = Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; **test yourselves.** Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test?***

**VIDEO: “*More of You*”** (and less of me)  
(see John 3:30)

M. *We grow... by realizing reality* (v.32a)

***Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come...***

N. *We grow... by repenting for our failures* (v.32b)

***...you will be scattered (in fear),  
each to his own, & will leave me alone...***

O. *We grow... by LIVING in KOINONIA* (v.32c)

***...Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.***

- Do not miss this point!
- Next week you will see as Jesus prays...
- It's impossible to over-emphasize Koinonia!

**T/S:            VIDEO:    *Gospel of John 16:16-33***

### III. BE-Ready... GOING by Faith!

*“I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

- John 16:33

*“I have told you these things”* = intimate discipleship

*“so that in Me”* = ALL purposes & promises are “in Him”

*“have peace”* = Got PEACE??? (If not, why not?)

*“in (vs. from) this world”* = in the world is to be at war!

*“you WILL have trouble”* = Again, if not... why not???

*“But”* – what a wonderful contrasting conjunction!

*“take heart”* = “have courage”

\*\*\* Have bold & confident, cheerful courage!

**"I have overcome the world!"**

**"overcomer" = "Nikao" (Nike)**

Nike says... "Just do it"

Jesus says... ***"I've done it!"***

**Revelation 6:2:**

*I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out **conquering** and to conquer.*

**CRITICAL:** Here's the KEY to this verse...  
Here's the GOSPEL in this verse...

***Jesus overcame & defeated  
Satan, sin, and death...  
FOR us!***

*NOW...*

*We don't have to be as good,  
but we must believe &  
receive Him as God!*

*Because Jesus, the True Christ is  
THE Overcomer...*

(Praise the Lord – literally!)

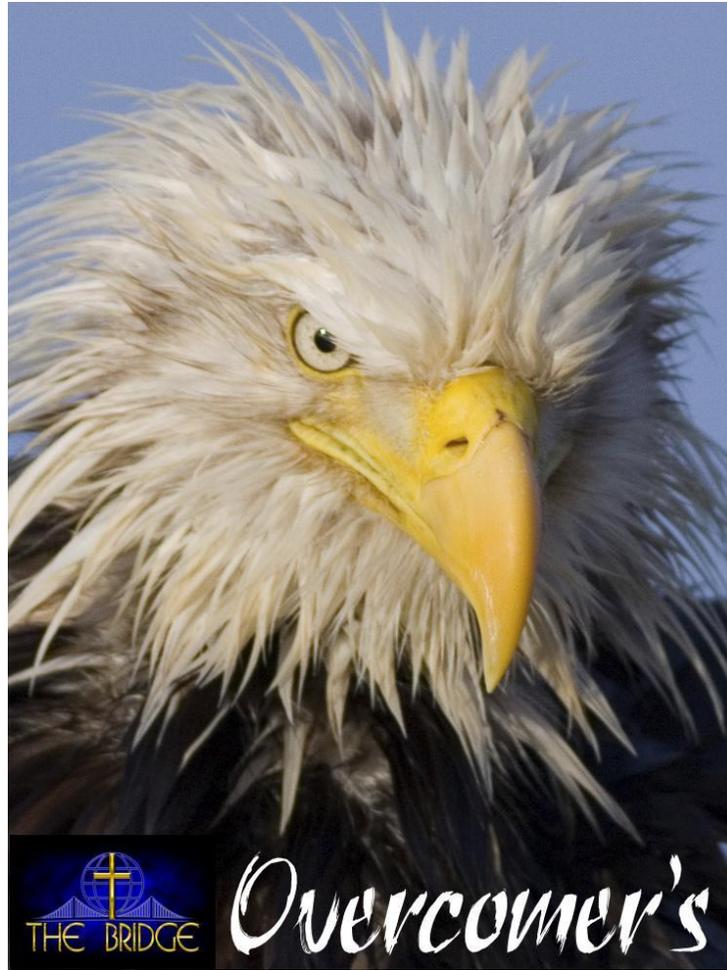
*EVERY true Christian can overcome  
**ALL temporal & eternal obstacles!***

(2 Peter 1:3)

**Romans 8:37**

*In all these things we are more than conquerors through  
Him who loved us. (ESV)*

***“we overwhelmingly conquer” (NASB)***



***True Christ-followers will BE Overcomers...***

**See Amos 7:14-15**

*Amos answered Amaziah, "I was not a prophet or the son of a prophet; rather, I was a herdsman, and I took care of sycamore figs. But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'"*

## **John 9:4**

*Jesus tells us, “As long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work”*

## **Romans 8:38-39...**

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*



## Closing Perspective:

### **...from 2 Timothy 1 & 2**

#### ***Guard the Deposit Entrusted to You***

##### Chapter One:

3I thank God whom I serve... 4...I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 5I am reminded of your sincere faith... 6For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you... 7for God gave us a spirit not of fear/timidity but of power and love and self-control.

8Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord... but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus... 11...I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, 12which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. 13Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit/treasure entrusted to you.

15You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes

##### Chapter Two:

#### **The Appeal Renewed**

1You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. 3Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

4No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. 5Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. 6The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. 7Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

8Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, 9for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained.

10Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

## INTRODUCTION:

Because of His perfect and complete love for the disciples ([13:1](#)), Jesus selflessly (cf. [Phil. 2:3-8](#)) spent much of this final night with them comforting them in their sorrow (cf. [14:1,18-19,27](#); [15:11](#)). Actually, they should have been comforting Him as He faced the ordeal of the cross, now only a matter of hours away. They should also have been glad for Him, since He was returning to His place of glory at the Father's right hand ([Acts 2:32-33](#); [5:31](#); [7:55-56](#); [Rom. 8:34](#); [Eph. 1:20](#); [Col. 3:1](#); [Heb. 1:3](#); [8:1](#); [10:12](#); [12:2](#); [1 Peter 3:22](#)). Instead, characteristically viewing events from their own self-centered perspective, the disciples were overwhelmed with grief and a sense of impending loss (cf. [16:6](#)).

Of course, they should have known better. On multiple occasions, Jesus had told them that He would one day die and rise again ([Matt. 12:39-40](#); [16:21](#); [20:19](#); [Mark 8:31](#); [9:31](#); [Luke 9:22](#); [18:33](#); [John 2:18-22](#)). One day, "while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them,

'The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day'" ([Matt. 17:22-23](#)). While on the road to Jerusalem, Jesus similarly told His disciples, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again" ([Mark 10:33-34](#)). Though Jesus frequently balanced the news that He would die with the fact that He would rise again, the disciples did not fully understand what the resurrection meant until after it took place. Thus, when He predicted His resurrection in [John 2:19](#), it was not until after "He was raised from the dead, [that] His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken" ([John 2:22](#); cf. [Luke 24:8](#)).

Though they had heard His repeated predictions (of both His death and resurrection), the disciples were not ready when the moment for Christ's passion actually came. Thus, as that fateful evening drew to a close, Jesus once again spoke words of comfort to the disciples. He reassured them that their sorrow would be short-lived, predicting that they would soon see Him again. When they reacted to that prediction with uncomprehending perplexity, Jesus illustrated His point with a parable. Then Jesus closed the section by promising the disciples fullness of joy.

- **MacArthur New Testament Commentary**

v.16 = Truth prophesied ...

vv.17-19 reveal confusion regarding that prophetic truth...

**v.20 = the description of that prophetic truth**

vv.21-22 illustrate & explain that prophetic truth

v.23 = personal ramification of that prophetic truth

v.24 = reinforcement & reward of that prophetic truth...

vv.25-28 = personal transition as result of that prophetic truth...

vv.29-30 = disciples still don't get it... evidence = they think they do

vv.31-32 = Christ's koinonia in the midst of chaos & corruption

v.33 = (Key: "these things" goes all the way back to 13:31ff)

### ***Jesus' Death and Resurrection Foretold***

## **In a little while...**

**16** *"In a little while you will no longer see Me; and again in a little while, and you will see Me."*

**Jesus had said almost the same thing in [14:19](#). Now seven times in this chapter ([16:16-19](#)) Jesus refers to "a little while" (Gk. *mikron*), which prompts the central question of the section: "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while. . . ?' ([16:17a](#)).**

- Gary Burge

## The Lord's Prediction

*"A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." ([16:16](#))*

The key to understanding this statement lies in correctly interpreting the two uses of the phrase **a little while**. That phrase refers earlier in John's gospel to the time remaining until Jesus' departure, whether that was several months ([7:33](#)), or several days ([12:35](#)) away. The first reference in this verse looks to the events set in motion by the death of Christ, which would culminate in His ascension. After that brief period, the disciples would **no longer see Him**.

Interpreters disagree over what the second **little while**, after which the disciples would again **see** Jesus, refers to specifically. Some view it as a reference to the second coming, connecting the Lord's illustration of a woman's pain in childbirth ([v. 21](#)) with His reference to the birth pangs preceding His return ([Matt. 24:8](#)). But the two references illustrate different truths. The birth pains associated with the second coming refer metaphorically to the cataclysmic events of the tribulation. On the other hand, the Lord used childbirth in this passage to show that the same event that initially produces sorrow can ultimately result in joy. Further, it is difficult to stretch the phrase **a little while** from the few days or months of its earlier uses into the more than two thousand years that have elapsed since Christ spoke these words.

Others believe that the Lord's second use of **a little while** points to the three days between His death and resurrection. (Those who hold this view would limit the first use of **a little while** to Christ's death on the cross.) The disciples, of course, were overjoyed and greatly comforted to see Him alive again. But the Lord was only with them for forty days ([Acts 1:3](#)) after His resurrection before

leaving them again at the ascension. According to this view the disciples' grief would turn to joy and then back into grief as Jesus left them again. That is hardly the permanent joy Jesus promised them ([v. 22](#)).

It seems most accurate to view the Lord's promise that He would see the disciples again primarily as a reference to the coming of His Spirit on the day of Pentecost (cf. [14:16-17,26](#); [15:26](#); [16:7,13](#)). After accomplishing the work of redemption and ascending to heaven, Jesus sent His Spirit to be with the disciples (cf. [15:26](#) and the exposition of [16:5-7](#) in chapter 17 of this volume). Christ came to them through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who is the "Spirit of Christ" ([Rom. 8:9](#); cf. [Gal. 4:6](#); [Phil. 1:19](#); [1 Peter 1:11](#)) and reveals Christ ([John 16:13-15](#)). The Lord's presence with His people through the Spirit is permanent, as His promise, "Lo, I am with you always" ([Matt. 28:20](#)), indicates. The sending of the Spirit was to take place after He had ascended to the Father's right hand; it was, He said, "because I go to the Father" ([v. 17](#)). This argues for the view just stated.

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary

- Prophetic power of preparation... TWICE!
- Jesus points to: the cross, the empty tomb & the Spirit!
- Jesus is removing all doubt... *before* doubt arrives!
- Key phrases: **“a little while”** & **“see Me”**

- A. In a little while... the CROSS (not see = crucifixion)
- B. In a little while... the CAVE (again see = resurrection)
- C. In a little while... the COMING Spirit (= the impartation)
- D. In a little while... the CHRIST! (always BE = glorification!)

## Confused Disciples

**17** Some of His disciples then said to one another, **“What is this thing He is telling us, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father?’”** **18** So they were saying, **“What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is talking about.”**

## Christ’s Divinity

**19** Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, **“Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me’?”**

In the same way though the disciples would **have grief** in the short-term, they could take comfort in the Lord's promise, **I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice**. In [verses 16](#) and [19](#) Jesus spoke of the disciples seeing Him; here He told them that He will see them. His knowledge of believers is more important than and foundational to their knowledge of Him. "You have come to know God," Paul wrote, "or rather to be known by God" ([Gal. 4:9](#)). The reality that **no one will take** the disciples' **joy away from** them indicates that more than just seeing Jesus after the resurrection is in view, since that lasted only forty days. The Lord's reference, as noted above, is to the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost to permanently indwell them. The disciples' Spirit-

produced joy ([Gal. 5:22](#); cf. [Rom. 14:17](#); [1 Thess. 1:6](#)) would be permanent. Nothing can undo the work of grace wrought in believers' lives through the power of the cross.

### MacArthur New Testament Commentary

**The confusion of the disciples is understandable. In [16:10](#) Jesus has said that he is going to the Father and they will not see him any longer. Now he says that they will see him, and it won't be long.**

- Gary Burge

## Preparation, Celebration(s) & Illustration

**20***“Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy.*

**The celebration of the world ([16:20b](#)) can only point to Jesus' crucifixion, which is contrasted with a time of sorrow for the disciples ([16:20a](#)), triggered by their shock at Jesus' death.**

**But this sorrow will be transformed into "joy" because Jesus will *not* be defeated by the grave. Note that when the disciples do in fact see Jesus again on Easter, they are filled with "joy" ([20:20](#))**

"you will see me" ([16:17](#), [19](#)). This is the one-line identification employed on Easter by Mary ([20:18](#)), the disciples ([20:20](#), [25a](#)), and Thomas ([20:25b](#)). Seven days after Easter Jesus invites Thomas to "see" him ([20:27](#), [29](#)). **John himself knows that this promise of "seeing" was at the heart of his confidence about Jesus ([1 John 1:1](#), "That ... which we have seen with our eyes ... this we proclaim concerning the Word of life").** There is no doubt that it is the resurrection of Jesus when the joy promised in [16:20](#) will be fulfilled.

- Gary Burge

**v.20 = a gospel portrait**

**21** *"Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world.*

**v.21 = a gospel paradigm**

**22** *"Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.*

The analogy Jesus uses in [16:21-22](#) of a woman in labor and child-birth was frequently used in the Old Testament to illustrate the anguish Israel (or a person) might have to endure before God's wonder and blessing were finally experienced ([Isa. 21:2-3](#); [26:16-21](#); [66:7-10](#); [Jer. 13:21](#); [Hos. 12:13](#); [Mic. 4:9-10](#); cf. [Rev. 12:2-5](#); 1QH [3:18](#)). The woman's suffering (Gk. *thlipsis*) also recalls the suffering of God's people before the Lord brings final deliverance ([Zeph. 1:14-15](#); [Hab. 3:16](#); [Mark 13:19, 24](#)).

[Isaiah 26:16-21](#) is particularly important since it combines the ideas of "a little while" and the picture of a woman in labor.

The cross and resurrection represent a dramatic deliverance; but more, they truly inaugurate an era in which eschatological gifts such as the Spirit are given.

*v.22 = a gospel promise*

Application of vv.16-22 "a little while"

**Resurrection and resolution.**

Running through [John 16](#) is Jesus' repeated assurance that "in a little while" his disciples will see him again. As I argued above, this "seeing" points to the resurrection, for "seeing the Lord" becomes a

watchword on Easter for having encountered the resurrected, glorified Jesus.

The importance of this is underscored in [1 John 1:1-3](#):

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. (italics added)*

There is no doubt that **for John the concrete visual encounter he had with the resurrected Jesus was foundational to his testimony.** This "seeing" was not simply a metaphor, as if now in his faith, belief in resurrection "dawned" on him. **This Jesus is someone seen and "touched"; this is an objective anchor that he refers to with great relish throughout his letter ([1 John 1:1, 3](#); [3:2, 6](#); [4:1, 12, 14, 20](#); [5:16](#); [3 John 1:11](#)).** These verses in 1 John link up with John's repeated reference to "that which was from the beginning" ([1:1](#); [2:7, 13-14, 24](#); [3:11](#); [2 John 1:5](#)), **which reminds his followers that the strongest argument for the truth of Jesus was found on Easter morning.** The resurrection validated Jesus' truth claims about himself and forced the apostolic leaders to look back on his earthly life and reflect more deeply (with the aid of the Spirit) on the meaning of these events.

**Paul follows this same tack in [1 Corinthians 15](#).** The truth about his faith is not to be found merely in self-validating spiritual experiences,

but also in the reality of resurrection from the dead. "If Christ has not been raised then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (15:14).

For the earliest Christians, Jesus' resurrection was the starting point for evangelism and proclamation. "This [Jesus] ... you ... put to death by nailing him to the cross.... But God raised him from the dead" (Acts 2:23-24). These words of Peter on Pentecost become the turning point in sermon after sermon in Acts (see Acts 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 34, 37; 26:8). The same should be true of our proclamation.

The resurrection of Christ should be the bold, unflinching word we possess for the world. Jesus knows what this moment will mean for his followers. "You will rejoice," he says (John 16:22). "Your grief will turn to joy" (16:20).

No doubt, Easter was the catalyst for the apostolic faith, and it inspired much of the reflection we read in the New Testament today.

But what about us today? We do not live in an era that can await such a moment of resurrection. The "little while" of chapter 16 is now long past. The resurrection of Jesus in Jerusalem is not a personal experience to which we can point, but instead has become a solid doctrinal position that we hold with fervor. I envy the Easter experience of John, Peter, James, and the other disciples. And I would wish that the blessing pronounced by Jesus in 20:29, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed," did not belong to me and my generation. We live with spiritual imperfection and incompleteness, not unlike the disciples as they awaited Easter. Paul's candid admission is that our vision is opaque, like looking through a dark glass or an ancient mirror (1 Cor. 13:12). We yearn for the day when we will see "face to face" (13:12b) and discover that all our questions have disappeared (John 16:23a).

This is perhaps where an application of John 16 requires that we understand clearly that Jesus participates in four episodes of self-

**revelation. (1) There was Jesus' earthly ministry**, which was filled with ambiguity for his followers. **(2) His resurrection** provided the confirmation and clarity they yearned to experience. **(3) Jesus promised the Spirit, who would serve as his personal, indwelling presence during his absence.** **(4) We await his glorious second coming**, when we once more will *see* him again.

**Our experience (episode 3) is similar to that of the disciples (episode 1) inasmuch as we struggle to understand and yearn for perfect clarity.**

**But we have one sterling advantage: We possess the Spirit, who gives us insight and understanding inaccessible even to the apostles.** Jesus' resurrection was the disciples' ultimate confirming experience, and while we can only point back to it (as a confirmation of their authority), we must *point forward to Christ's return. That is, the Second Coming serves the church much the same way that the resurrection served the apostles.*

**In theological language, this is tension between the "already" and the "not yet" of the kingdom of God.**

**We are interim citizens.**

**We live in the kingdom that has been inaugurated by Christ, yet we yearn for that kingdom's final consummation at the end of time.**

**The *history of Jesus* (his miracles, his parables, his empty tomb) must join with our *experience of Jesus* (his lordship, his indwelling Spirit) to form a confident discipleship that remains faithful as it awaits the fulfillment of his promise to return, when we will "see" him again (cf. [1 John 3:2](#)).**

NIV Application Commentary, The - NIV Application Commentary,  
The – John: From biblical text...to contemporary life.

**T/S: THIS JOY AT seeing Jesus will not only result in a renewed relationship with him, but it will have two notable effects: the joy of understanding (16:23a) and the joy of efficacious prayer (16:23b-24). The confusion described in 16:16-18 will no longer be theirs. At last they will understand (see 16:25-30). The momentous event of the resurrection will at once dispel their apprehensions.**

## In My name...

**23***"In that day you will not question Me about anything.*

*(Risen Jesus & Holy Spirit answer all necessary Q's...)*

*Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for*

*anything in My name, He will give it to you.*

(“in My name” is KEY... consistent with His will)

**24**“*Until now you have asked for nothing in My name;*

(...because Jesus was WITH them...)

*ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.*

(If you want Me and My will, your joy will be made full when you get your wish)

### **The Blessed Promise (vv.23-24)**

In the **day** when the disciples see the Lord again ([v. 23](#)) and their sorrow turns to joy, they **will not question Him about anything**. That further suggests that the **day** cannot be the resurrection (cf. the discussion of [v. 16](#) above). The disciples undoubtedly asked many questions during the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension that the Lord spent "speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God" ([Acts 1:3](#); one of their questions is recorded in [v. 6](#)). But after the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they would no longer question Jesus.

The phrase **truly, truly** introduces another important truth (cf. the discussion of v.20 above); namely, that if the disciples **ask the Father for anything in Christ's name**, He [the Father] **will give it to them**. This is the third time that evening that the Lord stated that truth (cf. [14:13](#); [15:16](#)), underscoring its immense significance. As noted in the exposition of [14:13-14](#) in chapter 9 of this volume, to pray in Jesus' name is not to use His name as a formula, ritualistically tacked onto the end of a prayer to ensure its success. Rather, it is to pray for that which is consistent with Christ's person and will, and to affirm one's complete dependence on Him to supply every need, with the goal that He would be glorified in the answer. Such prayer was new to the disciples, who **until** that point had **asked for nothing in Jesus' name**. They had either asked Jesus Himself, or prayed to the Father. But now Jesus urged them, **Ask and you will receive**, and then added the blessed promise **so that your joy may be made full**. Answered prayer, based on the finished work of Jesus Christ and springing from an obedient life ([15:10-11](#)), is a powerful force in turning sorrow into joy.

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary

**25** *“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming (a.k.a. “in a little while”) when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father.*

(vv.25-27a = LOVE)

Jesus had taught "figuratively" (16:25), but the Greek word used here (*paroimia*) does not simply mean illustrative speech or the use of metaphor and parable; rather, it is speech that is obscure and enigmatic.

**READ: Luke 24:27 & Acts 1:3**

**Luke 24:27** = *Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.*

**Acts 1:3** = *He presented Himself alive to them after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.*

**26** *"In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf;*

(The disciples/believers can now go directly to the Father in prayer – "in Jesus' name.")

**T/S:** As noted above, the Father's motive for allowing believers access to Him is that He **loves** them. **Loves** translates a form of the verb *phileō*, which is the love of deep, caring affection. It is the love of emotion, which is consistent with *agapaō*, which is the love of the will. *Phileō* describes the love of parents for their

children and children for their parents ([Matt. 10:37](#)) and of friends for each other ([John 11:3,36](#)). God loves (*agapaō*) sinners ([John 3:16](#)), but expresses a special, fatherly affection (*phileō*) for His children—so much so that He sent His Son to die as the sacrifice for their sins ([Rom. 5:8](#); [1 John 4:9-10](#)). Because of that they can boldly and fearlessly enter His presence in complete confidence, as children for whom He cares deeply (cf. [Rom. 8:15](#); [Gal. 4:6](#)).

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*27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.*

**This "hour" is about access. Jesus himself has mediated the Father's presence to the world ([16:27b](#); cf. [14:9](#)), and now the Father himself is accessible ([16:26-27](#)). There is a new circle of fellowship possible, which now includes not simply Jesus and the disciple, but Jesus, the disciple, and the Father.**

- Gary Burge

(vv.27b-32 = FAITH)

(Saving faith changes EVERYTHING! Starting in heaven, coming down to earth, and shrinking hell's waiting list – Amen!)

The Lord's words **I came forth from the Father and have come into the world** express the central doctrines of the Christian faith. That He **came forth from the Father** (cf. [Matt. 10:40](#); [Mark 9:37](#); [John 4:34](#); [5:24,30](#); [6:38,39,44](#); [7:29,33](#); [8:26,29](#); [9:4](#); [12:44](#); [13:20](#); [16:5](#); [17:18,21,23](#)) affirms Christ's deity ([John 1:1,14](#)), and apart from embracing that doctrine, no one can be saved.

The rest of the New Testament reiterates the truth that Christ came to redeem lost sinners.

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary

**28** *"I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father."*

(Again... "in a little while")

(Everything hinges on Christ's going & the Spirit's coming)

**One might call [16:28](#) a terse, or "plain" (cf. [16:25b](#)), summary of John's doctrine of Christ. This is the essence of the Christian faith, distilled to its most essential form. It shows the paradox of the incarnational service of the Son.**

- Gary Burge

The Lord's statement, **I am leaving the world again and going to the Father**, completes a remarkably concise

summary of the gospel in [verse 28](#). Jesus, God the Son, was sent into the world by the Father to accomplish the work of redemption, and having done so, returned to His place of full glory with the Father.

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary

**29**His disciples said, "Lo, now You are speaking plainly and are not using a figure of speech. **30**"Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God."

(What a bunch of bologna... can you see the foolish pride?)

(Can you empathize? I can... I recall early days on a job...)

(The disciples still don't get it... but realize they should.)

**QT: John Calvin =** *"The disciples certainly did not yet understand fully what Christ had been saying; but although they were not yet capable of this, the mere scent of it refreshed them"*

**The disciples immediately celebrate this "plain speech" (16:29-30) and feel confident that in Jesus they have gained access to unsurpassed wisdom. But this is one more example of tragic misunderstanding, such as we have seen in every other discourse... The time of complete understanding is coming with the hour of glorification, when the Spirit is given to them as a powerful and unique endowment. It is the Spirit who will**

give this insight and wisdom from Jesus, and this gift must  
await "the hour."  
- Gary Burge

**31** *Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe?"*

(See the divinity & the discipling of Jesus here...)

(It's as if He's saying: "Oh really... you do... do you?")

(All the while, He knows exactly how much they don't get it.)

(NOTE: Jesus challenges & confronts without crushing...)

**The language of 16:31 does not make a declaration (as in NIV: "You believe at last!"), as if Jesus now finally can rejoice in their brilliant insights about him. The disciples have not at last discovered faith. This misses the point. Instead, Jesus is asking a question (RSV/NRSV: "Do you now believe?"), placing some doubt on their achievement. They do not believe with the rigor or insight that they think. Now they think they've got it? At the "hour," in fact, they will be scattered in their fear (16:32; cf. Matt. 26:56). If they had understood, if they had believed fully, they would have the strength to cross this obstacle, but they do not.**  
- Gary Burge

**32** *"Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.*

(See again.... an hour is coming... “in a little while”)

(Jesus flags the ever encroaching moment: “already come”)

(“for you to be scattered” = cf. Zechariah 13:7-9)

- v.7 reveals the prophetic connection
  - v.8 reveals the purifying providence of perdition
  - v.9 reveals the promised use of persecution for prayer
- \*\*\* See John 15:7-8 & 16

## In Me...

**33**“*These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.*”

*(v.33 = HOPE)*

**John 16:33** records **Jesus' final words to his disciples before his arrest.**

**Last words are always precious. These words given by Jesus are doubly so. Luther wrote of them in a letter to Melanchthon, "Such a saying as this is worthy to be carried from Rome to Jerusalem upon one's knees."**

**Jesus does not continue his chastising words of [16:31-32](#) but instead supplies comfort and reassurance.**

**He has already referred to peace ([14:27](#)) and joy ([16:20, 22](#)) as two gifts belonging to his followers, but these must be seen together with the struggle (NIV "trouble") and conflict they have in the world. Discipleship is about learning how to discover peace when surrounded by threat, how to possess tranquillity despite those hostile to your faith. The solution is "courage" (Gk. *tharseo*, [16:33b](#); NIV "take heart!").**

– Gary Burge

**Peace:** That is more than enough reason to **take courage** and have hope. The believer's hope is in the Lord ([Pss. 31:24; 38:15; 39:7; 42:5,11; 43:5; 62:5; 71:5; 130:7; 146:5; Lam. 3:24; 1 Tim. 1:1](#)), His Word ([Pss. 119:49; 130:5; Rom. 15:4](#)), the salvation He provides ([Ps. 119:166; Eph. 1:18; 4:4; Titus 1:2](#)), and the eternal glory that awaits in heaven ([Col. 1:5,27; 1 Thess. 5:8](#)). That hope is made possible because Jesus Christ has **overcome the world** and conquered sin ([John 1:29; Heb. 1:3; 9:26,28; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 3:5; Rev. 1:5](#)), death ([John 14:19; 1 Cor. 15:26,54-55; 2 Tim. 1:10](#)), and Satan ([Gen. 3:15; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8](#)). In Him, Christians too are over-comers ([Rom. 8:37; 1 John 4:4; 5:4-5; Rev. 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 21:7](#)), for whom the Lord will work all things to their good ([Rom. 8:28](#)).

After the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the disciples would be radically transformed from men of fear to men of courage.

That same supernatural courage and boldness is reflected in the examples of Stephen ([Acts 7:54-60](#)), Philip ([8:5, 26-30](#)), Ananias ([9:10-19](#)), Barnabas ([13:46](#)), Silas ([16:25](#)), Apollos ([18:25-26](#)), and

Paul ([26:19-21](#)). Filled with the Holy Spirit and marked by personal conviction, these men were not intimidated by the threats of the world. Instead, they bravely proclaimed the truth of the gospel and rejoiced when they were persecuted (cf. [5:41](#)), being confident of the promise that "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" ([1 John 4:4](#)).

Significantly, Jesus' last words to His disciples in the upper room, before praying for them and departing for Gethsemane, were words of love, faith, and hope. In the face of their greatest trial in the next few days, the Lord reminded them of those three foundational truths—truths that would subsequently mark their ministries for the rest of their lives and also mark all the saints to follow them. Having done all He could to prepare them for what was about to take place, Jesus now turned in prayer to His Father, knowing that only He could truly protect the disciples in the following hours.

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary

### v.33 Application

**Life in the world. All along we have listened to Jesus talk about the reality of life in the world. He has not been subtle. "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first" ([15:18](#)).** John uses the term *world* eighty times, and fully one-third of these describe the world as a place of unbelief and conflict. Yet **Jesus also says that he has overcome the world ([16:33](#)) and that Christians who live in the world should have peace and joy ([16:20, 33](#)).**

**This produces a theological tension** that has led to numerous mistaken spiritualities. In a word, **how do I combine the victory of Jesus and the trouble of the world? Is it a sin or a failure of faith to admit to suffering and despair in the world?** To admit

to illness? **Does this deny the victory of Jesus? For others is the acceptance of struggle and spiritual battle—to acknowledge the world in all its power—a concession that has no place for Christ as victor? Where is the power of God when the power of the world sometimes seems so overwhelming and we feel defeated?**

**Does faith in Jesus automatically solve all our problems?**

I have just suggested that we are interim citizens of the kingdom, looking back to the resurrection and forward to the Second Coming—equipped by the Holy Spirit and eager to see Jesus as his apostles did. In this interim citizenship we need to understand fully what will be the character of our lives. For some interpreters, possessing the "victory of Jesus" means being exempt from tragedy, conflict, poverty, struggle, and disillusionment.

**It is curious that Jesus here speaks of peace and trouble in the same breath.**

**This forces us to carefully define what this peace really is.**

**One sort of peace means the absence of all enemies; the other is freedom from anxiety while struggling with enemies.** Who could not be at peace when there is no trouble? But **it is** the latter notion, **peace within the storm, that Jesus has in mind.**

Therefore **it is essential that we keep in mind that peace and trouble do not negate one another.**

**Illustration:**

**The peace of Jesus is a condition that takes the uncertainties and struggles of this world seriously, but like a seagull riding the surface**

of a turbulent sea, is able to climb swells and drop into valleys without worry.

We have seen again and again in this Gospel that the world is a place of genuine hostility to the things of God.

For a disciple to live in it is necessarily to experience struggle, conflict, even battle. **The world's values, its vision, its morals, its pagan religious instincts—these are all inimical to the God of the Bible. In this sense, Christian discipleship is nothing short of a call to warfare.**

Again, permit me to quote Miller: (add eagle face pic!)

*As long as a Christian is in the world he will be pressed as though by a great mob; he will be crushed in spirit as though great crushing weights were lying on his chest; he will know spiritual anguish like that of a mother in labor. This, Jesus has told us. When he speaks, therefore, of peace, it is not the peace of unruffled days but the inner confidence of the warrior who is weary, thirsty, outnumbered, and wounded, but who fights bravely on, confident of the outcome, assured of victory. We are saved not from trouble; we are saved in trouble.*

In the reality of this sort of world, Jesus says "**Take heart**" ([16:33b](#)). The **Greek verb used here is the same one Jesus used for his men in the boat during the Galilee storm (Mark 6:50).** More accurately, **it means to "have courage."** It means **taking stock of the circumstances and still prevailing.** But **the basis of this encouragement is important** in the balance of the verse.

**Jesus does not say, "Have courage—you will overcome the world." The Greek sentence structure is emphatic: "Have courage—I have overcome the world."**

**If Jesus had said, "Have courage, I have overcome the world— and you can too," there would be little good news for us.**

**Illustration:**

(A) If a golf master nearly drives on the green from every tee and says to you, "Have courage, I did it! You can do it too!" there is no encouragement here.

**Jesus is more than a human; if he is indeed the Son of God who over-came the world not simply for his own sake, but for our sake as well—for all of humanity; if his victory in his life can become a victory that we enjoy, a victory extended to us when we embrace him in faith, then his triumph can become our triumph.**

**\*\*\* See 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 \*\*\***

**He thus offers us genuinely good news, "Have courage! I have faced your enemy and vanquished him. I have fought your battle on the battleground of human experience where you must fight. I have routed the foe. You can never do it; but I have done it and I can do it again in you. Abide in me and my victory is yours."**

**This is the great departure of Christianity from every other religious faith.**

**It does not simply set out an ideal or a moral code; it offers a means of achieving it.**

**Christianity is the offer of God to live in his followers and achieve in them the victory demonstrated in his Son Jesus**

**Christ. And in that indwelling, an indescribable peace will be ours despite the fury and foment of the world around us.**

- NIV Application Commentary

### **Jesus' Return, the Disciples' Joy ([16:16-22](#))**

**ONE PROMINENT FEATURE** of the promises of the Spirit in chapter 14 had to do with **the second coming of Christ**. That is, **Jesus was indeed "coming back" ([14:3](#))** but in some fashion **the realization of the Spirit at Pentecost would satisfy** many of these desires of **reunion with the Lord**. We might say that the Parousia (or return) of Jesus is being interpreted in light of the Spirit. Now in [16:16-24](#) something similar is afoot. **While the question in chapter 14 may have turned on *how* Jesus would return, the question in 16 is *when*. Here the focus is on the events of Easter.**

**The departure of Jesus and its distress for the disciples has been a constant theme in the Upper Room**. Jesus does not let them ignore the reality of his going, and in [16:16](#) he brings it up again: "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." **Jesus had said almost the same thing in [14:19](#). Now seven times in this chapter ([16:16-19](#)) Jesus refers to "a little while" (Gk. *mikron*), which prompts the central question of the section: "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while. . .?'" ([16:17a](#)).**

**The confusion of the disciples is understandable. In [16:10](#) Jesus has said that he is going to the Father and they will not see him any longer. Now he says that they will see him, and it won't be long. What can he mean? The confusion swirls through the circle of disciples from [verses 17-19](#).**

This is not intentional ambiguity on Jesus' part, nor is this an attempt to provide a double meaning (Barrett). **Jesus is not talking about his second coming** either (Brown). Rather, **he is simply referring to his**

return in **resurrection**. He is departing from the world in his glorification and the world will no longer have access to him. When he returns in resurrection, it will be his followers' final opportunity to see him as he has always been.

**What clues point to the resurrection? (1) The opening words of [16:20](#) underscore the seriousness of Jesus' answer. The NIV's "I tell you the truth" disguises the Greek "truly, truly." The celebration of the world ([16:20b](#)) can only point to Jesus' crucifixion, which is contrasted with a time of sorrow for the disciples ([16:20a](#)), triggered by their shock at Jesus' death. Weeping and mourning were common descriptions of sorrow at death ([Jer. 22:10](#) LXX; [Luke 7:32](#); cf. [John 11:31, 33](#); [20:11, 13, 15](#)). But this sorrow will be transformed into "joy" because Jesus will *not* be defeated by the grave. Note that when the disciples do in fact see Jesus again on Easter, they are filled with "joy" ([20:20](#)).**

**(2) Jesus twice says "you will see me" ([16:17, 19](#)). This is the one-line identification employed on Easter by Mary ([20:18](#)), the disciples ([20:20, 25a](#)), and Thomas ([20:25b](#)). Seven days after Easter Jesus invites Thomas to "see" him ([20:27, 29](#)). John himself knows that this promise of "seeing" was at the heart of his confidence about Jesus ([1 John 1:1](#), "That ... which we have seen with our eyes ... this we proclaim concerning the Word of life"). There is no doubt that it is the resurrection of Jesus when the joy promised in [16:20](#) will be fulfilled.**

**(3) The analogy Jesus uses in [16:21-22](#) of a woman in labor and child-birth was frequently used in the Old Testament to illustrate the anguish Israel (or a person) might have to endure before God's wonder and blessing were finally experienced ([Isa. 21:2-3](#); [26:16-21](#); [66:7-10](#); [Jer. 13:21](#); [Hos. 12:13](#); [Mic. 4:9-10](#); cf. [Rev. 12:2-5](#); 1QH [3:18](#)). The woman's suffering (Gk. *thlipsis*) also recalls the suffering of God's people before the Lord brings final deliverance ([Zeph. 1:14-15](#); [Hab. 3:16](#); [Mark 13:19, 24](#)).**

**Isaiah 26:16-21 is particularly important since it combines the ideas of "a little while" and the picture of a woman in labor.** "As a woman with child and about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pain, so were we in your presence, O LORD." Then God answers through the prophet: "Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves *for a little while* until his wrath has passed by" ([Isa. 26:17, 20](#), italics added).

Since these ideas—suffering and dramatic deliverance—are properly eschatological, this has led some commentators to say that Jesus is actually referring to the Second Coming in [16:16](#) (or at least that John is confusing the Second Coming with Easter, or reinterpreting it). But such a view is unnecessary. **The cross and resurrection represent a dramatic deliverance; but more, they truly inaugurate an era in which eschatological gifts such as the Spirit are given.**

### **Prayer and Understanding ([16:23-33](#))**

**THIS JOY AT seeing Jesus will not only result in a renewed relationship with him, but it will have two notable effects: the joy of understanding ([16:23a](#)) and the joy of efficacious prayer ([16:23b-24](#)). The confusion described in [16:16-18](#) will no longer be theirs. At last they will understand (see [16:25-30](#)). The momentous event of the resurrection will at once dispel their apprehensions.**

Of course, these faithful men had on many occasions asked God for things in prayer. But **the new theological order stipulates that they ask in Jesus' name, which is something new**, something that belongs to the new spiritual era inaugurated by Jesus' work (see comments on [14:13-14](#); [15:7, 16](#)). Hoskyns quotes Swete: "The name of Christ is both the passport by which the disciples may claim access into the audience chamber of God and the medium through which the Divine answer comes." Jesus is their shepherd, their patron who will take care of their needs. The intimacy that will result from his

**indwelling them and their obedience to his word assures their success.**

Jesus recognizes that his ministry had used parables and sayings that were difficult to understand. **The misunderstanding of the people is a characteristic of the Synoptic portrait of his ministry. Both the crowds and the apostles could not understand many things he did and said (Mark 9:32).** In John we have seen in the Book of Signs how often **misunderstanding became a literary motif**, showing us as readers the world's inability to comprehend the complete significance of Jesus.

**Jesus had taught "figuratively" (16:25), but the Greek word used here (*paroimia*) does not simply mean illustrative speech or the use of metaphor and parable; rather, it is speech that is obscure and enigmatic.** It occurs in the good shepherd sermon, "Jesus used this figure of speech [Gk. *paroimia*], but they did not understand what he was telling them" (10:6). For the Middle Easterner, this is the "dark saying," which typically possesses prophecy or wisdom.

**The "hour" (16:25; NIV, "time") that is coming, however, is not the time immediately following, but the "hour of glorification,"** that passage of Jesus out of this world when he returns to the Father and sends to them the Holy Spirit (2:4; 7:39). **As we have seen many times, *hora* ("hour") is a theological term for John. This will be a new era, when revelation of Jesus will be spoken "plainly" (Gk. *parresia*).** No doubt we should again look to the work of the Spirit, through whose efforts the Father's words given through the Son are brought to the disciples (14:10; 15:15), and through whose presence the Father and the Son indwell the disciples (14:23).

**This "hour" is about access. Jesus himself has mediated the Father's presence to the world (16:27b; cf. 14:9), and now the Father himself is accessible (16:26-27).** There is a new circle of fellowship possible, **which now includes not simply Jesus and the disciple, but Jesus, the**

disciple, and the Father. As Augustine commented, "The Son does not ask the Father, but the Father and the Son alike listen to those who ask."

One might call [16:28](#) a terse, or "plain" (cf. [16:25b](#)), summary of John's doctrine of Christ. His origins are divine and he comes from God; he was sent on a mission to the world; he will return to the Father after completing his work. This is the essence of the Christian faith, distilled to its most essential form. It shows the paradox of the incarnational service of the Son.

The disciples immediately celebrate this "plain speech" ([16:29-30](#)) and feel confident that in Jesus they have gained access to unsurpassed wisdom. But this is one more example of tragic misunderstanding, such as we have seen in every other discourse. This final discourse too must end on the same note. The time of complete understanding is coming with the hour of glorification, when the Spirit is given to them as a powerful and unique endowment. It is the Spirit who will give this insight and wisdom from Jesus, and this gift must await "the hour." It cannot happen now. So Jesus must abruptly censure their exuberance ([16:31-32](#)).

The language of [16:31](#) does not make a declaration (as in NIV: "You believe at last!"), as if Jesus now finally can rejoice in their brilliant insights about him. The disciples have not at last discovered faith. This misses the point. Instead, Jesus is asking a question (RSV/NRSV: "Do you now believe?"), placing some doubt on their achievement. They do not believe with the rigor or insight that they think. Now they think they've got it? At the "hour," in fact, they will be scattered in their fear ([16:32](#); cf. [Matt. 26:56](#)). If they had understood, if they had believed fully, they would have the strength to cross this obstacle, but they do not.

While his disciples will desert him, Jesus says that nevertheless he will not be alone because the Father will never leave him ([John 16:32b](#)).

This verse does not contradict Jesus' cry of desolation on the cross (Mark 15:34, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). In John, Jesus is comparing the faithfulness of God through the hour of glorification and contrasting it with the faithlessness of his disciples. Mark records Jesus' moment of agony when he cites Psalm 22:1, which reflects something of the mystery of his complete humanity, a humanity that could experience desolation even at this depth.

**John 16:33 records Jesus' final words to his disciples before his arrest.**

**Last words are always precious. These words given by Jesus are doubly so. Luther wrote of them in a letter to Melanchthon, "Such a saying as this is worthy to be carried from Rome to Jerusalem upon one's knees."**

**Jesus does not continue his chastising words of 16:31-32 but instead supplies comfort and reassurance.**

His exhortation was for their benefit since the days to come will be difficult for each of them. **He has already referred to peace (14:27) and joy (16:20, 22) as two gifts belonging to his followers, but these must be seen together with the struggle (NIV "trouble") and conflict they have in the world. Discipleship is about learning how to discover peace when surrounded by threat, how to possess tranquillity despite those hostile to your faith. The solution is "courage" (Gk. *tharseo*, 16:33b; NIV "take heart!"). This word occurs only here in John but is used in the Synoptics to describe the attitude Jesus sought in the disciples during the Galilee storm (Matt. 14:27; Mark 6:50). It was also the word given by the Lord to Paul in Jerusalem when he was surrounded by enemies (Acts 23:11). Despite the circumstances, the victory of Jesus ("I have overcome the world") outweighs the jeopardy of the present crisis.**

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**Jesus and his disciples.** The incomprehensibility of Jesus' words and deeds not only frustrated the disciples (note [16:29](#), "Now you are speaking clearly") but must have frustrated him as well. He is their friend ([15:15](#)), and friends share a mutual understanding that is impossible with strangers. Yet **Jesus knows that it is impossible for them to comprehend the totality of who he is and of what God is doing in the world before the time of his glorification. In particular, his resurrection will change everything when they will no longer need to ask him questions ([16:23](#)). "Seeing Jesus" is the solution, and this "seeing" will take place on Easter when the tomb is opened ([16:16](#)) and all questions disappear.**

**This means a couple of things for us. (1) The resurrection should be the center point of our proclamation about Jesus.** It is not one more event in a series of events, **it is *the event* that climaxes Jesus' self-revelation in the world. It is a historical confirmation that God has penetrated our world and begun to set things right.**

**(2) But this proves to be a dilemma** for those of us who live on the other side of the resurrection. ***We have questions. We have not had the privilege of "seeing Jesus" as the early apostles had it.*** And while we might say that Jesus is with us in Spirit, this is not what Jesus is offering to his disciples. **In addition to the Spirit, he says that the objective, historical event of the resurrection will resolve many of their doubts. Evangelicals might say that we possess the Scriptures (which were unavailable to the apostles) and that these should supply renewed confidence.** But would Jesus expect the generations that follow the apostles to be satisfied *without* seeing him? **It is interesting that in**

**20:29** Jesus offers a special blessing on us in this circumstance when he speaks to Thomas, "**Blessed are those who have *not* seen and yet have believed.**" What then is the basis of *our* confidence?

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The – John: From biblical text...to contemporary life.

**Life in the world. All along we have listened to Jesus talk about the reality of life in the world. He has not been subtle.** *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first"* (**15:18**). John uses the term *world* eighty times, and fully one-third of these describe the world as a place of unbelief and conflict. Yet **Jesus also says that he has overcome the world (16:33) and that Christians who live in the world should have peace and joy (16:20, 33).**

**This produces a theological tension** that has led to numerous mistaken spiritualities. In a word, **how do I combine the victory of Jesus and the trouble of the world? Is it a sin or a failure of faith to admit to suffering and despair in the world? To admit to illness? Does this deny the victory of Jesus? For others is the acceptance of struggle and spiritual battle—to acknowledge the world in all its power—a concession that has no place for Christ as victor? Where is the power of God when the power of the world sometimes seems so overwhelming and we feel defeated?**

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The – John: From biblical text...to contemporary life.

## Resurrection and resolution.

**Running through [John 16](#) is Jesus' repeated assurance that "in a little while" his disciples will see him again.** As I argued above, this **"seeing" points to the resurrection, for "seeing the Lord" becomes a watchword on Easter for having encountered the resurrected, glorified Jesus.**

**The importance of this is underscored in [1 John 1:1-3](#):**

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. (italics added)*

There is no doubt that **for John the concrete visual encounter he had with the resurrected Jesus was foundational to his testimony.** This "seeing" was not simply a metaphor, as if now in his faith, belief in resurrection "dawned" on him. **This Jesus is someone seen and "touched"; this is an objective anchor that he refers to with great relish throughout his letter ([1 John 1:1, 3; 3:2, 6; 4:1, 12, 14, 20; 5:16; 3 John 1:11](#)).** These verses in 1 John link up with John's repeated reference to **"that which was from the beginning" ([1:1; 2:7, 13-14, 24; 3:11; 2 John 1:5](#)),** which reminds his followers that the strongest argument for the truth of Jesus was found on Easter morning. The resurrection validated Jesus' truth claims about himself and forced the apostolic leaders to look back on his earthly

**life and reflect more deeply (with the aid of the Spirit) on the meaning of these events.**

**Paul follows this same tack in 1 Corinthians 15.** The truth about his faith is not to be found merely in self-validating spiritual experiences, but also in the reality of resurrection from the dead. *"If Christ has not been raised then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain"* (15:14).

**For the earliest Christians, Jesus' resurrection was the starting point for evangelism and proclamation.** "This [Jesus] ... you ... put to death by nailing him to the cross.... But God raised him from the dead" (Acts 2:23-24). These words of Peter on Pentecost become **the turning point in sermon after sermon in Acts** (see Acts 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 34, 37; 26:8). **The same should be true of our proclamation.**

**The resurrection of Christ should be the bold, unflinching word we possess for the world. Jesus knows what this moment will mean for his followers. "You will rejoice," he says (John 16:22). "Your grief will turn to joy" (16:20).**

No doubt, **Easter was the catalyst for the apostolic faith**, and it inspired much of the reflection we read in the New Testament today.

**But what about us today?** We do not live in an era that can await such a moment of resurrection. **The "little while" of chapter 16 is now long past. The resurrection of Jesus in Jerusalem is not a personal experience to which we can point, but instead has become a solid doctrinal position that we hold with fervor.** I envy the Easter experience of John, Peter, James, and the other disciples. And I would wish that the blessing pronounced by Jesus in 20:29, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed," did not belong to me and my generation. **We live with spiritual imperfection and incompleteness, not unlike the disciples as they awaited Easter. Paul's candid admission is that our vision is opaque, like looking through a dark glass or an ancient mirror (1 Cor. 13:12). We yearn for the day**

when we will see "face to face" (13:12b) and discover that all our questions have disappeared (John 16:23a).

This is perhaps where an application of John 16 requires that we understand clearly that Jesus participates in four episodes of self-revelation. (1) There was Jesus' earthly ministry, which was filled with ambiguity for his followers. (2) His resurrection provided the confirmation and clarity they yearned to experience. (3) Jesus promised the Spirit, who would serve as his personal, indwelling presence during his absence. (4) We await his glorious second coming, when we once more will see him again.

Our experience (episode 3) is similar to that of the disciples (episode 1) inasmuch as we struggle to understand and yearn for perfect clarity.

But we have one sterling advantage: We possess the Spirit, who gives us insight and understanding inaccessible even to the apostles. Jesus' resurrection was the disciples' ultimate confirming experience, and while we can only point back to it (as a confirmation of their authority), we must point forward to Christ's return. That is, the Second Coming serves the church much the same way that the resurrection served the apostles.

In theological language, this is tension between the "already" and the "not yet" of the kingdom of God.

We are interim citizens.

We live in the kingdom that has been inaugurated by Christ, yet we yearn for that kingdom's final consummation at the end of time.

The history of Jesus (his miracles, his parables, his empty tomb) must join with our experience of Jesus (his lordship, his indwelling Spirit) to form a confident discipleship that remains faithful as it

awaits the fulfillment of his promise to return, when we will "see" him again (cf. [1 John 3:2](#)).

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**"In the world you have trouble."** There is a misunderstanding afoot that pertains to Jesus' final words *in [16:33](#): "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

**Does this mean that the "peace" of Jesus enables us to escape the ills of life, as so many popular preachers today claim? Does faith in Jesus automatically solve all our problems?**

I have just suggested that **we are interim citizens of the kingdom, looking back to the resurrection and forward to the Second Coming—equipped by the Holy Spirit and eager to see Jesus as his apostles did.** In this interim citizenship we need to understand fully what will be the character of our lives. **For some interpreters, possessing the "victory of Jesus" means being exempt from tragedy, conflict, poverty, struggle, and disillusionment.**

**It is curious that Jesus here speaks of peace and trouble in the same breath.**

**This forces us to carefully define what this peace really is.**

**One sort of peace means the absence of all enemies; the other is freedom from anxiety while struggling with enemies.** Who could not

be at peace when there is no trouble? But **it is** the latter notion, **peace within the storm, that Jesus has in mind.**

Donald Miller illustrates:

It is not noteworthy, for example, for a housewife to be at peace about her housework if she happens to have no children, little company, every modern convenience, and servants to do her menial tasks. It is astonishing, however, when a mother of five children, many visiting relatives, few conveniences, and no servants can work without excitement, without fretting, without worry, moving majestically through the confusion of her overburdened days with poise and dignity.

This type of peace—serenity in the midst of confusion—is superior to the "easier" peace because it abides while conquering obstacles rather than avoiding them.

Therefore **it is essential that we keep in mind that peace and trouble do not negate one another.**

#### **Illustration:**

**The peace of Jesus is a condition that takes the uncertainties and struggles of this world seriously, but like a seagull riding the surface of a turbulent sea, is able to climb swells and drop into valleys without worry.**

**We have seen again and again in this Gospel that the world is a place of genuine hostility to the things of God.**

For a disciple to live in it is necessarily to experience struggle, conflict, even battle. **The world's values, its vision, its morals, its pagan religious instincts—these are all inimical to the God of the Bible. In**

**this sense, Christian discipleship is nothing short of a call to warfare.**

Again, permit me to **quote Miller:** (add eagle face pic!)

*As long as a Christian is in the world he will be pressed as though by a great mob; he will be crushed in spirit as though great crushing weights were lying on his chest; he will know spiritual anguish like that of a mother in labor. This, Jesus has told us. When he speaks, therefore, of peace, it is not the peace of unruffled days but the inner confidence of the warrior who is weary, thirsty, outnumbered, and wounded, but who fights bravely on, confident of the outcome, assured of victory. We are saved not from trouble; we are saved in trouble.*

In the reality of this sort of world, Jesus says "**Take heart**" (**16:33b**). The **Greek verb used here is the same one Jesus used for his men in the boat during the Galilee storm (Mark 6:50)**. More accurately, **it means to "have courage."** It means **taking stock of the circumstances and still prevailing**. But **the basis of this encouragement is important** in the balance of the verse.

**Jesus does not say, "Have courage—you will overcome the world." The Greek sentence structure is emphatic: "Have courage—I have overcome the world."**

**If Jesus had said, "Have courage, I have overcome the world—and you can too," there would be little good news for us.**

**Illustration:**

(A) If a golf master nearly drives on the green from every tee and says to you, "Have courage, I did it! You can do it too!" there is no encouragement here.

(B) If the superior student performs perfectly on an exam and says to a less-gifted friend, "Cheer up! I did well, so can you!" such counsel only brings a sharper sense of hopelessness.

If Jesus was simply one heroic man who achieved a superior life, if he was simply a stellar example of what we hoped to be, then he has little value for us. ***We have tried to overcome the world, but we have failed.*** Jesus' example of superior humanity simply makes my inferiority more unbearable.

**But if Jesus is more than a human; if he is indeed the Son of God who over-came the world not simply for his own sake, but for our sake as well—for all of humanity; if his victory in his life can become a victory that we enjoy, a victory extended to us when we embrace him in faith, then his triumph can become our triumph.**

**\*\*\* See 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 \*\*\***

He thus offers us genuinely good news, "Have courage! I have faced your enemy and vanquished him. I have fought your battle on the battleground of human experience where you must fight. I have routed the foe. You can never do it; but I have done it and I can do it again in you. Abide in me and my victory is yours."

**This is the great departure of Christianity from every other religious faith.**

**It does not simply set out an ideal or a moral code; it offers a means of achieving it.**

**Christianity is the offer of God to live in his followers and achieve in them the victory demonstrated in his Son Jesus Christ. And in that indwelling, an indescribable peace will be ours despite the fury and**

**foment of the world around us.**

- NIV Application Commentary

## ***“A LIFE OF PURE AND HOLY SACRIFICE***

*“He who believes in Me . . . out of his heart will flow . . .”*

**- John 7:38**

Jesus did not say, “He who believes in Me will realize all the blessings of the fullness of God,” but, in essence, “He who believes in Me will have everything he receives escape out of him.” Our Lord’s teaching was always anti-self-realization. His purpose is not the development of a person—His purpose is to make a person exactly like Himself, and the Son of God is characterized by self-expenditure. If we believe in Jesus, it is not what we gain but what He pours through us that really counts. God’s purpose is not simply to make us beautiful, plump grapes, but to make us grapes so that He may squeeze the sweetness out of us. Our spiritual life cannot be measured by success as the world measures it, but only by what God pours through us—and we cannot measure that at all.

“When Mary of Bethany “broke the flask . . . of very costly oil . . . and poured it on [Jesus]’ head,” it was an act for which no one else saw any special occasion; in fact, “. . . there were some who . . . said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil wasted?’” (Mark 14:3–4). But Jesus commended Mary for her extravagant act of devotion, and said, “. . . wherever this gospel is preached . . . what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her” (Mark 14:9).”“Our Lord is filled with overflowing joy whenever He sees any of us doing what Mary did—not being bound by a particular set of rules, but being totally surrendered to Him. God poured out the life of His Son “that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17). Are we prepared to pour out our lives for Him?” “He who believes in Me . . . out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”—and hundreds of other lives will be continually refreshed. Now is the time for us to break “the flask” of our lives, to stop seeking our own satisfaction, and to pour out our lives before Him. Our Lord is asking who of us will do it for Him?”

- ***Excerpt From: Chambers, Oswald. “My Utmost for His Highest.”***