

- I. My Notes ... WWC message 6/7
- II. Series: That You Might Believe
  - Title: Predictions and Promises
  - Text: John 16:16-33
  - Quote: The Apostle Paul reminds us to rejoice always. The only way to do that is to live with gratitude. Pastor Rick
- III. Introduction
  - What to do? What to do? Struggling to figure out the next steps is something we all face at one time or another. Being overwhelmed can lead to hopelessness, it can easily throw one into some kind of funk. It sounds like this is what the Disciples were facing as Jesus continued to reveal where His path was leading. From the time they had gathered for Passover (the Last Supper) until this moment, Jesus had been given them instruction and examples on how to live. The conversation shifts here ... it turns from instruction to predictions and promises. Included in Scripture are the Disciples reactions. In Chapter 17 we will find an incredible prayer. Right after the prayer John recorded was the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus. Things are happening fast. Change is coming and the Disciples seem overwhelmed.
  - What do you do when you are facing change or overwhelming circumstances? Many complain and cry out – others withdraw – and there are some that run headlong into the situation. A good way to deal with this is to remember gratitude. Gratitude can become a trait, a characteristic of your personality and attitude. The Apostle Paul's instruction to believers encompasses gratitude. *"16 Always be joyful. 17*

*Never stop praying. 18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” (1 Ths. 5:16-18 NLT).* These choices can become identifying characteristics if we allow. I wonder how things might have been different if the Disciples had listened to what Jesus was saying and chose to be grateful for the guidance and instruction.

#### IV. Getting Started

- **John 16:16-18 CSB**

*16 “In a little while, you will no longer see me; again in a little while, you will see me.”*

*17 Then some of his disciples said to one another, “What is this he’s telling us: ‘In a little while, you will not see me; again a little while, you will see me,’ and, ‘Because I am going to the Father’?” 18 They said, “What is this he is saying, ‘In a little while’? We don’t know what he’s talking about.”*

- When my mentor told me that he was moving it was difficult to take. He would only be just over an hour away and there were always phone calls, but it was good just to be able to hang out with him. The Disciples had just been confronted with the news that Jesus was leaving ... and to top it off, they couldn’t go with Him.
- Instead of asking Jesus to explain what they were struggling to understand, all they did was talk to each other. The lack of understanding was being shared with each other. This likely led to more confusion and despair.
- The phrase “in a little while” is both a prediction and a promise. It addresses what is about to happen – the betrayal, arrest, trial, and

crucifixion. And it not only points to the Resurrection (which they didn't understand) but too, it points to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ. When Jesus told them that they would not see Him "in a little while" – this was a prediction of what was about to happen. When Jesus told them that they would see Him again "in a little while" – this was a promise of what was to come. This was initially fulfilled at the Resurrection, and it will be ultimately fulfilled with His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

- The struggle to understand God's plans can be a big one. It falls in line with what God told the Prophet Isaiah ... *8 "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. 9 For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts."* (Isaiah 55:8-9 NLT). Even though it doesn't make sense to us, and though we might be confused in the moment, God knows what it will take for His perfect plan to come to pass.
- While Jesus words may have hit them hard, they could choose to believe, to trust what God has said and done, to know that what Jesus said will come to pass.

## V. Clarity

- **John 16:19-22 CSB**

19 Jesus knew they wanted to ask him, and so he said to them, *"Are you asking one another about what I said, 'In a little while, you will not see me; again in a little while, you will see me'?"* 20 *Truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice. You will become sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy.* 21 *When a woman is in labor, she has pain because her time has come. But when she has given birth to a child,*

*she no longer remembers the suffering because of the joy that a person has been born into the world. 22 So you also have sorrow now. But I will see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy from you.*

- Let me make the most obvious statement first ... trusting Jesus will bring joy, even in the most difficult circumstance.
- Here we find another prediction and a promise. The prediction, intense sorrow and suffering by what the world (those without a relationship with Jesus) would view as a victory. The promise, the sorrow – the hurt and despair – will only be temporary. Jesus will be Resurrected; He will come again. And all who trust Him, who call Him Lord will see Him and rejoice.
- Using a practical example to help them understand, Jesus relates the experience of childbirth to what the Disciples are about to go through. They will suffer for a while, they will want the pain to pass, but just as in childbirth – when God’s plan comes to pass, there will be incredible joy (like when the baby arrives).
- While pain and sorrow are part of the path that we walk in life’s journey they don’t define us. And the truth is, that in the difficulty God is there ... *“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:18 NIV).* King David wrote this praise when he was being chased by Saul. He praised the Lord even when facing death. We can know that God is with us in every situation because He has promised to be there ... always.
- Our sorrow can be turned to joy, to praises, because of God’s faithfulness. Jesus was preparing His Disciples – He was warning them

that hard times were ahead. But they would only last for a brief time. Beyond the hard times, joy was coming.

- Know this ... in the moments of suffering, of distress, hold on to the hope of God's promises. He won't leave you or forsake you (His words, not mine). **Psalm 30:5** reminds us that *"... weeping may last through the night, but joy comes in the morning."* (NLT).

## VI. Prayer

- The next few words that Jesus spoke are often misunderstood. People have used them as a magical formula to get what they want. While there is no formula for prayer, it isn't about getting one's wish list filled.
- **John 16:23-24 CSB**  
*23 "In that day you will not ask me anything. Truly I tell you, anything you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. 24 Until now you have asked for nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete."*
- I see a couple of conditions here that we learn (and have reinforced) as our prayer life develops. The first revolves around understanding "in that day" ... this seems to be after the Resurrection, with the guidance and understanding of the Holy Spirit. Up to this point the Disciples had prayed in the presence of Jesus. The time was coming that He would depart, and they would learn to pray away from His physical presence. The other condition is often misappropriated. "In my name" does not mean that if we ask for something in the name of Jesus it will be given (granted). The "name and claim it" philosophy has come from poor teaching on this point. Our asking must be in accordance with God's will, not mine. In that

way, answered prayers bring joy – because God is at work and in the midst of these prayers.

- Jesus is letting His followers know that communication is important. The way that the Disciples will communicate with Him is about to change. It is the same way we communicate with Him today ... Prayer. Praying in Jesus name shows trust and dependence. We trust that He is listening, that He cares, and that He will continue to guide us through our daily walk. We depend on His viewpoint, on learning to see things the way that He sees them. This results in peace and joy filling our moments and carrying us through the stressful situations that come up.

## VII. Belief

- The time for parables, for teaching in relatable examples, was over. Jesus was making things clear and the Disciples were beginning to understand that. Even if they didn't know what tomorrow was going to bring, they understood who would be there for them.

- **John 16:25-33 CSB**

*25 "I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech. A time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. 26 On that day you will ask in my name, and I am not telling 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., 28 I came from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father."*

*29 His disciples said, "Look, now you're speaking plainly and not using any figurative language. 30 Now we know that you know everything and*

*don't need anyone to question you. By this we believe that you came from God."*

*31 Jesus responded to them, "Do you now believe? 32 Indeed, an hour is coming, and has come, when each of you will be scattered to his own home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33 I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."*

- We are dependent on God's grace for everything. Each moment is a grace-filled one. Imperfections, misunderstandings, and poor choices can be hurtful in the simplest of situations. When the pressure is on, when the decisions are big, trusting God (depending on His mercy and grace) must be our guide.
- The message of the Gospel is one of God's love for each one of us. It is a message of making a way that our relationship can be properly restored. It is a message of reconciliation. Giving someone the freedom to choose means that if the choice is contrary to what you stand for, they are free to make it. It doesn't remove the care or compassion. In fact, allowing someone to make a choice different than you would make can be painful. Because of forgiveness, our choices and intentions that do not align with God's will aren't held against us.
- Let me us Paul's explanation here ...
- **2 Corinthians 5:16-19 NLT**

*16 So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! 17 This means that anyone who belongs to*

*Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*

*18 And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. 19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.*

- As in most families, fighting and disagreement are what keep relationships in balance. The Father (God) wants the lives of His children (creation) to be peaceful, purposeful, and always in step the family. That is why Jesus came. To point all to unity with the God.
- Jesus told the Disciples that they no longer need Him to speak to the Father for them. We can speak to God directly because of our love and belief in Jesus. As Jesus explained this, the Disciples began to understand on some level. Even that understanding (belief) came with a prediction and promise.
- Belief in Jesus as Lord, as Savior, was going to cause persecution. Believers were going to be singled out for their choice to live God's way instead of the world's way. It was happening when Jesus was on earth, and it still happens today.
- The prediction of them being "scattered" would come to pass. People are opposed to the truth of God's love. Maybe because they feel convicted of their shortcomings, maybe because they want to do it on their own, or perhaps it is just fear and misunderstanding. The promise was that we could find joy and peace, even in the persecution, because Jesus paid the price. Even before we made the choice of opposition.



## VIII. Wrapping Up

- The Disciples struggled to understand the “plain talk” that Jesus gave them. There was a lot going on and it was clear that life (as they knew it) was about to change. They had to deal with their confusion and feelings of “what’s next.” Throughout this message Jesus was leaving them with there was the theme that peace and joy would remain as the focus and trust in Jesus was maintained. It’s a lesson for us today. There will be challenges, disagreements are going to take place and hurt, and heartache will be replaced with joy. Fear would not define them, confident expectation (hope) in the words Jesus spoke would.
- Do you see the parallels? Jesus has been teaching the Disciples, preparing them for the work before them. He was a living example of how God expects us to be in this world. In the first message Jesus spoke to the Disciples and the crowds listening, He gave them a list of attitudes they could understand that would define their walk. These “Be Attitudes” are not the only list around. Just as Jesus helped us understand, the World and the Devil have a list too ... We get to choose which list we are going to follow.
- Let’s Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always