

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

Turn off the outside “noise” for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God’s Word.  
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

JOHN 16:16-28 (NIV)

<sup>16</sup> 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.”

<sup>17</sup> At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, **‘In a little while you will see me no more,** and then after a little while you will see me,’ and **‘Because I am going to the Father?’**” <sup>18</sup> They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”

<sup>19</sup> Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, **‘In a little while you will see me no more,** and then after a little while you will see me’? <sup>20</sup> **Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.**” <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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.**

<sup>23</sup> In that day you will no longer ask **ME** anything. Very truly I tell you, **MY FATHER will give you whatever you ask IN MY NAME.** <sup>24</sup> Until now you have not asked for anything **IN MY NAME. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.**

<sup>25</sup> “Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. <sup>26</sup> **In that day YOU will ask IN MY NAME. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.**” <sup>27</sup> **No, THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVES YOU because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.** <sup>28</sup> I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

— PART 5 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*

As we have spent time in John 16, we have seen that Jesus is comforting his followers as he prepares them for his **death** . . . and possibly even worse, for his **absence**. No longer will they be able to turn to **him** for comfort. So he comforts them **by inviting them to access the same source of encouragement that he used . . . his Abba.**

You know the phrase “bypassing the middle man”? Jesus essentially tells them they can “bypass the middle man” — **himself!** — by going directly to the Father in prayer. **“I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf”** — No, he won’t

**need** to . . . because now they can go directly to the Father **on their own**, because **“THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVES YOU.”**

Jesus advises us that we can take our griefs straight to our Father . . . after all, he is **“THE FATHER OF COMPASSION and THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT”** (2 Corinthians 1).

And yet, in another sense, Jesus is still the key to their receiving comfort from the Father, because he encourages them to pray in a radically new way. He tells them to **“ask IN MY NAME”** (v. 24)! He promises them that **“MY FATHER will give you whatever you ask IN MY NAME”** (v. 23)! And then a **THIRD** time, in case they missed the point (as I often do!), he tells them that, following his death and subsequent absence from them: **“in that day YOU will ask IN MY NAME”** (v. 26)!

So, what does that mean, when Jesus tells them, and us, to **“ask IN MY NAME”**?

Names have deep symbolic meaning in the ancient world. In other word, one’s name reflects one’s character. So when we pray in Jesus’ name, that means:

- **what we pray should be in alignment with the character of Jesus.**

This is why in the Lord Prayer, Jesus told us to “hallow” or “honor” God’s name:

MATTHEW 6:9 (TNIV)  
'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name'

And that’s why, in THE MESSAGE, Eugene Peterson paraphrases it **“Reveal WHO YOU ARE”!** And why the new Passion Translation renders it **“May the glory of your name be the center on which our lives turn.”**

- **when we pray, we are praying as a representative of Jesus.**

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20 (TNIV)  
We are therefore **CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS**,  
as though God were making his appeal *through us*.  
We implore you **ON CHRIST'S BEHALF**:  
Be reconciled to God.

- **our everyday lives are to be in alignment with the character of Jesus: in other words, we should seek to reflect His name in everything we do.**

COLOSSIANS 3:17 (TNIV)  
And **whatever** you do, whether in word or deed,  
**do it all** IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS,  
giving thanks to God the Father **THROUGH HIM**.

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**“We have the heart of God  
as soon as we place before him the name of his Son.”**  
— JOHN CALVIN

*Abba, teach us to pray for what aligns with the character of Jesus . . . knowing we represent him before You . . . and out of a life lived in alignment with his character.*

Pastor Doug