

Wednesday, May 13, 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 16:16-33 (NIV)

¹⁶ 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."

¹⁷ 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'?**" ¹⁸ They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying."

¹⁹ 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'? ²⁰ **Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.** 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.**

²³ 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.** ²⁴ Until now you have not asked for anything **IN MY NAME. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.**

²⁵ "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. ²⁶ **In that day YOU will ask IN MY NAME. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.** ²⁷ **No, 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 entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

²⁹ Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. ³⁰ Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."

³¹ "Do you now believe?" Jesus replied. ³² **"A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.**

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."**

*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.*

I'd like to give Tom Wright the final word on this passage of Scripture:

“This passage is all about the fact that Jesus’ people have instant, immediate, direct and valued access into the very presence of the living God. Though Jesus, in John’s gospel and elsewhere, is spoken of as praying to the Father on behalf of his people, this doesn’t mean that his people can’t pray to God themselves, on their own account.

On the contrary. **The extraordinary and intimate union between Jesus and the Father, which is one of the main subjects of this whole book, means that those who belong to Jesus, the branches who belong in the vine, are granted the same immediate access to the Father that Jesus himself has.** What is more, when they pray in Jesus’ name — which means, as we saw, when they pray conscious of the fact that they belong to him, and that what they are doing is for his glory — then the Father welcomes them instantly and gives them whatever they ask for. *Whatever.* There it is again (verse 23).

The greatest Christians of old...were people who took promises like this at their face value and were humble enough to believe them. ‘The throne-room door is open,’ they would say. ‘Why not go in and talk to Father for yourself?’

This whole passage, then, is about the Father: how much he loves each one who trusts in Jesus, and how great are the promises that he makes, in Jesus, to each of us. The disciples, listening to these words at the end of these great discourses, have a sense that Jesus is finally speaking as clearly and openly as it’s possible to speak about the Father, and about himself. **They have, at least, glimpsed something of the truth, and they are going to hang on to it for dear life.**

They had better do so, because they are about to be tossed to and fro like timber in a tidal wave. The horrible events that Jesus has up to now hinted at and interpreted in various ways are about to engulf him and them. Their initial reaction will be panic and flight. They will be scattered like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus, the shepherd, will face the foe alone — though even then he won’t be alone; what he does on the cross he does with and in the Father’s presence, not over against him.

But the last word isn’t one of warning. It’s one of good cheer. Somehow, even in the worst that is to come, the disciples can have a peace that will carry them through....It’s a matter of standing on the ground that Jesus is going to win — indeed, that here he claims to have won already. ‘You’ll have trouble in the world; but cheer up, I’ve defeated the world!’ ”

TOM WRIGHT, *John for Everyone, Part 2 (Chapters 11-21)*.

::

*Abba, what our world needs now, is love. We say that “Bethany **exists** to love.” And Jesus taught us that “**the Father himself loves YOU because you have loved ME.**” So help us today to **live IN** your love, and **live OUT** your love to our broken world.*

Pastor Doug