

Sunday, May 10, 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 4 —

*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.*

Jesus came to offer us joy. He said "I have told you this **so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete**" (John 15:11)! He said **he wanted us to "have the full measure of his joy within us"** (John 17:13)!

However, in life, **weeping** often comes before **rejoicing**. Have you found that to be true in your life, as I have found it in mine?

PSALM 126:5-6 (NIV)

<sup>5</sup> Those who sow with **tears**  
will reap with songs of **joy**.

<sup>6</sup> Those who go out **weeping**,  
carrying seed to sow,  
will return **with songs of joy**,  
carrying sheaves with them.

I have had many mentors. There are many people I have looked up to and sought to learn from. (One might think I should be farther along than I am because of my many mentors, but that's another story!) One of my mentors is Jim Houston, a friend of C.S. Lewis, and the founder of Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. Many, many years ago I sat with him in Pasadena, and during the course of our conversation, he said something that I didn't understand at the time . . . but I dutifully wrote it down anyway! He told me "the gift of tears in prayer may soften you and release you from things that are holding you back."

Over the course of the last forty years I have slowly learned this wisdom of his words. We learn something from sadness that we could never learn in happier times. And times of grief and loss force us to turn to the Lord for comfort and compassion. I recall listening to my dad recite the following poem many times:

*"I walked a mile with Pleasure;  
She chatted all the way;  
But left me none the wiser  
For all she had to say.*

*I walked a mile with Sorrow;  
And ne'er a word said she;  
But, oh! The things I learned from her,  
When Sorrow walked with me."*

ROBERT BROWNING HAMILTON

What griefs and losses are weighing on you right now? Are you conscious of them? Sometimes we push our griefs away. We don't want to deal with them. We don't want to feel them. And sometimes, as the saying goes, "the body weeps the tears that the eyes refuse to shed." This can particularly be true for us men. We refuse to acknowledge our emotions; we are uncomfortable with grief, with pain. Another saying that also reflects reality: "Women cry; men have heart attacks and ulcers."

Are you learning anything from your tears right now? The Lord may be speaking through your tears. He might be teaching you. He most certainly is walking with you, and quite possible He is also weeping with you.

MATTHEW 5:4 (NIV)

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

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*Father, give us this day the tears that we need to acknowledge our hurts & wounds. We believe Jesus' words: "**THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVES YOU!**" And so we ask for permission to grieve our losses . . . in your loving presence. And we ask you to pour out your compassion and your comfort...in the name of the Son who weeps!*

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**HAPPY MOTHERS DAY!** I look forward to seeing many of you today after our service! Watch our service online together and then bring everyone on a FAMILY FIELD TRIP to the south church parking lot afterwards (from 11:45-12:30) . . . we would love to greet you, pray for you — *and we will have a small gift for all the moms who drive through!* You can also drop off your tithes and offerings with Sandy if you are not able to give online.

**You are missed! You are being prayed for! You are loved!**

**Pastor Doug**

P.S. We would love to hear from you! How are you doing right now? And we would love to pray for you! Email us at [info@bethanyonline.net](mailto:info@bethanyonline.net)

P.P.S. Keep checking our “ENCOURAGEMENT FOR TODAY” webpage — we will try to post fresh encouragement **every day** during this crisis!