

John 16:16-22

April 21, 2019

“I Tell You the Truth . . . Your Grief
Will Turn to Joy”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Easter Sunday

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

Jesus wept.

He knew sorry.

And he once told his disciples,

***“I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices.
You will grieve . . .”***

Weep. Mourn. Grieve.

Just a few days after saying these words,
that’s exactly what Jesus sees.

With the rooster’s crow still ringing in his ears,
Peter goes outside and weeps bitterly.

Mary Magdalene, oh! She is no different.

We, we find her wetting the graveside with her tears.

Think of that trek from Pilate’s palace to the place of the skull.

As Jesus stumbled to carry his cross,
the daughters of Jerusalem wept, mourned, and grieved for him,
all along the *Via Dolorosa*.

[Weep, Mourn, Grieve]

The Scriptures – they share such raw emotions! Weep, mourn, grieve.

Because that’s reality.

If you ever have this delusion that the Christian life is one of ease,
read the Scriptures
and your delusion will be cured.

Christians hurt.

We weep with wretchedness.

We mourn over missed opportunities.

We grieve over guilt.

But the pages of Scripture don't have to tell us that, now do they?

No, in this case

the pages of Scripture simply confirm
what we see in our own lives.

You may be happy today: After all it is EASTER!

Jesus is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed. Alleluia!

But I can guarantee that wasn't the case every day since last Easter.

And I can guarantee it won't be the case every day until next Easter.

So... Why have you wept?

What has caused your tears this year?

Whose death did you mourn this year?

Are you still mourning over that loss from a few years back?

What guilt has caused you to grieve this year?

Weep, mourn, grieve.

[In a Little While]

The real question today isn't what pain you have or what's causing your grief.

The real question is, how will you deal with it?

Jesus had an answer for his disciples.

Just prior to saying they would weep, mourn, and grieve, he counsels,

***“In a little while you will see me no more,
and then after a little while you will see me.”***

Did you catch the key phrase? “In a little while.”

Seven times within three verses; seven times Jesus says, “a little while.”

That must be pretty important.

You see,

Jesus is telling them and us,

“Take a step back. See the big picture.

Whatever you're going through,

whatever you're going to go through,

it won't last long.

Hang in there.

In a little while, it'll be over.”

Sometimes we maybe want to slap the person who says that.
When you're on mile 21 of a marathon and the person sitting in his lawn chair says,
"Just a little while," you want to retort, "Easy for you to say. 'A little while.'
Why don't you run the race yourself and see if it's 'a little while?'"

But it's different when Jesus says it.
Jesus has a different perspective than anyone else who's ever spoken those words.

First, he's all-knowing. He knows how long our "little whiles" are going to be.

For the disciples,

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| he knew most of them wouldn't see him after they abandoned him in the garden. | But he also knew he'd see them 96 hours later in the locked room. |
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He knew exactly how long their little while would be.

And he knows exactly how long your little whiles will be.
He knows how long you'll suffer with your sickness.
He knows how long your heart will ache.
Hang in there; it will be just "a little while."

Second, not only is Jesus all-knowing, but he's also eternal,
he's got a much better grasp about how long our suffering
really is in the whole scheme of things.

Ask one of our older members here today about how time flies.
They don't just say things like,
"It seems like yesterday ..."
Experience has taught them that.

Well, now consider our Savior's eternal perspective.
He knows our troubles are momentary
compared to the eternal glory that awaits.

[**Joy**]

Jesus says, "I tell you the truth . . . your grief *will turn* to joy."
That's how the passage ends up.
Not, "Your grief will be replaced by joy."
Not, "Your grief will coincide with joy."
But, "Your grief will turn to joy."

That is what Easter is all about.

It takes a sad, seemingly hopeless situation and it turns it to joy.

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| For the disciples, they mourned and grieved over the loss of their Savior. | But when they saw him again after a little while, they realized that their Savior's death was a payment for their sin. |
| In view of Easter, the cross that caused them so much grief just two days prior | turned into a source of joy for them. |

Look what Easter does to the grave.

There was Mary, crying at the tomb.

But when her Savior stood next to her and called her by name,

Easter turned that cold hole in the rock into the rock of her faith.

For Jesus is whom he claimed to be, the Son of God.

Easter turned her grief into joy.

But Easter didn't just change things for the disciples or the women at the tomb.

It does it for you and for me.

Instead of weeping at the grave of our loved one,

Easter turns our tears into droplets that magnify the blessings that we enjoy.

Instead of mourning and fearing our own death,

Easter turns our fears into a longing for a pleasant sleep

where our souls enjoy heaven

while we wait to be reunited with our glorious bodies on the Last Day.

Instead of the guilt and grief of seeing our sins pinned on the cross,

Easter turns the cross into a gift.

It is certain...

No matter how you look at it, Easter turns our grief into joy.

And nothing can take that away from you.

You see, we can ALWAYS rejoice!

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia.

REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16-18)
