

“It Won’t Be Long Now”
John 16:16-24

INTRO: “A little while,” a few more hours and Jesus would be taken away from the disciples. “A little while” and Jesus would be led down the via delarosa to the cross. “A little while” and He would give His life for the sheep, the sinless one for the sinner, the just for the unjust (1 Pet 3:18). “A little while” and His body would be placed in the tomb, a borrowed grave. “A little while” is all that the body would lay there; for in three days, He would arise! The phrase, “a little while,” occurs seven times in John 16:16-19.

I. VS 16, THE DEPARTURE OF JESUS

A. In just “a little while,” a few hours, Jesus would be taken away from the disciples.

1. “A little while,” and He would be crucified. He would cry, “It is finished,” from the cross and give up the Ghost.
2. “A little while,” and He would be placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and they would see Him no more.

B. “A little while,” and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.”

1. Yes, they would see Him after the resurrection, but notice that He makes reference to them seeing Him after He goes to the Father.
2. The key to understanding this verse is found in the Greek language.

a. “A little while, and ye shall not see me.....” The Greek for “see” in this phrase in *theoreo* meaning, “to be a spectator, to view mentally, to view attentively.” The disciples would not see Him as they had before. We get our English word theater from the Greek word *theoreo*.

b. “A little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.” The word for see in this phrase is *oraō* meaning “to comprehend.” For three and a half years they had been seeing Jesus through physical eyes. “In a little while,” they would see Him with spiritual eyes. The Holy Spirit would teach them and help them. They would see spiritual things the world is blind to (14:18-19). When a sinner sees Jesus, it is by the eye of faith, a work of the Holy Spirit (Heb 2:9).

1- The Holy Spirit shows the sinner the danger he

is in.

- 2- The Holy Spirit has to reveal the Son to the sinner (Jn 3:3-7).

II. VSS 17-18, THE DISCIPLES CONFUSED AND BEWILDERED

- A. Vs 17, To the disciples, the words of Jesus were hard to understand. They sounded like a contradiction.
 1. The disciples still were having a hard time with the idea of Jesus leaving them.
 2. They should have known from the Old Testament scriptures what Jesus was talking about (Psa 68:18; 110:1).
- B. Vs 18, The phrase, "a little while," had the disciples confused.
 1. The disciples were "still in their spiritual infancy, still in need of milk. Yet this was strong meat that the Lord was setting before them. They were ready to jettison it all. But in six week's time, most of their confusion would be blown away by the mighty rushing Pentecostal wind" (Phillips 309).
 2. Just as our Lord desired for His early disciples to grow spiritually, He wants us to grow spiritually today.
 - a. We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord (II Pet 3:18).
 - b. We will grow as we read the Bible, pray, and stay faithful to the New Testament church (Rom 10:17; I Thes 5:17; Heb 10:25).

III. VS 19, THE DISCERNMENT OF JESUS

- A. Jesus saw the disciples grouped together, talking to one another, and shaking their heads.
- B. Like children confused by a math problem that is beyond their conception. They say to one another: "Do you get it? I don't get it. What is the answer?"
- C. The Lord Jesus breaks into their discussion. He knew their desire was to grasp the truth of His words. He understood that what they did not get now they would grasp latter.
 1. Jesus felt their pain and gloom and knew they needed help emotionally and spiritually. He was touched by their pain and is touched with ours (Heb 4:15).
 2. He knows our needs, and He wants to help us.
 3. They would understand the deeper spiritual things later with the Holy Spirit's help. For now, He comforts them with the

words of verses 20-24.

IV. VSS 20-24, WEEPING TURNED TO JOY

A. Vs 20, Jesus shoots straight with His disciples telling them that they will weep and wail.

1. Deep grief would grip the disciples in connection with the death of their Lord.
 - a. To see Jesus hanging on the cross would cause crying and inner pain.
 - b. “Sorrowful” – Greek *lupeo*– “to be in heaviness”– expresses the inward feeling of the heart.
2. “The world shall rejoice.”
 - a. Hostile Jewish leaders would rejoice. “It [the Jewish nation] would look upon the death of Jesus as ‘good riddance,’ worthy of a celebration” (Hendriksen 333).
 - b. The world’s hatred for God and His Son causes rejoicing at the death of Jesus.
 - c. Believers should never be friends with a world that hates the Savior (James 4:4).
3. Jesus promises that “sorrow shall be turned to joy,” and illustrates what He means in verse 21.

B. Vs 21, The illustration that Jesus gives fits the case exactly.

1. The birth of a child produces pain, anguish, and sorrow as Isaiah 26:17 says: “Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs.....”
 - a. That same event, the birth of a child, after a short while, brings about abundant joy.....
 - b. That newborn babe was worth the pain.
2. The death of Christ would first cause the disciples to weep and lament, but the glorious resurrection and the Holy Spirit’s coming to them would be a constant source of joy and comfort.
 - a. Not only did the apostles find joy and comfort in our Lord’s resurrection and in the Holy Spirit’s indwelling, all believers through the centuries rejoice in our risen Lord.
 - b. Do you have the joy of knowing a resurrected Savior?

C. Vs 22, Right then the disciples were sorrowing.

1. They could not reconcile themselves to the Lord’s imminent

- death and departure.
2. The resurrection would turn the disciples sorrow into joy. Three days of anguish would be forgotten when the resurrected Savior appeared (Psa 30:5b).
- D. Vs 23, “In that day ye shall ask me nothing...” The day was soon to come when the disciples would not be asking such questions as they had just been asking.
1. Jesus would be gone and the “other comforter,” the Holy Spirit, would be present. Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit would bring answers.
 2. Jesus goes on to tell them that they could pray in His name and expect an answer from the Father.
 - a. Ask is the Greek *aiteo*– asking for something to be given– a word used by an inferior addressing a superior, asking the Master for provision.
 - b. At the death of Christ, the veil of the temple was rent, and the way to God was opened. We can pray directly to God the Father.
- E. Vs 24, To come to the Father in the name of Jesus would fill their souls with joy. “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

CONCLUSION: Knowing the Savior brings joy to the soul.

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