

JOHN 16:20-22
IN JESUS: REJOICE AFTER ANGUISH !—LIKE MOM

Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament; but the world will rejoice. And you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.

A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a [man] human being has been born into the world.

Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice. And your joy no one will take from you.

Sometimes life is “tough sledding.” Whether you are in your 80’s, or 40’s, or teens, or less-than-10, life has rough stretches. They are different for each, or perhaps common to many. What is it that keeps you going—and I mean you the Christian? It’s your sure hope in Christ that things will get better. In Jesus that is not just an empty hope, or whistling in the dark. It’s real. He has said so. He Himself endured the same in His mission on earth to save sinners. He disregarded the hurt, looking forward to the goal of rescuing His dear lost sheep and lambs—each one of you. *“For the joy that was set before Him, [He] endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God!” (Hebrews 12:2).* Jesus endured all looking to your salvation.

That is the very truth Jesus is teaching the disciples—and us—in our text for today. He was preparing them for hard hours and days ahead. *Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament; but the world will rejoice. And you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.* Do you know when Jesus said those words? It was the Thursday night prior to His unjust arrest, false trials, harsh treatment, and brutal crucifixion at 9:00 Good Friday morning. He knew how the hearts of the disciples would feel during those hours. They were helpless in lending a hand in Jesus’ defense, and Jesus Himself did nothing to help Himself! He could, but He didn’t. He just let the enemies “smack” Him about like a tennis ball in a tennis match. How grief-stricken the disciples would feel! And so it was Jesus said, *Most assuredly*—that is, truly, truly; verily, verily; amen, amen!—*I say to you, that you will weep and lament.* They would shed tears with sadness and mournful wailing—if not aloud, then in their hearts—at the tragic, unexpected death of their Lord. To make their hurt and loss worse, Jesus said, *The world will rejoice.* Imagine if your house burned down, and there were folks who stopped by, not to help, but to laugh at you and to rejoice that your house was ashes. Hurtful! Or a child whose favorite toy just got smashed and older brothers and sisters laugh with glee. (Did that ever happen to you?) How much lower could things get?

Jesus was talking about more than just the next 36 hours for the disciples. He was also aptly describing the entire age of the New Testament church. The preaching of Christ faces all kinds of opposition and setbacks in the world, even now in our own nation. Popular society calls Christians and Biblical Christian morals and values criminals and crimes. Right is called wrong, and wrong is called right. The Truth of Christ is a joke to those whom the devil has ensnared in his kingdom of lies and rebellion against God and His Son the Savior.

But in either case, whether the disciples during Jesus execution or the Christian Church progressing toward the end of all things, the words of the Savior ring true, *Your sorrow will be turned into joy. You now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice.* Jesus would rise from the grave on Sunday morning, He would appear to the disciples, see them, talk with them, eat with them, further teach them. All the sorrow and weeping gone! And for the Christian today—for those who look to Jesus humbly admitting sin and seeking His merciful forgiveness, love, and mansions of heaven—all the sorrows of this life turn to joy! Jesus Himself will stand before you and see you with love. And your heart will rejoice. Cast aside all tears and sadness of this life. In Jesus you win. What a change of emotions! What a flip-flop of songs of the heart!

Jesus compares it to that of motherhood. *A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a [man] human being has been born into the world.* Isn’t this exactly the case? Chronicle the pregnancy and birth of a child for mother. There’s morning sickness and nausea—no fun—“I hope I soon get past this stage.” There are the weeks of baby jerking and kicking and punching inside, not always in the most joyous manner. How many moms-to-be have said, “I’m waiting for this pregnancy to end!” Finally, labor and delivery. I must admit I have never seen my wife under more duress than at the delivery of our three children. (The pain and sorrow is the result of sin in this world, isn’t it? Go back to the garden of Eden.) But how much of a grudge does mother carry against that little babe for all the grief, discomfort, and pain she suffered? *As soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer*

remembers the anguish, for joy that a [man] human being has been born into the world. Mother love overshadows all the discomfort.

That too is something for us to consider this morning. The role of mother, mother love, and the honor given to mother. What is this joy that the Lord has built into mothers? She has a heart that loves the little baby God has given her. I remember one time showing a little girl from church the inside of our house. There are lots of things for youngster to look at and be drawn to. Do you know what caught her eye and interest the most? The baby doll that my wife had sitting out from her childhood. What a lesson there in a mother's heart. God builds it in. Imagine the joy and love of mother, when the child is her own, not just a material possession, but her own flesh and blood. There are all kinds of variations on this blessed love—adopted children, foster care children, children in a children's home. A mother's heart reaches out to all. A gift of God, for which the Lord expects us all to praise and honor mothers and our own mother.

Consider the joy that mother also has as the child grows and develops—crawl, walk, talk, run, bike, read, write, to help with joy, to drive, to get a job. Maybe the successes aren't outwardly as great as those of another youngster, but that doesn't matter. She rejoices in the child God has given her. And she labors tirelessly for her child's welfare. Fathers just do not have the same emotional chemistry that mothers do. They make a good pair, don't they?

Similarly consider how mother's heart is pained when her little one or not so little one is weak. Whether it's sickness, or injury, or damaged emotions-and-feelings, or loss, or reversal, or death for her child. Mother's heart aches. A part of her is lacking.

Children do not readily understand a mother's heart and life, until they have children of their own. Children do not readily understand what it is like for an aging mother, until they are aging themselves. And then it's too late. Mother is gone.

Dear children, love and honor your mother. That is what the Lord wants. "Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and you may enjoy long life on the earth" (4th Commandment). Do not be so arrogant as to fail to tell Mom you are sorry, to ask her forgiveness for your failures against her or even your ill-advised scorn. Tell her you love her.

Dear children, also realize that your mother is not perfect. Accept your mother for what she is and is not. God has made her your mother, not luck, or fate, or Satan. God has specifically given you to her. The devil and sin of course throw all sorts of aberrations into the picture that disrupt and distort the relationship of mother to child and child to mother—broken marriages, children conceived outside of marriage, drugs and alcohol. In Jesus, find forgiveness, unity, and love. Put all the rationalizing away, the excusing, and blaming. Love your mother. And, mothers, love your children.

Moms, I'm sure you would like to continue being "Mom" until you die—steering and directing your children in the way you think is right and best. Your role is to train them and then let go, to go on their own, always ready to lend your loving hand.

Moms--Dads and Moms, teach your children to know their Lord and Savior first and foremost. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "*From childhood [infancy] you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus*" (II Timothy 3:15). And Dads, teach your children to love and respect their Mom. Moms, teach children to love and respect their Dad. Beware of the "Forget about what Mom says / Forget about what Dad says." Work together in harmony. Build on Jesus in your family.

I have not forgotten our text. --- ***I will see you again and your heart will rejoice. And your joy no one will take from you.*** Life has its rough patches. Sometimes we drift away from Christ and make our own rough patches, or make them worse than they are.. But in Jesus there is forgiveness and love. It's a joy that no one can take away from you. It becomes the love and sinlessness of heaven. The last verse of this Chapter 16 of John is very appropriate. "*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33). The Jesus who has "*endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*" is the Jesus in whom you have peace in every stretch of life. In Jesus, rejoice in the anguish you are facing right now or ever. Rejoice like a mother who has just given birth to her precious child!

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---