

Love- Joy and Peace from Father- Son and Holy Spirit

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[0 : 00] Well, we are back again this morning for our second from last time in the upper room with Jesus, where he is saying goodbye to his friends.

And we've heard most of what Jesus has to teach us about how we are to believe in him when he has gone back to the Father through his cross and his resurrection.

And next week, we'll try and tie some of those threads together and sum up these chapters. But something that we've actually not spent loads of time on is how Jesus says these things, the way that Jesus is speaking.

Now, I'm sure for you, as it has done for me, it's felt at times like wading through a systematic theology textbook. But Jesus, remember, he's not lecturing here.

The upper room is not a conference room. These are Jesus' first followers. He calls them his friends, and they are around a family dinner table.

[1 : 05] And Jesus is speaking to them here as a father to little children. My children, he says, I will be with you only a little longer.

I will not leave you as orphans, he says. I will come to you. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you, he says.

His fatherly love and care for them comes through in the way he gently speaks to them. I have much more to say to you, he says, more than you can now bear.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Do not be afraid. And then this morning, I've told you these things, that in me you may have peace.

Now, that's just a selection of things that Jesus has said. And I do invite you later on maybe to read back from chapter 13 and just listen to his voice.

[2 : 01] You know, something that really came home to me a couple of years ago is that although Jesus himself never had human children, he never had children of his own, yet there has never been a person on earth with more of a father's heart, with more fatherly love and compassion.

Because Jesus shared the heart of God the Father, just inseparably and completely. And that is exactly how Jesus is speaking here to those disciples back then and to us this morning, if our trust is in him.

And however much there has been for us to take in and however little we feel that we actually have taken it in, we need to remember Jesus understands that. You know, where are these disciples after four chapters of pure Jesus?

Just have a look at verse 17 in chapter 16 there. His disciples say to one another, what does he mean? By saying, in a little while you'll see me no more.

And after a little while you'll see me. And because I'm going to the Father. They kept asking, what does he mean? We don't understand what he is saying. They are panicking.

[3 : 18] They don't understand. They're grieving. They're in disbelief. But the Lord meets us right there. In our confusion. In our struggle.

With our questions. When we feel that honestly we've just not got a good enough grasp on it. Now in that context, hear what Jesus now says.

He has three things to say to us if we belong to him this morning. Firstly, that the Spirit gives us joy. The Spirit gives us joy.

Verse 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 than after a little while you'll see me?

Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. Now you can picture the room, can't you?

[4 : 21] The disciples getting a little bit restless. Beginning to shuffle around. Beginning to whisper to one another, what does he mean? It's a sure sign as a preacher that you have lost everyone.

But Jesus knows that and he cares about that. So he goes back a step to what is causing them problems. What did I mean when I said, in a little while you'll see me no more and then after a little while you'll see me?

Well, let me put it in a way that you will understand, he says. Soon you'll be sad because you won't see me. But then you'll be glad because you will see me again.

If that sounds a bit too simplistic, just have a look at verse 20. It says, you will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. He's taken this massive truth and he's distilled it to a level that our hearts can get hold of.

He will go, those who love him will cry and mourn while the world laughs, but we'll see him again. And then we will be laughing to you.

[5 : 32] But here's the big question then. For them and for us now, which bit are we in? Is this the crying bit? Or the laughing bit?

When is the turning point, if you like, where our grief becomes joy? Which is all tied up with the question, isn't it? When will we see him? When does Christ mean? Is it when he comes again? Or maybe when we die and we go to be with him? Or does there come a time for every Christian where we just stop being sad and we're suddenly filled with happiness and gladness? Or has that turning point already happened? And we do see him and our grief has already turned to joy.

Which bit are we in? Well, I think Jesus means for us to understand that for us here today, that change has already happened.

[6 : 29] Because when Jesus has spoken before about when they'll see him again, he's been talking not about his return in the future, but about when he sends the Holy Spirit.

Okay, so this is chapter 14, verse 18. We will see him, but what has he just promised?

I will ask the Father and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever, the Spirit of truth. So Jesus is going. We won't see him, but the spirit is coming and we will see him again.

And so says Jesus, chapter 16, verse 22, now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice and no one will take away your joy.

That is, he is saying, lasting joy will be yours when he goes to the Father and the spirit has come to bring his death and resurrection to bear personally on our hearts.

[7 : 43] That is when we will see Jesus truly. See him as the Lamb of God come to take away the sin of the world. See him as the good shepherd who has lain down his life for his sheep and in seeing him for who he is and believing in him, our sadness is turned into gladness.

I don't know if any of you read history for recreation, but it's so important for us as Christians to know which bit of God's story or which bit of Bible history do we live in.

Because Jesus is saying, as a result of him going to the Father, we now live in the age of the new covenant. God promised that through the prophet Jeremiah.

That's why we read those verses earlier in our service. A new age, the age of the Spirit, the age in which we know him truly, which he says is the age of deep and lasting joy.

And Jesus illustrates that big world turning point there in verse 21, just like this. 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.

[9 : 11] The days and the hours leading up to the birth are painful and traumatic. The birth itself can be traumatic and hard, and even after that, it can be difficult.

But when you hear that first newborn cry, and someone puts a baby in your arms, it is overwhelming joy. I don't think I've ever cried so much in my whole life when someone did that.

That has all happened to the cosmos, when Jesus died and rose again and went to the Father and sent the Spirit. The birth of a new creation came with Jesus' anguished cries and tears and prayers from the cross.

And his disciples wept over him and buried him and grieved for him. But on the third day, he rose again, and that day, the sun dawned on a new age, a new cosmic order, because Christ laid down

his life for the forgiveness of sins, only to take it up again and overcome death. And if you believe in Jesus today, you belong to that reality, that new age. Christ has gone back. [10:35] He's gone away, back to the Father, into the glory that they have shared from eternity forever. He has sent the Spirit to bring that new creation, that new order and reality into our hearts, showing us Christ and his glory, and the glory of his finished work.

And seeing him, we believe in him and have eternal life. And brothers and sisters, that is how the Spirit gives us joy. That is how we get joy that no one is able to take away, permanent joy. And it's objective joy. That is, it's joy that doesn't depend on how we feel about it. It doesn't come and go.

You're like a rock in the sea. The sea around it ebbs and flows, but the rock itself stands firm, immovable. Not that there won't ever be tears again.

Not that we won't ever be sad or feel a deep sense of loss, but rather that underneath our circumstances and underneath our changing feelings flows an undercurrent of constant and unending joy in what Jesus has come and done for you and me.

[11:55] You know, that joy, it's one of the here and now benefits of Christ's saving work that belongs to all Christians. So there is no such thing as a joyless Christian.

I imagine for some of us, you know, that joy is like a forgotten family treasure that has sat up in the attic and is gathering dust.

But friends, we need to remember that it belongs to us. And today, Christ invites us to get it down and dust it off and put it on and wear it and live it.

Joy is yours in Christ. It has been secured and bought for you through his cross and his resurrection. There's a beautiful verse of a hymn that went round and round in my head as I thought about this this week that just captures this so perfectly.

How great is this? What though my joys and comforts die, the Lord my Savior liveth. What though the darkness gather round, songs in the night he giveth.

[13:05] Though storm can shake my inmost calm while to that refuge clinging. Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?

What good news for our broken and hurting and bruised hearts today that the Spirit gives us permanent joy when we see Jesus as he truly is and believe in him.

And as if that wasn't enough, the second thing that Jesus tells us this morning is that the Father loves us. The Father loves us.

Just glance down with me at verse 23. He says, In that day, that is this day, and now, you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Now, clearly this is to do with prayer and we will get there. We've heard Jesus say similar things to us before. But the difference here is that Jesus is telling us why we can ask God for anything and he will give it to us.

[14:20] Okay, just look down, if you would, at verse 26 and 27 and just let this sort of blow your heart open. He says, In that day, you will ask in my name.

I'm not saying I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you. Because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

The Father himself loves us because we have loved his Son. Now, it's worth saying this is a love that God has for Christians.

God loved the world by sending his one and only Son. But whoever believes in his Son who he sent, well, for them, God loves us in the immortal words of the Jesus Storybook Bible with a never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always, and forever love.

And I don't know if we always know that. I know that we don't always know that. I know that I don't always know that. Because think about our prayers.

[15:34] We know, don't we, we can come to God and pray to him only because of Jesus. Okay, it's his goodness, not mine or your goodness. But what do you picture when you pray, if I can put it like that?

Is it that you go and have a quiet word with Jesus and then Jesus goes into the throne room before his Father to ask for what we have requested?

Or even that the Holy Spirit kind of searches our hearts and the Holy Spirit goes and has a quiet word with Jesus and Jesus goes to the Father to present our requests. How long is the chain before you think our prayers reach the Father?

And then, how does that kind of go in the throne room? Is Jesus having to sort of persuade or convince the Father to give us what we have asked? or is it a sort of bargaining? You know, look at how he obeyed the Father even to death on a cross so now he kind of has to give him what we ask for.

[16:42] He says the Father sort of say grudgingly, okay then. Okay, just have it. In short, how in your head and your heart do you think the Father feels about you when you come to pray?

Well, look what Jesus says in verse 26. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves ye.

Jesus says it's not that he goes into the throne room before the Father in our name, okay, with our needs, saying I'm asking on behalf of so and so.

It's actually the opposite. He's saying when we see Christ truly, then we will go into the throne room. straight to the Father in his name, with our needs, saying I am asking on behalf of your son, Jesus. Now, a good friend of mine really loves history, and particularly American history. And he showed me some photos once of JFK, the 35th president of the USA in his office.

[17:54] And I've got some here. There he is. And I wonder if you can see someone there with him. That is his son playing in the Oval Office.

So here is the leader of the free world, possibly the most powerful man in the whole world at that point in time. And imagine the sort of security that you and I would have to go through to get into that room.

Imagine how many officers and assistants would have to speak to you just to get five minutes with him. Okay, for almost anyone else it would be impossible, but not for his son.

You could just go straight in and play under his desk. Because however powerful or important he was to his son, he is first and foremost father.

father. And that is how we come, says Jesus, to the holy and sovereign and eternal God when we pray in his name to our loving heavenly father.

[19:03] I'm not saying, says Jesus, I will ask the father on your behalf. No, the father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

That is how God feels towards us when we pray. He loves us. We can come and go freely from the throne room of God as we are with all of our needs in the name of Jesus' son.

And brothers and sisters, I know that sometimes we don't know that the father loves us like that because imagine our prayers if we were convinced of that truth.

We would pray without ceasing. We would pray confidently that he will give us anything we ask him for if we are asking for Jesus. My favorite, favorite part of our prayer meeting is not the reading, it's not the talking, it is hearing across the room the sound of God's people praying with confidence in God.

The voices of ye praying to your father next time on Wednesday, this Wednesday, just come and listen and pray to the beautiful sound of God's children in the throne room of our father.

[20:28] Now, perhaps you're thinking, hang on a minute, I've prayed prayers and I've never had an answer. Jesus says, ask and I'll receive. Well, I have asked and I haven't received.

But asking in Jesus' name, it puts a condition on our prayers, doesn't it? Jesus isn't promising that we'll get whatever we ask for as long as we kind of bolt onto the end of our prayer in Jesus' name, in Jesus' name, like a wee formula.

He's saying, if we are asking genuinely with a desire to glorify him and honour him with him first, then our prayers will ultimately line up with what God wants, which is, above all, his son's glory.

And so, if we want Jesus' glory, then we'll learn God's priorities and we'll pray his promises back to him because they tell us what brings Christ glory.

You friends, the best prayer manual we actually have is the Bible. And so, if you want to know what to pray for, learn what God's priorities are, what brings glory to Jesus, what builds up his church, and pray those prayers.

[21:45] Of course, we can ask God whatever we want. He hears us, he loves us, he is for us, but he only promises to give us what we ask for for Jesus.

And if we understand what sort of prayers those are, then we will know that that is not a half-baked promise. Okay, next week, we'll look at what Jesus prays for us to the Father.

Just have a read of that, chapter 17. Let it blow your mind to hear him ask the Father for things for us in his name because the Father loves his Son.

And if you love his Son, then the Father loves you. And if that was still not enough for us this morning, the third and final thing Jesus tells us to help us cope with his going away is that he has left us his peace.

Christ leaves us his peace. So the disciples, as ever, have a kind of slightly overinflated view of their own capacity and understanding.

[22 : 55] Verse 29, Jesus' disciples said, now you're speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things, that you don't even need to have anyone ask you questions.

Now Jesus has just said, to be fair, that soon he will stop speaking in images and parables and figures of speech that you will start speaking plainly about the Father, which is amazing if you think about it because Jesus is saying this whole time in the upper room he's actually been speaking in baby talk to us.

But soon he won't have to because he's going away and the Spirit is coming and then he'll speak to us like grown-ups and the Spirit will help us to get it.

But the disciples think that's what he started doing already. But Jesus says he hasn't. Verse 31, do you now believe? In fact, the disciples' insistence that they do now get it proves that they haven't yet got there.

They're at that kind of terrible two stage of toddlerdom where everything has to be. I do it. I do it.

They think that they're all grown up, but they obviously cannot do it on their own.

[24 : 14] However much they insist. And Jesus tells them that straight, verse 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'm not alone for my Father is with me. Jesus knew his closest friends, his first followers, would disappear at the first sign of real danger.

Only an hour or two later and these guys who are saying they understand will actually turn and run the other way. Peter, who has just said to Jesus, I will lay down my life for you, will shortly deny ever knowing him, not once, not twice, but three times.

And Jesus knows that. And there's no ifs or buts in his head. They are definitely going to leave him. and yet he says this, verse 33, I've told you these things so that in me you may have peace.

I'm pretty sure that if we knew beyond doubt our closest friends were going to hang us out to dry, we would not be looking to give them peace. But that is what Jesus did for these guys.

[25 : 34] Now how can he offer peace to such traitors? Well it's because of that last sentence in verse 32. He says you will leave me all alone, yet I am not alone, for my father is with me.

See the peace that Jesus gives us doesn't depend on how well we do, how closely we stick to him, and how faithful we are with him.

The peace we have from Jesus rests on his relationship with the father. Father, son, and spirit are carrying out here a rescue for us.

That rescue will climax at the cross in Jesus' death when he will be sacrificed to clear our debt before God. His blood poured out for the forgiveness of our sins.

And that is a plan that only requires Jesus and the father and the holy spirit to pull it off. It's a divine conspiracy to save sinners.

[26 : 36] And that is how Jesus can look at his fickle friends and these sinful saints and say, I've told you these things that you may have peace.

And again, friends, this is not a warm, fuzzy feeling that comes and goes. The peace is the state that we live in and the air that we breathe and the water we swim in.

Our trust is in Jesus because we have peace with God through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's a peace that holds us tight when we go through trouble.

Jesus says we will have trouble in the world. We thought about this last time. Life here and now is not getting easier. It is getting harder because we follow Jesus. Sometimes that trouble will tempt us to give in, to run away as the disciples did.

Jesus knows that about us. He knows who we are and he knows what we are. But that is why he gives us his peace. Not because we deserve it or because we have won it or because it's a prize for being so faithful but because without his peace we would be lost forever.

[27 : 54] Where would we be if Jesus had not come from the Father into the world? If he had not died for our sins, if he had not risen again, if he had not left the world and gone back to the Father

and sent the Holy Spirit, where would we be?

Well, we would be where the disciples were later that night, scattered, hiding in their homes, having left Jesus in the dust. But for his gift of peace we would not be here.

But praise God that this joy and peace and love he gives us comes to us as a free gift paid for in full by the priceless blood of his son.

And for all our sin we cannot lose these things if we are united to Christ today. As I prepared this in the week, one of the phrases knocking around in my head used by a lecturer in Edinburgh was this, if the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit isn't enough to satisfy us, he said.

Nothing will be. Nothing will be. And having just glimpsed this morning the love and joy and peace that is ours in Christ, that God, the trying God, Father, Son, and Spirit has lavished upon us in him, you hope that we can see that.

[29 : 23] And if what we've heard this morning just leaves us thinking, man, I have far more in Jesus than I ever bargained for, don't lose that sense. Thank him for that inexpressible gift, ask him every day for an ever growing sense of his joy and love and peace in your life.

Cling to the source, abide in Jesus, cling to his cross and his resurrection, because it is only in and through him that we have these gifts.

And if this morning your trust isn't resting in Jesus, and you're wondering perhaps what do these things have to do with me? Well, right now, nothing at all.

But these gifts, this love, can be yours right now. You return, put your trust in Jesus who died that you might live. These are not passing gifts, not feelings that come and go.

They are not things for super spiritual people. They are God's love and joy and peace are for anyone who trusts in Jesus and his rescue on the cross. And that can be you now.

[30 : 36] So let me urge you to take hold of him, believe in him, and have this new and eternal life to the full. Let's pray together. Amen. God, our Father, how we thank you for your love for us, that while we were dead in our sins, you loved us, and you sent your Son, Jesus, and you've poured out your Holy Spirit, that our lives might be transformed and brought from death to life, that our sins might be put away, that we might live in Christ and grow in him and bear fruit in him.

And Father, we pray that you would help each of us, Lord, with our trust in Christ, to have an ever growing sense of your love for us, and the joy that you've given us, and the peace that we enjoy with you now through Jesus.

Father, help us, we pray, never to take these gifts for granted, for these things you have given us in Jesus, and so we pray and ask in his name, that you would help us to grasp them.

We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.