

## Joy Full John 16:23-24

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Reading - John 16:16-24

#### B. Getting Their Minds Around the Resurrection

1. The Resurrection is something modern Christians readily accept.
2. We have 2,000 years of Faith built on the foundation of the Rising of Jesus from the dead.
3. So it's difficult for us to *relate* to the original disciples on that last night they spent with Jesus *before* the crucifixion.
4. The resurrection was yet to come & it wasn't something with which they were at all acquainted.
5. So when Jesus spoke about rising from the dead, they had nothing to relate to. His words left them confused – as we see here.
6. But Jesus knew in just a few days, what they were ignorant about *now*, would be crystal clear *then*.

### II. TEXT

#### A. V. 23

1. This is why in v. 23 Jesus says –  
**23 “And in that day you will ask Me nothing.**
2. When Jesus said, “**A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me**” this ignited a *furios* discussion among the disciples.
  - a. They covertly expressed their consternation to one another.
  - b. And began urging each other to ask Jesus what He meant.
  - c. But none of them wanted to voice their confusion for fear of looking inept.
3. V. 19 tells us Jesus knew they were agitated & wanted to ask Him but were afraid to.
4. In v. 23 He tells them that **AFTER** the resurrection, all their questions about what He meant would be answered – no longer would they be perplexed.
5. On **that day**, instead of wondering what He meant about appearing to them again, they would understand that Jesus had brought them into a brand new relationship to God.
6. In light of that, Jesus goes on in v. 23 to say -  
**Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.**
7. Jesus had just said something similar to this in 14:13-14.
  - a. He *repeats* it here because He wants them to realize that as His followers, **they're to carry on His mission.**
  - b. Yes--He's going away, back to the Father --
  - c. But they will remain, *continuing* the work He began.
8. And just as they'd watched Him bathe His entire work over the last 3 years in prayer & dependence on the Father – Jesus is now saying, “It's time for you fellows to move into that same place.”

- a. "I'm turning the work over to you."
  - b. "Here's how you'll get it done: Ask the Father in My Name & He'll do it."
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9. When **you** read these words - "Whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you" what's your → **Immediate reaction?**
- a. We're going to fall into 1 of 2 responses –
    - 1) One will see this as a way of getting **our will** done in heaven.
    - 2) The other will see it as a way to get **God's will** done on earth.
  - b. We'll either put the emphasis on,
    - 1) **Whatever you ask** the Father, He will give you."
    - 2) Or on, "Whatever you ask **in My name** the Father will give you."
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10. Until about a hundred years ago, Christians all had pretty much the same response to this promise of Jesus.
- a. Because they understood the Christian life as a **crucified life**, one where self has been taken to the cross & Christ now lives within –
  - b. They saw this as a promise they would be agents through which His work would go on.
  - c. The "**whatever**" was indissolubly linked **to His name**.
  - d. It was **consistent** with His character & mission.
11. But about a hundred years ago a shift took place in the way many believers viewed the Christian life, especially here in the US.
- a. For the sake of time, I won't go into the details of how this shift came about.
  - b. Suffice it to say; materialism & humanism combined to produce a popular brand of **cultural Christianity** that forgot all about the crucified life & sought to simply **sanctify** the American Dream of Prosperity.
  - c. This produced a couple generations of church-goers who see in v. 23 a means toward **self-fulfillment**.
  - d. These see the "whatever" here as a divine blank check to get their **wants** met.
  - e. I've heard the health & wealth teachers quote this verse as a test for proving one's faith. They use **mansions & Mercedes** as the meaning of what Jesus meant by "Whatever you ask."
12. But that is not at all what Jesus had in mind when He said to the disciples, **"Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."**
- a. There are 3 things we need to consider here -
    - 1) The **setting** in which He spoke this,
    - 2) The **ones** He spoke it to,
    - 3) And the **condition** He gave,
  - b. All point to the conclusion that this is not a formula for getting **our will** done in heaven.
  - c. It's the means by which we **partner** with God to see **His will** done on Earth.
  - d. So – let's consider these 3 things; the **setting**, the **audience**, & the **condition** of this promise.
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- 1 13. The **setting** was this – Jesus was turning His mission over to the disciples.
- a. They were to continue extending the boundaries of the Kingdom of God deeper into enemy territory.
  - b. **All** Jesus had done throughout His time on Earth was for **the Father's glory**.
  - c. As they carried on His work, they were to center their lives & prayers around that same target.
- 2 14. The **ones** this promise was given to were **the disciples**; young men whose whole desire was to be ***just like Jesus***.
- a. They'd left all to follow Him.
  - b. Judas, the one disciple who followed only to advance himself by USING Jesus, has already left. He wasn't there when Jesus gave this promise. It didn't apply to him.
  - c. This was for those who'd laid down their lives to follow the Lord.
  - d. The proof of their commitment is shown in that history tells us all but one of them was martyred for their faith in Christ.
  - e. The only one who died of old age was John, but not for lack of the enemies of Christ trying to kill him.
- 3 15. The **condition** to this promise is that whatever is asked has to be "in Jesus' name."
- a. We've grown so accustomed to this phrase it's lost its meaning for many.
  - b. Like the word "amen," many Christians have no idea what "in Jesus' name" even means.
  - c. For them it's just a way to tie a neat ribbon on their prayer, "In Jesus name, Amen" & they go on their merry way.
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- d. Jesus' name refers to His **authority**, His **Person**.
  - e. Think of it this way – When a man & woman are married, while she retains her first name, she takes her husband's surname as her own.
  - f. They're now united in a covenant that doesn't **erase** their personal lives but takes them up into something grander & fuller.
  - g. This covenant union is marked, identified, & symbolized by the wedding ring & a change of name.
  - h. Because a legal union has been joined, the wife is now able to avail herself of all her husband's resources.
  - i. Because she legally has his name, she can draw on his accounts & memberships because they aren't JUST his, they're **Theirs** – they **share** them.
  - j. When we're born again, we're brought into a covenant relationship with Jesus so that we're united with Him.
    - 1) Ephesians 1 says the Holy Spirit "seals us, much like a ring God gives us as a mark we're in covenant with Him.
    - 2) Jesus puts His name on us, so that we can enter in to all that belongs to Him.
  - k. When we pray in Jesus' name, we're simply identifying ourselves as those

- who are in covenant with Christ.
- l. Therefore – whatever we ask has to be **consistent** with that relationship, that identity.
  - m. If it isn't then this promise no longer applies.
16. A few weeks ago when we were in ch. 13 we saw that Jesus told the disciples all power & authority had been given to Him.
- a. By granting the disciples permission to use His name in their requests, He's telling them all that power & authority has been placed at **their** disposal.
  - b. But it can only flow to them if what they ask is **consistent** with His character & mission.
  - c. A police officer has both **power & authority**.
    - 1) His/her pistol is the **power**.
    - 2) Their badge is a symbol of the **authority**, the legal right to **use** the power.
    - 3) But even with these tools, the only time a police officer can USE his/her pistol is within the scope of the authority given – to enforce the Law.
    - 4) If he/she walked into a store, took out their sidearm & ordered the cashier to fill up a sac with cash, they'd be violating the terms of their authority.
    - 5) Whenever there's an officer involved shooting, they have to go through an elaborate review process to make sure they fired their weapon in a manner **consistent** with their duty as a police officer.
  - d. The same principle applies to this promise.
  - e. We can't just wave Jesus' name over our requests & expect God to answer them.
  - f. They must be consistent with the nature & mission of Christ.
17. But know this – if they ARE, God WILL answer!

### **B. V. 24**

**24** Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

1. The disciples hadn't asked in Jesus' name because Jesus had not yet gone to the cross & been resurrected.
2. They'd not come to know Him in His fullness. Only the resurrection would accomplish that.
3. But on that day, as they beheld Him risen from the dead, & after that watched Him ascend into heaven, their faith blossomed into the full awareness of Who He was & the Authority & Power that belonged to Him.
4. Looking forward to that time, Jesus says, "**Ask**, & you **will** receive, that your joy may be full."

### **III. CONCLUSION**

#### **A. Joy Full**

1. Hear these words as the disciple would have heard them.
2. Hear them as the Spirit wants **us** to hear them **today**.
3. Jesus said this with an **urgent eagerness**.

**"Up till now you guys have not asked the Father for anything in My name. But now, I'm urging you TO ask in my name, and you will**

**receive. And as you do, your joy will be full.”**

4. God is not bugged by our prayers – He *wants & waits* for us to pray.
5. Jesus *commands* us to pray – to take full advantage of our covenant relationship & use it to see God answer our requests.
6. He said that answered prayer would see *our joy made full*.
7. We don't pray *for* our joy to be complete, but the fact is, our joy *is increased* when our prayers are answered.
8. Here's why . . .
  - a. As we saw this last Wednesday, while *happiness* is dictated by what happens in our circumstances – Joy isn't.
  - b. Joy is a deep-seat confidence that *no matter what happens*, it's all going to work out for good because **God is Large & in Charge**.
  - c. Happiness rise or falls with our surroundings, with the *events* around us.
  - d. Joy is fixed on **one event** – The Victory of Christ!
  - e. If driving home after church someone runs a light & slams into my car, I'm going to be bummed.
  - f. But I'll get out of my car, survey the damage, & inwardly my Spirit will say – “This too will pass – and one day very soon you'll be in heaven where all this will be but a dull, distant memory.”
9. Joy is rooted in faith – it's confidence in Jesus.
10. And this is why joy can *grow*, because *faith* grows.
11. One of the ways our faith grows is through answered prayer.
12. Every answer to prayer is one more manifestation of the reality of our unique relationship with God, all made possible through the work of Christ.

## **B. Worshipful Prayer**

1. I want to tell you about something that happened this last Thursday.
2. For the last 5 years, the pastors, wives, & staff of the area CC's have gathered (nearly) monthly for fellowship.
  - a. We jaw about what's going on in our personal & ministry lives,
  - b. What's happening in our churches, & have occasional visitors who share about their ministry.
3. When we first started doing these monthly fellowships, we spent at least half the time in prayer.
4. But as the years went by & the circle widened with more people, we spent a lot less time praying & a lot more talking.
5. Last month, Rob McCoy, the pastor of CCTO shared with me how they've recently seen a *transformation* of prayer in their church & in the TO's pastors' fellowships.
6. Prayer has moved from being a pedantic & petty “bless me” session to being fresh encounters with the Spirit that have people *eager* to attend.
7. I asked Rob to share what God's been doing with our group on Thursday.
  - a. He put it this way: It's the difference between seeking God's HAND & His FACE.
  - b. Instead of asking God to give us *stuff*, we ask Him to give us *Himself*.
  - c. Instead of praying for more love, more patience, more power; we ask for God to give us more of HIM.

8. The time of prayer that followed was wonderfully refreshing.
  - a. Nearly an hour seemed like 15 minutes.
  - b. There was a lot of scripture in our prayers; we simply lifted God's Word up to Him & asked Him to make it a *reality* in our lives.
  - c. And as the Lord was pleased to come into that room & our hearts, the sin went out in open confession.
9. Put this testimony about what happened Thursday together with what Jesus says here in vs. 23-24.
  - a. Is there anything more in line with Jesus' name than to make the whatever we ask for – God Himself?
  - b. And when God comes, what's the result?  
Psa. 16:11 – “In Your presence is the fullness of joy.”
9. “Ask, & you will receive, that your joy may be full.”
10. Make the focus of your prayers that God would enter into your life in a deeper & more intimate way.
11. Older Christians – a well known lesson; heard this many times.
12. So let me end by challenging you with this question – when was the last time you prayed and asked God to take you deeper with Him?