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Your Sorrow Will Turn To Joy
John 16: 15-33
On the walk to Gethsemane sometime between 11:00 pm and midnight, the fifteenth of Nisan

Your sorrow will turn to joy DIG: What tones of voice do you hear in verses 17-18? If you were there, would Jesus' answer encourage you, or confuse you more? What event is Christ referring to in verses 20-22? In what ways does the world's joy (verse 20) contrast with the joy the apostles will experience (verse 22)? How is this similar to what Jesus said about dying (John 12:24)? About shalom (Yochanan 14:27)? What characterizes the relationship we can have with the Father because of the Lord (verses 23-27)? Do you think the Eleven really grasp what Messiah says in verse 28? Why? Why might the talmidim be both alarmed and relieved (verses 29-33)?

REFLECT: Both Yeshua and the world offer a form of shalom (John 14:27; 16:33); joy (John 15:11, 16:22-24) and love (John 13:34-35, 15:9-19). How have you experienced each type? What is different between them? How do you deal with change? Moves? Job transfers? Transitions from one stage in your life to another? How has pain helped you to grow? From your experience, how could you comfort someone going through change? What contributes to lack of joy, failing love, and unstable shalom?

Christ's last occasion for teaching **His talmidim** was drawing to a close. These final moments of tranquility among friends would soon give way to anguish in Gethsemane, injustice during two trials, cruel ridicule, brutal scourging, and finally suffering and death through crucifixion. Yet, despite **His** own desire for comfort and encouragement, **the Lord** comforted and encouraged **His** followers. A **selfless Servant** to the end, **Messiah** offered three promises to keep **His apostles** going as the looming shadow of the cross darkened **their** days. These promises can be

reduced to three words that are no less helpful to us today: **Joy (John 16:19-24), Love (John 16:25-28)** and **Peace (John 16:31-33).**

Jesus offered **His apostles** a negative prediction followed by a positive promise. **He went on to say: In a little while you will see Me no more,** which predicts **His** imminent death on the cross, while **then after a little while you will see Me [again],** promises **His** appearing through resurrection **(John 16:16).** This prediction – promise formula establishes a definable pattern for the remainder of **His** discussion with **the Eleven**:

A prediction and a promise – Resurrection **(verse 16)**
    The apostle's reaction **(verses 17-18)**
        A prediction and a promise – **Joy (verses 19-24)**
        A prediction and a promise – **Love (verses 25-28)**
    The apostle's reaction **(verses 29-30)**
A prediction and a promise – **Shalom (verses 31-33)**

At this, some of His apostles said to one another, "What does He mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see Me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" They kept asking, "What does He mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what He is saying" (Yochanan 16:17-18). Without the permanent dwelling of **the Holy Spirit**, **the talmidim** could only handle so much detail. So **Messiah** prepared them for the difficult hours ahead as best **He** could without revealing too much specific information and tried to keep it as basic as possible.[1465]

Joy: 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, and then after a little while you will see me" (John 16:19)? Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. Nonbelievers will rejoice at **Yeshua's** death, just as they will rejoice at the death of the Two Witnesses (see my commentary on **Revelation, to see link click Dm – The Resurrection of the Two Witnesses: The Third Sign of Jonah**).



Jesus followed **His** prediction with a promise. **You will grieve, but your sorrow will turn to joy. The Lord** illustrated **His** promise with the poignant image of **a woman** suffering the intense **pain** of **childbirth** – not coincidentally, one of the curses of the fall. As **her pain** grows, the change from **sorrow** to **joy** approaches. **A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but** then, in an instant, **when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.** The affliction of the curse produces a new life. **So with you: Now is your time of sorrow, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. Their sorrow will turn to joy. In that day** (after **His** resurrection) **you will no longer ask Me anything** (because they will be rejoicing)**. The apostles** would be **His** ambassadors and **they** had the right to **ask the Father** for **whatever they** needed to accomplish **His** will. The words **in My name** are not a blank check to get whatever **the talmidim** wanted. Instead, those words tied the requests to the ministry of **the Son** in carrying out **the Father's** will **(John 16:20-23).**

Until that point **the apostles** had not prayed **in Jesus' name.** But now with **His** imminent death, resurrection and ascension, **they** would be able to **ask and receive** because the **Ruach's** coming would enable **them** to enter into **God's** new program of the Church Age (see my commentary on **Hebrews Bp – The Dispensation of Grace**). **And their joy will be complete** because **ADONAI** will be at work in **them (Yochanan 16:24).**[1466]

Love: Then **Yeshua** predicted that the need for **His** teaching through

figurative language would end soon. **Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about My Father.** The meaning of **His** words would become clear as events unfolded; **He** expected that **His** words would come to mind in critical moments and **the apostles** would know how to respond. **In that day** (after **His** resurrection) **you will ask in My name. I AM not saying that 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.** Then **Messiah** promised that after **His** resurrection, **He** would be the permanent bridge between mankind and **ADONAI**. Through **Him**, **in His name**, believers would be able to approach **the Father** directly. **Jesus** then summarized **His** earthly ministry in one sentence: **I came from the Father and entered the world; now I AM leaving the world and going back to the Father (John 16:25-28).**

Then Jesus' apostles said: **Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that You know all things and that You do not even need to have anyone ask You questions. This makes us believe that You came from God (Yochanan 16:29-30). The talmidim** has at last come to the point of simple, childlike faith (compare to **Matthew 18:3**). Nevertheless, **Yeshua** does not allow **them** to bask in it but at once calls **their** attention to its inconsistency.

Shalom: Although **the apostles** were sincere in **their** childlike **faith**, **Yeshua** knew **their** limitations better than **they** did. **Do you now believe? Jesus replied (John 16:31). They** did believe but it was not a complete **faith** or strong **faith** until after the resurrection and the coming of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** at Shavu'ot (see my commentary on **Acts Al – The Ruach ha-Kodesh Comes at Shavu'ot**). At the moment **you** feel certain **your faith** is strong. But **a time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered (Zechariah 13:7), each to your own home.** In spite of **their** loyalty, **faith** and **love**, **the talmidim** soon failed miserably. Then **Messiah's** prediction: **You will leave Me all alone,** was fulfilled by all of **them** deserting **Him (Mattityahu 26:56)**, when **He** was arrested, and by **Peter's** denial **(Yochanan 18:17, 25-26).Yet the Father** had not forsaken **Him**, **"I AM not alone, for my Father is with Me" (John 8:29; Psalm 23:4, 73:25-26). He** had said **the hour** was coming and indeed **already there**. At that moment, the mob gathered by Judas had already begun their march. Soon, they would surround Gethsemane.

I have told you these things (Chapters 14-16), to sustain **you so that in Me**

you may have shalom. In this world you will have trouble. Despite the chaos of living in a hostile world, we may enjoy tranquility. Yet this too is conditional. We must choose it. The life of a believer in **Christ** is not the proverbial rose garden, except, perhaps, for the thorns. Nonetheless, **Yeshua** encourages us when **He** says: **But take heart!** We can choose **shalom** when we choose to believe that **He** has **overcome the world (John 16:31-33).**

By the end of **His** walk to **the garden of Gethsemane**, **Christ** had said, in effect, to **His apostles**, "**I** promise you, life in this world is going to be difficult. **But I have overcome the world.** Nevertheless, you can be **more than conquerors through My** power" **(Romans 8:37)**. **The Master** showed **them** how to persevere with **joy**, triumph in **love** and live in **shalom**.

Do you have a **joy** that cannot be taken away? Do you have confidence in **God's love**? Can you rest confidently in **His** wisdom and say to **Him**, "**Lord**, **You** know everything, so I'm not questioning **You** any longer?" When life comes crashing down, the qualities of **joy**, **love** and **shalom** are **ADONAI's** gift to keep us going. But, like a full bank account, they do us no good if we fail to draw on them. These gifts require faith. Failing to trust in the promises of **God** leads to **lack of joy**, **failing love**, and **unstable shalom**.

Lack of joy: We lack **joy** when wickedness gains the upper hand and we worry it will become permanent. But what if we knew beforehand that each trial would become the means of receiving a great blessing? Suppose you lived in a world in which each lost job led to a better, higher-paying job; each illness led to increased health and a longer life; each financial setback eventually resulted in a higher salary. How would you handle each trial? With dread or a sense of anticipation? With **sorrow** or **joy**?

While the world I have just described above obviously does not exist – **God** has not promised to make us healthy and wealthy in this life – **Ha'Shem** has promised that **He** has overcome evil and we will receive far greater blessing than we can imagine in the life to come. Affliction here on this earth will give way to perfect health, limitless wealth, and eternal life in heaven. Here on earth, the blessing we gain from suffering is healing for our souls and increased spiritual health. The difference is **faith**.

Failing love: The kind of **love** **Yeshua** taught is selfless. We cannot obey **His** command to love one another if we are concerned primarily with our own needs

and wants. When the Sadducees sought to trap **Christ** with a ridiculous theological question regarding marriage in heaven, **He** stunned them with **His** answer. Marriage will be obsolete after the resurrection (see **Ja – Whose Wife Will She Be at the Resurrection?**). In heaven, intimate, selfless, caring **love** will be shared among all who live there. Here on earth, however, we struggle to maintain that kind of **love** relationship with just one person! How many marriages are strained by people manipulating one another to get their needs met? They resort to manipulation, control, sulking, yelling, and blame, really anything that will work, to get what they want because they don't trust their mate to care for them.

Let's face it. We don't **love** others because we don't trust them to return our **love**. We live under the false idea that if we don't take care of ourselves, no one will . . . not even **God**. Therefore, most of our energies go into taking care of ourselves rather than **trusting the Lord** as we give priority to the needs of others. It all comes back to **trust**. When we fail to trust **ADONAI** to take care of us, we fail to obey **His** most basic command: **love one another (Yochanan 15:17).**

Unstable shalom: Messiah contrasted **His shalom** with **the world's trouble (16:33).** To have **Yeshua's shalom** is to have a life of completeness and wholeness. This **shalom** with **the Lord** will most certainly result in estrangement and persecution from **the world**; however, this **tribulation** will ultimately give way to overwhelming blessing.

While we have this **shalom** as a by-product of the grace of **ADONAI**, our ability to experience inner **shalom** depends completely on our **faith/trust/belief** in **His** sovereign care and steadfast goodness. **Jesus** has promised trouble. But **He** has also promised that the victories of **the world** are short-lived. **He has overcome the world**; therefore, we may endure short-term suffering with the certainty that **God** will ultimately triumph. But, once again, that takes **belief**.[1467]