

Jesus, the One Who Turns our Sorrow into Joy **John 16:16-22**

How many of you ladies have gone through labor and either delivered a child naturally or had a C-section? How was that experience?

Are words like “suffering”, “sorrow”, “grief”, and “anguish” appropriate descriptions of that experience? There is a curse upon women!

Genesis 3:16 - “To the woman he (God) said, ‘I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.’”

Now some of you might say “it wasn’t that bad”, but **that’s probably because of what came after!** The joy of holding your baby in your arms for the first time probably had an effect on how you now remember that experience!

Some of you ladies may have experienced a different kind of sorrow! You tried to have children but couldn’t. **That anguish & suffering is just as real!**

But what happened when, for some, you finally conceived, or you received that phone call from the adoption agency saying that your child was ready?

All that grief, pain, anguish, and sorrow are in an instant turned to joy!

And maybe for some of you ladies, you never had, or haven’t yet had, the experience of motherhood, but you can still relate because of the joy you receive in mentoring a Kids Hope child, or teaching a Sunday school class, or babysitting a niece or nephew, etc. There’s true joy to be found in that too!

Maybe for some, just hearing this analogy is painful, because you are in the midst of the suffering! **May you hear the promise of joy this morning!**

“Though sorrows may last through the night, joy comes with the morning...”
We can sing “I’m trading my sorrows... pain... I’m laying them down...” because of “the joy of the Lord!” Have you experienced the joy of the Lord?

As true as it is, that in labor there is grief, & in new birth it gets turned to joy, so too is our experience in this world – There are labor pains now that will one day be turned to joy in the coming of Jesus Christ!

When Jesus first said these words, **“A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me...” “You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy”,** what did He mean?

The disciples didn’t know either, & as they were trying to figure it out, Jesus responds to them by speaking this parable about a woman giving birth!

But the parable doesn’t really answer the questions of “when”, “where” & “how” this joy will be experienced – **simply that it will in “A little while”!**

Biblical scholars have given three different possible interpretations:

1) **Jesus is speaking about His death & resurrection!**

This interpretation is probably the most accurate because it best fits with the **“a little while”** theme of Jesus’ message here to His disciples!

2) **Jesus is speaking about His ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit!**

This fits best with what Jesus goes on to say in **vs. 23-24** about praying to the Father in the name of Jesus! When He is no longer with them, they will see Him through the work of His Spirit, & through answered prayer in His name!

3) **Jesus is speaking about his departure from this world and His return at the second coming** (which is still yet to come)!

This interpretation fits best with Jesus’ words, **“and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy from you.” “that your joy may be full.”**

Though option #1 is probably most contextually accurate, I believe Jesus leaves it somewhat vague because all 3 interpretations have merit!

- **There was great sorrow in the crucifixion & death of Jesus Christ, but that great sorrow was turned to great joy when He was raised from the dead!**

What joy do we find in His resurrection? _____

- There was great sorrow when Jesus left this earth and no longer walked with us. But what followed His departure became a source of great joy!

What joy is found in Jesus being in heaven today? _____

- **There is sorrow today in living between the two comings of Jesus Christ, but there is a joy still yet to come that we will experience in His return!**

What joy will come with Jesus’ second coming? _____

Back to Jesus’ analogy about childbirth. The sorrow/joy reality goes beyond just pregnancy & birth... & so does what it reveals about our joy in Christ!

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