

Life as a Series of Questions
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John 16:16-28
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John 16, moving into a new section this morning, Verses 16-28. The title of the message this morning is 'Life as a Series of Questions'. The renowned Russian author, Anton Chekhov, wrote a short story, I guess you would call it, maybe it was a poem almost, called 'Life as a Series of Questions and Exclamations'. He basically organized his writing under different headings. He started off with 'Childhood', and there would be 30 or so questions, or exclamations, that accompanied that element of life. Then 'Boyhood', and then a new set of questions. I mean, for example, 'Childhood', the first was, the first question: *Is it a boy or is it a girl? When is the Christening? Has he cut his teeth yet?* You know, life as a series of questions. 'Boyhood': *Why won't you listen to what Mommy says? Did you hit your sister?* Another 20 some odd questions. 'Youth': *Tell me the sequences of verbs. What class are you in now?* Then he moves into 'Adulthood, Age 20-30': *How much do I owe you? Do you know how much I love you? Yes or no?* Again, I'm just picking a couple of the 30 questions in each area. 'Age 30-50': *Am I bankrupt? Am I going bald?* 'Old Age': *When will I see the grandchildren? What is wrong with me, Doctor?*

A number of questions that life brings upon us, and there is a sense in which life is a series of questions in a fallen world. The Christian life is no different. We find ourselves asking question after question, and wanting answers always, or wanting solutions. Sometimes we see life as a series of problems that we want to fix, but isn't it true that you never get all the answers, and you never get all the problems solved? It is funny how you see this just in every area. When you try to fix something around your house, you fix one thing and something else breaks. It's funny that way, isn't it? And I think that there is a sense in which the Lord is reminding us we're not home. Everything is not going to be fixed until Jesus comes back, and so don't get too at home with this, and don't try to make Heaven on Earth. I mean, you're supposed to make Earth a little more like Heaven by loving Christ, and loving others, and you bring a breath of Heaven, but this world is decaying, it is passing away.

But then we find ourselves asking questions throughout our Christian lives. We begin with, *What must I do to be saved?* When the Lord really works in our hearts. But then after we come to Christ, we have so many questions. You know, *Why can't I overcome this sin? How? How can I overcome it? Why is this happening to*

me? The psalmist says, *How long? How long, oh Lord?* There is a sense in which life is about asking questions, and the interesting thing is, that we're going to see this morning in this passage, the disciples ask a question to Jesus. A pretty straightforward question really, which He chooses not to answer. He replies to their questions, but not with a direct answer, but the reply is better than a direct answer. If He had just replied to their question, answered their question, they wouldn't have gotten near the benefit and blessing they got out of His reply. But there is something about that, the ultimate goal of life is not to find all the answers to all your questions. The ultimate goal, and purpose of life, is to find the one who has all the answers to all your questions, and you find Him when you don't have the answers. Let's read John 16:16, we'll go ahead and read all the way through Verse 33.

John 16:16-33 ~ "A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." 17 Some of His disciples then said to one another, "What is this thing He is telling us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" 18 So they were saying, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is talking about." 19 Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me'? 20 Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. 21 Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.

23 In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. 24 Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full. 25 "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father. 26 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf; 27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father. 28 I came forth from the Father and have come into the

*world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.” 29 His disciples *said, “Lo, now You are speaking plainly and are not using a figure of speech. 30 Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God.” 31 Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? 32 Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. 33 These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”*

Let’s pray together.

Father, we thank You for Your precious word. We thank You that the Holy Spirit, who inspired these words to be perfectly recorded for us, is present with us. And we ask that You might give us the Spirit without measure to grant us understanding. That He would open the eyes of our minds, and our hearts, to behold wondrous things from Your law. That in everything, Christ may have the preeminence, and we pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.

‘Life as a Series of Questions’, and life is not ultimately about the pursuit of the questions, or the answers. Life is about relationship. In fact, life is ultimately about relationships. That is one of the things, we are in a passage of Scripture, *The Farewell Discourse* of Jesus, from John 13 all the way through John 17, in which the Lord is shining the light on the Doctrine of the Trinity, in the clearest form that we have in all of Holy Scripture. The doctrine that God is one God, that He is one in substance or essence, and yet He is three in person. That each person of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are equal in power and glory, yet distinct in role, and function, and ultimately the implications that we are seeing unpacked for us in these last words of Jesus to His disciples, are that life is ultimately about relationships. That is the implication of the Trinity.

I mean, the fact that God has always existed, that God Himself has always existed in relationship. The Father always loving the Son, the Spirit always proceeding from the Father and the Son, the Son always seeking the honor of the Father. They have always been in this bliss, in this eternal joy, this communion, so that God Himself is relationship. This means that the most important thing in our lives are relationships. And so when we see life as a series of questions, which we do in a fallen world, the ultimate goal is not to find the answer, but to find a closer relationship with God, the one who has the answers. The Lord wants us to

understand this so that we can enter into the joy of what we are created for. We are created for relationship. This is why the whole Bible, Jesus sums up the whole law, think about this, He sums up the entire Old Testament law in two commandments, and they are both relational commandments. “What’s the greatest commandment?” they ask Him. He says that, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang the law and the prophets. Jesus says, “If you get these right, you get everything,” that all of life is about relationship. Everything that matters is loving God and loving others, and we see this illustrated for us right here in this discourse, and discussion between Jesus and the disciples.

We’re going to organize the message this morning around three points. *The Question*, is the first thing we’re going to look at. The second thing is, *The Reply*. And thirdly, *The Implications*.

1) The Question:

The question, we see this in Verses 16-19, Jesus makes a statement that is somewhat mysterious, certainly to the disciples.

John 16:16 ~ “A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me.”

And then we have John record for us, in great detail, their wrestling with that issue. That is important to recognize the phrase, “***A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me.***” in Verse 16, is repeated word-for-word in Verse 17, and Verse 19. That is significant. He could have been a lot more to the point and just said, “‘A little while,’ Jesus said this, and then the disciples were wondering what that meant. Jesus knew they wanted to know, and this is what He said in reply.” He could have saved three verses right there, but it goes out of the way to say, ***Some of His disciples then said to one another, “What is this thing He is telling us,*** and then word-for-word:

John 16:17 ~ ... ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’;...

And then they also add in, “Hey, and while we’re at it, what did He mean, ‘Because I go to the Father,’ which He told us about earlier?” Then John reports for us in Verse 18:

John 16:18 ~ ...“What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is talking about.”

That is kind of like the thing we could put over the disciples most every day, “We just don’t know what He’s talking about.” Verse 19, Jesus knows what’s going on:

John 16:19 ~ Jesus knew that they wished to question Him,...

They have a question.

John 16:19 ~ ...and He said to them, “Are you deliberating together about this, that I said,...

And then we have Jesus repeating back to them exactly what He said for a third time.

John 16:19 ~ ...that I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me’...

This is repeated three times. Remember when we see repetition like that, it is always important. What does this mean? And what you see really is the confusion of the disciples. It emphasizes their confusion by repeating it, and repeating it, and repeating it. We have on their lips, “What is this thing He is telling us?” in Verse 17. In Verse 18, ...***“What is this that He says,...*** They were always asking questions of Jesus because life is a series of questions, and so they always were perplexed. “Lord, what do You mean when You told that parable? How are we to understand this? Why did You not do this this way? What were You thinking? What did You mean when you said this?”

And life is a series of questions. We find ourselves asking question after question, as I said earlier. You know, “Why Lord, why won’t You give me complete victory over this sin now. I’ve been praying about it, and working on it. Why must I battle with this still today?” Don’t you sometimes feel like that? Doesn’t it feel like, and don’t we think, there is something in our wiring, it’s messed up. I guess part of it is we were created for a perfect world, we know we were created to be perfect, and we’re not. And so we long to be perfect, we long to see Him as He is so that we will then be perfect, right? But we live in a world where we can’t obtain that, we cannot attain to that level of perfection. And so we look at our lives, we see the struggles that we have, and we just, “Lord, if I learn the right Bible verse,” and it is so important for us to learn the Bible verses, and to meditate upon the Scriptures, and to help one another, and to counsel one another, and to be accountable. We’re

supposed to do all of those things, but why must it take so long? Why? Why does it take so long to get where we are going? Why is it so hard?

The Christian life is hard! Those who tell you differently just don't know what they are talking about. Salvation is all of grace. We are not saved by our works, the glory of the Gospel is we are saved by a free gift from God. We are saved when we trust completely in something outside of ourselves. Not what we bring, but what Jesus has done. We trust in His perfect life, His righteousness as a gift. We trust in His atoning death, His sacrifice for our sins. We trust in His resurrection. When you reach out, as Martin Luther describes '*saving faith*', it is '*the empty, outstretched hand of a beggar*'. Nothing in my hand I bring, only to Your cross I cling. But the Christian life is still to be lived in complete dependence upon God. As Paul says in Colossians, "As you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, so also walk ye in Him." And yet, it is a daily grind, it is a battle, it is a war. Why must it be so hard? Why can't we just get the magic pill? The magic Bible verse? And be set free. The reality is, the truth *is* what sets us free, but why doesn't it do it all at once? What we see in the Scriptures is this, again and again, whether you look in the Old Testament, or the New Testament, God is more interested in relating to you than He is in fixing you, and that is wonderful news.

That is why He uses the metaphor in the Old Testament 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. Sheep need a shepherd. We would like to become another animal. We would like to become dogs. Not really, I don't, just work with me on this. I mean, sheep are dumb animals, right? You never see sheep going and fetching. "Here, fetch," the sheep is just standing there. Sheep don't do any tricks. Has anybody seen a sheep do a trick? If you have, please tell me after the service. I want to know about it. You don't go to the circus to see the sheep. All kinds of other animals do tricks, but sheep don't. Well, the Lord picked sheep, and I think He created sheep to show us what we are. And the wonder of it is, we can take the insult and be really discouraged, or we can just realize this is reality, what sheep must have is a shepherd. God made us to need a shepherd. He made us to need a relationship with one that we would follow, that we would need to stay close to Him. That the way to navigate through the difficulties of life is not to receive a manual or a roadmap, and to go off on our own, but it is to stay in the path of the Shepherd, right on His heels. That is why Jesus said, what was His word to His disciples? It wasn't, "Here is how I want you to live. Go and do it." He said, "Come follow Me."

When the Lord called Abraham, what did He say to him? “Go to the land that I will show you. You are going to have to stay with Me, and follow Me.” When they left the land of Egypt, when Moses delivered the people, the Lord did the great work through Moses and Aaron. How did they know where to go? Well, they were going back to Canaan, it had been 400 some odd years though, but how were they to get there? They were to follow the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. They were to follow directly the presence of the Lord, to seek to walk in His presence. That’s the way you get through life.

So the questions that we have, and the problems that we have, it is not that we are just looking for solutions. In the Bible, in one sense, you can say, and it is right to say this, the Bible is, in a sense, the place we find all of our answers to all of our problems. You could say it has all the solutions to life’s problems in the Bible, right? You could say it has all the answers to our questions in one sense. Yes, you could say that. But the way that God has ordained it, is that He doesn’t just give it as, it is not a static thing. What He is really doing in the Bible is not giving you solutions that you can use on your own apart from Him, the real ultimate purpose of the Bible is to draw you into fellowship with Him.

And that is what we are seeing here because the disciples have a question, and the question is really straightforward. The question is: “Jesus, what did You mean when you said, ‘A little while, and we will not see You, and a little while, and we will see you?’” Now I can answer that question. If I had been there, on this side of the cross, I would have been just as dumb as the disciples, obviously, but if we could transport in time to go back there, and Peter, and John, and all those guys are saying, “Wait, hey guys, you’ve missed it. He is talking about the cross. Don’t you see? He is talking about the cross and the resurrection. He is saying, ‘A little while, and you won’t see Me, and then a little while, and you’re going to see Me, and your hearts are going to be filled with joy. You are going to have great grief when I’m taken away from you. You are going to experience the anguish of a woman having childbirth, the pain and anguish is going to be so real, so overwhelming at that moment, but it’s going to be followed by joy, because you will see Me in My resurrection.’” We could have gone and told them that, but why didn’t Jesus tell them that? He could have said, He could have spelled out, “Listen, I’ve been telling you guys in the past, I’ve told you a number of times that I’m going to suffer at the hands of sinners, and then I must be raised again.” He didn’t do that. What He chose to do in this circumstance was to reply in a way that wasn’t a direct answer to their question. So the question is, what does He mean when He says, ...*‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’*;...?

2) The Reply:

The reply, as I said, He doesn't answer the question directly, but He answers really from Verse 20 all the way through Verse 28. It is not an answer, it is a reply, and what He does say is much better than an answer to their question. Because what He tells them is not an answer, what He gives them is not an answer to their question. What He gives them is a promise, and the promise is essentially this: You have this perplexing question, and you are always going to be filled with perplexing questions. Life is confusing. You figure out how to deal with one problem, and you never see that problem again. When we talk to the counselors about biblical counseling, or discipling Christians, you know you help somebody with one problem, and you really feel like, working through this, or working through this in my own life, I now figured out how to do this. This is the key, then you never get that one again. You say, "I'm ready, bring them on." Well, you're really not ready. But the Lord has a way of taking you to different things because He wants us to continually have more and more questions, so that we see our inadequacy, so that we are driven to Him. So the reply is not an answer, it is a promise. And what's the promise essentially?

The promise is this. You will receive great joy. And your question, if you handle it correctly, will lead you to great joy. The key theme in the passage is this issue of joy versus grief, this contrast in Verses 20 to 22 of the words that He uses to describe sorrow and grief. Look what He says in Verse 20:

John 16:20 ~ Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy.

Then He uses the illustration of a woman in labor. He says:

John 16:21 ~ Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain,...

That word *pain* is actually the same word as grieve or grief in Verse 20. The same word here is translated as pain. Whenever a woman is in labor she has *grief*,...

John 16:21 ~ ...because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.

He says, “Listen, it’s basically a promise or an invitation. You’re going to have joy. You’re invited to joy in your question.” When you are perplexed, when you are confused, as a follower of God, it’s actually an opportunity to experience incredible joy. And the joy doesn’t come in finding the answer. The joy comes in finding God, finding the wonder of who He is.

Let me make a few points about this joy as we continue talking about the reply, which is a promise, the promise of joy. Why don’t we break this down into two sub-points. This is under the second point, the reply that Jesus makes. He doesn’t answer their question. He gives them a promise. He basically says, “You’re going to have joy.” Let’s say that sub-point A is *The Reality of Joy* and B is *The Source of Your Joy*, because He goes on to, as He replies, talk about the reality and the source of their joy. First of all, we’ll look at the reality of their joy.

A) The Reality of Their Joy:

In Verse 20, He tells them the first part about the reality of their joy is the circumstance in which you’ll find joy. Verse 20:

John 16:20 ~ ...you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy.

What He says here is that the circumstance in which you as a Christian will find your greatest joy is grief. Where you will find your overwhelming joy is through grief. You will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy, Verse 20. Literally it will become joy. That song we sang earlier, the new song, the line was: *With joyful grief I lift my praise*. He’s talking about the fact that in salvation, where do you find the joy of salvation? How does joy, the joy of being a child of God, come to you? It comes through grief. It comes as you see your poverty before God and you mourn over your sin. Blessed are they who mourn. They shall be comforted. There’s no other way to salvation than through the grief and agony of seeing your sin. So when we find confusion and perplexity in life, when we find ourselves overwhelmed with our circumstances and we’re asking God for help, this is an opportunity to find grief. When you’re grieved by your sin, by your failure, when you’re grieved by your lack of understanding, it’s an opportunity to find joy. And the joy that you find, not only the reality of your joy, we’re still under the first sub-point, not only the circumstance of your joy, but the permanence of your joy. Look at Verse 22:

John 16:22 ~ Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.

When you find joy in Christ, going through grief, it is a permanent joy. Nobody can take it away from you. And finally, there's the fullness of your joy, Verse 24. He's saying, "Listen, you're going to find joy in grief. You're going to find permanent joy, and you're going to find fullness of joy."

John 16:24 ~ Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

So Jesus doesn't answer their question. "Listen, you have a question. You want to know why? You ask, 'What did You mean when You said this?' I'm not going to answer that. I'm going to tell you that you can have joy, and you're going to find joy when you have questions like that, that you don't know the answer to, if you will understand that that's the path to joy. And you'll have fullness of joy." Now, what is the source of the joy?

B) The Source of Their Joy:

We're still under the second sub-point, *The Reply*. We looked at *The Reality of Joy*, and now *The Source of Joy*. The source of joy is a new relationship with God. You're going to have joy. This is what He does. He says basically you're going to have incredible joy. You have this question, and a key word in the passage is the word *question*. Verse 19:

John 16:19 ~ Jesus knew that they wished to question Him,...

They have a question. Look what He says in Verse 23:

John 16:23 ~ In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you.

What is He saying? He's saying, "Listen, what's going to happen is when I go to the cross, I'm going to make it so that you will not have to ask Me any more questions, disciples. You will be able to go into the very throne room of the eternal, living God, and ask your questions. You will have unhindered access to God's throne, and you can ask Him whatever is on your heart. You can take your questions to God." He's saying, "Go to Him. Ask Him. He will give it to you." Verse 24:

John 16:24 ~ Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive,...

“Go to Him in My Name and ask whatever you want.” That’s what He’s saying. “You will now have an access to God that no one has ever had before, because of what I am doing.” Folks have needed a mediator. Now you need no mediator. You can go directly into the throne room of God and open your hearts and bear your souls. This has tremendous implications for the way we pray.

I’m doing a series on Wednesday nights starting this Wednesday, on prayer. It’s been such a blessing to me to work on this these last five or six weeks, because I feel like my prayer life has been so poor through the years. It’s been a source of discouragement to me, and the Lord has really just granted grace. And one of the things He’s shown me is exactly what He’s talking about right here. He’s talking about, the reason you’ll have joy when you have questions, when life causes you to be at a place where you don’t understand, where you can’t make sense, where you can’t make things work—maybe it’s your children. How can I be a better parent to my child at this place in their life? How can I help them to see what they need to see? I don’t know what to do. “Read a book. Figure it out.” No. Well yeah, read a book. That’s good if the book is biblical, but what does God really want? He wants you to pray. He wants you to come to Him and stay with Him, and pour out your heart to Him. That’s what He’s talking about here.

He’s not saying, “I don’t want to hear what you have to say.” He’s saying, “The amazing thing, guys, is you don’t need Me to take the request to God. Before, it’s been like that. You ask Me questions and I take it to the Father. Now because of what I accomplish at Calvary, you go directly to the Father. He wants you to come directly to Him, and He wants you to do so with transparency.” This is what I love. You ask for anything. Take your questions, all the questions that you have, and ask Him openly and honestly.

One of the things that I’ve seen as you look at what prayer really is, prayer is a sincere and transparent pouring out of the heart before God. In a sense, it’s just like a child expressing their heart, just like Konner was right now. Seriously, it is. It is the freedom to tell God exactly what you feel. It is the freedom to be completely transparent with Him. This is what really has impacted me, because as ridiculous and stupid as it was, I realized that too often in my prayer life, what I was trying to do was to get myself right, before I talked to God. That is completely mistaken. That is a Satanic deception. I can’t clean myself up to talk to God.

We're supposed to go to God as a child, a little child, goes to his daddy. A little child doesn't worry about cleaning himself up. He can have stuff all over him, but he needs his daddy. God says except you become His little children, you have no part with Me. "Come to Me as a little child." That's what Jesus is saying. You can go to God with whatever question you have. If you think it's a stupid question, and you know in your heart you shouldn't even ask Him this question the way that you are, don't lay it down. I mean, you come to God with an awareness that He's the God of Heaven. Yes, that's part of it. We've got to remember that, but at the same time, He's saying, "I want you to come to Me exactly as you are." When you look at the Psalms, that's exactly what the Psalmists do. They say, "How long, O Lord? How long are You going to leave us like this? Why? Why are You doing this?"

What happens when you go to prayer honestly and you open your heart, and you pour out your heart before God, and then part of prayer then is listening to His word, but it's really expressing your heart. You open up with what's really there, and then the Spirit works through the word, and in your communion with God, and He starts shaping you and fixing you, so that real prayer happens starting exactly where I am. "Lord, I know I should be talking about this. I should be concerned about this, but what's really on my heart is *this*, and I can't stop thinking about it. I know I ought not be thinking about it." But you see, I'm not sitting over here. What I tended to do was I'm over here trying to talk to myself. "I've got to get right. I shouldn't be doing this. Okay, now I'm going to go to God." No, you go to God like straight the way you are, with all the questions that you have. That's what He's saying. There is to be transparency now between you and the Father. It's a new relationship with God, and God is saying to you, "Come to Me like that."

One of the problems we have is getting in the right frame of mind to pray. It's a constant battle. I love how the Puritans are so honest about this. I shared last week, I think, a Bunyan quote where he talks about that, how hard it is to get the mind to pray. Here's John Bunyan. What a man of God. Remember he said that I loathe... He's basically saying, "I hate... I find in my heart that I hate to go to God. There's a part of me that does that, and then once I'm with God, I tend to hate to stay with Him. There's part of me that hates to stay with Him." It's a battle against the flesh. It's constant. So it is a war, but the way that we go is we go as we are. We don't have to clean ourselves up. We go to Him as we are, and as we go as we are, and we come into His presence, one of the things that becomes clear as we talk to Him is the Lord brings to mind as we have been meditating on Scripture and learning the Scriptures, we remember He's holy. He's pure. How can I be here with Him? And then a verse like Psalm 130:3 comes to mind.

Psalm 130

3 *If You, Lord, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?*

What business have I got talking to You? But Your word says:

Psalm 130

3 *If You, Lord, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?*

4 *But there is forgiveness with You,
That You may be feared.*

“You have put that in Your word to remind me to keep coming, to not turn back in fear, not run away from You, but to come transparently, trusting not in my righteousness, not in anything in myself, but in Your character. And I will not turn back. I will believe Your word.” So we’re transparent with God, and what will happen as a result of that is He goes on to say, Verses 23 and 24, this new relationship with God is our transparency with God, in Verses 23 and 24. But then Verses 25 to 27 is His transparency with us.

John 16:25 ~ “These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father. 26 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf; 27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

Do you see that? “I am going to show you who the Father is plainly, openly. You’re going to see who He is. You’re going to understand more of who He is because of what I’m doing on the cross, and what I will do as you seek Him in My Name.” It’s the wonder of this new relationship with God that is what life is all about. This is what the joy is. It’s not the problem. The problem that we have, the question that we have that drives us to seek Him, is what then results in joy, because we find Him. We don’t find the answer. We find a God who is holy and yet who loves us, and who delights to hear you express and pour out your heart. Isn’t that astounding that He wants you? He delights in you.

This is the wonder of the Trinity as I was talking about earlier, the three Persons who delight in one another, the Father eternally delighting in His Son, the Son eternally delighting in the Father. They pour out their hearts to one another continually. This is relationship. It's like when you talk to someone and you know they're really listening to you. That's something that happens rarely for us in our lives, isn't it? It's because we're so imperfect. We're so self-focused. But when you have a moment where you share something in your heart, and you know the other person is really hearing you, understanding you, and is with you, that is who God is all the time. And the invitation that Jesus has put before us is to say, "Go to Him that way, because He wants to hear you, and understand you, and love you, because you love Me." And as you do that, as you open yourself up to Him and surrender yourself to Him, and are honest about who you are, He's going to open Himself up to you, and He's going to show you more of the glory and wonder of who He is. And whatever problem prompted you to run to Him is now a lot smaller, because you have found the treasure. You have found, like the words in Song of Songs, "I have found the One my heart loves." That is what God is doing in our lives.

We would like just to find a solution, fix a problem, fix a problem, move onto the next problem. God's like, "Look, it's never going to happen." That's why it keeps raining. If you get good at it, there's this program I use sometimes for brain exercises, and I forgot the name of the game, but it's like these raindrops are falling down on the screen. It'll start off with like $2 + 2 = 4$, and then they start multiplying. The raindrops get more and more, and then they start multiplying too. 3×3 , and then it's 20×7 , 14×9 , $70 \div 7$, and they just start all over the screen. If you get really good at it, you're just hitting them and they just keep going. They don't stop. They're going to wear you out eventually. You're not going to win, and that's the way it is with problems and questions in this life. Praise God, He's not going to let you win, because if you really won that way, you would lose. He's going to let you be perplexed, and whenever you encounter a problem, this is why you can count it all joy. "When you encounter various trials, why would you think something strange is happening to you?" Peter says in 1 Peter 4. Something strange? No, you must suffer. You must have tribulation, otherwise you and I, dumb sheep, will never remember to run back to the Shepherd. But He's so good to give us just enough, not more than we can bear. It feels like more than we can bear so often, doesn't it? And it continues to feel like that when you are carrying it. What are you supposed to do? You go and you lay it down.

That's what prayer is. It's casting your burdens upon Me, for I care for you. It's not pretending that you don't have burdens when you come and pray. No, what is it on your heart? Cast it down. "I care for you." Not you generally. No, you singular, in Christ, He cares for you like that. Then what happens in your prayer life is prayer is the most wonderful thing in the world. Now, we still are so stupid, we forget. I mean, you can have a wonderful prayer time one day, and the goal is to pray without ceasing, to learn to do that, but you have a wonderful prayer time one morning, and the next morning you're having trouble convincing yourself to take time to pray. I join the club. But what do you do? You go to the good Lord and say that. That's one of the first things I think a lot of time we have to open in prayer with. "Lord, I don't even want to pray right now. What's wrong with me? Help me. I'm just going to be honest with You that this is what I'm feeling." We start pouring things out, and laying things down, being transparent with Him, and He starts drawing us into His lap spiritually, and He starts showing us His love, and the next thing you know, our hearts are full. We have a joy that came out of grief. We have a joy that no one can take away, and we have a joy that is fullness, more than we could have ever imagined. That's the joy of following Christ.

That's the joy of living a life that is a series of questions and a series of problems that are never going to have all the answers until we get to Heaven, and I think even then we're still going to have questions. I don't know what it's going to be like. It's going to be perfect, but we're always going to need more of Him. But isn't He good? And you can have that kind of relationship with Him if you will love His Son. That's what Jesus said. He said, "You don't have to go through Me anymore, because My Father will love you, because you have loved Me and believed in Me." If you will love Jesus and believe in Jesus, if you will repent of your sins and place all of your faith in Christ and what He's done for you, God will make you His child, adopt you into His family, and nothing can change that. And then the rest of your life He invites you for all eternity to enter into the joy and the blessedness of being His child. Why would you not run to Christ right now?

Let's pray together...

Father, we marvel at the wonder of who You are, the beauty and glory of who You are, oh God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in a communion of love and ultimate happiness, having no need of anything, oh Lord. You did not need to create the world. There was no need in You. There's never been anything but fullness in You. That You would create people like us, the dust of the earth, who in all of our glory are just like the grass that withers and is so quickly gone, and yet You, infinite, eternal, holy, Lord of glory, You have chosen to set Your affection upon people like

us. You have chosen, You who are so great, to whom the nations are a drop in the bucket, You have chosen to love and to set Your intimate affection upon each person, each individual who places their faith in Christ, and You have chosen to delight in them, and to reveal Yourself to them. We stand in awe of You. We stand in awe of the fact that You could work such a wondrous plan of salvation, that You could take we who are filthy and sinful from birth, and You could make us righteous and holy forever in Your sight, through the blood of Your precious Son. Father, help us to be people who press on ever more to know the Lord. Let us not glory in anything but that we know You and that we love You. May You be exalted in our lives this week, and we pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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