

New Life: John 16:1-15  
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Let's open our Bibles to John Chapter 16. Adrian Rogers says that we really only have three problems in life. These problems are sin, sorrow and death. This morning, I want to talk to you about the second of those, which is sorrow. What do we do with sorrow in our life? What do we do with a sorrow-filled heart? Today I am encouraged by the song that we just sang. It's a reminder that God is sovereign over us. What the enemy means for evil that God can turn to good.

When you hear the word "sorrow," what comes to mind? Maybe grief would be the first word. Sorrow is defined as "a feeling of deep distress that shows in sadness unhappiness, gloom, heaviness of heart, low spirits, or sense of broken-heartedness." Sorrow is often caused by loss. It may be the loss of things that we hold dear. The loss of innocence, the loss of purity, the loss of a job, or the loss of a person that we love deeply. Sorrow is often caused by disappointment of some expectation that we had about the future. We get to that point or that season, and we find ourselves disappointed and we experience sorrow. Sorrow is often experienced in times of change. It may be a life event. Sorrow is often experienced in times of failure where we feel like we just didn't quite measure up or we didn't get it right. Sorrow can be experienced in times of pressure.

This sense of sorrow had settled into the hearts of the disciples, the friends of Jesus. I want to point out here at the very beginning that sorrow is no respecter of persons. No matter how wealthy you are or how poor you are, sorrow is common to the heart. Today, you may have been a believer for 50 years or for 5 minutes, and you still can experience sorrow. Sorrow is also experienced by those who are not followers of Jesus, by those who are unbelievers in Jesus Christ. The Good News today is that Jesus knows what to do with sorrow.

He knows what to do with a sorrow-filled heart. Let's start in John 15:26 and continue through John 16:

But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

Remember the context of these verses. This is Thursday night in the life of Jesus in Jerusalem, just hours before He would be nailed to a cross. He is spending these last hours with the disciples. He began this night with 12 disciples in the room. By the time He's talking here, there are 11 disciples in the room. On this night, he had served them by washing their feet. He had told them that someone among them would betray Him. He had declared that Peter would deny Him. He had told

them that they would be hated by the world. Those that did know the Father would hate those who do know the Father. He tells them that they will be persecuted like He was persecuted, and He goes on here to say that the reason He's telling them these things is because He's going away. His hour is coming, and in a sense you could say the hour of the world is arriving.

And he said,

And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.

I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'

Some of the disciples had asked where He was going, but it seems by the context here of this statement by Jesus and the context of them asking previously that the answer to their question of "Where are you going?" was not about His destination. It was about His departure. It was more of a "Why are you leaving? What's going to happen to us here? How are we going to handle this?"

Jesus replies beginning in verse 6:

But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

The mood of these verses is heavy. There were no jokes being told in this room at this time. There was a feeling of deep distress. It had settled in the hearts of the disciples because of the things that Jesus was telling them. The loss for them that had resulted in sorrow and their heart was that Jesus was going away. Jesus was saying to the disciples in very plain language, "Rough times are ahead." It's a reminder to us that even with Jesus in such close proximity, followers of His can

experience deep sorrow. The pressure was on them. The pressure was on them to hold to Jesus. Jesus described that they would face things in the weeks and months ahead, such as being cast out of the synagogues. They would be cast out of their religious circles. Not only would they be cast out and hated. He says also, "the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God." I think we can understand their hearts being full of sorrow.

There was a threat to the disciples in Jesus' eyes. The threat was that they would fall away after these events took place. I don't know what happens in your mind when you read statements like "fall away." If you've been in church for a long time or you've been in Baptist life for a long time, you may be tempted to immediately go to this question - "Is He worried about them losing their salvation?" Don't go there. This isn't the doctrine here where you build a sense of eternal security. What He's talking about here is that they would walk away from what He had called them to do as disciples.

The Greek word for "falling away" has several different translations. Some translations have "so that you will not stumble." Some have "so that you will not fall away." Some have "so that you will not be caught unaware." One commentator by the name of Tasker says the Greek word here is identified as one of the most difficult words in all the Greek language to translate into English. It is the Greek word "skandalisthēte," and it does have a sense of stumbling. It does have a sense of a falling away. It does have a sense of being caught unaware, but it seems like no single phrase really defines exactly what that Greek word "skandalisthēte" means. If you turn it into a noun, it is not used to describe a stumbling block. It doesn't capture the full meaning of it. People much smarter than me that study the Greek language here would say that there is a sense of falling away. There is a sense of stumbling, but what comes with it is a stumbling by surprise. It would be the picture of something like a trap that catches you that you didn't know you had stepped in.

I picture the athletic world when I read all the descriptions of this word "skandalisthēte." I see a running back that's the star who is sprinting 80 yards down the field, and he's giving it all he's got. On the 20 yard line, you see him and his hand goes immediately to his hamstring. Then he limps across the goal line maybe if he can make it that far. There's a sense here where Jesus is saying, "You're following Me, you want to go hard after Me. But there are some things that are coming. There's some stress that's coming. There's some strain that's coming, there's pressure that's coming, there's persecution that's coming, and I want to tell you ahead of time it's headed your way so that you won't be caught by surprise."

We might describe it in our everyday language by saying, "This person was going through life, and they just snapped. They just hit a wall." Here Jesus is describing that. He said, "I want to tell these things you ahead of time." Note the compassion of Christ. Note the foreknowledge of Christ. Many times when we come here as believers, we're using Sunday mornings to gather and to remind us of what Jesus has done and to remind us of what Jesus has said.

What we come to do this morning, I believe a great purpose for this time is this - to forewarn. For me to stand before you as a pastor like Jesus did before these disciples and say that as

you go into these next few days, into these weeks, into these years that as believers and followers of Jesus Christ, there will be persecution. There will be pressure in following Christ. As you walk with Christ and you stand on the word of God, we have to come to terms with the fact that those who do not know the Father will hate those who know the Father. It's not an excuse for me to be mean. It's not an excuse for you to be obnoxious. It's not a reason for us to be arrogant. It is all the more reason for us to live a life that is full of the Spirit and bears the fruit of the Spirit that would not give the world a reason to despise.

But Jesus identifies the fact that our very identification with Jesus Christ and simply by being followers of His - rough days are ahead. Don't be caught unaware. Don't be taken by surprise. It's as if Jesus is trying to catch the disciples just before that last step that would lead to the hamstring being torn. He steps in today I believe in a very practical way for each of us on this 17th of March, 2019 and says, "Hey, friend of mine. In your sorrow, don't despair. Don't be caught unaware." That was the threat in Jesus's eyes.

Notice the victory in these verses. Jesus shows what to do with this sorrow that fills our heart. He says, "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth." In one of the most profound statements of Scripture you'll ever read in all the 66 books in the Bible, Jesus speaks. Look at it in, verse seven: "-it is to your advantage that I go away."

Does that not just make you stop? Think about how we exalt Jesus. We praise Him. We celebrate Emmanuel, God with us. In this moment of realness, Jesus says to His disciples who are filled with sorrow, "This may not make sense to you right now. This may not all add up. I'm telling you things, and there's going to come a day down the road where all these things that have been stored up, this foundation that I've been building, you're going to draw on that. You don't get it right now. Listen, you can't see it right now, but Me leaving actually is going to be better for you."

Can I tell you as parents that one of the wise things that you do is to teach your children the word of God before they ever know God personally in relationship? We often come to hard times and think, "Why don't we learn the word?" You may be thinking in your mind, "They're not saved yet, but we're memorizing Scripture. We're teaching the word but they don't know Christ yet. I'm singing "Jesus loves me, this I know" to a baby. Why would we do that?"

Let me share my personal testimony. I really believe that I was changed forever and came to know Jesus Christ as a junior in college. But all my life up until that time, I'd been in church. Do you know that what I know about God today didn't start when I was a junior in college? What I know about God and what I draw on about God today, what I understand about who Christ is, so many of those things are verses that I learned when I was in elementary school. They were truths that I learned as a little child. There were examples of Jesus modeled before me before I ever could make sense of it all. So I want you to be encouraged that even though your children may not be putting it all together right now, that there will come a day perhaps where God would give you a gracious joy

of being able to see the fruit of all of that foundation that was poured into them when they see Christ and know Christ as Lord and Savior.

Jesus is saying to them, "I'm saying these things to you that you can't understand right now, but I'm preparing you. I'm getting you ready." He says, "It is your advantage that I go away, and here's why." Jesus was saying it was better for Him to go away than to stay. Why? Because then the Helper would come, and it was better than Jesus being with them. This would be the Holy Spirit in them. What they had known as Jesus being beside them, walking with them, in the years ahead would be the very Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus, living in them. Wherever they went, wherever they were, the Spirit of God was speaking to them, counseling them, and doing these very things that He says in this passage that the Spirit would do - convict, guide, and glorify. I'm praying today that the beauty of the Holy Spirit would sink in in such a fresh and powerful way.

We long to see Jesus face to face, but here today we don't have to think, "I wish we could get to Jerusalem so we could see Jesus. I wish we could get to the Holy Land to see Jesus." The amazing supernatural work that God has done is that every one of us, when we trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, He is not just with us, but also in us. You see, the answer to the sorrow-filled heart is a Spirit-filled life. In their sorrow, Jesus says, "I'm going away, but it's going to be good for you. It's going to be right for you. It's going to be to your advantage." We sit here today clinging to this promise believing this truth, that it is better for us today. The Holy Spirit has come, and by faith in Christ, the Spirit lives within us.

What does the Spirit do? He does His work. This is beautiful. The Spirit of God living in you today convicts, guides, and glorifies. Look at verse 8: "And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." To convict means to expose. It means to cross examine. The Holy Spirit becomes the prosecutor. The reason that I know that something's wrong in my life or you know that something's wrong in your life, the reason that your children know that something is wrong in their heart, is because of the work of the Spirit.

It's such a powerful thing to think this morning that what happens in your heart today for eternity is not based on how good my stories are, how eloquent my speech is, or how fast or slow I speak. It's not weighing on that. Your heart, your eternity, your life change is based on the prosecuting work of the Holy Spirit of God. He's the one that changes a heart and changes a life. He's the one that cross examines and exposes what sin is.

He convicts. It's good for us to celebrate conviction. What a gracious God that He would not leave us ignorant of what is wrong in our life, but He would care enough for the Holy Spirit to convict us of what's wrong. He says that the Holy Spirit will expose sin, convict of sin. The Holy Spirit will show what's wrong. The Holy Spirit will convict or expose righteousness. That means the Holy Spirit will show what's right. The Holy Spirit will convict or expose judgment. The Holy Spirit will show us what's ahead.

He expounds on this a little bit in verse 9: he says, "concerning sin, because they do not believe in me." That is a phrase that describes how the Holy Spirit will convict of sin. The basis of our sin and the great sin is unbelief. You may call it lying, adultery, stealing, and you can make a list of sins. Jesus draws it all back to the origin of sin, which is a lack of faith, a lack of believing in who Jesus is. He says He will convict of sin.

Do you know your great hope as a parent this morning? It's not that you can set enough rules for your kids to follow so that they'll become righteous. The great hope for you in your kids' lives today is that you would be able to pray to the Holy Spirit of God that He would come and He would convict their heart of sin and change their mind toward sin. The hope for your dad or your mom or your or best friend or brother to come to know Jesus Christ is not because you're able to share some eloquent illustration with them. The hope today for us is that we would believe in the Holy Spirit and that He would bring conviction in their life and change their mind and heart about sin.

Oh, thank you Lord, for the Holy Spirit. He says in verses 10-11: "concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

When He says that He is going to the Father, He is telling them, "You will see me no longer." It's a very practical way of Him telling them, "I will die on the cross. I'll be buried, I will rise, and then I will ascend to heaven. Physically with your eyes, you're not going to see Me any longer. I will be in heaven and I will be approved by the Father." This is a description of God's approving work of the cross of Jesus Christ in receiving Him back into heaven. He had left heaven. In Philippians chapter 2, it tells us He had given up his glory. He came to this earth, took on flesh. He went to the cross to die for sin. He did His work. He declared, "It is finished." He ascended to heaven to the right hand of the Father. He's there approved with the Father saying, "Well done, my good and faithful Son."

Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will convict of sin and tell us what's wrong. He will convict of righteousness. He will tell us what's right, and what is right is Jesus Christ. His life and His righteousness are the glory of salvation. The glory of salvation is that when I'm convicted of my sin, Jesus' righteousness is credited to my account. I see that I'm wrong and I have no hope and I can't do enough to be good. I can turn to Jesus Christ as my righteousness, and His righteousness is put on my account so that when judgment comes, the atoning work of Jesus Christ pays for my sin.

You see, the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, convicts of righteousness, and convicts of judgment. He is declaring to us that there is sin. There are things that are wrong, there is righteousness, and there are things that are right. When it all comes down to it, there is coming a day of judgment. So much of the world's system is built on the belief that there is no accountability in the end. Jesus is pointing out that the work of the Holy Spirit is to convict of sin and righteousness and also that there is a judgment.

In just hours from this conversation, Jesus would bear the judgment of sin by His death on the cross. Listen to Colossians 2:13-15:

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

The work of the Spirit is to convict. The work of the Spirit is to guide. He says in verses 12-13:

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Think about this. Whether you're 18 years old or you're 88 years old, you're living this life and sorrow has gripped your heart. I don't know your story, but you know the distress that weighs heavy on your heart. Here's the grace of God. Here's the grace of the Holy Spirit living in you because of your faith in Jesus Christ living in you as the guide. The word "guide" is a word that was used to describe someone that would take a person into an unknown country. You and I live day by day facing events, facing times, facing seasons of life where we say, "I don't know what to do. I don't know how to handle this. I don't know what's ahead. I wasn't prepared for this. The disappointment has set in. This is not what I expected." And the Lord says to those of us with a sorrow filled heart that the Spirit-filled life provides you with a guide.

He says, "he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." He was telling the disciples in this verse, "All the truth about Me, all the truth about what I do, all the truth about salvation, all the truth about what this means as a follower - the Spirit of God is going to be your teacher. He's going to be your counselor. He's going to live in you, and He's going to tell you the truth. And when He speaks, He's not speaking on His own authority. He's speaking from the same place from where I get my authority. He's speaking what He hears, and He's going to tell you what's to come."

Do you know where we see this most vividly and most immediately played out? That promise is fulfilled most rapidly through what we hold in our hand as the New Testament. It is the Spirit of truth speaking through the writers of the New Testament. It is the Spirit of truth speaking through this very apostle John who would tell them what was to come the book of Revelation. You and I have the spirit of God to guide us in truth to illumine the truth, to teach us the truth, to counsel us in what's ahead. That's amazing.

The third work of the Spirit is to glorify. He says in verse 14: "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." It is easy to miss the fact that He says, "He will glorify me." Jesus is speaking. This is the work of the Holy Spirit - to convict to guide and to glorify. To glorify means to make known, to show the character of, to take every attribute and make it known by advertising what something is. When you glorify a place to eat, what are you doing? You're describing what it tastes like, what the service was like, what it looks like, what the experience is. You glorify when you build it up. Jesus said that the work of the Holy Spirit is this convict of sin, righteousness and judgment God into all truth and what's to come and to glorify Me.

It's such a great reminder to us that the work of the Holy Spirit working in the midst of our sorrow wants to do this - He wants to take our sorrow and He wants us to show Jesus in it. What a great lesson for us, to look and say, "In this sorrow, in this loss, in this disappointment, where is Jesus? What's the good that God is bringing out of what the enemy meant for evil in this time of sorrow? Where's Jesus shining? Where will we let Him rule and reign?"

He will glorify. That's the work of the Spirit. The amazing thing today is that you don't have to take a course for 10 weeks to have the Spirit of God living in you. The Spirit of God that convicts and guides and glorifies comes to live in you when you turn to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. For some of you today, you came here rich without knowing it. It's that experience of grabbing the jeans out of the laundry and later reaching in your pocket and finding the freshly washed \$20 bill. You never knew it was there, but you're eating out today. Today you may walk into this room with a sorrow filled heart, but I hope that you'll walk out of this room knowing that you can have a Spirit-filled life. I hope you say to yourself, "I went into that room and I thought I was broken. I'm walking out of this room today rich, because I have the convictor, the guide, and the glorifier living in me."

Some of you in this room today have come, and you've never turned to Jesus, but you still know sorrow. There is no answer for our sorrow except Jesus. We can get a 15 minute relief from an experience or we can get a two hour distraction by watching a movie. We can take up a hobby to get our mind on something else. The lasting, eternal cure for sorrow is faith in Jesus Christ and His Spirit coming to live in you. So today, I want to ask you to trust Jesus for your salvation. Maybe the sorrow of your heart would show you your great need of a Savior. You could pray with me this morning something like this, "Lord Jesus, my heart's full of sorrow and I've got no hope. I don't know what to do with it. I'm lost. I don't believe in You, and that's been my sin up to this point. Today I want to turn to You, Jesus and trust You as my Savior. Amen."