

We are taking Jesus' last night before the crucifixion very slowly because John wrote so much about it in his gospel. (John 13-18) The Last Supper already took place. Judas went out to betray Jesus. They most likely went to the Temple. Jesus commanded the disciples to love one another and warned them of the hatred they would encounter from the world. He told them He would send the Holy Spirit to help get them through the difficult times. It must have been a very solemn evening. While still in the Temple, Jesus is going to explain His departure and what lay ahead.

16 "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." Jesus had to prepare them for what was about to happen. He tried to in a number of ways. He told them this same thing earlier in His ministry. In John 7:³³ *Jesus said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me.* He warned of being betrayed, handed over, beaten, crucified, and rising on the third day. (Matthew 16:21) Still, the disciples didn't know what to make of it. They were asking each other what it could mean and wondering if they dare ask Jesus anymore about it. (Luke 18:34)

Looking back with 20-20 hindsight, we can tell that Jesus meant that He was going to die and then return through the resurrection. We have seen in our Wednesday night study of Zechariah that prophecy often speaks on multiple levels. It addresses a current situation, often an intermediary one that seems to fulfill even more but not entirely, and then an ultimate fulfillment. That is because God is not bound by time. He can address situations throughout time with a single statement. This is one of those statements.

The disciples would surely see it fulfilled over the next three days. Then they would see it fulfilled again during the week between Jesus' ascension and Pentecost. We await the final fulfillment when Jesus returns with our spirits and calls our bodies up from the grave to live in His presence forever. (1Thessalonians 4:16) We don't see Him now, but we await His glorious appearing. (1Peter 1:8; Titus 2:13) To see God was the great longing of Moses. (Exodus 33:20) The phrase, "You will see me", may ultimately be referring to seeing Him as He is in His glory. (1John 3:2; Revelation 1:12-16) That is when His work in us will be complete.

Jesus noticed they were confused about what He had said so He addressed the issue. *20 I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.* To weep and mourn was the language of grief over a deceased loved one. (Jeremiah 22:10) This is again reminding them that He is going to die and it will be a painful time. The Jews were very vocal in their wailing over their departed family members followed by a long period of mourning. Jesus unexpected twist to the warning was that their grief would turn to joy. (Jeremiah 31:13; Isaiah 61:2-3)

The Jewish feast of Purim celebrated such a time. It was a time to remember when a man named Haman had deceived the Persian King into making an order that

Commented [notes1]: 21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Matt 16:21 (NIV)

Commented [notes2]: 34 The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about. Luke 18:34 (NIV)

Commented [notes3]: 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 1 Thess 4:16 (NIV)

Commented [notes4]: 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 1 Peter 1:8 (NIV)

Commented [notes5]: 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, Titus 2:13 (NIV)

Commented [notes6]: 20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." Ex 33:20 (NIV)

Commented [notes7]: 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2 (NIV)

Commented [notes8]: 12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ... [1]

Commented [notes9]: 10 Do not weep for the dead [king] or mourn his loss; rather, weep bitterly for him who is exiled, because he will never return nor see his native land again. Jer 22:10 (NIV)

Commented [notes10]: 13 Then maidens will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow. Jer 31:13 (NIV)

Commented [notes11]: 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion-- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the o... [2]

amounted to the extermination of the Jewish people in Persia. Through the providence of God the order was reversed and Haman was hung on the gallows he had built to hang his Jewish enemies. (Esther 7:10) But Jesus is talking about an even greater joy, a joy of salvation and freedom that can endure the trials of life. It's the joy of knowing that Jesus is alive and has conquered death and hell for us! It is the joy of knowing our sin debt is paid in full. It is the joy of knowing God loves us!

Commented [notes12]: 10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided. Esth 7:10 (NIV)

Word pictures can be very helpful to get us to envision what someone is saying. Jews are famous for their word pictures. Jesus used one that He had used before. (Matthew 24:8) *21 A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.* If you have ever witnessed a birth, you can instantly relate to this description. You wonder if the mother and baby will survive the ordeal and then suddenly, everyone is smiling, even laughing, bubbling over with joy, especially the mom who one moment earlier was screaming at the top of her lungs that she couldn't take any more. It is the most sudden extreme reversal of emotion you will probably ever witness. Jesus was saying that is how it will be in the days ahead.

Commented [notes13]: 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains. Matt 24:8 (NIV)

I've tried to put myself in the shoes of those disciples after Jesus breathed His last on the cross. That is despair. They never really understood the "rise in three days" predictions or they would have been at the tomb on that Sunday morning waiting to greet their risen Lord. They thought it was over. Three years of miraculous events one day after another. Their hopes and expectations couldn't have been higher. The wonder that such a rabbi would choose them was incomprehensible. Then suddenly it all changed. In a matter of hours it went from bad to horrible to hopeless. They had to wonder if they would be the next to be crucified. (Luke 24:20-21)

Commented [notes14]: 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. Luke 24:20-21 (NIV)

But just as suddenly as it all turned bad, it all turned wondrous again. Jesus appeared to them. *"Peace be with you."* *37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.* *38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?"* *39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."* Luke 24:36b-39 (NIV) From the valley of the shadow of death to the mountain peaks of glory in an instant! Jesus used the perfect description, birth pains to joy, but then, He always does.

Jesus went on to tell them, *22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.* That joy they would experience would never leave them. The hatred Jesus predicted that would be directed at them would not rob them of that joy. No one can take it away. They knew He was alive forevermore. (Psalm 32:21)

Commented [notes15]: 11 Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart! Psalms 32:11 (NIV)

The same is true for those of us who have had a revelation of what Jesus did for us. If you have really seen what Jesus did for you, if you know how much He loves you, you have a joy no one can take from you. The world may be coming apart before our very eyes, but we have an unshakable joy. (Isaiah 66:14)

Commented [notes16]: 14 When you see this, your heart will rejoice and you will flourish like grass; the hand of the LORD will be made known to his servants, but his fury will be shown to his foes. Isaiah 66:14 (NIV)

Jesus then went on to invite them to ask of Him and promised that they would receive. This is now the third time in John that Jesus had invited them to make requests. Billy Graham once said, "Heaven is full of answers to prayers to which no one bothered to ask." God longs for us to pray His will into the earth. When the disciples faced difficulty and uncertainty, Jesus wanted them and us to know that He is ready to hear our prayers and answer them.

24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. He used the expression of complete or perfect joy that we saw in the last chapter. (John 15:11) This is telling us that by participating with Jesus in praying His will into the earth, we are experiencing the Kingdom of God. We don't have to wait to know what full joy is; we can taste it now. In the previous passage He used it in conjunction with obedience. (John 15:16) "In my name" implies the same thing. When we get in His yoke and walk at His direction, He will work through us in ways that will make our hearts overflow with joy.

There are times when the working of the Holy Spirit becomes evident and I know that I am participating with Him. My heart feels like it will explode with joy. There is no way to really convey the fullness of it.

Jesus said that He had spoken to them in an obscure way about the Father. I think that is because up until the time for His departure had arrived, speaking more clearly would have resulted in His death. Now He can speak freely. (John 8:20)

26 In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. 27 No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. We can go straight into the Holy of Holies without fear, knowing that we are in Christ and loved of God. (Hebrews 10:19) We can go right to God. Some people pray to Mary and saints, and I have to wonder if they don't get what Jesus is saying here. God loves you. You don't need someone as a go between. How would you like it if your son or daughter had messages relayed to you through a friend and never talked directly to you? You'd think they were upset with you. God invites us in. His arms are open to us in love. He wants to hear your request if it is in Jesus' name, or in our terminology, with Jesus' authority. He is never too busy.

Notice that Jesus said the Father's love for you is based on the fact that you love Jesus and believe He came from God. It is not based on your works, your lineage, or your doctrinal understanding. It is based on just two things, your love for Jesus and belief that He came from God. Here is another way to describe salvation that we aren't as familiar with. Of course that implies that you will repent of your sin and trust in Him for salvation. Do you love the Jesus of Scripture and believe God sent Him? Then you are loved of God! You have access to God. Pray His will into the earth, fellow believer! The Father is waiting for you to ask. (Matthew 7:7)

28 I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father. There it is. He is speaking plainly. The time had come. He knows where He is from and where He is going. (John 8:14)

Commented [notes17]: 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
John 15:11 (NIV)

Commented [notes18]: 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.
John 15:16 (NIV)

Commented [notes19]: 20 He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.
John 8:20 (NIV)

Commented [notes20]: 19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,
Heb 10:19 (NIV)

Commented [notes21]: 7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
Matt 7:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes22]: 14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.
John 8:14 (NIV)

Compare this expression with Isaiah 55:11-12(NIV). ¹¹ *so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.* ¹² *You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.* John began his gospel by telling us that Jesus is the Word of God made flesh. (John 1:1, 14) He is about to finish accomplishing what God sent Him to do. He is about to achieve God's purpose. Then He returns to the Father. That results in the joy that makes mountains and sing and trees applaud. It causes us to go out in joy.

²⁹ *Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech."* ³⁰ *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."* The disciples realized the time Jesus was speaking of had arrived. He wasn't using a parable or an analogy. He came from God and was going back to God. The disciples conclude that He knows all things and doesn't *even need to have anyone ask you questions*. What in the world does that mean? I actually think it means the disciples have drawn the right conclusion, that Jesus is God, but perhaps with the wrong details.

In the period between the Old and New Testaments, the Jews believed that God knew questions before people asked them. (Isaiah 65:24) He would answer before we asked the question. Jesus taught this was true. (Matthew 6:8) They were attributing this ability to Jesus, which means they believe He is God. Well, He is but He very well may have discerned those things through the Holy Spirit, and may have set aside His all-knowing attribute to become a man. (Philippians 2:7) The disciples were probably wondering about these things, and it seemed that Jesus' words answered the questions they had not yet asked.

³¹ *"You believe at last!" Jesus answered.* ³² *"But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.* So they finally all believed the night before the crucifixion. Will they still believe tomorrow? Jesus is warning that that belief is about to be tested. The prediction from Zechariah 13:7 was about to be fulfilled. The shepherd would be struck and the sheep would be scattered. Even though they believe, they will abandon Him. (Mark 14:27) That must have been hard for them to accept, but a few hours would prove it was true.

The Father walked with Him through the trial, the brutality and the crucifixion. Those hours of darkness on the cross were the only time Jesus didn't experience the Father's presence, and yet He knew He was waiting for Him on the other side. (Psalm 22:1; John 8:29) The Father loves us and is with us as well. (John 14:23) He will walk through the storms of life with us. He will not leave or forsake us. Whatever you are going through, the Father will go with you through it. (Psalm 23:4) Jesus experienced that separation from the Father when He bore the sins of the world so that you will never have to the darkness of being separated from the Father.

Commented [notes23]: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
John 1:1 (NIV)

Commented [notes24]: 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
John 1:14 (NIV)

Commented [notes25]: 24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.
Isaiah 65:24 (NIV)

Commented [notes26]: 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.
Matt 6:8 (NIV)

Commented [notes27]: 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
Phil 2:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes28]: 7 "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the LORD Almighty. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones."
Zech 13:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes29]: Mark 14:27 (ESV) 27 And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'

Commented [notes30]: 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?
Psalms 22:1 (NIV)

Commented [notes31]: 29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."
John 8:29 (NIV)

Commented [notes32]: 23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."
John 14:23 (NIV)

Commented [notes33]: 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
Psalms 23:4 (NIV)

³³ "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Well, if you are into the prosperity gospel, this is definitely a verse to consider. (Philippians 1:29) Jesus promises us trouble in this world. It is fallen. Most of the inhabitants of this world live in habitual sin. Satan is its ruler. He has come to kill, steal and destroy. (John 10:10) The world hates the message of bowing our knee to Jesus as Lord because man desires to be his own lord. Why would you expect things to be easy here?

Commented [notes34]: 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, Phil 1:29 (NIV)

Commented [notes35]: 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10 (NIV)

If Able was murdered for His righteous sacrifice, and Abraham had to wait till the age of 100 to have his promised son not to mention the loss of Ishmael, and Jacob dealt with the loss of His favorite wife and a famine, and David dealt with Saul's wrath and an usurping son, and Jeremiah was stoned, and Isaiah sawn in half and I could go on and on, what makes you think it will be any easier for us? Read Hebrews 11. Read the life of the Apostle Paul. But all of them had something that helped to see them through, peace in the Lord.

We are to take heart, or be courageous, because Jesus has overcome the world. The word for overcome occurs only once in the Greek version of the Old Testament, Psalm 51:4 and quoted in Romans 3:4. God overcomes through His righteous judgments. Jesus was about to make a righteous judgment of sin, hell, death and Satan. Since Jesus has overcome, you and I can take heart.

Commented [notes36]: 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Psalms 51:4 (NIV)

Commented [notes37]: 4 Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." [Romans 3:4 (NIV)]

In this world we will have trouble. (Acts 14:22) Our governments may turn from God. Our neighbors may not want to hear the gospel. It may become illegal to speak out on Biblical truth, but take heart, Jesus has overcome. You may face dark hours, as dark as those the disciples faced. The world is full of death and decay, but Jesus has overcome. We are counter agents in a world of sin trying to rescue those who will join us in leaving this sin sick world for the one our Overcomer is preparing for us. (Revelation 21:1)

Commented [notes38]: 22 strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. Acts 14:22 (NIV)

If you had any notions about ease while your journeying through this life listen to how the saints in the book of Revelation overcome. ¹¹ And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Revelation 12:11 (ESV) That is what our Overcomer is asking of those who love Him. Jesus said, "Follow me!" and He journeyed to the cross. (Matthew 16:24) But praise be to God, it didn't end there. He overcame death and hell. Follow Him to an eternal victory. Take heart brave souls, He has overcome!

Commented [notes39]: 1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. Rev 21:1 (NIV)

Commented [notes40]: 24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Matt 16:24 (NIV)

Page 1: [1] Commented [notes8] Paul Wallace

12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands,
13 and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.
14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.
15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.
16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.
Rev 1:12-16 (NIV)

Page 1: [2] Commented [notes11] Paul Wallace

2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,
3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion-- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.
Isaiah 61:2-3 (NIV)