

John 16:16-33
Christ's Joy Unites Us

Main idea: Jesus gives us joy that unites us, strengthens us through sorrow, and fills us with peace to live for Him today.

Have you ever watched a potter shape a lump of clay? [\[video\]](#)

- At first, it doesn't look like much. In fact, it looks like he's wasting his effort.
- But after a bit, the form begins to emerge.
- The potter knew what he was doing all along; the pressure had purpose.

That's what God does in us as well.¹

- Life is full of pressures, and we often don't know the purpose of them.²
- But Scripture seems to say that all of our trials have a purpose, and that they will ultimately lead to joy.³
- Our joy is not fragile or fleeting, but firm and lasting because it's joy that's rooted in Jesus.⁴
- In our passage today, we'll read what Jesus said to His disciples just hours before His arrest.
 - He knew the disciples would weep and mourn, for a time, but He also knew that their sorrow would be transformed into a joy that would never fade away.
 - This same joy still unites and strengthens believers today.

Read John 16:16-33

Studies have found that some of the hardest moments in our lives lead to the greatest personal growth. [\[chart\]](#)

- People often report that grief clarifies what matters most in life.
- What starts in pain frequently becomes the foundation for deeper joy.

In the same way, Christ's joy gives us hope even in sorrow. (v. 20-22)

- Jesus said this in answer to their fears about Jesus leaving them.
- But they didn't even know the half of it!
 - Soon, they would see Jesus arrested and mocked.
 - They would see Jesus crucified on a cross, where He would die, body broken, and blood shed.
 - And they would see Him buried in a cave.
 - They would experience extreme anguish seeing all this happen to their Teacher and Friend.
- So Jesus used the image of a woman in labor. [\[video\]](#)
 - Now, I've never been in labor, and I'm pretty sure I never will be.
 - But I've been in the room for three labors, and I can say that it appears to be extreme pain that turns into celebration when the child is born. [\[photos\]](#)
- So Jesus wasn't saying sorrow is just erased as if it never happened; He was saying it transforms.
 - When Jesus rose from the dead, their grief was instantly turned into gladness.
 - The same is true for us: every sorrow we face in Christ is pregnant with future joy.
- You know, it's going to be winter soon, and you know what that means? Snow. [\[video\]](#)
 - I mostly really like snow, but I can understand why many people don't.
 - But beneath the snow, spring is already stirring. [\[infographic\]](#)
 - God's promises are like that: joy is already growing underneath the pain.
 - So, when we grieve, we don't grieve without hope. We know that resurrection joy is coming.

¹ Isaiah 64:8

² 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

³ Romans 5:3-5, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 1:6-9

⁴ John 15:9-11

And knowing that, Christ's joy changes our perspectives and how we live even today. (v. 24b)

- That's not a promise to get everything we want; it's an invitation to stay connected to the Giver.
 - When we pray in His name, we pray according to His will, not our own.
 - We don't pray to change God's mind; we pray because His joy has and is filling our hearts.
- When our joy is in Jesus, prayer becomes at least one of the channels through which that joy flows.
- Some of you may recall that about 2 years ago, there was a spontaneous revival that took place.

[video]

- Asbury University is a Christian college in Kentucky that has mandatory chapel services.
- But one chapel service extended from 50 minutes to 384 hours.
- More than 50,000 people from all over the world came to see what God was doing.
- It all started because a few students, after one chapel service, had such a peace that they stayed after the chapel service close to continue to pray and worship. [video]
- And prayer is just one expression of our joy in Jesus. Our joy completely transforms how we live:
 - We serve God and others not out of obligation, but out of delight.
 - We forgive because we've been forgiven.
 - We live out our faith boldly, because joy has replaced fear.

And this is true of us, because God's perfect love has cast out our fear. (v. 27)

- You see, our joy in Christ flows from His love for us.
- The joy Jesus promises isn't something we work up; it's the natural effect of resting in God's love.
 - Resting in Jesus is like plugging a dying phone into its charger. [video]
 - Nothing flashy happens at first, but life begins to return.
 - You see, joy isn't found in pretending everything's okay.
 - It's found in knowing that we are loved anyway by plugging into our Savior.
- That's what unites us as the people of God: we are all loved by the same Father, welcomed through the same Son, and filled with the same Spirit.

Finally, Christ's joy brings peace that overcomes the world. (v. 33)

- Because Jesus died and rose again, we know that even things seem hopeless, God wins.
- We don't have to live anxious or afraid, because the One who loves us has already won!
- Christ's victory at the cross doesn't remove or erase the battle, but it does guarantee the outcome, and that gives us peace.
- And when we walk in that peace together, the world sees a joy that isn't common anywhere else.
 - It's a joy that endures pain and yet still gives thanks to God for everything.
 - It's a joy that doesn't lose hope when we seemingly have every reason to do so.
 - And when everything in your life seems to be falling apart, you can still have perfect joy if you fall on Jesus.
- It's interesting that when a storm hits the sea, waves toss and crash. [video]
 - But deep beneath, the water is calm.
 - That's what Christ's joy and peace do in us: they anchor us beneath the surface of life's storms.

This was an extremely important lesson for the disciples to hear that night.

- The disciples would soon go through their greatest trial: Jesus going to the cross.
 - His body would be broken for them, and His blood would be shed for them, just like they had just learned about when taking the first Lord's Supper.
 - They would experience great sorrow!
- And yet, His death and resurrection leads to our eternal life and joy. [John 11:25]