

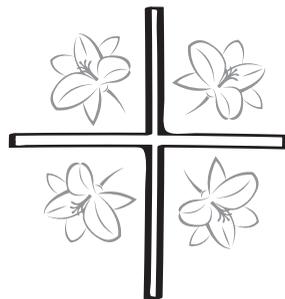
THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

JUBILATE

Shout for Joy

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

by: Rev. Roberto E. Rojas, Jr.



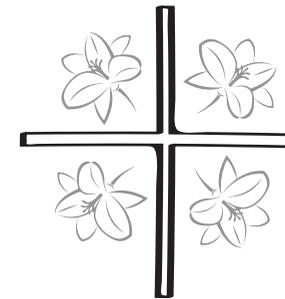
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John 16:16-22 ESV

Author and Date:

The Holy Spirit caused the words of this Gospel to be written by John the Apostle around AD 90. This is the historical record of Christ's prediction of His own death and resurrection, and His promise to turn the disciples' sorrow into joy. This took place on Holy Thursday, the night when He was betrayed.

¹⁶ “A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me.”

- Jesus predicts His own crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection earlier in John 3:14; 8:28; 10:17-18; 12:7, 23-24, 32-34.
- “In these words He points to His cross, suffering, death, and resurrection, as He often had done before, and that not without cause. For our flesh and blood is weak, for which reason all the articles [of faith] are hard to believe, and are not easily grasped. Therefore Christ acts like a faithful schoolteacher, is persistent, does not cease to impress these articles upon the disciples often, so that He may fulfill His office in every respect” (Johann Spangenberg, *The Christian Year of Grace*, 187).

¹⁷ So some of his disciples said to one another, “What is this that He says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father’?” ¹⁸ So they were saying, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We do not know what he is talking about.”

- Dr. Luther says, “Christ’s going or being sent from the Father means nothing else than that He, the true Son of God from eternity, became a true man and revealed Himself on earth in human nature, essence, and form; that He let Himself be seen, heard, and touched; that He ate, drank, slept, worked, suffered, and died like any other human being. On the other hand, His going to the Father means that through His resurrection from the dead it is declared that He sits at the right hand of God and reigns with Him forever as eternal and omnipotent God. ... Christ’s coming from the Father to us and His going from us to the Father, His descending from heaven into death and hell, and His ascending and thereby taking complete possession of and filling heaven and earth—all this the dear apostles could not yet comprehend. Nor would anyone else understand it if the Holy Spirit had not come to reveal and clarify these words” (*Luther’s Works* 24:375-376).

¹⁹ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, “Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘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, you will weep and lament but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.

- Jesus makes another prediction of the disciples’ misery and anguish at His death (see John 20:19). Also, He predicts that the sinful, evil world will rejoice at His death (see Luke 23), but that

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the disciples sorrow will turn into joy at His resurrection (see John 20:20). Christ describes the way in which the disciples' faith will be tested, exercised, strengthened, and preserved.

- The “rejoicing” of the world is a false, demonic, fleeting “joy.” It finds “joy” in the death of Jesus not because of the forgiveness of sins achieved there, but because they think of Him as a blasphemer, liar, and fraud. The world hates Jesus and the Word He speaks, so they rejoice when His life is ended and His Word is silenced.

²¹ When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

- See Isaiah 21:3; 26:18-19
- “In Revelation 12, as the woman, that is the Christian Church, was to give birth to a little boy, that is the spiritual children of God, she was in pain and cried out in anxiety. That’s how it still goes—God’s children are born amidst cross and tribulation. For only temptations teach to take note of the Word (Isaiah 28:19), through which Word we become born again. So then, as Christ preached to His disciples about the benefits of the cross, He held before them the illustration of a woman giving birth, who at first was sad, but who later rejoiced (John 16:21), to show that the cross gives new birth to those who through faith and hope await divine help” (Johann Gerhard, *Postilla*, 109).
- Dr. Luther says, “A change like this is also experienced here in this Christian life. Sadness will not last forever; it will turn into joy. Otherwise our condition would be hopeless and helpless. But Christ has helped by saying that we will not be subjected to the eternal spectacle of the devil with his horns and claws, but that our hearts will again see Christ and rejoice in Him. Thus here on earth Christians experience an ever-recurring alternation of ‘a little while and again a little while.’ Now it is dark night; soon it is day again. Therefore, the lamenting does not have to last forever, even though it seems and feels that way

when we are in it. But even though we cannot see or determine the end, Christ has already done so. He points out to us in advance that we must bear this suffering, no matter how bad and unpleasant the devil makes it. Even though we do not see the end, we must wait for Him who says: ‘I will put an end to it and will again comfort you and give you joy’” (*Luther’s Works* 24:382).

²² So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

- True joy is a fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23). It is grounded in the fact that Jesus has given His life for ours. Since the world has not given this joy, the world cannot take it away from the Christian. Joy is a result of faith in the merits of Christ.
- “True faith is not only a dead accepting as true of all that which is in the Bible; a person whose heart is still unbroken can have that. True faith is rather a heavenly power worked by the Holy Spirit, by which one comforts himself in firm confidence in Christ, whenever the conscience is disturbed over sin, God’s wrath, death, judgement, and hell. It is a power through which a person is born again, the love of sin rooted out, his heart cleansed and renewed, and love to God and one’s neighbor poured in” (C.F.W. Walther, *Gospel Sermons: Volume I*, 255).
- “Dear Christian! Let the devil, the world, and all tyrants storm and rage, let the winds rush and roar, let the waves crash and soar,—they can do so no longer than God permits them. But if the time has come, God’s will be done, and we must simply pass through it, whether brief or long. ‘It is appointed for a man to die once’ (Heb. 9 [:27]). But we have this comfort: ‘Whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s’ [Rom. 14:8]” (Johann Spangenberg, *The Christian Year of Grace*, 189).



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