

**“In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”**

<sup>17</sup> Some of his disciples said to one another, **“What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father?’”** <sup>18</sup> They kept asking, **“What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”**

<sup>19</sup> Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, **“Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’?”** <sup>20</sup> I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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. (NIV 84)

Theme: I tell you the truth: Your Grief will turn to Joy.

The illustration that Jesus uses in our text for today is perfect. There are some women who like being pregnant; sure they are plenty who don’t like it at all, but there are some who actually enjoy those nine months. But I have yet to meet someone who actually enjoyed the labor aspect of it. Sure, it’s a little better now with epidurals and all the other medical advancements made throughout the years. Of course—I’m speaking not from personal experience, but for what I’ve seen and been told—giving birth still isn’t a pleasant experience, it can’t be! But in the end, when the baby arrives the mother isn’t so much concerned about the pain. Her baby is here—in her arms. She had been waiting for nine months for this moment; and now she can hold her baby and see his precious face. She is not concerned about the pain—it was worth it.

That is the truth that Jesus teaches us today—your grief will turn to joy.

Jesus was in the Upper Room Maundy Thursday night when he said the words of our text to his disciples. He was warning them about

what was about to happen, **In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.** In a matter of hours Jesus would be betrayed and arrested. And after standing in front of the Sanhedrin and High Priest, Herod, and Pilate, Jesus was flogged and sentenced to death by crucifixion. It all happened so fast. The disciples didn’t have a chance really to say goodbye. It seemed as if it was over in the blink of an eye. One minute they are enjoying the Passover meal with Jesus then less than 24 hours later Jesus was dead. The disciples were dazed and confused. They thought Jesus was the Messiah. They believed that he was the Son of the living God—the Savior of the entire world. They had seen him perform miracle after miracle. They saw him walk through a crowd in Nazareth that tried to push him off of a cliff. He raised three people from the dead. But when it came time to save himself, he didn’t—perhaps he couldn’t. They had followed Jesus around for three years thinking he was the one; but now he is no longer. Things looked bleak. That is the grief that Jesus warned them about, **I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve.**

Like the disciples, we too have grief as we live on this earth; we have our troubles and difficulties in this life. Because of sin—our own, and others’ we suffer much in this life. People used to look at Christianity favorably and upheld Christian values; but lately Christianity is under attack—and not just from people halfway across the world; but from people in our own backyard. Those whom you once trusted stab you in the back. Those whom you were once close to no longer want anything to do with you. You did what is right, you helped out someone in need; but the tables got turned on you and now you are suffering because of a good deed you did. Perhaps you are all alone, it seems as if no one cares about you, no one really looks after you. A loved one is sick. You see him suffering, but neither you nor the doctors can do much about it. The disease has changed him so much, he’s just not the same person; and you can’t stand to see them like that. And then there is death. Perhaps you have been in the same situation as the disciples. A loved one suddenly and unexpectedly. Not only will you never see them again and hear their voice, but you never got a chance to say goodbye. Now all that is left is memories. Or perhaps it’s your own death. You can see it coming—it’s not too far away.

You're getting older, your health is getting worse; you know it's a matter of time—not if but when. We all have grief in this life; in one way or another we all suffer. It's all you can think about—but the world moves on; the world continues without even much of a thought about you.

It was Sunday morning—it had been three days since Jesus died on the cross and the disciples were still grieving; things still looked bleak. But then a group of women went to visit Jesus' tomb to give his body a proper burial. But Jesus wasn't there. Peter and John went to check things out themselves—and they too saw that the tomb was empty. Various reports filtered in throughout the day, until that night when the disciples were still hiding behind locked doors when Jesus suddenly appeared before them. Jesus was no longer dead. He had arisen! He was not dead he was alive—right there in front of them, with his own flesh and blood!

Grief turned to joy—just as Jesus had said, **I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy...Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.** The disciples were filled with joy because Jesus is the Son of God; he is the Savior of the world. He defeated death; and he paid for our sins.

Jesus' resurrection from the dead gives us assurance. We are assured that we too will rise from the dead. As Jesus said earlier on Maundy Thursday, **Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.** How can we see Jesus if he is in heaven? Because eventually we too will be in heaven.

Christ's resurrection means that death has been defeated. Death was not the end of Jesus, and it's not the end for us. But death is a beginning. When our life on earth ends, a life in heaven begins!

B. So there is no reason to grieve about our own death. On the Last Day our bodies will be raised from the dead—perfect, like Christ's glorious body. And our bodies will join our souls in heaven—and we will once again be complete. The consequence of sin is that body and soul will be separated. But Christ paid for our sins and defeated death. And so body and soul we will live in heaven.

And there in heaven we will be with Jesus—living side by side with him and seeing him face-to-face. And we will be with all our fellow

believers singing the praises of our Savior forever. Living in a perfect place free from sin and the effects of sin—a perfect life that will last forever.

No sin, no effects of sin—that means no pain, or sorrow, or crying, or disease, or death. There no grief in heaven. Because there is no one or thing that will ever cause you grief. There is no one who will stab you in the back; no one to turn the tables on you. You will never be alone—but you will be with your Savior forever.

And with no grief, our lives on earth and forever in heaven are filled with joy—just as Jesus said, **You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.** Instead of the guilt and grief of seeing our sins pinned on the cross, Easter turns the cross into a gift as we are assured God accepted Christ's payment on our behalf. Instead of weeping at the grave of a loved one, Easter turns our tears of sorrow into the sure hope of everlasting life; knowing that we will be reunited with our loved ones where Jesus wipes every tear from our eyes. Instead of lying awake at night fearing our own death, Easter turns our fears into a longing for a heavenly home.

Like a mother giving birth—your grief will turn to joy. And no one can take that joy away from you as Jesus says, **I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.** No matter who you are, how young or old you are, how rich or poor, no matter how much grief you have in your life at the moment, you still have joy in the sure hope of everlasting life—a joy won for you by Christ and no one can take the joy of everlasting life away from you. Amen.