

## Full Deep Study: John 16:16–24 – Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

### Scripture (NKJV)

#### **John 16:16–24**

16 "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father."

17 Then some of His disciples said among themselves, "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 go to the Father'?"

18 They said therefore, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is saying."

19 Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'?"

20 Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.

21 A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

23 And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

### Historical & Cultural Background

At this point, Jesus is preparing His disciples for His imminent departure – the crucifixion. The disciples still expect an earthly kingdom (cf. Luke 24:21). They do not yet fully grasp that Jesus is going to die, rise, and ascend to the Father.

Jewish teachings had shaped the idea of a reigning Messiah who would not suffer and die. Much of their confusion came from interpreting Scriptures like Isaiah 9:6–7 without considering passages like Isaiah 53. Their sorrow at Jesus' words was a sorrow rooted in shattered expectations – and fear of being left behind.

The phrase "a little while" is repeated for emphasis, showing both the short time until Jesus' death and the brief sorrow before His resurrection. In their grief, they would weep while the world – those opposing Jesus – rejoiced. But that grief would become joy when they saw Him alive again.

## Key Word Studies

- **"A little while" (Greek: mikron)** – Refers to a short span of time; it's used to contrast present suffering with soon-coming joy (v. 16, 17, 18).
- **"Sorrow" (Greek: lypē)** – Deep emotional pain or grief (v. 20, 21, 22). The term is used in the New Testament to describe the anguish of soul.
- **"Joy" (Greek: chara)** – Rejoicing that springs from inner contentment, not circumstantial happiness (v. 20, 22, 24). It points to a joy that comes from knowing Christ.
- **"Ask" (Greek: aiteō)** – To request, petition, or seek from someone in authority (v. 23, 24). It implies relationship and trust.

## Theological Themes

- **Transformation of Sorrow into Joy** – The disciples' sorrow is temporary. Jesus' resurrection would bring unshakable joy. This truth extends to all Christians: in Christ, sorrow is never the end.
- **Divine Access Through Prayer** – Jesus teaches that believers can now pray directly to the Father in His name. This new relational access comes through the cross and resurrection.
- **Assurance of Answered Prayer** – Jesus promises that asking in His name is not merely a formula, but a reflection of being aligned with His will. There is a confidence that prayer, born of trust in Jesus, will be answered.
- **Jesus' Foreknowledge and Compassion** – He sees their confusion and sorrow and speaks directly to it. He meets their need before they ask – just as He often does for us.

## Old Testament Connections

- **Isaiah 53:3-5** – Jesus was "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," yet He bore our sins to bring healing.
- **Psalms 30:5** – "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."
- **Isaiah 66:7-9** – Describes the birth of Zion and joy following travail, echoing the childbirth metaphor.

## Reflection Questions

- Have you ever gone through a season of sorrow that later turned to joy in Christ? What changed?
- Why do you think Jesus used the metaphor of childbirth for the disciples' sorrow?
- What does it mean to ask the Father "in Jesus' name"? How can we do that sincerely?

- Do you believe your joy can be made full in Jesus – even now? What might hinder that joy?

## ✓ References

### Free Online Resources:

- Bible Gateway. "John 16:16–24 (NKJV)." <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16%3A16-24&version=NKJV>
- Blue Letter Bible. Greek Lexicon and Interlinear Tools. <https://www.blueletterbible.org>

### 📖 Paid Print or Digital Books Used in This Post:

- Strong, James. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Abingdon Press, 1890. [Available for purchase.](#)
- Tenney, Merrill C. *John: The Gospel of Belief*. Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1948. [Available for purchase.](#)

### 🤖✨ Artificial Intelligence Assistance

ChatGPT. "✨Sorrow Will Turn to Joy✨ – John 16:16–24." OpenAI, 2025, <https://chat.openai.com>.

This post was prayerfully prepared in collaboration with ChatGPT 🤖, a research assistant designed to support deep, Christ-centered Bible study. All Scripture is taken from the New King James Version (NKJV), and supporting references include Strong's Concordance, cultural background texts, and trusted Gospel study materials. May this work bring glory to God and encouragement to the hearts of those who read it. 🌿❤️