

SERMON FOR MAY 22, 2022

TEXT: JOHN 16: 22-24

THEME: JOY THAT LASTS

. **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. **23** In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. **24** Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

In the name of Jesus:

Chase Gipson was in sixth grade when Vicki Karolewics (Carol wicks), president of Wallace State Community College in Alabama, came to speak to his class about the importance of attending college. During her talk she asked how many students planned to graduate high school and attend college. Hardly any hands went up. Vicky tried to coax them into at least thinking about finishing high school and going on to college, but no one was willing to even consider it. So the president of Wallace State Community College made them an offer. Chase Gipson was all ears. Then, six years later, Chase showed up at a college day to see Vicky who was still president of Wallace State.

Summoning all the courage he could, Chase went up to the president and asked, "Ma'am you spoke to my sixth grade class a few years ago, didn't you?" Vicky responded, "Why yes I did!" Chase went on and said, "When you spoke to my class, do you remember what you said that day?" The president replied,

“Yes I remember, but do you remember what I said?” Chase looked her in the eyes and said, “You told us that if we would remind you that you promised a scholarship to go to college that you would give us one.” The president never flinched and replied, “I did, thank you for remembering that!” Chase went on and asked, “Is it going to be a full ride?” Again, the president replied, “Yes, it is.”

That year Chase received a presidential scholarship to Wallace State Community College, not because he earned it or deserved it. He received that scholarship because it was offered and he asked for it.

That first Holy week, when Jesus met with His disciples, Jesus told them, “**16** “A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me.” The disciples had questions, and when they discussed this among themselves, they were getting no answers. Jesus, knowing what they were discussing, and knowing that they wanted to ask him for an answer, asked the question for them. Jesus prepared them for the events of the coming days, by telling them that He was going to the cross to die, and then three days later rise again. That is why Jesus says: “**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.”

The disciples were saddened at the news and the prospect of Jesus' impending death. Their hearts and lives were filled with sorrow, for they thought if Jesus dies, then all is lost. There is no hope, for if Jesus only died then how would this affect them and how would they go on living? If Jesus only dies, then sin and death and Satan wins, because death has defeated Jesus just as it had been defeating people since the time of Adam of Eve. If death wins, then there is no hope, and where there is no hope, there is no joy.

That is why Jesus reminds them that they WILL SEE HIM AGAIN. The resurrection is coming, Jesus says, and three days later Jesus did indeed rise from the grave, defeating sin, Satan, and the grave forever. Jesus died willingly, laying down His life so that, in His words; "He may take it up again." And because of the resurrection, the lives of those who followed Jesus were changed in dramatic ways. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit fell on them, the Spirit led and continues to lead His Church, guiding His people into the truth that Jesus is the way, truth, and life, and that no one comes to the Father except by means of faith in Jesus.

Jesus' resurrection changed the apostles' lives. No longer did they live for themselves, they lived for Jesus. They became powerful witnesses to all around, pointing everyone to Jesus, their Savior and Savior of sinners. Their

lives were lived full of joy and hope, living in the light and love of Christ. They had the JOY THAT LASTS.

Jesus' resurrection turns all of our sorrows into joy that lasts. Granted, we aren't the apostles, the times that we are living in are different than the times that they lived in. But what is the same is Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today, and today. And just as Jesus gave to those first Christians His Spirit, so Jesus also has given to you the same Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit points you to Jesus and leads you to Jesus, the One who lived, died, and rose again! The Good News of Easter gives you and me lasting joy, because Easter proves that the Devil and the enemies of God did not win and cannot win. Your sins are forgiven in Jesus! Jesus loves you now and forever. Nothing will separate you from Christ's love. And Jesus will return again, just as He promised. Jesus will come again in glory, and we will see Him again, as He will keep His promise of bringing us to our eternal home, where we will have no more sorrow, sin, or death, and we will have the JOY THAT LASTS, a joy that will never be taken away from us.

Until that time, Jesus calls us to love Him and live for Him. And to be honest, living life in the world is filled with all sorts of problems. If you are like many people, you have a lot of things on your plate, things that cause you to stay awake at night, worries and concerns that you have about yourself,

your loved ones, and even the world that we live in today. It can be overwhelming when you take into account not only your issues but the issues others have as well. How, then, can we have the JOY THAT LASTS today?

THE JOY THAT LASTS is yours today because of Jesus. You can have joy because your sins are forgiven, joy because you have eternal life, joy because Jesus is with you always, and joy because Jesus is your ever present Help in times of trouble. Jesus is ready and willing to help you in your times of need, and all you have to do is go to Him in prayer and ask. For Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened."

If you are like many, maybe you feel uncomfortable asking Jesus for what you need. Maybe you feel uneasy going to the Lord in prayer. Perhaps you think others have it worse off than I, so you feel guilty in praying for help in the issues you face. Maybe you are hesitant to ask for anything, too embarrassed to ask for help. Maybe you think why should the Lord even hear my prayer and answer me?

The Bible says: "You have because you don't ask." Jesus loves you with an everlasting love. Nothing now stands against you. Christ is for you, He is with you, and He delights not only in hearing your prayers but in answering

your prayers and petitions. He loves you more than you can imagine, more than anyone else has or will love you.

Jesus wants you to ask Him what you need. He says: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." Jesus stands ready and willing to help you and answer your prayers in ways you cannot imagine. So bring to Him your puzzled look, your knotty problems, your unusual requests! Go to Him in prayer, and let Jesus figure it all out. Pray, pray, and then pray more. Pray without ceasing. For when you go to Him in prayer, trusting in Him not only to answer prayer but to do so in a way that is good for you and that gives glory to God, then Jesus will give you the peace of mind knowing that He is at work for you, to meet your need and to give you the JOY THAT LASTS.

To the glory of God and in Jesus' name.

Amen