

**John 16:16-22**

April 5, 2015 – EASTER SUNDAY

## **I Tell You the Truth...<sup>1</sup> Your Grief Will Turn to Joy**

### **I. You will weep, mourn, and grieve II. Your grief will turn to joy**

**He is risen! He is risen, indeed! In the name of Jesus who proved all His promises are true when He stormed back from the grave, dear celebrants, brothers and sisters in Christ our life:**

What does it take to make your heart smile? Do you have such great memories of Easter that just seeing lilies on the altar or all the little kids dressed up – does that make your heart smile? One pastor told the story of a late night stop at a Waffle House outside Indianapolis. He and his buddy had a robust, outgoing waitress who obviously enjoyed the night shift. Along with all her jokes and sayings, she finally delivered each of them a plate full of pancakes. In her Hoosier accent she said, “Here ya go, honey. This’ll make your heart smile.”

### **I. You will weep, mourn, and grieve**

Sadly, a constant diet of hot cakes, syrup and whip cream could as well stop your heart. So we can all check our pulse at Easter. Your heart may be smiling “from ventricle to ventricle today.” Maybe your pulse is really pumping: “Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah” (Hallelujah Chorus) It’s great to overflow with joy for a day. But how long will it last? Five minutes after you get home...next week...next month? What has cost you joy in the past year? Has it been losses at work, in school, lost love? Is there a death that continues to leave your heart sad? Guilt unexplained? Sins of habit or sins of choice?

There was also plenty of sorrow for Jesus’ disciples. Jesus said, “*Amen, I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve....*” It happened at the second rooster crow for Peter; he went out and wept bitterly. The “Daughters of Jerusalem” on *Via Dolorosa* were lamenting Jesus, but He told them, “*Weep for yourselves and for your children.*” Mary Magdalene and the other Mary’s went out to the tomb the first Easter morning fully expecting more weeping, more grief.

And then we hear Jesus saying back on Maundy Thursday with His disciples, “*A little while...*” – seven times in vv.16-19. Yesterday we saw runners along a lake. Some were really hurting. Can you imagine how they would feel toward the end of the race if someone sipping a tall cold one in a lawn chair says, “Just a little while”? But remember, Jesus is all-knowing. He could tell His disciples, “*a little while,*” knowing that in about ninety-six hours they would actually see Him again alive. Jesus knows what “*a little while*” is for us too. He makes sure we will have no more sickness or suffering than we can bear for our good. (1 Corinthians 10:13) Better still, this is a race our Jesus has already run and won. He knows by experience the deep woe and grief for our sins. (Isaiah 53:4 KJV)

Jesus is also eternal. He sees all things from perspective of *forever*. You know how it is, 20 minutes to a child can be like 20 years to an elder. But all of time only like a drop of water in the sea of eternity. That’s just “*a little while*” to the eternal Lord Christ. He can assure us from His vantage point that “*Our light and momentary troubles...*” (2 Corinthians 4:17) And it’s all because *CIR HIRI*.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on 2015 NPH Series by Joel S. Heckendorf: *I Tell You the Truth*

In the midst of our grief it's nearly impossible to imagine things getting better. But keep an eye on Jesus' disciples, men and women, on that first Easter morning, and you see how quickly Jesus' words will come true for you too:

## II. Your grief will turn to joy

**“Amen I tell you...your grief will turn to joy.”** Notice Jesus does not say, *your grief be replaced* by or *coincide with joy*.... When Christ goes to work on our **grief**, He makes it **turn to joy**. Look at the totally hopeless situation of disciples, how everything they tried failed. Yet the dear Holy Spirit had foretold: **“Gladness and joy will over take them...”** (Isaiah 35:10; 51:11)

Look how Easter makes you find what you were not looking for. Mary and the women were looking for a dead Jesus. So do many people today. That's why Jesus for them is nothing more than...<sup>2</sup> *ATM kind of Jesus* – punch in numbers, “Jesus, I got needs!” How about a *carpet cleaner Jesus* – back shelf until needed, get out some stains, back on the shelf. For some He's just a *good buddy Jesus* – hang around sometimes, not when I'm busy. For a few He might even be a *seat mate Jesus* – just a few stories, but don't expect me to believe them. That might work for a dead Jesus, but **CIR HIRI !**

A scientist named Alexander Fleming, 1928, made a famous quote, “One sometimes finds what one is not looking for.” Fleming had been trying, but failing to find a way to fight bacteria with compound from human tears. Finally he gave up and went home, leaving a stack of dirty culture containers in his lab over a holiday weekend. When he came back to clean up, he found the mess he was expecting, you know, something like the Tupperware in back of fridge in break room at work? Fleming started dropping them into cleaning solution. But then he noticed one dish with staph growing all over plate, except where halo of dead staph from mold called *penicillius*. He came expecting a mess and found penicillin which has been called one of the greatest discoveries of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Penicillin has saved ca. 200 million of lives. He was looking for a failed experiment, found gift to mankind. Fleming did not get a patent; he never charged for his intellectual property. He won Nobel Prize for accidental discovery and knighted by King George VI in 1944: Sir Alexander Fleming. With that he gained a new status.

Our new status was given by Jesus in sermon to Mary Magdalene: **“Go and tell my brothers....”** They came expecting to find a dead Jesus. Instead they found God's greatest gift which totally changed their status and ours from guilty sinner to forgiven child of God. In Christ God's forgiveness is so deep, rich, complete that Son of God calls you His own brother / sister. There is no patent, no charge. Just take it home and enjoy the gift that has saved billions of lives. Jesus says, **“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”** (John 11:26) “That is the beating heart of all our hope.” (Franzmann) It makes your heart sing to find God's gift when you weren't even looking for it.

A Hindu woman complained to a Christian missionary about her 16-year-old daughter who had converted to Christ. “What did you do to our girl?” she demanded. “We did nothing,” he answered. “Oh, yes, you did. My daughter died yesterday, and she died smiling. Our people do not die that way.” You see, her face couldn't help it. Her heart was smiling because Jesus was living there and she is living in Jesus. Jesus says, **“Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.”**

Why is that? Because **CIR HIRI !** And all God's people say, **Amen!**

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from 2015 Easter sermon by Jonathan E. Schroeder, Faith Lutheran Church, Sharpsburg, GA. Shared with pastors.  
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