

Sermon for Sunday, October 4, 1981 by Andrew A. Jumper, D.D., Pastor
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"THAT GIFT THAT CAN'T BE RECALLED - II"
St. John 16:16-33

Text: "But I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you." St. John 16:22

Last Sunday I preached a sermon based on the text printed in your bulletin. Actually, I didn't get to finish the sermon because there were some other things I wanted to say. However, I didn't want to be accused of preaching a rat tail sermon. You know what a rat tail sermon is? That's one that is long and thin! Besides, in seminary one of our professors used to warn us about preaching long sermons. He always said, "Boys, remember the mind can absorb only as much as the seat can endure." Anyway, this morning I want to finish last week's sermon.

For those of you who were not here last week--and to refresh the memory of those of you who were--let me review briefly for you the content of what I said. The subject of our sermon was Christian joy. I said that Christians have a reason to be joyful. Christian joy doesn't depend on what is happening outside of one. I said there were three things in our text--all of which started with the letter "S"--that told us about the joy of a Christian. If you will look at our text either in your Bibles or in your bulletin, I will remind you of those three things about Christian joy. First, the text says, "But I will see you again..." The "I" of course is Jesus and I said that the source (that's the first "S") of the Christian's joy is the presence of Jesus Christ. If you want to have true joy, you must have Jesus. He is the source of our joy.

Second, our text says, "and your hearts will rejoice". That is the second "S" and it speaks to us of the seat of our joy. You see, in the long run, what is in your heart is the very thing that will control your life. If you have hate in your heart, or lust in your heart, or envy in your heart, those things will control you life. Such things as greed and avarice make a man act badly because those are the things in his heart. But if Jesus is in our hearts, then we will have a joyful heart. Our hearts will rejoice and our lives will be characterized by joy.

Third, our text says, "and no one will take your joy from you." So the third "S" speaks to us of the security of our joy. Our joy isn't determined by things outside of us that can be taken away. No, when we have Jesus in our hearts nothing that happens can take that away from us and our joy is secure.

Now, this morning I want to introduce you to the fourth "S" that I didn't have time for last week. The fourth "S" has to do with some signs of joy. The first sign of our joy is found in verse 23. There Jesus says, "In that day you will ask nothing of me." A lot of people today have questions about religion. We are swayed by all kinds of philosophies, various systems of thought and belief, and by many opinions about life. But that isn't true of the man who has Jesus in his heart. His doubts are gone. His questions are answered. He is a man who knows. Like St. Paul, he can cry out, "I know whom I have believed."

So here is the sign of assurance. I have a friend who likes to think of himself as an intellectual. He says to me, "I will accept your Jesus when all of my questions have been answered." And I keep replying, "If you will accept Jesus, all of your questions will be answered." Yes, a Christian has assurance. Some day this week get your Bible out and read the little book of I John. There are only five short chapters and the entire book is only three pages. I John is a book of a man with assurance. His questions have been answered. Over 14 times in those three pages the author writes, "We know!"

A second sign for joy is found in verses 23 and 24. There we read, "If you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." This introduces us to the sign of the name. May I suggest to us this morning that we have not begun to understand the power that is available to Christians? I think the early church understood and believed in the power of the name of Jesus and they used that power. For example, remember when Peter and John were stopped at the temple gate by a crippled beggar? Peter said to him, "Silver and Gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." (Acts 3:6) Or here is Paul on a missionary journey in northern Greece in a city called Philippi. There was a young girl who followed them about who was possessed with an evil spirit and then the Bible says, "But Paul...turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."(Acts 16:18)

Do you know why Christians end their prayers by saying, "in the name of Jesus?" It is because of this passage of scripture we read this morning. Yes, there is tremendous power--untapped resources--in the powerful name of Jesus that Christians need to appropriate. That is his promise to us.

Now one other sign for joy. In verse 26 it says that when we ask in his name God won't answer just because Jesus asks him to. No, in verse 27 he says that God will respond to us because, "the Father himself loves you..." Whoever you are this morning, God loves you! He cares about you. He knows your name. Yes this is a sign for joy, to know that God loves us.

Well, that brings me to Holy Communion this morning. Before us is the table of the Lord and it represents the sacrifice of Jesus for your sins and mine. But above all, this table says, "God love you." What joy that is to know. And here before you are the visible signs--the proof--the assurance that you are loved. Yes, the Christian can have joy--Jesus is the source of that joy, our hearts are the seats of that joy, and that joy is secure. There are many signs for joy--the sign of assurance, the sign of the name, but above all there is the sign of love for the Father himself loves you.