

Theme: A LITTLE WHILE

Introduction: Twice Jesus had spoken to His enemies about the little while. Read Jn. 7:33-36 and 12:35-36. He was warning them. At 13:33 He told the disciples that He had told the Jews this. Now He was saying it to the disciples. At 14:18-19 He repeats it but this time He comforts them. But the big passage on "a little while" is found in our text.

I-WHAT THIS MEANT AT JESUS' TIME

- A-What it meant for the Jews. Read Jn. 7:33-36. Jesus had been testifying to the Jews that He was the Messiah but they rejected Him and wanted to arrest Him. He warns them that after a little while He would go to the Father (suffer, die, rise and ascend) and they would not be able to follow Him. Why? Because of their unbelief. Then they make fun of Him in vs. 35. Again, at 12:35 He warns the Jews that He, the Light, would shine a little while longer. If a person rejects the Light of the Gospel, Jesus Christ, there will come a time when it is too late. Paul warns at Rom. 13:11 "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand." The Jews were blind to what Jesus said. He wanted them to repent and believe.
- B-What it meant for the disciples. At 14:18-19 Jesus repeats the "little while" idea to the disciples but He distinguishes between the world and the Christians. After a little while the world will not see Jesus. There is no record of the Jews seeing Jesus after His resurrection. They did not see Him. But to the disciples He said: "But you will see me. Because I live you too will live." They saw Him often after His resurrection. And they rejoiced in their life in Christ. But the big passage about a little while is found in our text. The disciples were confused over Jesus' words. Then He explained: "You will weep and mourn and the world will rejoice. You will be pained but your grief will turn into joy." Then He uses the beautiful illustration in vs. 21 and its application in vs. 22. When Jesus suffered and was in the grave the disciples mourned but the world rejoiced. But all of that suddenly changed when He rose from the dead. Many of them died rather than to deny their faith. No one took their joy from them.

II-WHAT THIS MEANS TODAY

- A-What this means for the unbelievers. John the Baptist used very stern language to warn the hypocritical Pharisees and Sadducees. Read Mt. 2:7-10. Their lack of good works proved that they had not confessed their sins and believed in Jesus. Therefore he refused to baptize them. The little while would not last forever. Stephen (Acts 7:51-53) boldly told the Jews the truth about themselves. They were stiff-necked and uncircumcized in heart and ears. The little while would not last forever. Likewise, we must show people their sins so that they might confess them and then receive forgiveness. The time is short.
- B-What this means for believers. We are living in the little while of this life. Like Jesus said, we often weep and mourn while the world rejoices. Maybe we are tempted to deny Him. Maybe we are tempted to follow false prophets who promise us false joys of this world. But He promises that after the little while of pain and suffering we will see Him again. The clouds hide the sun but it is still there. Troubles hide Jesus' cheerful face but He is still there. Ps. 30:5 says "Weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning." Is. 54:7 reads: "For a brief moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you." And Paul, at Rom. 8:18: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Israel mourned but the Lord brought them back to their land. The disciples mourned but Jesus rose from the dead. He is constantly saying: "I will never leave nor forsake you."

1. On this section Luther wrote: "We have now often heard what is means 'to go to the Father'; which indeed is not a common expression, such as men usually employ and as they generally understand it, but is the language of the Lord Christ and His Christians. That Christ went forth from, or was sent by, the Father (see vs. 28) means nothing else than that He, the true Son of God from eternity, became a true man, and revealed Himself on earth in human nature, essence and form, permitted Himself to be seen, heard, and felt, ate, drank, slept, worked, suffered, and died, like any other person. Again, that He goes to the Father, that means that He will be glorified by His resurrection from the dead, that He sits at the right hand of God and reigns with Him in eternity, as eternal, almighty God. For by His coming down or going from the Father He revealed and proved Himself a true, natural man; but by His return to the Father He declares Himself to be true, eternal God, out of God the Father, and thus remains in one person both God and man, and should be thus known and believed."
2. The "little while" began with His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and lasted three days until He appeared to them in the evening of Easter Sunday. The beautiful axiom in vs. 21 is readily understood by all cultures. The point of comparison is applied in vs. 22: A painful situation very quickly becomes a joyful occasion with all pain forgotten.
3. Lazarus in the parable of Lk. 16 spent a "little while" in the company of dogs but is now in Abraham's bosom. The malefactor spent a "little while" on the cross but is now in Paradise. Paul said: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Rom. 8:18. The Covenant People spent a "little while" in captivity in Babylon but were restored to their land in Israel. Ps. 126. See also Ps. 30:5; Is. 26:20; 54:7; Mt. 5:4; II Cor. 4:16-18. At Lk. 17:22 Jesus says: "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man but you will not see Him." Then in vs. 23 He warns us not to follow false teachers. False teachers mislead people who mistakenly think that the Lord has deserted them. They make people feel good by feeding them rubbish. Remember the warning of Jesus at Mt. 24:4-5. When you are sorrowful and can find no comfort among people look at Rom. 10:5-13. You find comfort only in the Good News. That Good News is in your mouth and in your heart. The sorrow lasts only a little while. The disciples were such sorrowful cowards for three days. But, when Jesus reappeared to them, their sorrow was changed to joy.
4. On the words "a little while" see Jn. 7:33; 12:35; 13:36 and 14:19. For Jesus' enemies these words were warning words of condemnation and judgment. But for the disciples these words were great comfort because Jesus assured them that He would not forsake them. The whole Bible is one long book of comfort which says: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Deut. 31:6,8; Gen. 28:15; Heb. 13:5. Many other passages could be cited. For example, Is. 43:1-2 and Mt. 28:20.
5. Notice that Jesus affirms His promise in vs. 20 with "Truly, truly." Jesus binds Himself to an oath to take care of you. No one can take your joy in Christ from you.
6. Jesus says in vs. 17 that He is going to His Father. In His final sermon to the disciples and us in Jn. 13-17 He uses the word "Father" at least 48 times. In Gethsemane He prayed fervently to His Father. On the cross His first and last recorded sentences (Lk. 23:34 and 46) began with the word "Father". Just before He ascended He said "in the name of the Father etc." Jesus is also our model. In days of great sorrow we should pray frequently "Our Father etc."
7. Very often, like the disciples, we are cowards and hide in the times of "a little while." But then when the Lord reappears He very graciously forgives us. "Oh give thanks unto the Lord for He is good."

1. Jn. 13:31-16:33 was spoken by Jesus in the night when He instituted the Lord's Supper and went to the Garden of Gethsemane. Even though He knew that He was facing suffering and death, Jn. 13:31-16:33 is a passage of remarkable serenity. It is followed by the prayer of Jesus to the Father, Jn. 17. Perhaps the pastor should read Jn. 13:31-17:26 before he begins his work on this sermon.
2. An ancient commentator said: "The disciples knew it well, but on this occasion they did not know that they knew it." Read the questions by Peter, 13:36; Thomas, 14:5; Philip, 14:8; and, Judas, 14:22. The disciples had spent three years with Jesus. Perhaps we think that they should have learned enough so that they would not ask such questions. But when times of sorrow come, Christians often forget what they have learned. We do not enlighten ourselves. Only the Holy Spirit can do that through the Word of God. When times of sorrow come, the comfort of the Gospel may slip from us.
3. Jesus was a very gentle teacher. He taught His disciples again and again. The disciples were like children who easily forget and must be taught again and again. That's the way it is today. Pastors must be gentle with the people. The people are like children who need much tender, loving care. When times of sorrow come to the people, the pastors must gently teach them again and again.
4. The thought of vs. 1 is repeated at 14:27. The world does not give lasting peace as does Jesus. Only the peace of God in Christ can quiet our fearful and guilty hearts. Just believe Jesus' Word. Vs. 1.
5. In vss. 2-4 Jesus speaks immediately of the purpose of His mission. Going to prepare a place for us means His suffering, death and resurrection. By doing that He prepared a place for us forever. He wants us to be with Him forever. He will come again to take us to Himself. That is the main message of God in the Bible. Many O.T. saints are already there because of what Jesus did. Read Heb. 12:1-2. Heb. 5-10 tell us what Jesus did for us. Heb. 11 speaks of O.T. believers. Then comes Heb. 12:1-2. Ps. 15:9-11 is a prophecy of Christ. See Acts 2:25-28. And it is a promise to us of everlasting life. Job (19:25-27) knew that he would rise from the dead and live with God forever. Paul had a desire to depart and be with Christ. Php. 1:23. Peter (I Pet. 1:4) speaks of our incorruptible inheritance in heaven. The book of Revelation gives us many pictures of everlasting life. How did Jesus comfort His sorrowing disciples? With everlasting life. Thomas and Philip (vss. 5 & 8) showed their weakness by their questions. But they were not afraid to ask Jesus. They knew that He would not be harsh. To Thomas He gives the wonderful answer: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." There is only one way. There is only one truth. There is only one life. Jesus Christ. Philip asked a disappointing question. Jesus gently reprimands him. He had taught the disciples often that Jesus is very God of very God. But Philip had forgotten. So do we. We need to hear the Word daily to remind us again.
6. In vss. 10 and 11 Jesus speaks of Himself being in the Father and the Father being in Him. That means that He is true God by nature. In 17:23 Jesus says: "I in them and You in Me." Jesus and the Father are one in essence by nature. We are one with Jesus by grace. He lives in us.
7. Vs. 10 speaks of Jesus' Words and works. His Words are not of Himself. They are of God. And the Father, by His union with Jesus, does His works, His miracles. Jesus' Words and works work faith in us. Pastors must preach Jesus' Words and works. They cause faith in people.
8. At Jn. 7:34; 8:21; 13:33,36; 14:5 and 16:5 Jesus speaks both to the Jews and then to His disciples about going to the Father. That means that He would suffer and die. The Jews did not understand. The disciples were filled with sorrow. But the Father had planned Jesus' suffering and death to save mankind. Therefore Jesus says: "Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And I will come back and take you with Me so that you can be with Me." Do not be sad.

Theme: JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

Introduction: All people are lost. All people are confused. All people are sorrowful. But they need not be. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Jesus came to comfort them. Jesus came to make them rejoice. Even Jesus' disciples, in the night when He was betrayed, were confused and sorrowful. That is clear from the questions of Peter, Thomas, Philip and Judas. Jesus tells them: "Sorrow has filled your heart." 16:6. And several times He says: "Let not your heart be troubled." We are just like the disciples. Often we feel lost, confused and sorrowful. Let us listen to Jesus Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

I-JESUS IS THE WAY. Thomas said to Jesus: "Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Often Jesus had predicted His suffering and death but the disciples had forgotten. Now He says: "Just believe in Me. I am the Way." What Way? The important Way to live and to die. Jesus said at Mt. 7:14: "Narrow is the Way that leads to Life and few are those who find it." It is narrow because it is the way of God, according to God's Word, not according to the dreams and theories of people. How does one quiet a fearful heart? By believing in God and Jesus. Vs. 1. How does one quiet his fears about the future? By listening to Jesus Who says: "In My Father's house are many mansions. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to Myself so that where I am also you may be." And then He adds: "And where I am going you know the Way." Jesus went the way of sorrows and suffering so that we can go the way of peace and everlasting life. Jesus is the Way.

II-JESUS IS THE TRUTH. There is no truth in Satan. He is a liar and a murderer. Jn. 8:44. All unconverted people in this world are children of the devil. Read Eph. 2:1-2. Unconverted people are dead in their trespasses and sin. They walk in these sins according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air (the devil). The devil is the one who now works in the children of disobedience. Satan causes people to be lost in lies. He even sometimes snatches the Word of God away from believers. Lk. 8:12. He goes about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour people. But Jesus is the Truth. He came to tell us the truth about ourselves and about God. He came to show us our sins and the need for salvation. He came to tell us that no one can come to the Father in heaven except through Jesus. He came to tell us that He has prepared heaven for us. He came to tell us that if we believe in Jesus we also believe in the Father. He came to tell us that He and the Father are one in essence. There are two persons, Father and Son, but there is only one God. He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. He came to bring us God's Word, God's Truth. He once said: "Your Word is Truth." Jn. 17:17. Jesus' Truth comforts us in our sorrows, guides us in our fears and assures us that He is the Good Shepherd Who lays down His life for the sheep. Why did He rise from the dead? He said: "Because I live you too will live." Jn. 14:19.

III-JESUS IS THE LIFE. The wages of sin is death. Rom. 6:23. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Rom. 3:23. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 6:23. And all those who have sinned are justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. All will die but Jesus has saved all and offers them eternal life. Jesus told the sorrowing sisters: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, even though he dies, he will live. And he who lives and believes in Me, shall never die." Jn. 11:25-26. And then He asks: "Do you believe this?"

And we answer with Mary: "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, Who has come into the world."

Conclusion: Jesus is the Way, the Truth, the Life. He is everything.