

**Difficulty:**  
**The Context of Spiritual Growth**  
**John 13:21-30, 36-38; 14:1-3, 27; 15:11, 18-20; 16:16, 20-24**  
**Sermon Outline**

**Introduction:** What should Christians expect in this life? Joy or sadness? Progress or set-backs? Peace or struggle? Jesus says we should expect both (we live in the “already but not yet” time). Jesus promises to help.

**I) The ‘already’**

**A) Something very big has happened**

*16.16, 20: A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me...You will weep and lament...you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy. I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.*

**B) What this means for us now**

Christianity isn’t a bunch of ideas about how to be good and happy. It is a story, and we live now inside the happy last chapter of that story because of what Jesus had done.

*14.1-3: Let not your hearts be troubled...I go to prepare a place for you...I will come again and will take you to myself.*

*15.19: You are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world*

*14.27: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled; neither let them be afraid.*

A peace that does not depend on feelings or circumstances. A place that will never be lost.

**II) The ‘not yet’**

*13.21, 28; 16.20: Truly, truly I say to you....*

People, even people inside the church, will betray and hurt us.

We, like Peter, will wimp out because of pressure

Sad things will happen

**III) Help and hope**

*15.11: ...My joy in you*

*16.33: ...in me you have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart, I have overcome the world*

*15.23: One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Jesus*

**Take away**

Keep coming back to Jesus

### Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Have you been disappointed as a Christian? What happened? Why was it a disappointment?
- 2) Christianity is not a bunch of ideas about how to be good and happy. It is God's rescue story and declares that we live inside the last triumphant chapter. Read John 16:16-24 in its historical context, as a promise not to you but to the disheartened disciples who were about to lose Jesus to a terrible death. What does Jesus promise to them? When was v 22 fulfilled for them? What did that fulfillment mean for them? For us?
- 3) In John 14:27 Jesus promises his disciples and us a peace that is not like the peace that the world gives. What is the peace like that the world gives? What does it depend on? How certain is it? How is the peace that Christ gives different? Think both of objective peace (God's declaration that his war with you and your sin is over because of the cross) and subjective peace (the experience of the 'peace that passes understanding' (Philippians 4.6) that flows from and is based upon the objective peace.
- 4) At least three times in John 13-16 (13.21, 28; 16.20), Jesus issues a solemn warning beginning with, "Truly, truly, I say to you..." What does he predict in each case? Why is he so solemn about it? Extend each of the warnings to yourself and your experience. Why is it important for us to take these warnings to heart?
- 5) Jesus tells us in John 13-16 that we should expect the bad with the good, the sorrowful with the joyful, setbacks with encouragements. But his overall message is up-beat. Why? What deep hope permeates Jesus' account?
- 6) The key to living through the 'already but not yet' experience appears in John 15.1-8, where Jesus urges us to 'abide in him'. How do we do this? Why is it so important to do this? Ask for help to stay close and make a plan for improving your fellowship with him.