Introduction
1. The opposite of joy is not sorrow. It is unbelief.¹ Never considered such a thought at all. (Show)
   a. Some things just make you stop and say, That is right! Source of all true joy is the Lord.
   b. (Read Nehemiah 8:10). Our relationship w/Lord is based upon faith.
   c. Unbelief blocks that relationship so when sorrow arises, we can’t combat it w/joy of Lord.
2. R. A. Torrey concluded a church service where layout required people to file out past stage.
   a. Tall man about 60 came by stage & scowling said, “I am an unbeliever.” Torrey said 
   b. You don’t need to tell me. Your face shows it. Have one of most wretched faces ever saw.
   c. Man said nothing. Next day letter came. I am wretched. How be anything but wretched?
   d. There is nothing in unbelief to meet the deepest needs of the human heart. Nothing in unbelief to transform the sorrows of life into joys. Intelligent faith in Christ fills the life with sunshine. Unbelief fills the heart with clouds and despair.²
3. There it is. The opposite of joy is not sorrow. It is unbelief.
   a. Whatever builds our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ also builds our joy amidst sorrow.
   b. (Show Title/Text) Jesus does 2 things: Teaches us about sorrow. Teaches us about joy.

I. Jesus teaches us to expect sorrow, vv. 16-19.
A. Section Deals with Disciples’ Emotions
   1. Sorrow occurs 5xs in chap., vv. 6, 20², 21, 22. No attempt to shield from coming sorrow.
      a. Weep/lament = Jewish grieving practices in mourning = profound inner sadness.³
      b. Read v. 1 = Jesus main concern not protecting them from sorrow. Faith from failing.
   2. Jesus knows if our faith fails then sorrow will win, and we will give in to despair.
   3. But if our faith in Him remains strong then sorrow will not win because faith brings joy.
   4. And joy in the Lord’ll counteract destructive effects of sorrow that cause wretchedness.
B. False Assumptions about Being a Christian
   1. Aren’t you grateful that passages like this remove false views of being a Christian.
      b. Then a huge tragedy happens & think, I didn’t think this how God treats His children.
      c. If Jesus allows this to happen to His children, I don’t want any part of it.
      d. There is here not even the hint that Jesus will rescue them out of their sufferings.⁴
e. God does not seal His children in a plastic bag and remove them from the stern realities of life.
   God’s laws work equally for all. The Christian lives in a physical body and is subject to germs, disease, and death like any other person.⁵
   2. Being a Christian does not mean we escape the real world; it means equipping to face it.

II. Jesus transforms sorrow into joy, vv. 20-24. (Show)
A. Your Sorrow Will Turn into Joy, v. 20.
   1. All Christians should have this verse highlighted/marked in Bibles. Very critical point.
      a. Turn into = experience a change in nature…entry into a new condition.⁶

b. Jesus does not say to the disciples He will spare them from the sorrow about to come.  
c. What He will do is transform their attitudes so that despite sorrow they will have joy.  

B. We Know The Future Plan, Not Just The Present Reality, vv. 20-21.  
1. Notice how this phrase little while confused the disciples, vv. 16-18. 7xs in verses.  
   a. 1st little while = Jesus’ death; 2nd little while = resurrection & appearances to them.  
   b. They were not expecting this. As many xs. as Jesus told them, could not see plan.  
   c. When Jesus died they were thrown into confusion, despair, sorrow & defeat. Why?  
2. They misunderstood the O.T. and how God’s plan for the Messiah would unfold.  
   a. Read Isaiah 9:6. (Show) What does this look like’ll happen when Messiah comes?  
   b. He will take over the government and rule as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, etc.  
   c. Isa. 9:7 makes it even more emphatic. They completely missed Isaiah 53:4-5.  
   d. Because they could not see the plan accurately, joy could not transform the sorrow.  
3. But Jesus could see the plan couldn’t He? He not only knew how Scripture fit together,…  
   a. He knew the future & He knew after His death’d come resurrection, ascension, & H.S.  
   b. And He knew the disciples, transformed by all of this, would turn world upside down.  
4. How many of us find anything but delight at sight of this precious baby? (Show) Awe!  
   a. But how delightful was it just a few hrs before when mother went thru labor pains?  
   b. Isn’t it amazing that the same baby that caused the pain also caused the joy, v. 21?  
   c. The mother endures the pain because she knows the joy that is coming.  
5. Jesus’ death caused the disciples pain. But that same death = forgiveness, life, future.  
   a. They could not see it then, but once Jesus’ appeared to them it’d all become clear.  
   b. The very event that caused them sorrow would be turned into joy. (Show words)  
   c. As H.S. taught them, see cross necessary to bring God’s ultimate plan to pass.  
6. We know the plan don’t we? (Show Biblical Events Timeline)8 H.S. revealed in Bible.  
   a. At 1st coming Jesus die/rise again/ascend to heaven. Build His Church thru believers.  
   b. Return at Rapture take believers home. Follow period of Tribulation. 2nd Coming.  
   c. Establish Kingdom 1000-yrs, believers rule w/Him. Finally defeat Satan.  
   d. Make a new heaven/new earth where we will dwell forever w/Lord. We know plan.  
7. R.C. Sproul said most notable thing about heaven is what is absent as well as present.  
   a. Things absent include: (1) tears, (2) sorrow, (3) death, (4) pain, (5) darkness, (6) ungodly people, (7) sin, (8) temples, (9) the sun or moon, and (10) the curse from Adam’s sin (see Genesis 3:14-19).  
   b. What will be present includes: (1) the saints, (2) the river of the water of life, (3) healing fruit, (4) the Lamb of God, (5) worship, (6) the wedding feast of the Lamb and His bride, (7) the unveiled face of God, and (8) the Sun of Righteousness.9  
8. Everything that causes sorrow will be replaced by what causes joy. That’s the plan.  
C. We Know Present Joy, Not Just Future Joy, v. 22.  
   1. This seems like pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by. Is there anything we can experience now?  
   2. Look what Jesus promised in v. 22 – a present experience.  
   3. This is exactly what happened after the resurrection. Look at John 20:19-20.  

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a. **Glad = They were filled with joy (delight, exultation, ecstasy, rapture).**

b. And this never left the disciples no matter how much they suffered, Acts 5:40-42.

c. They knew Jesus was with them; doing His work; privilege know & serve Him.

4. This joy can be with us even in our hardest trials.
   a. Some of the most pathetic people in the world are those who, in the midst of adversity, indulge themselves by wallowing in self-pity and bitterness, all the while taking a sort of delight in blaming God for their problems.
   b. Christians can face tribulation, crisis, calamity and personal suffering with a supernatural power that is not available to the person outside of Christ.

5. That supernatural power = Christ w/in us, what Jesus said = joy no one’ll take from you.

D. **We Know Answered Prayer, Not Just Unanswered Prayer, vv. 23-24.**

1. Key to understanding this is that Jesus uses two words for ask.
   a. V. 23a ask = ask a question. V. 23b-24 = ask for something (a request).
   b. The disciples no longer ask Jesus questions, because H.S. guide into all truth.
   c. Disciples have new privilege – asking Father in Jesus name after Jesus left.

2. Oswald Chambers in his classic devotional *My Utmost for His Highest* explains this well.

3. Oswald Chambers interprets praying in Christ’s name as asking anything “in my nature.” This simply means that we are to ask for what Christ would want, not just our own spontaneous desires. Prayer is not a means by which we get God to do what we want. Rather, it is a means by which God does through us what he wants. Chambers says, “The idea of prayer is not in order to get answers from God: prayer is perfect and complete oneness with God.”

4. So prayer is cooperating with God by being “at one” with Him in our desires.

5. 2 amazing things happen when pray that way. *Father’ll give it you. Your joy may be full.*

6. Gladys Aylward knew this kind of prayer & this kind of joy. Missionary to China. (Show)
   a. Books written about her. Movie about her starring actress Ingrid Bergman. (Show)
   b. When child had 2 great sorrows: 1) Friends beautiful golden hair, hers black.
   c. 2) Other friends still growing, she had stopped. She was about 4ft. 10in. tall.
   d. When God called her to be missionary to China she arrived in Shanghai.
   e. As stood on dock and looked at all of the people God called her to reach, she said:
      i. *Every single one of them had black hair.*
      ii. *And every one of them had stopped growing when I did.*
      iii. She exclaimed, *Lord God, You know what You’re doing!*!
   f. She lived a life of extraordinary usefulness, joy and answers to prayer.
   g. *The eagle that soars in the upper air does not worry itself how it is to cross rivers.*

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12 John 16:23.


