

Sermon Series: “Good News for Life”
“Joy Comes with the Mo(u)rning”
Pastor Norwood N. “Woody” Hingle III, Ph.D.
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Have you ever suffered for something— and then found that joy was just around the corner? E.g., I recall when I had my shoulder surgery about 20 years ago I was a little worried about it; I had never undergone surgery and I knew as with any surgery there are risks, and I knew it was an elective surgery— my shoulder had popped out three times but it was back in now. But I also knew it was likely to pop out again. So I had the surgery, and I recall when I woke up from the anesthesia how excited I was that it was all over. All I had to do was to recover and go through physical therapy, which I gladly did. You too have probably been through a rough time in your life— maybe it was a surgery, or going through school, or had a rough time at work— only to make it through and see the joy that was just around the corner. As we will see in today’s passage, Jesus’ original disciples were like that, and His disciples today are too! Please listen for the occurrence of χαίρω (2x)— to rejoice— and χαρά (4x)— joy— in these nine verses.

READ John 16:16-24 (pp. 110-111)

CONTEXT: Jesus has just explained that it is to the disciples' advantage that He go away, because when He does go He will send His Holy Spirit, the Advocate, who will lead them into all truth, and convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgement. Jesus continues to comfort them about His upcoming departure.

READ vv 16-20a. "Jesus promised His disciples two polar-opposite things in the future: First, they would have extraordinary pain. Cf. Psalm 22:1-5." Have you ever had extraordinary pain? The type of pain which will stop you in your tracks? E.g., I recall reading in the recent *Sports Illustrated* (June, 2021, pp. 54-61) about Alex Smith, who severely broke his leg in a way that broke through the skin a couple of years ago and had to deal with flesh-eating bacterial infection which almost caused him to have his leg amputated, but came back last year and played for the Washington Redskins and won the 2020 Comeback Player of the Year honors, and decided now to retire—he had a lot of physical pain for sure! Yet pain can be not only physical, but also emotional, can't it? E.g., I recall when someone's father died the pain was so great that the woman bent over in agony, she missed him so much. The separation of loved ones from each other is painful. E.g., Biddie Chambers after her beloved husband Oswald Chambers died after about seven years of marriage, as we discussed last summer for those who read about it, was an extraordinary agony; she never remarried, nor do I think she even dated. We come to realized the agony Jesus had on the cross in being separated from His Father, as He quoted from Psalm 22; READ vv 1-5. Even the psalmist, as Jesus probably implied, knew that deliverance was just around the corner.

READ vv 20b-22. "Second, the disciples would have unimaginable joy! Cf. Psalm 30:1-5." Jesus' words here remind me of the beautiful words of Psalm 30:1-5; READ. What has been unimaginable joy for you? E.g., maybe when your favorite sports team wins it all, as in the Saints winning the Super Bowl in 2009; I recall someone who jumped up when the Saints won that he injured his leg! E.g.,

I recall a family vacation on which I went when I was young where when we got to the hotel— my favorite, The Grand Hotel in Point Clear, Alabama— I not only wanted to jump for joy, but I actually did in the hotel room— but fortunately no injury! E.g., I recall when we returned from Scotland and we had Norwood in tote— he was a little over a year— and he was named for my Dad, and at the airport was the first time they met, and how happy he was, and how happy that made me! You too have probably had joys like these, whether with sports or family reunions or getting married, or graduating from high school or college, or something else. These are certainly wonderful joys. But they only scratch the surface of the joy of seeing Jesus when He returns!

READ vv 23-24. “This second promise would also open up a remarkable power to which the disciples would have access. Cf. 14:13; 15:7,16; James 5:13-18.” This promise of answered prayer in Jesus’ name is found multiple times in the John’s gospel, as well as in the synoptic gospels. Jesus wanted His disciples to take Him up on this. READ James 5:13-18. Have you ever asked for something of the Lord that was bold. E.g, Brother Andrew, as told in the book *God’s Smuggler*, had a great ministry in the 1950’s and later smuggling in Bibles and Christian literature into Communist bloc counties like Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc., and his prayer to the Lord was to make “seeing eyes blind”, and God did— he would drive up to the border crossings with his little VW Bug filled with boxes of Bibles and such and the guards would look at the boxes and see nothing suspicious and let him through the gate! God answered this prayer miraculously! And he had another amazing prayer request after his first engagement ended with the woman not wanting to participate in ministry— she wanted him to pursue a lucrative job at a chocolate factory. He asked God twice for a wife, and no wife came, and finally he told the Lord he would not badger Him, but ask Him one more time, and then let it be, and then while he was in prayer one day the Lord brought to mind a young Christian woman he knew—

Corrie van Dam, and he pursued her, and they got married! Brother Andrew related, “I opened the Bible to the back cover and scribbled one last notation, ‘Prayed. . . For . . . Wife. . . Third time. . . Witte, July 7. . . 1957.’ Then I closed the Bible with a snap. ‘Some people, Lord, are built for the lonely walk. But not me, please. Not me.’ It wasn’t until September that anything happened that I could interpret as an answer. And then one morning in the middle of my prayer time, a face suddenly floated in front of me. Long blond hair. A smile that made the sun come out. Eyes never twice the same shade. Corrie. Corrie van Dam. The thought of her had come to me so unexpectedly, so completely independently of what I was thinking at the moment, that I wondered with a leap of my heart if the thought was God’s, if He were showing me the beyond-wildest-dreams answer to my prayers” (p. 112). So he went to her house; the house was shuttered. He went to her nursing school in another town, but she was at home in an apartment caring for her very ill Father. So Andrew went and found them, visited her Dad, and spoke with her. Then when he died, he pursued her, and asked her to marry him, but to wait to give him an answer when he had returned from his trip smuggling Bibles and Christian literature into Hungary, so she could know whether she wanted that kind of life, and when he returned from the trip he approached her as she was leaving the hospital where she served as a nurse in a long 3-11 shift. “‘I’m back, Corrie,’ I said. ‘And I love you. I love you whether the answer is yes or no.’ Corrie looked tired from the hours on her feet. But when she laughed, the weariness seemed to drop away. ‘Oh Andy!’ she said, ‘I love you, too! Don’t you see that’s just the trouble? I’m going to worry about you, and miss you, and pray for you, no matter what. So hadn’t I better be a worried wife than just a cranky friend?’ Together, the following wee, we went to a jeweler in Haarlem and brought two wedding rings. In Holland the custom is to wear the ring on the left hand during the engagement and transfer it to the right at the marriage ceremony. Corrie and I carried the rings up to her little sitting room in the top of

the casele. There we opened the boxes and each of us placed a ring on the other's hand. 'Corrie, ' I began, not know ing that I was saying for the first time words that wer to become a kind of motto for us, 'Corrie, we dont; know where rthe road leads, do we?' 'But Andy,' she finished for me, 'let's go there together'" (p. 122)."

"What is your and my request in His name?" In other words, for His glory? That someone you know would accept Him as Lord and Savior; then we should pray. That a ministry opportunity would open for you to start a Bible study, or share the gospel with someone; then we should pray. That God would bring a Christian spouse into our lives; then we should pray. The sky is the limit, because our God has *no limits!*