

# Hanging Out With Jesus: How To Experience Joy Even If You're Hurting

Unedited Transcript

*John 16:16-33*

Good morning, men! Welcome to Man in the Mirror Men's Bible Study, where we always have room for one more guy! Let's go ahead and do a shout out to one of the groups meeting around the country and around the world. Today the group is Capital Men of Capital Christian Center in Meridian, ID. These are 6 men who have met weekly for 4+ years at 7 pm on Thursday s at the church using the Video Bible Study. Jim Phillips is their leader. So I wonder if you would join me giving a rousing Man in the Mirror welcome to Capital Men. One, two, three, hoorah! Welcome guys, we're really glad to have you with us!

So we're in the series Hanging Out With Jesus, and by the way, this will be the final message that Jesus gives to his disciples before his death. It also will be the final message for us for a while because we'll be moving into some other things. We'll come back to the high priestly prayer that Jesus prayed right after this message later on in the year. The title of this message today is How To Experience Joy Even If You're Hurting.

I met a man this week, his name is Doug. Doug is an elite athlete, or should I say was. He was a cyclist, and was part of a group of men that road on a regular basis. He was out on a long ride on cement, and something was amiss in his rear tire. Some bearing broke or something like that, and he went into a curve and probably wasn't going to make the curve anyway, because of the condition of the wheel. He knew he was going down, and he had just had some road rash in the previous few weeks and he really didn't want to go down in the road again. He had been down fifty times before in other accidents, but he looked off to the side of the road and there was this green pasture, this green grass that looked lush and thought it would be so wonderful to fall there. So he decided to go ahead and put himself down there. What he didn't realize was that the grass was over 2 feet deep. So he ended up hitting a culvert, and landing upside down. His feet were caught in barbed wire and he was paralyzed from the chest down. I spoke at a prayer breakfast on Wednesday morning and he was the person that everybody there knew that gave a little testimony. Doug described that even though he went through this horrific accident that because of God, because of Jesus, he has never ever once experienced a second thought. He has never ever once done anything except thank God for sparing his life and he has been filled with joy, not grief for the entire experience. You know that every one of us experiences hard times, trouble, trouble, trouble. Some men, like Doug, are able to say that even in the midst of these sorrows, even in the midst of these grief's that they have experienced one blessing after another. They experience joy. But there are others of us when we go through these difficult times, we're wondering what's going on! Where is the joy? I thought you were my God! Why are you letting this happen to me? And you have these two very different responses to these hard times, to these troubles. So today I want us to see how Jesus tells us that we can experience joy even when we're hurting

**What Does Jesus Want His Disciples To Know?**

First up, what does Jesus want his disciples to know. We're in John 16 and I want us to begin at verse 16. The situation is that in 24 hours Jesus is going to be dead. The disciples are going to be scattered. They're already confused about what's going on. They're being hunted by the authorities. Jesus is a threat to power, power wants to destroy him. You can think about any number of countries where you have people in power who are not righteous and then someone comes along who is speaking for the truth and speaking for the right and how they want to quell that. They're scared, and Jesus says in verse 16:

"In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."

Some of his disciples said to one another what does he mean? By saying in a little while you will see me no more and then after a little while you will see me? And because I am going to the Father? And they kept asking what does he mean? A little while? We don't understand what he's saying.

Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this and so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'?" <sup>20</sup>Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices.

R. C. Sproul has a commentary on John. I was reading it. R. C.'s quite a golfer and he said there's a saying among golfers: somebody's happy with every shot, because there's a competition going on. If you make a good shot, that makes you happy. If you make a bad shot, that makes somebody else happy. That's what's happening here, the death of Jesus is going to make his disciples very sad, filled with grief and mourning. But it's going to make the world rejoice. What is that Jesus wants them and us to know about what's going to happen? Reading on:

You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

So the first thing that's going to happen is that the grieving and mourning of the disciples, them then, and also us now, it's going to turn to joy. In fact, I'm always looking for what is the one thing that if properly understood and truly believed could change everything? For me, and then also because I know it will change my life, I know it will change your life, too! What is that one thing in the text that we're taking a look at that, if I really understand it and I truly believe it, could change everything for my life? This is it! And this is the Big Idea for today: **Jesus promises that your grief will end in joy.** Jesus has just promised this! Jesus promises that your grief will end in joy! Look at it again! You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

Nobody really understands for sure. Different scholars believe that in a little while is probably in historical context. In other words, Jesus is going to die, he's going to be resurrected, and then they are going to physically see him again. Other scholars believe no, it's more figurative, in that Jesus is referring to how he will be with them in the person of the Holy Spirit. He said I will come to you in the person of the Holy Spirit, and so some think it's that. Whether it's this or that, we know what it is for us; it's that Jesus will figuratively be with us in the presence of the power of the Holy Spirit, that's how we get it. So the first thing he wants us to see as his disciples is that our grief is going to turn to joy. Your grief! Whatever situation you're in is going to turn to joy! It's going to happen in a little while! Paul wrote that our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us a glory that far outweighs them all. And so our lives are happening not in earth time only, but even more so they are taking place in Bible time! With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. But this is the promise, whatever situation you're in, your grief, if you are a disciple of Jesus, is going to turn to joy!

This is like every week, but especially this week; I meet men who are going through excruciating marital struggles! So after the prayer breakfast, a man came up this week to speak to me. He was the last guy to talk to me, and I always know the last guy, the one who's hanging back is probably the one who is hurting the most, because he's wanting everybody else to clear out. He was not even with the group putting on the prayer breakfast, nor its attendees, he crashed the prayer breakfast! He had met David Delk a few months ago, and he's going through an excruciating marital situation. I don't have permission to tell you the details, but he had been separated from his wife. He was about to lose everything! He had everything, has a big job, but about to lose it all. Filled with such grief, such anguish that he began even as he was talking to me to weep. Whatever situation you're in, Jesus knows what you're going through.

It might be you grew up in a dysfunctional home. I wrote an article on the 13 characteristics of men who grew up in dysfunctional homes this week, and I've been hearing from men from all over the country who've said I can't believe this list! These 13 things here! Most of the guys are saying I've got all of them! I have to guess at normal behavior, I have difficulty following projects through from beginning to end, I lie when it would be just as easy to tell the truth, I judge myself without mercy, I have difficulty having fun, and so on. You may have grown up in a dysfunctional home, and you have this sort of amorphous pain that just is with you all the time. Jesus has promised your grief will turn to joy!

Maybe you're depressed right now because of your circumstances. That's okay! Your grief is going to turn into joy! Maybe you're poor. Maybe you've just always struggled with money. Maybe you are a racist. Maybe you have been the subject of racism, and you just have nothing but grief! Or you've had a lot of grief, you've had a lot of sorrow, you've had a lot of trouble. Life has been hard! And Jesus is making a promise that your grief is going to turn to joy, and we're going to talk about how that's going to happen here in just a moment.

I don't think we'll have time to go into detail about it, but not only is your grief going to turn into joy, but down in verse 23:

<sup>23</sup> In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. <sup>24</sup> Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Down in verse 29:

<sup>29</sup> Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. <sup>30</sup> Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."

<sup>31</sup> "Do you now believe?" Jesus replied. <sup>32</sup> "A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone (which of course they did). Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.

Then he says this:

<sup>33</sup> "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

In this world, you're going to have trouble. Trouble, trouble, trouble! You're going to have trouble in this world disciples! But take heart, I have overcome this world and I am promising you that your grief will end in joy! Why is that? Verse 27:

the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.<sup>28</sup> I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

Your grief, whatever it is, is going to end in joy.

### **Why Do Men Experience Different Results?**

Why do men then experience such different results? One of the men who responded to this article I wrote on 13 characteristics of men who grew up in dysfunctional homes, he said I was stunned to read this list. I grew up in a home with a violent alcoholic and addicted father. It got so bad that my mother took my siblings and me and we had to flee, and that eventually led to a divorce. He said I was basically on my own at age 5, I was actually in charge, always. I had to be an adult. I was able to cope pretty well through my 20s and 30s and now I'm in my 40s and I have 2 toddlers. Here's what he wrote:

I feel like I have no control while trying to move my life forward and trying to provide for my family. It is frustrating being educated and very skilled and yet not knowing how to put the pieces together that are all so ill-fitted to begin with.

One group of men doesn't experience the results that Jesus is promising because they've never been disciplined. They don't understand the Gospel. Let's call this man Adam. With his permission I'm telling his story. Adam, I wrote him back and I asked him do you have a small group of guys that you get together with on a regular basis to do life together with? Tell me about your devotional life? He wrote back and said I'm not in a small group. I've never thought about that. He's never even thought about being part of a small group. Why? Because nobody ever took him under his wing and showed him what it means to be a man of God! Has never shown him Biblical manhood! Then he said my devotional life is spotty, I don't read daily. I'm often distracted with other things like university work, gym, errands, yard work, etc. When I do read, I do read a lot, but I don't even know if it's what I should be reading! He's never been disciplined, you see? Unlike you who are being disciplined. So he doesn't know what to do, and he has this grief, this pain that he lives with. Contrast that with Doug who has been paralyzed from the chest down in a tragic cycling accident who is filled with joy because he has been disciplined. He's leaning in to Christ! Suffering compels us to seek the God that success makes us think we don't need. Because of his troubles, he's actually leaning in more to his discipleship, and because of that he's walking in this joy that Jesus is promising here. This is the one thing if properly understood and truly believed could change everything! But you have to be disciplined into this! The Big Idea today: **Jesus promises that your grief will end in joy.** When? You don't know, because it's going to happen in Bible time, it's just going to unfold. But the ability to cling to this promise is what keeps Doug going. He can't move his feet, he can't walk, he's in a wheel chair for the rest of his life. Maybe not, who knows? But he's in a wheel chair, but the promise that his grief will end in joy, amazing!

### **How Can You Experience Joy Even If You're Hurting?**

Finally, how can you experience this kind of joy even if you're hurting? So the first thing of course is you need to have the right theology. You need to have the right belief. Jesus when he said I will always be with you, you have to decide if you really believe that's true or not. This is at the end of the great

commission. Lo, I will be with you always, even to the end of the age. Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you. Do you believe this? Because if you do, then when Jesus says my grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness, then that means something because you have him with you in this trouble, this weakness! Paul said that's why I delight in weaknesses, hardships, insults, persecutions, difficulties, because when I am weak, then I'm strong! So I'm going to boast about my weaknesses so Christ's power may rest upon me, and the expression of that power is this life of joy. Joy joy joy! Trouble trouble trouble! Ah, joy! Why? Because Jesus has promised that that grief will end in Joy.

My literary agent is Robert Wolgemuth. His wife is going to be dead by thanksgiving. She's been battling cancer for the last several years, and they've just decided to stop chemo therapy. You know what she said? She has been like Doug. She has been this joyful person! She has had this incredible ministry to all of the people, the other patients, the staff at the different medical centers where they've gone and they've tried all kinds of different therapies. You know what she said? I wouldn't go back. God has done such amazing things that I wouldn't go back. She is experiencing the joy even in her grief! Just like Jesus said, in this world you will have troubles, but take heart! I have overcome the world! You can take heart! She has taken heart, even in the middle of these troubles!

So here are the 4 things I suggested to Adam so that he could experience joy, even though he's hurting, and it's all about becoming a disciple, to really grasp your discipleship. First thing I told him, make sure you are part of a church with a disciple making culture. Make sure that you are part of a church with a disciple making culture. Listen, there are lots of churches, and it makes me sad to say this, it really does, but there are lots of churches that do not care whether or not their people become disciples. I think intellectually they care, they know it's important, but by the way they actually prioritize and do things... Andrew Carnegie said the older you get the less you should pay attention to what people say, just watch what they do. When you watch what these churches do, they're not making disciples! And it makes me sad to have to see this, but if you're not in a church that is making disciples, you should move. If you are not already a powerful, strong, Doug like, Bobbie Wolgemuth like disciple and you're in a church that is not making disciples, you're not going to reform them. You are not going to reform that church! Maybe one or two of you might if you spend 20 years at it, but cultures are set from the top down. You're not going to change that culture. And if you have young children, the risk is far too great to your children to pay the price for your desire to be a reformer! Get into a church that has a disciple making culture. And by the way, if you want to experience joy on an ongoing basis, even when you're hurting, and you're in a church that doesn't have a disciple making culture, who's going to surround you? Who's going to love you and care for you? What is discipleship? It's when God puts somebody in your path who is stuck, discipleship means finding out why and helping them solve that problem. So if it's not a disciple making culture, there are not any people in the church who are trying to figure out the problem you're struggling with and how to solve it! Often, it's just trying to put you to work.

Second, ask for someone to take you under their wing and disciple you. And by the way, there are lots of pastors who have never been disciplined. Did you know this? There are lots and lots of pastors who have never been disciplined. You can have been a Christian for 10, 15, 20 or more years and never been disciplined. If you've never been disciplined, it's going to be a little hard to experience joy if you're hurting. Ask somebody to take you under their wing and disciple you.

Third, this is speaking to Adam and all of us, begin a daily routine of spending time with the Lord. Start small. Read a chapter out of the New Testament. Pray the Lord's prayer. Start small, but spending time

with God the Father who loves you, Jesus who died for you, the Holy Spirit who wants to animate your life with his presence and power.

Finally, begin making disciples, starting with your own family! Nothing will help you grasp the truth of God than helping other people grasp the truth of God. These kids, no ministry you will ever have is more important than helping your children understand the truth of God, these ones who have been entrusted to us. Those are four steps you can take to experience joy even when you're hurting.

The thing is, when you become a disciple, you really do come to that place where you believe, really believe, fully understand and really believe. This one thing out of today's lesson that will change everything is that **Jesus promises that your grief will end in joy**. You can be a joyful person, even in the midst of these troubles! So let's pray!

### **Closing Prayer**

Our dearest Father, Lord, thank you for giving us your word. Jesus, thank you for this promise that your joy will never leave us, it will remain in us! So Lord, some of us have been discipled and yes we have these troubles but we do take heart because we've been discipled. There is joy and sorrow for us, but Lord, others of us have never been discipled into the truth of your Gospel, so we just have trouble, trouble, trouble and we wonder where is the joy? I pray for every man who hears this message to examine his own heart, to see if he's in a disciple making church, to seriously go after somebody to take him under his wing, to have a small group, a strong devotional life and to start making disciples of others! Start growing, expanding, so that this promise and the other promises of your word will not only be their intellectual knowledge but their actual experience. I pray this for every man here, in Jesus' name, amen!