

Jesus Never Leaves Us

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[0:00] We live in a world with many trials.

And the Lord once said that in this life we will experience tribulation. I tell people, and this isn't original with me. Nothing is original with me.

But I tell people, don't focus on or spend any inordinate amount of time focusing on some particular trial you're having in life right now because eventually that's going to go away and be replaced with something worse anyway.

So why spend a lot of energy, you know, focusing on it? Trials are interesting in that most people endure them. I mean, they'll even say, you know, Lord, you've given me more than I can handle this time if we get to the other end.

They may not think they're going to make it through, but in reality we almost always survive the trials of life.

[1:14] The greatest aid to enduring and surviving the trial of life, of course, is hope. If a man or a woman can see a ray of hope at the end of the tunnel, they can almost always endure the trial.

And of course, for the believer, our hope is in Jesus Christ. And it's a settled hope. It is an established hope. You know, I can hope right now that this chair holds me up.

It may, it may not. And if it breaks with my left knee, I promise you I'm going to go to the floor. But Christian hope is a settled hope. Settled eons ago by the Lord Jesus.

Settled eons ago by the Lord Jesus Christ.

us or did we move away from him by our actions and our thoughts and our sin life so just always remember that just when he seems very distant ask who moved who created that distance and once we make it through the trial we discover that God was there all the time you remember the great plaque or the picture of why didn't you leave me when times got really tough I don't see my feet in the sand anymore he said that's when I carried you I love that but we discover God was there in the times of greatest difficulty he carries us now people need hope and we need hope that the trial is going to one day end people talk to me all the time about and believers you know the condition of the world things are going to say look I read the end of the book read the end of the book and you'll see the hope I'm talking about

[3:35] Israel needed hope when they woke up and found they were in bondage to the Babylonians God came to them through a prophet told them he knew about their suffering but he had plans for them to one day prosper that great that brought them great hope in the midst of great trial the same was true of the bondage in Egypt that the Hebrews had it was a great bondage lasted 430 years and as difficult as it was many of the Hebrews remembered God had promised that one day he would send a deliverer and of course we know he did in the person of Moses a type of Christ an example of what it would be like someday for the Messiah to be sent as the deliverer when the Lord Jesus was born into the human family he came as a Jew and this is this is both interesting and important to understand when Jesus came to earth born of the

Virgin Mary the Jewish people the nation was at rock bottom I think my personal opinion is the second advent of Christ is going to be similar to his first advent he came to a people in his first advent born of a woman and they were rock bottom in bondage certainly in bondage by the Romans but also by religion false religion I see many parallels today I see the true church numerically getting smaller and smaller and I see the false church and there's plenty of them out there getting larger and maybe maybe we're building toward the second coming of Christ I do know he's closer right now than he was when I woke up this morning to return Roman oppression when Jesus came was at his zenith many people thought that God had abandoned them but God was sending to them the ultimate deliverer not only to the Jews but to the Gentiles as

well now in our study in John we're at chapter 16 and we see a band of disciples that for all practical purposes are without hope the Lord has made it very clear to them that he is going away and they didn't want to hear that in fact Peter who was often infected with foot and mouth disease said no you're not you're not going away and you're sure not going away by way of death on a cross but the Lord had made it clear to them that he was going away and actually when he says this in the context of chapter 16 that going away is soon within hours he's going to be handed over by the Hebrew or the religious establishment of Israel they're going to hand him over because it wasn't lawful for them to put someone to death only the Romans could do that so he's going to be handed over to the Romans and declared innocent by Pilate and sentenced to death what a miscarriage of justice under the law and under the Roman law under the Hebrew law and the Roman law two of the bases of our law today by the way but he's going to be handed over by the religious establishment to the secular government who will murder him so the Lord we find him now still in the upper room and he is selflessly spending his final night on earth his final hours trying to comfort his followers who are in great sorrow now think about that

I mean this happened at some point in history and they're in the upper room and Jesus is trying to comfort them and I don't think we would have been any different than the disciples but in truth they should have been comforting him he told them what he was getting ready to endure and they were the ones that should have been comforting him he would soon face a time without the presence of the father and the spirit only time in eternity and we can't comprehend that we see a glimpse of it he's going to have to go it alone with his Roman executioners even the disciples are going to abandon him and here we find them mourning their own loss and seeking

[9:31] Jesus to comfort them now under stress the human mind hears what it wants to hear and Jesus had repeatedly told his followers he's going to be handed over to the Roman authorities and he's going to be crucified and they knew what crucifixion was that was the method of execution by Rome and he had repeatedly told them that but he went on to tell them that he's going to be raised from the dead he would come out of the grave and I think by and large they didn't hear that part they would remember it later but they're focused on the cross they're going to lose the man they thought was the messiah and of course they had a Jewish concept of the messiah which death on the cross didn't fit that and they're all questioning it and some are starting to doubt

I threw in with this guy and now he's telling me he's going to die on a cross and everybody that dies on a tree is cursed of God that's back in the old testament so we see Jesus with the cross looming ever nearer bringing words of comfort to the disciples John 16:16 a little while and you will see and you will see me no longer and again a little while you will see me you're not going to see me and then you're going to see me interesting words and twice in that little verse the Lord uses the phrase a little while now the interpretation of these two phrases has gone on for centuries and there's really been no absolute resolution to the debate within

Christian theology the first little while obviously refers to his crucifixion in a little while he is going to die he's going to be taken down from the cross he's going to be placed in a tomb which is essentially a cave hollowed out placed in the wall of a mountain and he says you're not going to see me and that's not the debate but then he says in a little while you will see me and that's where the debate lies and scholars have come up basically with three interpretive possibilities and actually I'm kind of comfortable with a couple of them but I'll just give them to you and you can decide then when we get to heaven

Jesus can correct us the first is that you will not see me and then in three days I will be resurrected and you will see me again and let me say to you that is very widely held as the proper interpretation the problem with it is that this period of time only stretched forty days and then the Lord departed again taken up in a cloud and that would have plunged them into sadness again well he said we're going to see him and he's going to be with us and now he's going again another suggestion is that the second little while refers to the second coming of Christ they will see him die they will one day see him return in power and triumph but that's going to put at least two thousand years between those two phrases in a little while and a little while and you got a two thousand year valley not impossible but there have been not a lot of widespread support for that there's a third interpretation and perhaps this is the correct one the Lord's promise that he will return in a little while after being crucified might refer to the coming of his spirit that he's going to send the Holy Spirit so the disciples and those who came after them could carry on the work of evangelism and worship that the church had been commanded to engage in and if that's true he's still with us

Holy Spirit is still with us after the Lord completed the work the father had called him to do he ascended back into heaven to be at the right hand of the father the position of power and authority the spirit of Christ returned according to this interpretation in the form of the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower the church and that is why upon his departure the Lord said to all believers I'm with you always in verse 17 and 19 we read this some of the disciples said to one another what does he mean

[15:33] I can understand that question 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 by a little while we don't understand what he's saying and Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this 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 while you will see me now if you have a keen eye for scripture like Don and Mike you will notice that the disciples have been silent for a long time remember we're in the upper room we're in the inner sanctuary and they've been quiet they have not said anything since Judas asked a question in

John 14:22 but with what they perceive to be a riddle that Christ has given them they begin to talk among themselves as to what this could all mean and they're troubled they're trying to solve the riddle by far the greatest difficulty that they had to come to grips with was the fact that Jesus had to die he's going to die and that ran counter to their understanding of the Messiah and that ran counter to their understanding of the mission of the Messiah which they saw as the establishment of the kingdom on earth they didn't know there'd be a 2000 year parenthesis between the first advent and the second advent when he does establish his kingdom called the church age the Swiss theologian and writer of commentary which I have Frederick Godet gives an amazingly clear explanation of their dilemma this is what Godet says where for us all is clear for them all was mysterious if Jesus wishes to found the messianic kingdom which was their understanding of what the Messiah did for a living why are they going away why leave your kingdom if he does not wish to found his kingdom why does he say I'm going to return in a little while you'll see me again if you're not going to found your kingdom why come back just go to heaven and be with the father now the Lord understood that the disciples are experiencing this dilemma and he as he does he took the initiative he knows all things that sometimes bring me great comfort usually the opposite he knows all things about each of us down to our subconscious and he peers into the hearts and the minds of the disciples and this great debate is going on about understanding the phrase that he used in fulfilling

Isaiah the Lord begins to answer the question before they can even ask it he was always good to do that verses 20 to 23 truly truly I say to you that you will weep and lament but the world will rejoice and I would suggest to you the unbelieving world still rejoices you will grieve but your grief will be turned into joy whenever a woman is in labor she has pain because her hour has come but when she gives birth to the child she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world therefore you too have grief now but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice and no one will take your joy away from you boy that is a great passage thanks you Wes gave a thumbs up that is a great passage that's a great passage the Lord begins his answer here with truly truly now when he says truly truly we need to take note that's really important this is not just true as Dr.

[20:50] Shaffer said this is true truth truly truly get your attention the disciples and followers of Christ would soon weep and lament over their loss but the death of Christ would bring great joy to the world and the Jewish leaders and the rest of the apostate nation of Israel they will rejoice over his death reminds me of the two witnesses!

where it says the whole world is going to look upon them by the way that wasn't made possible until television they used to say CNN was going to be broadcasting that because Fox is going to go on a rapture I'm not even sure of that anymore some of the stuff they're doing but TV is going to show it and these two witnesses!

The world is rejoicing I just want to be the fly on the wall John McCarthy says I hope the Lord's got a big library of videos and we can watch all this! check out a video and watch all this their joy over the death of Christ is going to be short lived the Jewish leaders had mocked Christ telling them if he came down from the cross they would believe in him and that's precisely what he did that is when they had to go to plan B many of the leaders knew or suspected that he had resurrected not wanting to believe in him they concocted an elaborate hoax that his followers had come in the night

snuck past the Roman soldiers under penalty of death snuck past the temple police under penalty of death rolled back the 2,000 pound stone all by stealth in the quiet of the evening and gone in and stolen the body the reason

I know they didn't do that is they were quaking with fear hiding in a room and say don't light a candle whatever you do we might get caught the Jewish leaders allege that the follower of Christ did this to make it appear that he resurrected several years ago now remember the swoon theory they said well you know he was crucified and he was stabbed through the heart with a spear and he went through all what he went through and they put him in a tomb and the coolness of the tomb he didn't die he just swooned and like fainted and then the cool of the tomb resurrected him it made him feel better healed the heart that had been stabbed with a spear and yeah just a bunch of garbage yeah he still had to do all that by the way you know why the stone was rolled away to let the world in didn't have to let him out he didn't!

he go through the world in to see that he had resurrected so the Jewish leaders make all these allegations that he wanted it to appear to be a resurrection and after that the Jewish leaders worked feverishly to keep his followers from preaching or even mentioning the resurrection they told them not to preach in Jesus name this is why you see followers of Christ in leadership particularly John and Peter in Acts you know the first guys getting arrested they're arrested within less than 24 hours of Pentecost they start going to jail I read something interesting today I never thought of this it said who was the first person ever born on earth that became a persecutor

[25:08] I never thought of that it said Cain persecuted his brother Abel who was a believer and Cain was the first person born the others were created of course Adam and Eve now I throw that in there for free there's no reason for me to have done that but it's catchy so they're told you can't preach in this name don't preach a resurrection we church doesn't like us when we preach a resurrection Jesus assured his followers that their sadness would turn to joy and I think he would tell the followers that today Peter Yossick 447 days I think that was it in a prison in the Sudan but you know that passage where it says God holds the king's heart in his hand Peter was given Sunday services and if you were a Christian and you're a prison guard they put a cross on you and if you're a Muslim they had some symbol for that and he had a lot of Muslims come into that service we were worried when they said time to release he might say wait

I've got a ministry going here but he did leave we were glad so Jesus says your sadness is going to turn to joy and this joy would be the result of the atoning sacrifice by which we are saved the blood of Christ it would also be in the resurrection and in the ultimate ascension of Christ as he is now at the right hand of the father making intercession for his children he's praying for us and did Jesus ever pray a prayer to the father that wasn't answered of course not their joy would also be complete on the day of Pentecost when the spirit descended and filled the church with resurrection power it filled the church and when the spirit came the disciples were able to see the cross in its true light no longer just a cruel instrument of death it was the power and the avenue of salvation the cross is the very foundation of Christian joy because it is the basis by which a holy

God reconciled sinful men to himself we can come to the throne of God with confidence or boldly but only by way of the cross and that's what sets us apart from the world the Lord used an example in human life that brings great pain and sorrow followed by inexpressible joy and it is the woman in childbirth and none of us in here have ever experienced that and don't be foolish like one person in here said to his wife I remember when we went into labor don't tell her that don't tell her that I know who you are and I felt her wrath too yeah can't joke about that the Lord uses this example of childbirth and their sorrow and pain pain and

I'll stop there I was in the room that's all I'll say the pain of a woman in labor comes from the curse of the garden God put that on the human race God greatly multiplied the woman's pain during delivery but when that baby is born the woman is filled with excitement and joy and having delivered her child she is no longer she no longer remembers her anguish I'm living I saw that I saw that well the disciples had similar grief at the prospect of Jesus going away but he told them you're going to see me again and that brought joy and when I speak at a Christian funeral I look at the family and tell them and Mike I said this at your dad funeral I said it many of them doesn't end here that isn't the end the Lord then gives the disciples and those who came after them these great words of comfort in verse 23 and 24 in that day you will not question me about anything here we go again truly truly

I say to you if you ask the father for anything in my name he will give it to you until now you have asked for nothing in my name asking you will receive so that your joy may be made full in the day that the disciples would see Jesus again they wouldn't even be able to muster up a question instead they're going to be overwhelmed with joy and thanksgiving and we're going to experience the same thing I can't tell you how many times I've heard people believers good Christian people say I have a thousand questions for the Lord and my answer to that is no you don't no you don't you you will stand or kneel or lay prostrate before the Lord and be absolutely speechless a lot of you don't know that I write music but I've been working on a song and it says there will I dance for you

[31:14] Jesus or in awe of you be still and then someone said that's already been done I couldn't believe they're going to see things in a new light on the computer at home on YouTube I've been working through some of Paul Worsher's material and John MacArthur's and I've been looking at the some of the strange fire conference he had a couple years ago we actually have the whole video series over there we're going to be showing in here on Sunday morning in a few months but I was looking at a segment and pretty outlandish claims out there and this is not what I would call your assembly of God you know which I'm like one guy said look there's a lot of assembly God people love the Lord repent of their sins going to be in heaven with us and we'll be together enjoying fellowship with one another and we won't be speaking in tongues we'll be speaking one language in heaven whatever that language is but these are the outlandish send me your money and you'll get a blessing and I can make trees walk and you know dogs meow like a cat absurd stuff but in the strange fire conference they showed this little clip and this guy's up there making promises and the people are hooping and hollering and all of a sudden this tinsel comes down from the ventilation system this is a huge auditorium huge twice as big as the community center and the tinsel's coming it's being blown out and this preacher starts yelling that's the

Shekinah glory of God descending well first of all when you say Shekinah glory that's like saying glory glory but he was claiming that to be the Shekinah glory of God they were hooping in dollars well when they ended that and they came back to the panel and a couple guys said something and then Dr.

MacArthur said you know I want to say something he said if that had been the Shekinah of God everybody in that room would be dead everyone he said the only time we saw the glory of God was through Jesus Christ and it was veiled in human flesh to protect us even on the matter of transfiguration when they went up there and Jesus put Peter and John and James basically in a coma to protect them to keep them when the Roman soldiers went to arrest Jesus and he said whom seek ye and they said Jesus of Nazareth and his proper answer was I am he is in italics or should be I am he gave the great name of God I am and they all fell backwards and passed out if they hadn't passed out they would have all died we don't tamper with the glory of God Dr.

Criswell was asked one time at the College of the Prophets said do you have any advice for us as we leave and go back to our ministries and he said don't ever touch the glory of God touch the glory of God so here we see the Lord telling him hey you know what you need to ask in my name and these guys are saying people come to me so I got all these questions and no we don't we're going to be like John we're going to fall with his feet and we do have living in us a repository of truth that is the spirit of God the disciples would understand great truth and remember the great events of their ministry with Christ they're going to see things in a new light in a few hours a few days when he resurrects and again

Jesus says we can ask anything in his name and he will provide it but brothers that's not a reference to the lottery it's not a reference to the lottery I have a confession I bought a lottery ticket one time but I did it so I could teach my class this was years ago and what happened is what I suspected would happen I didn't have a single number of the winning number it's not that I had the winner I didn't have one you know anybody that thinks going to lottery is mathematically challenged and I told my class back in those days I didn't get a single number and why would you this is not the promise or reference to the lottery when we pray we are to do so consistent with the person and promises of Christ and I ask people this do you want your prayers answered pray the scriptures read the scriptures this is what

[36:21] Jesus wants you doing in that passage pray that passage the ultimate joy is experiencing answered prayer springing from an obedient life an obedient life Jesus said I'm never going to leave you he was going to heaven wait a minute you're leaving no I'm not going to leave you and I'm not going to forsake you he is with us through his spirit and one day we're going to see him as he is first

John we're going to be like him because we see him as he is and until then we are called and equipped by the spirit to remain faithful Thank you.