



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #296
Thursday... Day of Instruction and Arrest:
Jesus Delivers His “Farewell Discourse”

Jesus Promises the Joy Of Answered Prayer
JN 16.23-31

=====

16.23 “In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. I command you to keep on asking and you will receive, so that your joy will become permanently full.

25 “Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language, but will tell you plainly about my Father.

26 “In that day you will ask in my name, and I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. 27 For the Father himself loves you because you have loved me fully, and have permanently believed that I came from God.

28 “I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

29 Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. 30 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.”

31 “Do you now believe?” Jesus replied. 32 “A time is coming, and in fact has now come, when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone.

“Yet I am not alone, for my Father is always with me.”

=====

NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in “blended texts” as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This “superscript ID” is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	A Vineyard On the Road to the Mount Olivet
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus’ Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week

	D. Thursday: Day of Instruction and Arrest
	Jesus Delivers His "Farewell Discourse"
Title	Jesus Promises the Joy of Answered Prayer

Today's reading continues Jesus' promise of joy. In the previous reading we saw that Jesus mentioned three sources for his joy: (1) his love (15.11), (2) his risen, living presence (16.20-22), and (3) answered prayer (16.22-24).

We also noted that Jesus' joy is both an immediate, instant reality, and it also accumulates over time. This distinction between joy as a present possession, and as a growth process is what we need to think about first.

Jesus said that the disciple's deep grief and sorrow over his death would be like the pain of childbirth, which grows in intensity to a climax, and then ends in the joy of embracing new life. In meeting the risen, living Jesus his disciples would be instantly filled with a depth of joy that they had never known before--the joy of his abiding presence. The resurrection encounters in the New Testament emphasize this joy.

Joy is our complete satisfaction in the perfection of Jesus. He is perfect in his person, his saving work for us, and in all the resources of the Trinity that he has made available to us. This joy is immediate and constant for us: we have a perfect God, who has shared all of his perfection with us in every way.

Therefore, in looking to him we should constantly *"rejoice in the Lord,"* as both Jesus, and the apostles--especially Paul--commanded us to do. There is never a moment when we are separated from our perfect Lord, his love, and the infinite perfections of what he has already accomplished for us in his life, death, resurrection, and union with us through his Spirit. As he cried out in his final words in the flesh, ***"It is finished--and the results of what I have done remain forever!"***

This is our ground for immediate joy by faith--no matter what our circumstances might be. No one can take this Jesus joy away from us. Yet incredibly, there is more.

While the perfections of Jesus, his love, and his work for us as Savior are complete, his work within each of us to transform us into his own likeness is ongoing throughout our lives. Therefore, our joy in his work in us should be constantly growing, the more we experience it. This is the process kind of joy that is unique to us, and Jesus.

Our Lord is creating a special masterpiece revelation of himself in each of us, and the joy of that growing beauty in us is something that others can see, but only the Trinity and our inner person actually experience. This is something glorious beyond belief!

Prayer has a special role here. As pious Jews, all the apostles had prayed from their youth. They had experienced answered prayer before they met Jesus, and in a whole new dimension as they followed him for three years. Yet he said, ***"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. I command you to keep on asking, and you will receive, so that your joy can become permanently full."*** (16.24) This was something new--asking in the name of Jesus.

Praying in the name of Jesus is an expression of the joy of his completed work, for it is praying from our position in him--in his perfect righteousness and worthiness to ask and receive anything from the Father. Christians have resources in prayer through Jesus that no one else has--nor can anyone even conceive of these privileges until they come to know Jesus and see them in him.

Praying in the name of Jesus also means conformity to his own desires and will--to pray in his place, for the advancements of his interests and concerns, so that his glory will be revealed and worshipped in all creation. This aspect of praying in the name of Jesus is the most powerful method of being transformed into his image ourselves. Prayer in the name of Jesus changes us gradually into conformity with him as we seek his will. This is the ultimate purpose of prayer.

Prayer is a mystery. God is sovereign and omnipotent. He does not need our puny requests in order to do his perfect will. Too much prayer is a matter of pleading with God to do our own will--which is often so far less than the perfection of his plan to begin with.

Self-advancing prayer does not change us into becoming more like Jesus. But praying **"in the name of Jesus"** is praying for HIS interests, for his sake, unto his glory alone. THIS kind of prayer creates the deepest, most satisfying joy in the universe, because it is the means for his perfect work to constantly grow within us.

Prayer is not a peripheral matter for a Jesus follower. It is the heartbeat of our lives, for it is the most pure expression of our passionate desire to personally become like our Lord, and also to see the entire universe conformed to the perfection of our glorious King.

The joy that grows and builds in us through asking and receiving in the name of Jesus is the capstone of everything he is, and has done for us. It is therefore pure joy, that nothing in creation can take away from us.

APPLICATION:

Every believer knows that we need to pray, and that we do not know how to pray as we should. However, when we think of "prayer" we too often limit our thoughts to private times of prayer. These times are crucial to be sure. Jesus spend hours in private prayer every day.

However, the heart of prayer is the non-stop conversation that should be going on with God in our hearts and minds--unspoken prayer. This is how we live in his presence. This was the center of Jesus' prayer life--his constant inner communion and communication with his Father through the Spirit. After he told the disciples that they would desert him, he said in today's reading: "Yet I am not alone, for my Father is always with me."

Just as he commanded us to **"abide in me,"** Jesus practiced the presence of his Father by **"abiding in Him."** This is the heart of prayer--consciousness of the presence of God by faith, and communicating with him accordingly.

Do not worry about how much private time you spend in prayer every day. Begin by cultivating unspoken prayer...your heart-communication and conversation with God. This is available to you every moment you are awake.

How can you spend more time in prayer as you "abide" in Jesus today?

How can you set up appointments throughout the day to commune with Jesus in your heart as you do specific activities in your daily schedule?

How much more time can you spend "abiding" in Jesus today than yesterday?