

June 27th – Small Group Questions - John 16:16-24 Indestructible Joy

1. It was Blaise Pascal who said – “all of us seek joy, the will never takes the least step but to this object. It is the motive of every action of everyone of us”. Would you resonate with this statement? Why or why not?

2. We so often experience joy and sorrow as mutually exclusive, you either have joy or you have sorrow. This is the case because we locate our joy in circumstance and / or things that change. Joy in anything that changes will eventually be diminished and we will be sorrowful. How has this been your experience?

Read John 16:16-24

3. (21) How does Jesus’ illustration of the woman in labour help us understand the unique nature of Christian joy – that is - it is a joy that we can have in the midst of sorrow?

4. Jesus intends the illustration of the woman in labour to point us to the source of true joy – that is the results of the resurrection. The resurrection is the glorious assurance of our salvation, that our sins have been forgiven, that death has been defeated, that a new humanity, a new creation is inevitable. J.C. Ryle spoke of this assurance being the engine of our joy – he wrote – “assurance goes far to set a child of God free from a painful kind of bondage, and it ministers mightily to their comfort. It enables them to feel that the great business of life is settled, the great debt is paid, the great disease is healed, the great work, a finished work, so that all other business, diseases, debts and works are by comparison, small”. How practically does joy in the assurance of our salvation help us deal with sorrow - to have joy in our sorrow?

5. Refer to the other times where Jesus uses the term hour in the gospel (2:4; 12:27; 13:1). Take note that Jesus uses the same word here to refer to the woman in labour (vs. 21). How does this image impact our view of what Jesus did on the cross for us? What does this tell us about what happens in Jesus’ death and resurrection and how it relates to our joy? (see Hebrews 12:2)

6. If Pascal was right, that the motivation of every one of our actions is to pursue joy, how can pursuing the joy Jesus offers us lead us to live in anticipation of the marriage of heaven and earth in all we do and say and pray?