

Dr. David L. Turner, John, Session 18,

John 16:16-17:26

6-Min. Video Overview

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Welcome to the explainer. Today, we're diving into a really profound and, honestly, an emotionally charged moment in the gospel of John. This is where Jesus gets his closest followers together to prepare them for his departure.

And what he says, well, it's going to completely reframe how they see everything: grief, joy, and even their mission in the world. And it all starts with this one line, a really puzzling promise that just leaves his disciples totally baffled. I mean, you can just picture them whispering to each other, right? What on earth does he mean? A little while. This single, cryptic statement sets the stage for everything that's about to happen.

All right. So to make sense of all this, here's our game plan. We're going to start with that puzzling promise, then talk about how sorrow turns into joy.

We'll look at finding peace in a troubled world, what it means to overcome the world, and finally this mission of unity he gives them. Okay. So let's jump right into this first part, that puzzling promise.

Seriously, the disciples are genuinely confused here. You can almost feel the tension in the room as they're all trying to figure out what in the world Jesus is talking about. So Jesus sees them struggling, right? He sees their confusion, and he just switches gears.

He drops all the figurative language and just says it plainly. I came from the Father. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.

And with that one clear statement, boom, they get it. But understanding this just opens up a whole new, much more emotional problem. Which brings us to the real emotional heart of this whole thing.

The disciples finally understand he's leaving, and the text says they are just filled with grief. And Jesus, he tackles this sorrow head on. He doesn't dismiss it or tell them to get over it.

Instead, he completely redefines it. And this promise, it's just so powerful. He actually validates their pain.

He says, yeah, now is your time of grief. He's not shying away from it. But then he tells them that this grief, it's temporary.

It's going to be completely transformed into a joy that is permanent, unshakable, a joy that absolutely no one can ever take away from you. So you might be wondering, where does this kind of lasting joy come from? Well, there are two sources. First.

Yeah. It's about seeing Jesus again after the resurrection for sure. But it's so much more than that.

It's also about the ongoing relationship they'll have with him through the Holy Spirit. And that's the key. That's why their joy can't be taken away because his presence in a very real way is never actually gone.

Okay. But here's the big question, right? How can you have this unshakable joy when Jesus also predicts a super difficult future for them? This is where he introduces one of the most famous and frankly, powerful paradoxes in all of his teaching. He kicks it off with this incredible promise: peace, something I think we're all looking for, right? But then in the very next breath, he hits them with this stark warning: trouble.

So you get peace, and you get trouble. How on earth do those two things go together? And here's the absolute key to the whole thing. Jesus just completely redefines what peace even means.

It's not the absence of problems, not at all. It's this deep internal resilience. It's a settled heart and mind that's fixed on God.

No matter what's swirling around you, it's a peace you can have right in the middle of the storm. And this is the foundation for that peace. This is the reason they can take heart.

It's a flat-out declaration of victory. Jesus is basically saying, you know, all that trouble I just warned you about. Yeah, I've already beaten it.

Okay. But that raises a huge question, doesn't it? What exactly does Jesus mean when he says he's overcome the world? This is a really key idea in the gospel of John. So we've got to unpack this.

So first things first, he's not talking about the planet Earth. In John's gospel, the world, the Greek word is *cosmos*, isn't a place. It's a system.

Think of it like the operating system of humanity that's hostile to God. It's all the values, philosophies, and priorities that are just fundamentally opposed to God's ways. And it's this system that hated Jesus.

And as he warns them, it's going to hate them too. So how does he beat it? Well, Jesus's victory over this whole system is accomplished through his death and resurrection. And this is so crucial.

This isn't just a victory for him. It's a victory he shares. The whole idea is that anyone who has faith in him gets to share in that exact same victory.

It's not for some elite club. It's for every single believer. And this leads to another one of those fascinating paradoxes for believers.

You're chosen out of the world. You're still living in the world, but your values are not of the world. And then to top it all off, you're sent back into the world on a mission.

It's this constant tension, right? You have to live in this world, engage with it, but not be defined by it. All right. So let's get to our final section and see how this all comes together.

How does it all wrap up? Well, it culminates in this really powerful mission for his followers, which Jesus lays out in his big prayer in chapter 17. You know, if you look at this whole farewell speech, it's kind of like it has these two massive bookends. It starts with him telling them to love one another, and it ends with him praying for their unity.

And these aren't just nice little suggestions either. They are absolutely central to their entire purpose. And here's the kicker.

Why are love and unity so important? Because Jesus prays that their unity would be the ultimate proof to the world, that it would be so different, so counter-cultural, that it would be the most compelling argument that he was really sent by God. It's like their unity is the ultimate evidence. And get this, the standard for this unity is just staggering.

He says they should be one just as you and I are one. So the model for their relationships, for their unity, is the perfect divine unity between God, the Father, and God, the Son. I mean, talk about a high bar.

That's about as high as it gets. And that really brings us to the final thought we have to wrestle with. If Jesus himself said that the most powerful, convincing proof for who he is would be the visible love and unity among his followers, well, what does that mean for us today? It's a huge challenge, one that echoes right out of this ancient text and lands squarely in our modern, and let's face it, very divided world.