

“Clarity” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Easter 6 – May 22, 2022

- I. **John 16:23** - ²³ In that day you will ask nothing of Me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you.
- II. **Jesus opens a can of worms for us today.**
 - a. First of all, as much as the disciples said Jesus was speaking “plainly”, His words are hard to understand!
 - b. The problem is that Jesus has the whole picture in mind... He understands with perfect clarity all that has happened in the past and what will happen in the future.
 - i. If we think these passages are difficult to understand, just put yourself in the disciples’ shoes...
 - ii. They are at a disadvantage because they have a limited picture.
 1. Yes, they were with Jesus in person, and they saw the miracles, signs and wonders, but they didn’t have the luxury of “the rest of the story.”
 2. Jesus is talking to them about going to the Father for a little while, returning to their great joy, and then departing again so the Holy Spirit would come...
 - a. He encourages them that they will have this Helper or Spirit to be there and show them the truth
 - b. But He doesn’t speak clearly to say, “Look, I’m going to be betrayed by Judas over here... be arrested and executed on a cross... you all are not going to be happy about all this... but I will rise again on the third day and you will be overjoyed.”
 - c. However... when we look back at all that happened, yes, this is what Jesus is saying to the disciples... they just couldn’t fully comprehend the whole picture.
 - c. The words we read in our Gospel lesson of John are just a few hours before Jesus will indeed be arrested and crucified.
 - i. These are some of the last things Jesus would say to His followers before His death – so it would seem this is important for us too!
 - ii. But the can of worms begins from our first verse... “In that day you will ask nothing of Me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you.” (vs 23)
 1. Why would we ask nothing of Jesus?
 2. Can we really ask the Father for “whatever” and receive it?
 - d. I love my wife Michele... and... it can sometimes be hard to watch movies and shows with her because she asks a lot of questions I cannot answer.

- i. She gets really wrapped up in the storyline, but somewhere along the line, she thinks she missed something that I might have seen or heard
 - ii. So she asks, “Who is that person?” or, “What is that thing?” or “Why did he do that?”
 - 1. My guess is usually as good as hers, so instead of getting upset with her, I just say, “I’m not sure.”
 - 2. However, if I’ve seen the show and I DO know what’s going on, I say, “You’ll see.”
 - e. In our Gospel, Jesus is telling the disciples, “In that day, you’ll see with clarity.”
 - f. As God’s faithful, sitting here today with the whole Word of God... we can reflect upon the truth with clarity that was not available to the disciples.
 - i. Jesus is saying that the time for questions – “where are You going...” “what are You doing...” “why did that happen...” “when will this happen...” will not be directed to Jesus anymore.
 - ii. No, instead, God the Father will be available to these mere mortals just as Jesus has access to Him – and the time for questions will be over – instead we will just ask Him to meet needs.
 - iii. Will God the Father meet our needs and the needs of others?
 - 1. Yes, He always gives us and everyone the best thing... because He’s God.
 - g. So, spiritual things seem confusing and are misunderstood by the world around us...
 - i. Yet, by faith, we see with clarity because we have direct access to God the Father through Jesus our Savior... as the Holy Spirit opens the Word and leads us.
 - ii. That is the big picture... that is the clarity the disciples didn’t have.
- III. **Does God really give us all we ask for?**
- a. Long before I became a pastor, I remember the story of a young girl who read this verse, “whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you”... and when her mom was sick she asked God to heal her.
 - i. Her mom died... and the girl rejected God and religion from that point forward saying the Bible and God are not trustworthy or true.
 - b. Why didn’t God heal her mother as she requested?
 - i. We cannot answer the question of why her mom died, but we have some peace in knowing that her mother had faith in Jesus.
 - ii. As a believer, the mother was healed completely, and she is now free from all pain and suffering.
 - iii. The heartache and loss, the difficulties and troubles are not always taken away when we ask... but sometimes God answers our prayers in mysterious ways that might only be known when we enter glory.

- c. How is your prayer life?
 - i. Do you confidently go to the Father in Jesus' name like our reading exhorts us to do?
 - ii. Do you trust that God is completely aware of your needs and desires, and He will do the very best thing?
 - iii. Do you pray less than two minutes a day, taking for granted the very presence of a God who loves you... a God who chose you... a God who wants to be in communication with you?
- d. With all the clarity we can have on this side of heaven... we can be confident that God is with us – God wants to be in relationship with us.
- e. God planned a great victory to have a personal connection with you.

IV. **Jesus wins.**

- a. Jesus wins the battle against our sinful nature that rejects God and praying to Him.
- b. Jesus wins the day when He lost His life – because the loss He experienced in His suffering and death was our gain, as we are forgiven.
- c. Jesus wins the great reconciliation between God and humanity – as sin can no longer separate us and we finally have full access to God.
- d. And Jesus wins the release of the Holy Spirit – who gives each of us the clarity to see how God loves us and the great lengths He went to so that we might live forever... with Him.
- e. Jesus wins... and through faith so do we.

V. **In that confidence... in that faith... we go to our Father every day.**

- a. What can be better than knowing God – the Creator of the universe – wants what is best for me?
 - i. I know that sometimes people believe God answers prayer with “no” – but just like Pr Bohren used to say, it's not no, it's something better.
 - ii. We've been visiting the grandkids over the past few weeks, and on more than one occasion, the little ones wanted to play with something that would hurt them.
 - 1. In our great love and care for them, we didn't not give them the thing they wanted... we gave them something better... a toy, an apple, a book.
 - 2. God is the same for us – when we ask for something that is not right for us or others, He will be sure we get the best thing.
- b. In the end, I want you to walk away confident that God not only has your best interest in mind, but He is present in your life and is always seeking to be in relationship with you.
- c. As we spend time in prayer, which by the way, is always grounded in the Word... we are growing in our trust and connection to God.
 - i. And with that connection comes clarity...
 - 1. We walk in confidence that God is with us

2. We see the ways that Jesus has overcome the world in His victory over death and sin
3. And, above all, we clearly see the Lord's gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. Amen.