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JOHN 16:22-33

John Series

Today we're going to look at John 16.

I've been a pastor now for thirty-some years and also I've been working with people a lot. I keep coming over the same kinds of things over and over again as I'm sharing with people. Every once in a while I think I should make a list of the top 20 things that I think everybody should know. That if you don't know these you'll end up in trouble in some way or another. I talk about money, talk about being internally motivated, and talk about how to deal with anger. They're just common things that we need to address in our lives. If we don't deal with them we end up with a problem, and if we do deal with them we can take on God's strategy for addressing those.

Today we're going to deal with one of those things on my top 20 list. It's dealing with disappointment. I think everybody needs to learn how to deal with disappointment in their life. Whether it's a small disappointment – as I started last week, you go to the store and the ice cream you want isn't there. Or you have an appointment with someone and they don't show up. That's kind of a small disappointment. Or a big disappointment that you were in a life situation now that you did not plan on. We need to know how to handle disappointment.

Last week we started in John 16. Now John 13-17 we call the Upper Room Discourse. These are the last words of Jesus with His disciples before He is crucified. So He has His top list, I guess, of things He wants to share with His disciples.

In John 13 He talked about the importance of servanthood and we're all servants. That's going to be very important. In John 14 He talks about the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit in our life. In John 15 He talks about how we are to be rooted in the vine and there's a strength that we draw from God in the midst of that.

Now we come to John 16 where He talks about disappointment. I've given you a piece of paper and the piece of paper contains my worksheet. That's what this is – simply for me preparing this message today. It was in your bulletin, so you can pull that out if you'd like.

What I do (and I would encourage you to do this too as you study the Bible) is (and I'll do this either written or I'll do it in my head as I'm preparing message) I'll have an observation from God's word, then I'll have what it means in the passage because I want to make sure I want to know what it means in the passage so that I don't take something out of context and make it to mean whatever I want. Because I'm not interested in what the Bible means to you or me. What I want to know is what does the Bible mean to God and then how can we apply it to our lives.

That's the second column there is what does it mean in that passage. And then the third column is how can we apply it to ourselves. So I put this here as an area for summary.

We're going to start in verse 22 today, but let me review some of the things that are on this sheet or the things that we talked about last week so that you can see where we're going in this area of disappointment in our lives.

In John 16:1 He starts this passage by saying to the disciples, "*I have told you these things so that you will not fall away* or you won't go astray or you won't be offended." Depending on your translation that's what it says. And then He explains in the next couple verse that people are going to do bad things.

I think what He's saying there is you're going to be disappointed. You need a plan for disappointment and I'm sharing these things with you right now so you'll be ready. That's what it says in verse 1.

If we go down to verse 4 notice it says, *when the time comes you will remember*. The idea is you need information now because these things are going to come and you're going to have to have them there with you. The ideas I'm sharing with you, you have to know them so you can bring them to bear at that time.

I believe we need to be ready for the challenges we're yet to face. A lot of us are playing catch up here. "Alright. I'm having a problem now. We're going to find information." Jesus is doing something with His disciples that we need. What He's telling them is "I want to give you information now that will prepare you for next week, for next month." We need that in our lives as well.

If we go down to verse 6 and then look at verse 20 and 22, they all use the word *grief*. Because when you are disappointed with something there is a grieving process that must take place. It's very simple in some respects. I get to the store and I want chocolate chip ice cream and it's not there. There's a grieving that has to take place. "Oh I'm disappointed. I don't get my chocolate chip ice cream." I have to change my course of action at that point. But sometimes there's a grieving that takes place because of a major life situation. You're in a disappointing place in your life and there's a grieving that takes place.

I want you to see that the grieving isn't wrong. It's mentioned three times there. In fact in verse 22 we'll see in a moment it says *now is your time for grief*. Jesus isn't saying stop grieving, cheer up. He's not saying that. Because many times we do have to grieve in the midst of that situation.

He goes on in verse 7. He says, "*I will send the Counselor to you.*"

I suggested last week there are two things in the passage that are personal things that help us deal with disappointment. Not just information. Two very personal things. One is the Holy Spirit who comes in as our Counselor. He's the one who comforts us. That's another word. The *Advocate* is another translation for this word. The idea is the Holy Spirit has been helping them in their times

of trouble. So the Holy Spirit's going to be a key component in our lives as we develop our plan, recognizing that the Holy Spirit is there for us in those disappointing moments.

Then in verse 12 we talked about the fact that He says to them, "*I have more to say to you, more than you can bear.*" So He doesn't share with them everything.

We looked at some other scriptures last week about how God protects us. God is not the author of bad things that happen in our lives. God doesn't cause the challenges that happen inside of our hearts or in our life situations. He doesn't cause them; they're the result of sin in our world. In fact, God protects us, not allowing us to be challenged more than we're able. So that is the kind of things He's talking about there in verse 12.

In verse 13 the Holy Spirit He says will *guide them into all truth*. Picture this: We're going along in our path of life and we hit a roadblock and it causes disappointment in our lives. There's grieving that takes place, sometimes just minor because it's a minor thing or it's a major thing. But God wants to reroute us and move us in a direction, and the Holy Spirit's going to guide us into all truth.

Truth is going to be a very important component in our understanding of disappointment. Because whenever we hit a roadblock in life, whatever that little roadblock or big roadblock is, there's new truth that we must embrace and the Holy Spirit is the one at the crossroads guiding us. That's the word there. He's guiding us in whatever direction. "Come on. Go this way. Go that way." He guides us into all truth. And the truth becomes important because the truth is going to help us in the midst of the disappointment to handle it.

I want to give you two different kinds of disappointment that I imagine and I want to use the idea of getting a job. Let's say that there's a job opportunity. You go after this job and you're called in for the interview. The interview goes well, so you go to the second interview. You've been called for that and then they tell you no you can't have the job. At that point you're disappointed because you had your heart set on this great job. And so you're going along and there's a roadblock placed in your life and there's new truth you must embrace in order to go a different direction. In that case, moving forward means moving on. So moving forward – in that case moving on, leaving this, and going on to something else – that's one kind of disappointment.

But let's imagine that you got the job. You're so excited you got the job and then the next week you find out it is the worst job in the world. But you committed yourself there for a year now. Now you're in this very difficult job. That's a very different disappointment it seems to me. A disappointment I think some of us find ourselves in. A disappointment that we didn't plan to be in this part of our life. Because now going forward doesn't mean going on. Now going forward means staying in there and embracing new truth to be able to deal with this difficult situation.

Do you understand disappointment is, I think, the onramp to a number of different things. It could be the onramp to people get angry when they're disappointed, they give up because they're disappointed, they get discouraged because they're disappointed, or they can embrace the new truth guided by the Holy Spirit. They can go on in a hopeful way and they could move forward.

I'm just setting up the stage here for where we're going in this next part of the passage. But He says that the Holy Spirit is going to be this key person in our lives to guide us into all truths so that we can move forward in our lives. He's the guide, and truth is going to be an ingredient.

Verse 19: *Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this.* There were some questions that the disciples had.

I want you to see Jesus' response because Jesus' response is important for us because there's sometimes when we have questions – questions like, “Why, God, is this happening?” or “How long am I going to have to endure this?”

I want you to know that Jesus in the passage models the same thing that God has with us. Number one, He's not frustrated with our questions. You can bring your questions to God at any time. He can take my questions. And secondly, He cares for us in the midst of those questions. That's what Jesus does. He takes time, He answers the questions. He helps them deal with that in the midst of it. So the questions are fine. God is big enough to take our questions. Let's go and give Him the questions and turn them over to Him.

Now we come to verse 22 and we'll cover the last points on that sheet. We're going to go back verse by verse. That was the review to bring us to where we are in verse 22. He says in verse 22, *So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.*

So the grief isn't bad. The grief is part of the process and it's a reasonable process. If some event took place in your life in the past, you might find on the anniversary of that event you're going to grieve again. And it's not wrong to be grieving about something. Grieving is an important part because it helps us to be able to accept the situation and move forward.

Let's imagine that a loved one passes away. You grieve about that. It's hard. The grieving process allows you to separate the memory, which you want to keep, separate that from the presence of the person. We have to let that presence of the person go, keep the memory, and move forward. God does a work inside of our hearts through the grieving process.

The same thing's true even with minor disappointments that we have. We have to let it go. We approach a light and it turns red. Or we get into construction. Or we get into traffic. And the disappointment of getting a blocked goal can cause us then to be angry and upset. We have to be able to, in that case, grieve it quickly and get on or we end up having a problem.

Let's go on to verse 23. Because this is going to lead us into the second solution, I think, that God gives us to handle the disappointment, a personal situation. Look at verse 23. *In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.*

There's a transfer going to take place, Jesus says. When I leave, I want you to know this: the transfer is going to be from you coming to me all the time. Now you're going to go straight to

the Father and you're going to be able to talk to the Father about it. The Father is going to be this key ingredient that's going to allow us to be able to deal with disappointment.

I want to amplify that a little bit more today – getting to know God as Father. See, Jesus is the one who really amplified this idea of the fatherhood of God. We saw it in the New Testament, but Jesus comes in and He talks a lot about the fatherhood of God. As we're understanding that more, we're going to recognize that God's a Father who comforts us in the midst of disappointments in our lives.

So He's saying in verse 24, *Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*

Now when you look at those words, He says *anything*. The word *anything* is very open-ended. Sometimes as Christians we tend to put definitions on that. "Well, you've got to ask in His name." "Well, you've got to ask according to His will." "Well, your desires have to be in line." I think those are good things. We need to keep those in mind because even in the past Jesus is saying bad things are going to happen. But He's not saying if you pray those bad things aren't going to happen.

Bad things are going to happen, but let's not miss the open-endedness of this. Let's recognize here that Jesus is saying, "Come and ask the Father for anything. Anything. Come and talk to Him." The open-endedness of that is very hopeful. We can come to God and we can just open our hearts to Him.

In the midst of that, something happens. He talks about this *joy* that becomes *complete* inside of us. Remember, we've already talked about grieving and the bad things that are going to happen. But somehow in the midst of that grieving and hitting the roadblock and having to redirect, something happens inside of us that's joy.

I think the key is understanding the difference between happiness which comes from the word happenings, circumstances, external, and joy which comes on the inside. So what we're doing is we're recognizing that God wants to do something inside of us, He wants to do something through us, and that is more important than anything. There's joy that can start bubbling up inside of us in the midst of a difficult situation. Powerful, it seems to be, in that passage.

Now the second thing – the Father. We're going into verse 25. He's going to go into this specifically. Look at this. Verse 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."*

I want you to understand the Father, Jesus is saying. Understanding God is Father is so important. There are some people who say today, "Well I can't really think about God as Father because I didn't have a father or the father I had wasn't any example of godliness or fatherliness even." I think that person is making a mistake. What they're doing is they're going to earthly models of fatherhood and saying, "I just don't have that. And I can't imagine what God is like."

What I think God wants us to do is what Jesus is teaching in this passage. He's not saying only those of you who had a father think of Him as Father. That's not what He's saying. He's saying when I teach you to how to pray (remember back in the passage where He's teaching them how to pray), I want you to come to God and say, "Our Father." So we pray to God as Father. We're learning what it means. Because then we're going to use that model of God working in our lives as Father to evaluate every earthly parenting relationship.

You know what we find out? There are not perfect parents. You and I weren't perfect parents. We don't have perfect parents. That draws us to the Father who is the perfect Father, the Bible says. He is the perfect parent, unlike any of us earthly parents, and we are drawn to that.

So what does that mean? What does that mean that God is Father? I think Jesus is teaching them right now. He's the one who helps you deal with disappointment. He's the Father who comes alongside of you.

In 2 Corinthians 1 it says He is the *Father of compassion*. I don't usually think about a father in compassion. I think of a mother in compassion. I don't usually think of a father and compassion. But I think we need to get to know God the way He is, and He is the Father of compassion. Once we understand that, then we, certainly as His fathers, we can emulate that and try to be the fathers that God would have us to be. I think we learn something very important about that in our lives.

Verse 26. It says, *In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.*

This is a strategic point in many people's lives. I want you to see that Jesus is saying, "I'm getting out of the way. You're going to go straight to the Father and pray."

Now if you grew up in a tradition where the tradition is that you don't pray to the Father, but you pray to saints or you pray to mother Mary or you pray to something different than the Father, this verse is very freeing for you because now you can go straight to the Father. What a privilege! Because the Father cares for you. The Father knows you. The Father loves you.

That's what we see in this next verse. Verse 27 I think is the key verse for the rest of this passage. It says, *No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.*

So when we believed that He came from God, when we trust Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, God is our personal Father. We're embraced into His family and – this is fun – because the word there *the Father loves you* is not the word you would think it would be.

I would think the word there would be *agape*. The word that means sacrificial love. When Jesus Christ died on the cross He sacrificed His son. That's not the word here. It's the word *phileo*. It's the word that two friends have for each other. It's the word for a parent's love for a child. It's the word of caring for each other. Fondness I would put in its place here. The Father is fond of you. He likes you. He doesn't just love you, He really likes you. I know sometimes as parents we say

to our kids, “I really love my kids, but sometimes I don’t like them.” God likes you. That’s what He’s saying here. He’s fond of you.

Oh man. God loves you even when you’re treated unfairly, when you’re persecuted, He’s saying to them. Even when bad things happen to you. Even when you’re disappointed with life. Jesus is saying to His disciples, these things are going to come. I want you to know that one of the things that’s going to help you when you’re disappointed in life is you have a connection with the Father and He likes you, He loves you. This *phileo* kind of love.

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

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

This is one of those rare times that the disciples say, “Okay, I think we’ve got it.” Many times the disciples have no idea what’s going on. They’re as confused as we are sometimes as we’re learning new things about the Father. But this time they say, “Okay, we got it.”

Verse 31: *“Do you now believe? Do you really got it? Do you really believe?” Jesus replied.*

I want you to understand something and this becomes another piece of the puzzle that’s very helpful for us as we’re living our lives. Verse 32: *“A time is coming and in fact has 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 with me.”*

See there’s going to come a time in the next few hours when all the disciples are going to disappear. They’re not going to stay next to Him while He’s being crucified. They’re all going to be separated. They’re going to go their own way. It’s going to be a challenging experience for Jesus Christ to be Himself.

He’s saying, “Look, you guys say you believe.” Just like you and me, right? We say we believe, but then there are times when we end up doing the wrong thing. We end up going away from God’s path in doing what is inappropriate. We’re missing the mark. What I want you to see about this is that the words that He says when He says the Father loves you, He loves you even though He knows you are going to be falling away. He loves you even though He knows that you’re going to make mistakes.

I think that sometimes we are disappointed with ourselves. “Oh I can’t believe I did that again. Oh here we go again.” And that disappointment we have on ourselves causes us to pull away from the Father. As He’s warning in chapter 16:1, *I’m telling you these things so you won’t fall away* or you won’t go astray. We pull ourselves away from the source of the strength of the love of the Father because we’re disappointed in ourselves. We’re going to fail. So in these verses, Jesus is saying, “Hey, I want you to know there’s a time that is coming when you’re going to fail, you’re going to fail. The Father still loves you.”

Verse 33: *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace.”*

He’s talked about joy already; now He’s talking about peace. I would suggest those two qualities, joy and peace, are the things that we need in our hearts to replace the disappointment that causes us to be angry or disheartened or discouraged or apathetic. You just give up. That God wants us to have joy and peace. Those are energizing things that push us forward in our lives.

But notice the words in the first part of verse 33 – *I have told you these things*. Look at chapter 16:1 where we started – *I have told you these things*. It’s repeated the same way. In other words, I’m telling you these things so you won’t fall away and I’m telling you these things so you’ll have peace inside your heart. I just want you to know why you’re having these things; you’re ready for them.

In the next part of the verse it says, *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*

The word *in this world you will have trouble* – you’ve just got to know that. The word *trouble* is the Greek word *thlipsis*, which means compression under pressure. I know some of you feel that. You know exactly what I’m talking about. You feel like you’re pressured at the moment in your life. God says in this world you’re going to have that pressure in your life.

But notice He says as He goes on – *But take heart! I have overcome the world.*

So there’s something that happens inside, the joy and the peace that we have inside, that allows us to withstand the pressure and actually to broadcast that joy and that peace. To have something that others can see under pressure. Because the expected thing in the world today is when you’re under pressure you crack. Not Christians. There’s a resilience that God has given to us by the power of the Holy Spirit who we’ve seen already who’s going to guide us into truth. And the love of the Father allows us to stand up under the pressure in order to manage that and not collapse under that pressure.

The words *take heart* are important there. It’s take courage. It’s interesting (I study this) that the word ‘hope’ is not used in this passage. Because I think hope is the end result. When you’re disappointed, you just need some hope. Right?

I was sitting in some teaching this week and for the devotion of the day, the guy got up and he talked about hope. He said hope contains three things. I like what he said. One is a vision for something better. So there’s a vision out there. Secondly, a way to get there, a plan. And thirdly, the courage to go that direction. That’s what hope is.

I like that and I see that in the Christian life because God has given us a vision for something better. He’s given us a plan to get there by trusting Him, by accepting Jesus Christ into our life in order to move that way. It’s our job then to take the courage, take heart so to speak, as it says in this passage, to go forward and follow that path.

I would just suggest if you're here today and you've never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you need hope. God gives you a vision, He gives you the way. Your job is to take the steps. When you do, it does something in your heart. It transforms that disappointment into something else, something that's hopeful that has to do with joy and peace. It's a beautiful thing that happens in our lives.

So He starts in this passage the same way that He ends. He says *I want to tell you these things so you won't fall away*. There are two key elements that are going to walk you through the process. One is the love of the Father. The second is the power of the Holy Spirit to guide you into truth. You need those two things. The results are going to be this joy and this peace in your life.

Now do you have to wait for that to happen in your future or can it happen right now? "I'm going to be better when...I have more money. When...I get a job. When...I get a new car." Or can you experience the joy of God right now? That's the challenge, I think, and that's what God wants us to do. Because right now you're under pressure and right now – not later, right now – you can experience the joy and peace that God has for us.

This is not just the truth for people who are not saved yet. If you are not saved, this is a great opportunity for you to get saved. But this is truth, I think for me. It's a truth for all of us. No matter where we are in the Christian walk we need to have a plan for dealing with disappointment and understanding God's ways.

In order to do this, I wanted to give you an experience this morning. I'm going to show you forty-one slides right now, each one having a different scripture right from the Bible. You're going to recognize a number of these passages. What I've done is I've turned them into first person so God is speaking to you. I want you to hear God's heart coming straight out of God's word. I want you to hear God's heart as He speaks to you. So I want you to watch this, watch the slides as I show you just the words that God wants you to know about His relationship with you.

Psalm 139:1 – *I know you.*

Psalm 139:2 – *I know when you sit down and when you get up.*

Psalm 139:3 – *I am familiar with all of your ways.*

Matthew 10:29-31 – *Even the very hairs of your head are numbered.*

Genesis 1:27 – *You were made in my image.*

Acts 17:28 – *In me you live and move and have your being. For you are my offspring.*

Jeremiah 1:4-5 – *I knew you even before you were conceived.*

Ephesians 1:11-12 – *I chose you when I planned creation.*

Psalm 139:15-16 – *You are not a mistake, for your days were written in my book.*

Acts 17:26 – *I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live.*

Psalm 139:14 – *You're fearfully and wonderfully made.*

Psalm 139:13 – *I knit you together in your mother's womb.*

Psalm 71:6 – *And brought you forth on the day you were born.*

1 John 4:16 – *You can rely on my love.*

1 John 3:1 – *It is my desire to lavish my love on you.*

Matthew 7:11 – *I offer you more than your earthly father ever could.*

Matthew 5:48 – *I am the perfect father.*

James 1:17 – *Every good and perfect gift comes from my hand.*

Matthew 6:31-33 – *I am your provider and meet all of your needs.*

Jeremiah 29:11 – *My plan for your future has always been filled with hope.*

Jeremiah 31:3 – *I love you with an everlasting love.*

Psalm 139:17-18 – *My thoughts toward you are countless like the sands of the seashore.*

Zephaniah 3:17 – *I rejoice over you with singing.*

Exodus 19:5 – *You are my treasured possession.*

Jeremiah 33:3 – *I will show you great and marvelous things.*

Deuteronomy 4:29 – *If you seek me with all of your heart, you will find me.*

Psalm 37:4 – *Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart.*

Philippians 2:13 – *I am working in you.*

Ephesians 3:20 – *I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine.*

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 – *I want to encourage your heart.*

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 – *I am the father who comforts you in all of your troubles.*

Psalm 34:18 – *When you are broken-hearted, I am close to you.*

Isaiah 40:11 – *As a shepherd carries a lamb, I carry you close to my heart.*

Revelation 21:3-4 – *One day I will wipe every tear from your eye.*

John 17:3 – *I am your father and I love you like I love my Son Jesus Christ.*

Romans 8:31 – *I am for you, not against you.*

1 John 4:10 – *Christ's death is the ultimate expression of my love for you.*

1 John 2:23 – *If you receive the gift of my Son Jesus, you receive me.*

Romans 8:38-39 – *Nothing can separate you from my love.*

Ephesians 3:14 – *I represent myself to my people as a father.*

John 1:12 – *My question is, will you be my child?*

God's word is a beautiful message for us about His love that He wants to have.

In summary, I want to show you one more verse from the Bible. It's a verse that Paul wrote, a verse that summarizes everything we've talked about. It uses the word 'hope,' it uses the word 'disappointment,' it uses the word the 'power of the Holy Spirit,' it uses the 'love of God.' All in the same verse.

Romans 5:5 – *And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us.*

Paul is sharing the same idea. You don't have to live with disappointment. God has designed our hearts so that disappointment will weigh it down. God wants us to have joy and peace that lift that heart up.

Every person needs to have a plan for dealing with disappointment in their life. I believe disappointment is a spiritual issue, not an emotional issue. It's a spiritual issue and when we understand the components that God designed for us, it propels us forward so we can take those steps to either move on or stay in the situation in new ways because we have the truth that God provides and God guides us in that through His Holy Spirit. Amen?

Let's pray together and then we're going to sing this song. I just believe that the Lord wants to work in our hearts in ways that break through the hardness. Sometimes because of disappointment our hearts get hard and the hardness is a result of not handling the disappointment well. We just need to respond to that in ways that are I think wise.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we ask now that you would break through that hardness in our hearts and provide new truth – new truth that will provide the hope that we need to take steps towards you, take steps forward, and not be hung up on where we've been before. Be able to go forward. Lord, I pray especially for those who have dreams that seem to be dashed and the disappointment has caused just this agony inside of their hearts or apathy that they give up. Lord, I just pray that you would renew something special inside the human heart today. Give us hope. That hope that's built on not wishful thinking, but it's based on the reality of who you are inside of our lives. Do that, Lord. We ask in Jesus' name, amen.

Let's stand and worship the Lord together.