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JOHN 16:16-33

John Series: Get a Life in Jesus

[PRAYER] Lord, we've focused in on your holiness and it's just so awesome to think about you. It's just sometimes hard to think about you. We can think about Jesus because He had a body and we can imagine Him. But thinking about you as our heavenly Father, as a King that's enthroned in heaven or just that you're a spirit, it's hard to picture that. But we recognize this holiness, this separateness that you have and we're just drawn to you. We need you. We thank you for offering a relationship with us. So today, Lord, cause us to enjoy that relationship. Speak to us as we look at your word today and teach us from it. In Jesus' name, amen.

If you open your Bibles to John 16 you'll find that in this passage Jesus again uses these same three words. He talks about peace, and He talks about joy, and He talks about love. Now we've already talked about all of those things all the way through, but now again He's going to emphasize these in John 16 in our passage starting in 16 today. So John 16 is our passage.

What I want to do I want to answer the question – why? Why is He talking about love and joy and peace? I want to draw this into a bigger picture for our lives. I think you'll find this to touch you in a deep way as we'll try to understand what God is saying here. So in our passage all the way through the gospel of John we're looking at this idea of life and what life is and how we can have new life in Christ.

So would you stand with me in honor of God's word as I read our passage from John 16 today. They're in the middle of a dialogue here and you can sense the confusion in the passage. Jesus is trying to speak clearly into it. Starting in verse 16 – *Jesus went on to say, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."*

At this, some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father?'" They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying." He's obviously talking about the crucifixion and how He's going to be gone from them and the importance of the cross here.

Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'? Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. (That's our first word – joy.) A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. 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 whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

“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. In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you (there’s our second word) because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. 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.”

“Do you now believe?” Jesus replied. “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. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace (there’s our third word). In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

You may be seated.

I want to note in the passage going back to the first part of the passage that He talks about joy. Notice there’s grieving on the one side and joy on the other. So grief replaced with joy. The second word we see here, He talks about *the Father himself loves you because you have loved me* and so on. And then He talks about this *I am not alone, for the Father is with me*. So the aloneness versus the love of God. Both of those things are demonstrated here in that part of the passage. And the end we have – *I told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you have trouble*. But the word *trouble* there is *thlipsis* which means tribulation. Your version might have the word *tribulation* or *trouble*. Three words, we’re seeing them all in the passage there.

I want to understand why. Why is this taking place? Why is He talking about this love, joy, and peace? We hear that all over the place. It’s in the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, and peace. I would suggest it’s because of this ideal of life. If we understand what God is saying about life then this love, joy, and peace become these connector points. That’s where I want to head today and I want to show you what that looks like.

So I want to start with this idea that Jesus said often in the gospel. He said in John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but will have everlasting life*. He says in John 14:6 – *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*. He says in John 11 – *I am the resurrection and the life*. His message throughout this gospel is about life. That’s why we use that as our theme. And in John 10:10 He says – *I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full*.

Now follow me here because I want to take you back into the Old Testament. I want to take you back into the Hebrew Bible in the Old Testament. I want to look at a Hebrew word. This is the

word *nephesh*. It's the word for life that's used in Genesis. So God created life. And this word *nephesh* is an interesting word because it's used about 750 times in the Old Testament. It's a commonly used word to describe the word. *Nephesh*. It's translated soul.

In Genesis 2:7 we have – *Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life* (that's not our word *nephesh* yet...here it is), *and the man became a living being*, a living *nephesh*. So this word *nephesh* has to do with this fullness of who you are. It's translated soul, but sometimes you think I have a soul? No, you are a soul is the idea. It is everything about you. It is your personality, it is your emotions, it is the wrestling that you have inside of you. It's your desires. It's this soul that makes you who you are and God breathed into man and He created inside of him this living soul, this living being. So that's what we mean when we're talking about this soul.

So in Psalm 23 (as Tim just alluded to) it says – *He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul*. Well that's really interesting. The picture is a beautiful one about the quiet waters and just imagining being restored. This reviving of the soul, which I think we all need in our lives. I don't know about you, but I need this reviving in my heart, in my soul, and my soul needs refreshing. So I love that Psalm 23 that describes the reviving of the soul, this restoring.

So we have this soul. This all of who we are in our being and Jesus uses three words to describe the wrestling of the soul He's going to use these words – grief. Your grieving turns to joy. He's saying I'm alone, but I'm not alone because the Father is with me. There's this Father's love. Then there's this pressure or this tribulation that's mentioned in the last verses. Those are things that are wrestling around inside of our soul. Our souls tend to be wrestles. Our souls tend to be spinning inside. That's where they tend to be. God knew that when He created people. When He created them, He says okay, because your soul has a tendency to be restless, I'm going to do something for you. I'm going to do something that will help you to restore your soul. I'm going to have it every week. We're going to create this Sabbath for you.

So God uses another word, *naphash*. Do you see *nephesh* is the word in its noun form. *Naphash* is the verb form of *nephesh*. So *nephesh* means a soul, all of my being. But the verb for it is to *naphash*, to refresh. And God created the Sabbath today so that every seven days (on Friday night over the Sunday afternoon) there would be this time of ceasing of work, ceasing of labor. Because our souls tend to get so sucked into the labor of our lives. It's the work of family life that can be challenging at times. It's the work they had in the garden and then they were doing other kinds of work. Work was something they ceased from in their Sabbath day. They broke from their work. It was a way for them to have this restored soul, this Sabbath day that God set up in those times and He uses the word.

In Exodus 31:14 it says this: *In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was naphashed*. Well that's really interesting. God said He was refreshed. And we know that God doesn't expend energy, but He uses this picture of completeness so that on the seventh day He modeled what He wants us to do. He wants us to be refreshed. He wants us to experience that restoration, that reviving of the soul.

And so you might ask yourself then but we don't celebrate the Sabbath day every week. Why don't we do that? It's a very good question. You see God established in the Old Testament a lot of different ways that people would accomplish things in order to understand God and who He is. So there was the going to a priest to confess your sins and offer the sacrifice. So going to the priest was something we have in the Old Testament. Now it's been changed. We don't do that now. In the Old Testament we had blood sacrifices that were offered. And when someone wanted to worship God, they came before God with a sacrifice and they worshiped with this sacrifice. And every seventh day on Saturday they would rest from all of their labor.

So God used this Old Testament law as a training ground. So if you look at the scriptures and we understand the purpose of the Old Testament, the Bible says it was a training. A training so that people would learn. They would learn their need for God, their need to worship. They would learn how to do that. They would practice those things and there would be this experience inside of them that came from the practice of the law.

But something happened in human history that changed all of this. Everything changed because of the cross of Christ. So now that we have this cross of Christ, we experience this rest that's different than what we had. So in the Old Testament you offered sacrifices as a form of worship. But then Jesus became that sacrifice. So now we don't bring blood sacrifices with us to worship. Now we have the blood of Christ who is that sacrifice for us. Now we don't have to confess our sins to a priest. Now we are the priest that God allows us to come directly to the presence of the holy of holies. We are that special place. We don't have the tabernacle where the presence of God was. But now we are the place where God resides in side of our hearts and we don't have the Sabbath day every week because God has given us this rest in Jesus Christ.

Now the book of Hebrews is all about this. So if you want to understand how Christ fulfills all of these things, read the book of Hebrews. It's fascinating.

I'll just take you into a couple of verses. I want to complete this idea for you so you understand *nephesh* in the Old Testament and the completion of Jesus Christ to the law. Because in Hebrews 9:8-11 it describes this. It says – *The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order. But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation.* And he goes on. The passage is an amazing one all through Hebrews talking about how Christ has satisfied the law. He's given these things to us so that we understand them.

One more passage in Hebrews, if you'll bear with me, is in Hebrews 4:9-11 and it's talking about the Sabbath day. It says – *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest (something we, you and I, can experience in our hearts) for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works* (that is their performance in order to access God's presence. We rest from those. We

don't have to rely on those). *Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.*

I think as I was pondering this this week that my soul tends to be restless. Trying to get my to-do list done or complete tasks or concerned about this or that. So there's this restlessness going on and I need to enter into the rest that's provided by Jesus Christ because when I do, I can do that. I don't have to wait till Saturday. I don't have to wait till one day of the week. Every day I live within the rest of God. That God has given me that rest. That *nephesh*. That life, that wholeness of my soul that now I can experience a *naphash*, the restoration of that soul. It's something we need, each one in our lives.

But the question is how do we get there? And that's where I think these three words become really helpful. And this is where it gets very practical. Because I think it's through joy and through love and through peace that we enter into the rest that God would have for us. These three different words are used in the passage in response to three other words on the outside. So our soul is in this turmoil. We experience grief in our lives.

Now if you look at the passage in John 16, why were they grieving? They were grieving and Jesus is saying you are going to grieve why? Because Jesus is not going to be there. And when He goes away, their expectations are not going to be met because they expected that He would be with them continually. They expected that He would be the king. They expected that He would provide righteousness, this kingdom for everybody. They just expected He was the Messiah, the one who would come and solve all these problems. They had all these expectations. So what Jesus is saying there's going to come a time when you're going to grieve. You're going to grieve because your expectations are not going to be met. It's not what you expect. The cross of Christ is going to be right in the middle. So I would suggest a lot of times our expectations get us in trouble. You know we expect things to go a certain way and when they don't, what happens? We lose our joy.

I would suggest joy is one of the most elusive qualities for the Christian, you and me. It's hard. It's hard to stay joyful when we expect things to go this way and I can't believe it. And our expectations are interrupted. How in the world are you going to get rest? It doesn't come by practicing joy; it comes by finding the cross of Christ. We lay our expectations down before the cross and we say, "God, I want to give you my expectations so I'm not holding them on so dearly in my soul." When we do that, that's when we experience the joy. It goes back to the cross and then back out through joy. So if you find yourself saying, "Wow, I'm not feeling very joyful," likely it's going back to some expectations you have about people, about things, about life. And we need to lay those things down at the cross. When we lay them at the cross, God allows us then to experience something new, this joy that He wants.

In the passage that we looked at, in fact let's just look at it again, notice He says – *You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.* Verse 21 it uses the illustration of childbirth. The idea is that there's some pain here until an event takes place. When the event takes place and the baby is born, there's something that changes the way you think about life. That the pain is no longer as relevant to you as the joy that you experience. And He uses that picture to describe what it means to come to Him and to get to know Him and to experience the cross of Christ. When you

understand the cross, you're not going to grieve, but you're going to be rejoicing. Joy is going to take over your heart. That's what He's saying and that kind of pathway of joy in order to get to this rest that our soul desperately needs.

The second one He talks about is this love. It's this response to being alone. He says – You guys are all going to scatter and I'm going to be alone. But I'm not going to be alone because I've got the Father with me. This Father who loves you and whom you love. There's this sense of aloneness that we often experience in our lives. Why do we feel alone? Because let's say you do make a mistake. Every time you make a mistake and you're embarrassed about that, there's this aloneness you feel and you go "oh man." And sometimes the aloneness of not having people around. But often it's the aloneness of your soul of "man, I just feel so alone. There's just nobody here who understands me, nobody is with me." Jesus wants them to know in modeling this – *I am not alone, for the Father is with me.*

If you're feeling alone, you've made mistakes, you're feeling isolated, you feel like you're not meeting up to the expectations or you're not doing what needs to be done or whatever and you're feeling very alone, then the solution isn't go to love. The solution is to go to the cross. You lay that down before the cross of Jesus Christ. When you lay that down, He allows you to experience love in a way that provides us a *naphash*, this rest for your soul that you and I desperately need in our lives.

So we see in the passage as He's describing it, *the Father himself loves you because you loved me.* And He says – *Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.* There's this sense of aloneness met by the Father's love. This sense of presence of God in our lives in our very souls.

The third word that we look at and we see in this passage is this word peace. And it's tied to this word *thlipsis*, which is the Greek word for trouble. *I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble.* Pressure is the idea. Tribulations. Frustrations. If you just think about your soul for a minute, in your soul what rocks you? What gets you off this still water sand quiet waters before the Lord where He restores your soul but then you got life that gets in the way and you've got all this stuff going on that messes with your heart? And when it starts messing with your heart then challenges start happening deep inside of us and those challenges are a problem. And He's saying look, I've given you a peace that overcomes the world, that's different.

So the challenge here is when you start to feel the troubles, when you start to feel the persecution or afflictions or the tribulations or the pressure as it would be translated, the solution isn't just go find peace somewhere by meditating or doing some kind of something to bring about peace. The goal is to go to the cross. You lay it down before the cross because the cross changes everything. It changes who we are and when we come before the cross it does something inside of us. It opens us up so that we can receive the peace that God wants us to experience.

So here becomes the application, I think, for our lives. If your soul is experiencing some turbulent times, if your soul is being stirred up, where is it being stirred up? Because it may be pointing to an area of your heart that you want to lay down before the cross of Christ so that you can experience the joy and your joy would be complete. So you can understand and experience

the love of the Father, this peace that Jesus has overcome the world. When we do that then something happens inside of our souls. It becomes this Sabbath rest. It becomes this place where we enjoy a peace, a joy, a love that God wants us to experience that replaces the turbulence inside of that soul that we have. That's why Jesus says – *Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

And yes, this is something if you've never accepted Christ as your Savior then you want to come and say, "God, I want to give myself to you. I want to trust myself to you." He will help you with your weary and burdened state and He will give you rest. But this isn't just for people who aren't yet Christians. This is for you and me, people who have already made a commitment to Christ. That it's not just about having Jesus as the Savior. He's also the Lord of our lives. When He's the Lord, that means we're regularly allowing Him to be the boss and turning things over to the cross of Christ. That's what happens when we come to Him. He gives us this rest, a rest that we need.

I talked to a lady this week. She was saying, "Ah this parenting thing is so hard. I'm so tired." I'm thinking, "Look lady, four and five years old is how old your kids are? You've got a long way to go here. This is not going to be an easy task." So there's something that needs to happen inside of a person's heart when they go "Oh man, work is really hard." You're twenty-five years old. You've got a long time you're going to be working. There's something that needs to take place inside of us, a spiritual strength that God wants to provide for us and it creates this longing.

So Jesus, if you think about the names, He says *I am* in the book of John seven times. He says *I am the living water*, which gives the impression that we're thirsting after Him. *I am the bread of life*, which has this idea that I'm hungry for God. *I am the resurrection and the life*, He says. *I am the door*. *I am the way, the truth, and the life*. Jesus says all these *I am*s in the book of John. But it creates in us this desire for Him. Our soul needs to the cross. Our soul needs to come to Jesus. And because of that, I like this word *nephesh* in the Old Testament.

I've used Old Testament word and verses and New Testament words. Keep in mind *nephesh* is an Old Testament word. It's a Hebrew word. So now we go back to *nephesh* in the Old Testament and in Psalm 42:2 it says – *As the deer pants for water* (it just wants to come down onto the brook and drink of the water) *so my soul pants for you, O Lord*. I need that. There is this need that we all have in our hearts for rest. So if you find your soul in turmoil, there's likely something that you need to lay down before the cross of Christ so that you can receive those benefits of love and joy and peace. Those are supernatural things that come from God. They come from the Holy Spirit's presence in us. But we must give up some of those griefs and aloneness and pressures of our lives that our soul hangs onto. So we give up those things and we're able to experience God in this new and refreshing *naphash* kind of way.

Would you stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Oh I get it, Lord. I think that's how I feel when I look at this. That sometimes the weariness or the frustrations that I experience you can really satisfy. I know that requires that I come before you, come before the cross, and just lay those down. But I pray that you would give us the humility to do so. Give us the willingness to serve you wholeheartedly and not hold on to

things that you want us to let go of. And Lord, we ask for that rest for our souls. That we can enjoy it, benefit from it, and then share it with others. Lord, do that in our hearts this morning. We ask in Jesus' name, amen.