

Joy Out of Tragedy

Kyle was devastated. After faithfully working for his company for eleven years, another corporation bought out the business and he and many other workers were laid off. Through no fault of his own, Kyle was out of work. He moped around the house for several days in the depths of despair.

Eventually a friend came over to visit Kyle. He told Kyle not to worry about his job, but to pray and trust God to meet his need. Kyle followed his friend's advice. He prayed for a job and even asked people at his church to pray, as well.

In time, Kyle got a new job. Amazingly, the new job was in a field in which Kyle had always wanted to work. He loved his new job and looked forward to going to work each day. He later told his friend that he was actually thankful for being laid off, because it opened the door for him to get an even better job.

When tragedy strikes we are often knocked flat on our back. In this week's lesson you will learn that Jesus' disciples faced some very sad and frightening times, but He promised that their sorrow would be turned into joy.

John 16:16 What did Jesus mean when He told His disciples in a little while they wouldn't see Him?

What did He mean when He said a little while later they would see Him again?

John 16:17-18 How did the disciples react to Jesus' statements?

John 16:19 How did Jesus know what the disciples wanted to ask Him (see also **John 2:24-25**)?

John 16:20 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall _____ and _____, but the world shall _____: and ye shall be _____." Jesus knew His disciples would be devastated with sorrow and sadness when He was crucified. Remember that He spoke these words the night before He was crucified. Jesus went on to say: "But your sorrow shall be turned into _____."

To help them better understand, Jesus used the illustration of a woman giving birth to a child.

John 16:21 What happens to a woman **after** her baby is delivered?

John 16:22 When did Jesus say the disciples would rejoice?

How long did He say that joy would last?

John 16:23-24 Jesus urged His disciples to pray in His name, promising answers to those prayers.

- John 16:25** How had Jesus spoken to them up to that time?
How was He going to speak to them in the future?
- John 16:26** Jesus said in the future His disciples would pray in His name and have direct access to God the Father.
- John 16:27** Why did the Father love Jesus' disciples? "Because ye have _____ me, and have _____ that I came out from God."
- John 16:28** Where did Jesus say He was going?
- John 16:29-31** The disciples finally understood His words. What did Jesus ask them?
- John 16:32** What did He say the disciples would soon do?

The Old Testament predicted Jesus' disciples would abandon Him (**Zech. 13:7**). That is exactly what happened (**Matt. 26:56**).

- John 16:33** Why did Jesus tell His disciples about these things?
What did He promise they would experience in the world?
Why could they be of good cheer?

Concluding Thoughts: Jesus' disciples were about to face the worst time of their lives. Within a matter of hours one of them would betray Jesus, resulting in His arrest; they would all (except John) abandon Jesus; another of them would deny that he knew Jesus; their Lord would endure the combined cruelty of the Jews and the Romans; and Jesus would be brutally executed.

The disciples were understandably stunned, broken-hearted, and discouraged. How could things possibly get any worse? Yet in the midst of their emotional devastation, Jesus told them that their sorrow would soon be turned into joy.

If you experience turmoil and tragedy and a friend says, "Cheer up, things will get better!" does that really help your feelings? Probably not, because your friend doesn't know anything more about the future than you do.

Jesus, however, told His friends to cheer up, but He is God and He knows exactly what the future holds. Jesus knows that we will face difficulties in the world, but He has overcome this wicked world. We can always trust Him to do what's best for us.

When tragedy comes, thank God that He holds your future.

Project: Memorize **John 16:33**. Do the **Daily Bible Readings** each day and don't miss Sunday School this Sunday.