

EXALTING CHRIST . . . THE LAMB OF GOD

Four Words That Keep Us Going

John 16:16–33

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Jesus' conversation with His disciples was fast approaching an end. The anguish and agony of Gethsemane followed by the trials, scourging, and crucifixion lay before Him like a dark, dismal shadow. His closing remarks tumbled from His lips one thought after another. Time was of the essence. Death lurked near.

Just prior to the Savior's immortal prayer for His disciples (John 17), we observe four main words He punctuated in John 16. Each carried its own message of encouragement and hope—initially to His closest followers and, ultimately, to all who serve and obey Him in faith.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Making sure you prepare your heart before your time in the Scriptures allows the Holy Spirit full access to your study process. The thoughts and emotions the disciples were feeling as they listened to Jesus speak about His departure—even death—surely brought a mix of confusion, uncertainty, sadness, and even fear. It's likely you know someone facing uncertainty who may need the Lord's comfort. Take a few moments to pray for that person right now, asking the Lord personally to encourage him or her with His presence and peace.



Observation: Stepping into the Biblical Scene

Chuck Swindoll recommends using your imagination to step into the biblical scene and fully engage with the emotion and experience of the disciples. Try this technique as you read John 16:16–33.

Quotable

*In preparing
His disciples
for His death,
Jesus took them
from the known
to the unknown,
from the familiar to
the uncharted. He
went from where
they were living
into whole new
vistas of truth they
needed to hear.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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As you do, circle or underline text that indicates how the disciples felt or how they reacted to Jesus' words. How do you imagine these men reacted to Jesus' words? Make notes below.

Confusion of the Disciples

Repeatedly, Jesus told His disciples He was going away—and they wouldn't be coming with Him. In John 16:16–18, what word or group of words did Jesus use multiple times in speaking with the disciples?

Why is Jesus' choice of words significant?

Four Words That Keep Us Going

In John 16:19–33, Jesus offered the disciples reassurances upon which they could hang their hopes. He wanted them to know that despite intensifying periods of persecution, grief wouldn't have the last word. There were four key characteristics their hearts would need before ominous events unfolded.

Joy . . .

In verses 19–20, what emotions did Jesus say the disciples would experience?



What illustration did Jesus use in verses 21–22 to describe how the disciples would experience a change from sorrow to joy?

Jesus mentioned two aspects of joy. Read John 16:22 and 16:24 to see if you can identify each. Complete the sentences below with your responses.

Joy will be _____ not temporary (John 16:22).

Joy will be _____ not partial (16:24).

Love . . .

Jesus wanted to make certain the disciples understood just how accessible He'd continue to be long after He left them. Read John 16:23–29. What quality did Jesus introduce in verses 23–24?

What was the basis of the Father's willingness to respond to the disciples' prayers offered in Jesus' name (16:26–27)?



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How would you characterize the disciples' response to Jesus' words (John 16:29)?

Faith . . .

Ultimately, Jesus desired to deepen His disciples' trust in Him. What did Jesus say would test their faith once He was gone (16:32)?

Peace . . .

The result of faith is peace, Jesus taught. What did Jesus say would be the certain experience of the disciples' life on earth (16:33)?

What did He offer to help the disciples endure tough times?



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Interpretation: The Meaning of Christ's Promise of Persecution

Chuck provides a compelling interpretation of this entire section in his commentary on John's gospel:

Jesus challenged His disciples—and us by extension—to “take courage.” The Greek term means “to dare,” “to be bold,” “to be of good courage,” “to be cheerful or confident.” The definition includes two other nuanced meanings. First, “to trust in,” “rely on,” and, second, “to be bold against someone or something,” “to go out bravely to.” The entire range of meanings is appropriate to the Lord's exhortation. His victory over the world—sin, evil, Satan, death, the twisted manner by which the world operates—gives us reason to throw ourselves headlong into the conflict. We have nothing to fear. For even if we die, we live.

Joy, love, and peace are ours, if only we will believe in Him.¹



Correlation: How Does It Relate?

Correlation is the *Searching the Scriptures* method that helps you strengthen your interpretation of a biblical passage by comparing it to other portions of Scripture. Do you recall how John opened his gospel?

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it” (John 1:5). In John 16, we read the conclusion of Jesus' teaching ministry: “I have overcome the world” (16:33).

In what way do these two passages tie together?

How do they together reinforce Jesus' desire that His disciples put their hope in Him, even after His ascension?





Application: How Will You Respond?

As we conclude this lesson, let's consider two statements by Chuck to help us apply to our lives what we've learned.

1. "His life may not have been long, but His death was not a mistake."

How can the love, joy, faith, and peace of Christ strengthen you in times of heartache and grief?

2. "My life may not be easy, but I can go on."

In what ways can you offer the light of God's Word to someone struggling to find his or her way through the dark tunnels of uncertainty and doubt?



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for not leaving me alone to myself and to my doubts . . . especially during times of great uncertainty and pain. Please grant me Your supernatural joy, love, faith, and peace that I may not lose heart but walk on with great confidence in Your perfect will and plan. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on John*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, vol. 4 (Carol Springs, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2014), 315.



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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

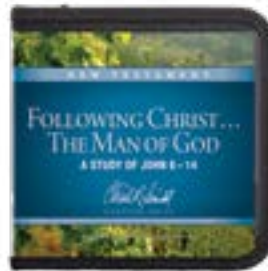
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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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