**John 16:12-22 May 15, 2022**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

 Our text for this morning comes from the Gospel of John the 16th chapter here re-reading these words. “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.” This is our text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

 As Easter continues we have gone from the season of sorrow and contrition over sin of Lent into this season of joy. Lent lasts 40 days and now we are in day 29 of the Easter season. Which means this Spring holiday is still our focus here in God’s house, but when you look outside, and out on the area Lakes it seems we’ve moved on to Summer. As a matter of fact, I dare you to find any leftover Easter candy or decorations in a department store, if you do find any leftover candy I would encourage you not to eat it. The world has moved on from the joy of Easter, Baseball games are on T.V., school will soon be over and plans have been made for summer vacations and summer activities and camps. The days in our area are being planned and will soon be upon us from Onekama Days, to Arcadia Days, to Kaleva Days….and I’m sure there are many more…It seems strange to dwell so long in this season of joy here in the Church, for the world around us Easter is long gone, Spring is just a memory even if we are still in that particular season, but for us Christians, in order to appreciate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have to remain at the empty tomb. Remember, for 40 days we journey to the cross, to the place of sorrow and sadness over Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior taking upon himself the penalty of our sin as he dies in our place. And now for 40 days we bask in the joy of the empty tomb, the sign that death itself has been swallowed up in the victory of our Lord and Savior before his Ascension. It wouldn’t seem right to immediately leave the tomb behind after such a monumental gift has been given to us by our Lord. And while it’s true that we don’t stay in the Easter season forever, we have remained in a state of waiting this entire year, and every year we’ve been alive. Moving from a season of sorrow to a season of joy shouldn’t be foreign to us, because in a little while our Lord will bring redemption, life, and salvation into our world.

 This sadly means that right now we are living in the time of sorrow that Jesus describes in our Gospel lesson. Even here in the season of Easter. Even in the joyous season of Christmas. Truly all throughout our lives we live in a state of sorrow because we live in a state of sin. There’s no way to deny the sin that exists in our lives even when we are celebrating. The celebrations of our lives, while joyous, can also be short lived. You can celebrate that a family member or friend has gotten over a particular illness or injury, but the fact remains that they still have a body that will break down to disease over the years. You can celebrate that you survived a car crash without any serious problems, but every time you drive a vehicle you are in danger. Small victories don’t change the overall picture. We live in a dangerous world full of sorrow. We live in a world of calamity and disaster. We live in a world of war, and violence, and death. We live in a world of disease and illness. We live in a sorrowful and fallen creation, and we ourselves are sorrowful and fallen creatures. Sin has corrupted us, and sorrow surrounds us. It’s a reality we must face. It’s a reality we live in every day of our lives.

 This sorrow was amplified in the lives of the disciples whom Jesus was speaking to in our Gospel lesson. We know that these men faced unbelievable sorrow in their lives as they went forth from Jesus appearing to them after his resurrection. Here today they seem to struggle with the idea that he was going away from them, but as Jesus was pointing out the comfort they needed was with them through the Holy Spirit. Jesus had provided them with the Holy Spirit to speak to others with the same authority that he had spoken to them. Christ didn’t need to stay around with them any longer, he promised to remain with them through the Spirit and through His Word. He had instituted the Sacraments for the forgiveness of their sins and so that they would have a continued and remaining fellowship with God the Father. Their faith was secure, even in the midst of sorrow. As he says to the disciples about the Spirit, “The Spirit will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine, therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” They had joy in the midst of their sorrow because all that belonged to Jesus was now theirs, and ultimately was passed on to us. The same faith that they had, we have too. We share in the same Baptism because Baptism is ultimately the work of God and not us. It isn’t the water, it’s not the Baptizer, it’s God himself and we have confidence in our own Baptism as being as important and true as theirs. We have the same Supper they did, even on the night that Jesus instituted, because present is all that we need to have this fellowship with God. Bread, Wine, and the authoritative Words of our Lord and Savior are here, and so we receive the same forgiveness, and the same fellowship and strengthening of our faith. Nothing has changed, the same things have been given to us.

 We have the life that Jesus showed by his resurrection because it has been bestowed upon us as a gift from the Holy Spirit. All that the Father has is Jesus’ and all that Jesus has is ours through faith and given as a gift. And in that is the joy that Jesus is speaking about in the midst of sorrow. It’s the joy that follows the season of sorrow that causes our hearts to rejoice. It’s the promise of salvation and life everlasting that Jesus will give to us eternally when he returns. “A little while, and you will see me no longer.” We know that this was fulfilled for the disciples in that we will read about Jesus’ Ascension in just a few weeks. He did not remain with the disciples forever but he ultimately went back to prepare a place for us. While this “little while” was only in reference to a few weeks, the second “little while” has been a bit longer. “And again a little while and you will see me.” The disciples waited to see Christ again, and ultimately did in their death when they were taken to be with Him. But we still wait for the final moment when we will see him again. When we will stand in his presence and behold the majesty and glory of the one true God.

 We will see his glory, but what will he see in us? Our Good Deeds? Our faith shining as bright as the sun? Or will he see the real us? The side of us that no one else sees? If that scares you a bit, let me ask you this, what does God see right now when he looks into your thoughts, and the true intentions of your heart? Does he find humility? Does he find, as we read about in Acts in our first reading, the repentance that was granted to us Gentiles that leads to life? Or does he find schemes? Excuses for sin? Does he see the true desires of our hearts and how we really feel about worship? Authorities? Our parents? Our children? Our spouse? Our boss? Even those sitting around us? What do you think he sees? What everyone else does? Oh no. He sees it all. Remember we pray that God would forgive us of our sins of *thought* word and deed. We will see his glory and divinity on that day but what will he see from us? The truth is outside of faith he will see all of the blackness of our hearts of sin. He will see the destruction of his own creation and how sin has corrupted us to the core. How we have plotted against Him, how we have betrayed his trust and misused His gifts. He will see just how sinful we truly are.

 It’s the side of us that no one else sees, that we hope to keep hidden from everyone, even those closest to us. It’s the side of us that leads us to this place that is revealed to us in the mirror of God’s Law that says we have sinned against God and can’t possibly save ourselves. It’s a part of the season of sorrow that Jesus describes, because we can’t escape sin here in this world. It’s a world of sin. We can’t escape sin in our lives because Satan is out there constantly tempting us into betrayal and to wander away from God. We can’t escape sin because we ourselves are born into sin and have a heart that is inclined to sin. Which is why on that day, a “little while” from now when we see God in His glory and divinity, our hope is built not on the foundation of our works or our false faith in ourselves. It’s built on the rock of Jesus Christ. It’s built on the peace that surpasses all human understanding, the lasting and true peace, that God does not see our sin, but he sees Jesus. He sees his perfection and holiness. He sees us clothed in the perfect white robes of our Savior, who shed his blood for us, and died to take away the penalty of our unrighteousness. God the Father sees His Son, the one who has fellowship with Him, who is eternal himself and declares us eternal and holy with Him through the faith created by the Holy Spirit. That’s the ultimate truth of joy for us in this world and life of sorrow. That’s the joy that can’t possibly be taken from us, no matter what sorrows we face. No matter how many times we fall down and fall into temptations and sin. The joy we have in the face of Satan’s lies and accusations, is that we are redeemed. Bought back. We are saved and sanctified; made holy through the sorrowful death of God’s own Son, and the joyous resurrection that is ours through Baptism.

 Stay in this season, my brothers and sisters in Christ, appreciate the joy of Easter as long as you can. While the world has moved on to other things, let us stay here at the tomb for a “little while” longer. Let us remain in the joy of our eternal salvation and victory over death through God’s own Son, and as we leave here today, go out to those we know in our lives and invite them to see the joy that is found here in God’s House. So may we share this joy, this light, and this celebration, until the day he returns, whether we are alive to see it, or it truly is in just a “little while”.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.