



# Sermon Growth Guide

**November 14, 2021**

**Good Medicine - Felixitup**

**John 16:19-24**

**Key Verse:** John 16:22 “Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.”

**Big Idea:** God brings you joy that will never be taken away.

## Foundations

Love, joy and peace. This week, joy! The Holy Spirit delights in growing joy in your very core.

There is a surprising, and perhaps unwelcomed at first, precursor to the joy of the Lord that this week’s Scripture brings to bear on our mind: “You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy,” (John 16:20b). Grief turning to joy, what a marvelous thought.

Pastor Matt unpacks this grief-to-joy transformation by likening the process to the metamorphosis of a caterpillar/ butterfly.

As we approach the holiday season, where can you identify grief-spots on your heart? May you sense the power of the gospel that holds your pain with you and promises to transform your heart into pure joy at the second coming of Christ.

There is also joy for today. Joy is, praise God, a piece, an aspect, of The Fruit of the Spirit. God desires that you begin to taste and see the joy of heaven in the here and now.

Open your time this week sharing your lives together. Where do you feel the grief of today? Where are you seeing the growth of joy in your life as you walk in Christ? How do you imagine eternity, knowing it will be a forever fullness of joy? Wrap your time in prayer.

## Understanding God’s Word

Our text opens with Jesus pointing to something earlier in John 16. What is it? What’s the greater context of this week’s text?

Jesus tells us that we will “weep and mourn while the world rejoices,” (verse 20). Hold a discussion on what this means for you.

Our text concludes with a beautiful promise, “your joy will be complete.” Looking back over the text, how/why will this happen?

## Applying God’s Word

God brings you joy that will never be taken away. Joy is a piece of The Fruit of the Spirit.

How can you better lean into your relationship with God so that His joy bears itself on the branches of your life?

## Witnessing God’s Word

This week we learn that the fullness of joy is coming, but joy is being grown in us in the present, in the now of our living. As you live (in your home, your office, your neighborhood/city), do the people around you see The Fruit of the Spirit on display in your life? How might you share the joy of heaven with those around you this week?

Today we're looking at joy; what a great word. Can we say it together? "Joy!" And how about some "Christmas Joy?" Does everyone have their tickets?

Now, if I had a special thermometer that was able to measure joyfulness, and I was able to measure your level of joy in your life, what would it read? Low? High? No matter what it might read, chances are there isn't anyone in here right now that if I asked you, "Could you use some more joy in your life?" nobody would say, "No thanks, my tank is all filled up! I've hit my joy quota." No. It's something we all want and it's something we all need. Joy is good for the soul.

Did you know that studies show that joyful people have less chance of having a heart attack, maintain a healthier blood pressure, and tend to have lower cholesterol levels? Did you know that there's actual research to prove that joy boosts our immune systems, fights stress and pain, and improves our chance of living longer? Is this starting to sound like a **Felixitup** commercial?

Speaking of commercials, we see this everywhere don't we? "Joy can be yours. Find your joy. Buy this. Eat this. Gain this experience—and real joy can be yours!" As an advertising major in college, you might say that I got an education in how to persuade people toward the idea that joyfulness, this overflowing exuberance in life, could easily be accessed—if only the right thing could be apprehended. So as an aspiring advertising student at Texas Tech, I created advertisements ... I constructed campaigns ... I even wrote jingles from time to time (even if it wasn't part of the assignment) in order to hopefully boost my grade! These jingles had great power in persuading people into thinking that certain experiences or even products could increase the level of joy in their lives.

Take Q-tips for example. Did you know that Q-tips have the power to increase joy in your life? It's true. Now, clean ears are nice. But clean ears is only one of the many benefits Q-tips can bring. Just listen:

*The Q-tip song*

Q-tips, sticks made of cotton.  
Q-tips, how can they be forgotten.  
Q-tips, you spoil me rotten  
With the things you do for me!

Q-tips, helps ya clean your ear out  
Air conditioner vents, gets the dust out  
Q-tips, you make me cry out in every way!  
Q-tips you make my day!

There, see? Joy and Q-tips. They go together! I'll spare you verse two for now. Alright. Enough fun now, we're in church for crying out loud! Today, I hope you know that we're looking at a different breed of joy altogether.

We're in week two of **Good Medicine**, where we are taking a look at the first "big three" of the Fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23). That's a good one to put to memory ... or maybe another jingle!

Now, fruit doesn't appear out of thin air, it's starting place isn't the produce aisle at the grocery store. It's brought forth from somewhere—a branch of some sort, a vine. Fruit is connected to something bigger than itself. This fruit of love, joy and peace is brought forth from the limbs of our lives as we live out a life connected to Jesus.

In John 15, one of Jesus' great "I Am" statements, Jesus would say, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Jesus is the true vine, and we are His branches. The power of God's Spirit begins to flow and the fruit of that Spirit starts to emerge. Now just a couple of lines later, Jesus would say this, "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11).

Today we're looking at joy. Not just any joy ... but "my joy," says Jesus. Complete joy. Jesus wants us to know this joy is not merely like a firework that explodes in the sky for a moment, only to fade into the darkness. "My joy," says Jesus, "is not a fickle joy; in one moment and then out the next. This joy belongs to me. But I'm not just keeping this for myself. I want it to be in you, that your joy might be complete!" Can you see the Lord's desire here? He is wanting to give us a very big gift.

There are times when joy is so palpable. Life is just humming along. The sun? It's out. Money? In the bank. Family? Loving each other. Parenting? Piece of cake. Personal health? No problems. Here joy seems to be right on the bottom shelf; easy to access. But when trouble is in the forecast, or when real sorrow is at hand, or when paralyzing effects of suffering or pain comes ... joy just seems to be more out of reach, doesn't it? I think we all can relate given where we've been in our journey as of late. We need a



joy that can reach us no matter what's going on around us, no matter the circumstances. So let's pick up again at John 16.

In our passage today, Jesus and His disciples are together, and Jesus is prepping them for what's ahead. All of this is part of what's known as Jesus' final discourse before He turns toward the cross. He's had the Last Supper with His friends, He's washed their feet, the betrayal of Judas has occurred, and they are now on the road on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus, knowing what's ahead, says that He is only going to be with them for just a little while longer. His own death is just ahead—but Jesus, wanting to comfort His friends, says, "Hey guys, it's a good thing I'm going away because unless I go back to the Father, I can't send you this really great gift called the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth back to you..." But all the disciples can seem to hear right now is that their dear friend is only going to be with them for just a little while longer. Upon hearing this, the disciples are confused and start talking among themselves. What does He mean? Where's He going? What's going on 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 (John 16:19-20a).

Jesus doesn't pull any punches. He tells it like it is. "Guys, it's gonna get hard. What you are about to see and experience will be nothing short of a nightmare to you. And not only are you going to grieve because of what you will see, but you will grieve because you will see me no more." Can you imagine yourself being one of these disciples? Can you imagine the sense of sadness and despair? Now for you and me, we sit over 2000 years after the fact and we know the rest of the story, but right now for these disciples a great cloud of despair descends as they hear these words: "You will see me no more."

And then He says, "You will weep and mourn while the world rejoices." And what's the difference between weeping and mourning? Weeping is crying out loud. That's hard as it is. But mourning as well? That's a sorrow that sets in when someone we love dies. I imagine the apostle John, who wrote these words, being among the most sorrowful as this announcement comes from this man he has loved and walked with. But then ... a turn toward hope. How grateful we are for John

16:20b! Look at what it says: You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy" (John 16:20b).

Jesus acknowledges the reality of pain and grief here; He does not avoid it. But then, do you see what happens? The grief does not simply get relocated for joy to then come into the picture. No. Grief turns to joy. It's as if the molecular makeup of grief transforms all together into joy! It's like a caterpillar metamorphosing into a butterfly. I love that.

And do you know what one of my favorite words in this one verse is? It's the word "but." That word could be a sermon series itself! "The Buts of the Bible." Just think of the jingles I could write for that one!

Here are a few of my favorites ... and I want you to say "but" when I raise my hand like this, OK? Let's try some:

- My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. – That's Psalm 73.
- If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied but Christ has indeed been raised from the dead! – That's 1 Corinthians 15.
- Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning. – That's Psalm 30.
- You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. That's John 16:20b.

What a great "but" in John 16! And you know, Jesus isn't merely saying to the disciples, "when you die and you see me in heaven ... then you will have joy" (which is true) or even, "when I come back at the end of all things and set up shop; the new heavens and new earth ... then you will have joy" (although that's true). What He is saying is this: when you see me you will have joy! Seeing Jesus is to immediately have joy! It just simply comes as part of the package.

Jesus so badly wants His disciples to understand what's coming that He uses the example of a pregnant woman in labor. Watch this. Verse 21: "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."

How many of you have been in labor before? OK, guys, if you are raising your hand right now ... please come see me after the service. Now, women! Many of you know this experience and know what comes along with it. Pain! Struggle!



They call it “labor” for a reason. Brooke and I have three beautiful boys, all who I was privileged to watch come into the world when they were born. And while I do not have a clue as to what being in labor is like, I can tell you two things from what I observed:

1. Pain happens. Epidurals are a gift from the Lord, but still! Pain happens. That seems to be unavoidable in childbirth.
2. There’s no stopping it. There’s no going backwards. When it’s time for the baby to come, guess what? It’s coming! Can you imagine me saying at the point of one of my boys being born, “Honey, can you just hold it for a little longer?” No way!

A woman giving birth to a child. What is Jesus trying to say here? He’s saying to His disciples, “Pain is coming. It’s inevitable. But so is joy. And here’s the reason: When you know me, when you abide in me, “my joy” comes and there’s no stopping it. Is pain part of this process? You bet. Do we get to bypass the labor pains of suffering? Not a chance. But just as surely as the joy arrives in tandem with the child that is seen once he’s born, when you see me, when you see Jesus, joy comes! This is a blessed assurance! To know Jesus is to know joy!

Now, you might be saying, “But c’mon, Matt. What do I do when I’m just not feeling it? I know Him ... but what do I do when I feel like the joy that once made it’s home in me is just plain gone? What if I’m just having trouble seeing Jesus right now?” Many of you might be in this space today.

I want you to see something I noticed in verse 22, when Jesus is speaking to His very troubled disciples: “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” (John 16:22).

Jesus knew the disciples would lose sight of Him. Jesus didn’t ever lose sight of them. He would see them again. And friends, in times of grief or hardship we, like these disciples, lose sight of Jesus from time to time, don’t we? But we shouldn’t despair; we can take comfort in what Jesus says here. It’s not “you will see me again” but “I will see you again!” We have a loving Lord that is on the lookout for you. And while now may be the time of grief ... you will yet again rejoice and no one can take it away.

I remember a few months back, I just found myself in a funk. I was making all kinds of mountains out of molehills. And a good friend of mine picked up on this. (By the way everyone

needs to have a good friend like this.) While we were sitting there having coffee, he heard my complaints and simply said, “Matt, do you suppose it’s time to take a note of where you see God’s blessings?” Ouch. And yet, wounds from a friend can be trusted. I found myself praying “Oh Lord, would you please enter back into my day-to-day. I want to see you again. Open my eyes to where your blessings are.” Shortly after, I started carrying around these little black books in order to chronicle things I encountered in my day that I could be thankful for. Sounds simple, doesn’t it? It was transformational for me.

It wasn’t merely recounting these blessings on my own that was powerful, it was talking again with the Lord and thanking Him for giving me the joy of noticing His activity in my life. To see Jesus is to have joy. To know Him is to know joy.

It’s amazing what happens when that joy of Jesus is at home in your inner being, isn’t it? You see things differently. When you truly get to see Jesus, you can’t help yourself but see and experience things differently. For instance, you might find yourself singing with a little bit more exuberance as you come into worship. Or maybe those mountains you’ve been making out of the molehills of your life suddenly become small once again. Or maybe that sticky sense of discontentment you’ve felt as you look sideways to your neighbor’s successes changes and maybe gratitude begins to emerge instead, as you recount the Lord’s rich blessings in your own life. When the joy of Jesus finds it’s way in you, things change.

I get to spend a lot of time with people in the hospital. One of my favorite verses to share is this: “You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing ... Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand (Psalms 16:1-2, 9-11).

The pleasure, the delight, the joy that comes with knowing Jesus is eternal. Do you know this joy? Can you see where the source is? “You will fill me with joy” where? “In your presence.” It’s in His presence where we find true joy. “My joy,” as Jesus says. That joy of the Lord will never run dry, will never fade away, and no one can take it away. Amen.

