

This Easter season, in the lectionary from the Church Fathers, the appointed reading for the Church, consider the direct references to you, what you go through, the reality of your Easter life. The Sunday after Easter Jesus says **blest are those (you) who believe and have not seen. These words are written that you have life.** Then last Sunday, **I have sheep of another flock (you) and I will be their shepherd and they follow My voice, one shepherd one flock. I am your good shepherd.**

And now today Jesus speaks of sorrows. Jesus teaches those disciples, teaches you, **a little while.** You wait. Be patient. Trust His Word. That we believe and are confident Jesus keeps His Word. Our Lord give this comfort, this promise, this doctrine to the Disciples the night He's betrayed, preparing them for what they will go through and what you go through no less.

Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. The world doesn't get us. We don't play by their rules. Our values are not their values. In the days of the Roman Empire, Christians were called "haters, unpatriotic" for not hailing Caesar as a god. They're made out to be "unloving" because they refused to embrace the gods of the culture, include the Roman gods with their God. And because the Christian would not honor the gods of the culture, they were to blame for anyone's hardship, any hardship of the society because they upset the gods, caused the hate. Has anything changed to what we have today? This post-Christian world and the Early Church have striking parallel. So Jesus tells you the world celebrates while we, the church laments. So be it.

Then your Lord gives this example of a women in labor. Men, never minimize or downplay the pain, hardship of labor, at least if you're married to her, take my word on that. But women in labor and the child, it's dangerous, can be very deadly. We live in a modern, insulated world, with medical advances that in our age it often isn't the case. Aside from death, the pains of a women in labor is a result of the curse from the Garden, what was spoken to Eve. What should be so joyous: childbirth, God's gift of life; also of pain, danger. Miracle of joy in a child, your birth, your mother, the most apt illustration -your Lord gives- the beautiful example of Christian suffering in the world. Your life is dangerous, sorrows hit, suffering yet the Lord uses it to form you to be His child, to draw you closer to Him. This is how life works. He works in sorrow and joy. Joy of a new baby.

You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. Jesus is talking about faith. Joy is the inevitable, immediate, and constant response of faith. You see Jeremiah today, that lower corner stained-glass window, Jeremiah

sees the Jerusalem and the S. kingdom defeated, destroyed because of unrepentance and failing to heed God's Word, and even God's faithful caught up in the destruction, their way of life destroyed, their homes gone, so many family and friends dead, so many family and friends hauled off into slavery. And yet. Yet He can confess **the steadfast love of the Lord endures forever, His mercies never come to an end, new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness. Wait for Him.** So the Christian prays for relief, prays for miracles and not pretend if only I have a strong faith I can make it, but you can insist God is good, true to His word, wait for God to keep His word. Thus you live, when days are bright and sunny, when times of sorrow, suffering, tears, and wait with His Word, Sacraments, live with His joy in you.

Jesus lives. It matters. You have His steadfast love. Be in awe and amazed, waiting and anticipating what Christ does in your life. You have joy of His resurrected life. Joy, you are His baptized- that no one, no thing can take this joy, this Christ from you. Your Easter reality. **You have sorrow now ...and your heart will rejoice.**

This is what lasts, what endures, what is trustworthy in these crazy times. Rejoice whatever your circumstances. You know the end. Jesus lives. So do you. Your sorrows turn to joy. You belong to God. This world and this living death with its false joy and its real sorrows is passing away. Jesus lives. He lives for you. He has taken up your cause. He has answered for your sins. He has died your death. He transforms death into a passage. He pleads your case: His righteousness is your righteousness, death and the grave have been destroyed and emptied.

So it is **we wait**, is but **a little while**. Our reality of a life with sorrows, yes, yet is overwhelmed with the reality of His resurrected joy in living. We join Jeremiah and the faithful. We have joy even in the midst of our sadness, for our joy is anchored to something deeper, something more real than our daily circumstances, something that never changes and is eternal. We have joy because we have Jesus, and nothing can change that.

St. John implores you, lift up your hearts: **Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God.**

So shout for joy to God, cry out dear Everett and all you children. **Come and see what God has done. Who has kept your soul among the living, he heals the broken hearts and binds up their wounds.**

And no one will take your joy from you. Not now, not ever. That is His promise. That is your Easter reality.