

## **In A Little While**

Air Dates: June 6-10, 2022

### **Day One**

Does life seem just too hard to endure sometimes? Let's face it, we live in a sin-cursed world and both in our personal lives and in our society, we see trouble of all kinds. I find myself sometimes just sighing and shaking my head and wondering what's going to happen next. Can it possibly get worse? Life is just hard for so many people.

But I'm encouraged by what Jesus told his disciples on the night before he died. Things looked pretty bad to them, too, you know. The man they had committed their lives to was not bringing about the political change that they expected. They thought he would overthrow Rome, they would have their country back to themselves, Jesus would be King and of course, they would be his right-hand men. Listen to what Jesus told them, from John 16:16-19:

*Jesus went on to say, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." At this, some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying." 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'?"*

Well, they just didn't get it. They wanted Jesus to move on their timetable, which was NOW, and Jesus was saying "in a little while." To them, that was not acceptable.

As I thought about this, I realized how much I am like those disciples. I so often just don't get it! Why are things going from bad to worse? Why are so many people I know going through such deep waters? Why—no doubt the most frequent question that bombards Heaven.

But Jesus said, "In a little while." To us, "not now" seems like eternity. But God does not measure time as we do, and in the light of eternity, we are living in "a little while," and it won't last forever. This phrase—in a little while—has been resonating in my head for days, and it so encourages me.

### **Day Two**

How many times as parents have we said to our children, "In just a little while"? They want something now and we keep advising them that they'll have to wait "a little while," and of course that never seems to satisfy them. "In a little while" sounds like forever to them.

Jesus gave us an admonition also. In one of his last conversations with his disciples, which we find recorded in John 16, Jesus said, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."

This totally confused the disciples, and they questioned among themselves what Jesus meant. Knowing their confusion, Jesus went on to say to them: "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. 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 16:21-23).

We are living today in this “little while” that Jesus referred to. It’s the time between when Jesus first came to earth and then after his death, burial and resurrection, returned to the Father, and the time he has promised to come again and we will join him in his righteous kingdom. And this “little while” is exactly that in light of eternity. It’s a blink of the eye compared to endless time when we will be with Jesus. But oh my, it seems long to us sometimes, doesn’t it?

What is burdening you down right now? What is sapping your joy and your strength? What is giving you that run-away feeling, causing you discouragement and grief? I want to remind you that in just a little while this little time will end and if you are a Christ-follower and you’ve been born into God’s family by faith in Jesus Christ, you will again rejoice and no one can take away that joy—in just a little while.

So, focus your eyes on eternity, don’t let the enemy of your soul beat you down, because it’s just a little while until we will see Jesus and we will rejoice again.

### Day Three

Do you have forever eyes? Forever eyes give us the ability to look beyond what’s happening all around us and see what the future looks like. I think one reason people have always been fascinated with fortune-tellers is because we have a natural curiosity about what’s in store for us. We want to know what the future holds.

Well, if you are a Christ-follower, if you’ve been born from above through faith in Jesus Christ, you certainly don’t need a fortune-teller to advise you of what’s in store for you, because Jesus has left us with very clear information. In John 16 Jesus explained to his disciples that he would be leaving them soon, after his death, burial and resurrection, but in just a little while their grief at his departure would turn to joy because he promised to come back.

In John 14 he gives them words of comfort, as he encouraged them not to let their hearts be troubled. He said he was going to prepare a place for them, “And,” he said, “if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (John 14:3). That was his promise to them and it is his promise to us. In a little while, as measured by eternal standards, Jesus is coming back to take us to be with him. We just have to learn how to navigate this “little while” in between.

I admit, it’s not easy to look through forever eyes some days. I mean, life just swallows you up at times, and the cares and concerns of everyday life seem to come over you like waves from a tsunami, don’t they? I know—I’ve been there often, but lately I’ve been focusing my mind on the fact that Jesus says “in a little while” my joy will be complete because I’ll be with him.

You probably know the familiar old song we’ve sung for years: “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of his glory and grace.” It’s truly a simple thing to do—not always easy, but simple. Just turn your eyes on Jesus. Think about his love for you; think about what he’s done for you. Remember that someday you will see him face to face and your faith will turn to sight!

Hang in there, because in just a little while your joy will be full again. Jesus endured the cross and its shame for you and me; let’s be faithful to endure this “little while” in victory and peace as good soldiers of Jesus.

## Day Four

Like many of you, I have experienced that stage in life when my parents were aging and my brothers and I took on the responsibility of caring for them—role reversal, if you will. My Mom's life did not end the way I had planned. Instead of living with me after Daddy died, and traveling with me, and doing fun things together in her last years, as I had imagined, she was confined to a wheelchair with dementia, in a home where she received 24/7 care. And I simply didn't like it.

My prayer for months was, "Lord, her quality of life is so poor; her memory doesn't work well; just take her on home to Heaven with you." And then, God rather abruptly reminded me that I wasn't in charge of the number of her days; he was. I was not the one to judge her quality of life; he was. I was not the one to determine whether her latter days were worthwhile and useful; he was.

We are living in that "just a little while" that Jesus referred to in John 16—that little while between his first coming and his second. And what sometimes seems long and intolerable to us takes on a different perspective when we live in light of eternity instead of constantly focusing on the "little whiles" of our present lives.

David wrote in Psalm in Psalm 39:4:

*Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life.*

And Moses prayed:

*Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom (Psalm 90:12).*

When Mom passed, God pulled back the curtains of Heaven and gave me a glimpse of how her life had been a blessing in that place where I thought her life had lost meaning. So many people told my brothers and me stories of how Mom had blessed them, just by being who she was right there in that place. The "little while" which seemed so long to me was part of God's plan for using my Mom in a different place and a different way than I had planned.

Whatever your "little while" is looking like right now—for you or for someone you love—I want to encourage you to not to lose sight of the end of the story. "Little whiles" really don't last forever and as Jesus told his disciples, "Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy."

## Day Five

A few years ago I was talking with a friend who has a painful past to deal with. There was some mental and physical abuse in her childhood, and of course she has struggled with the after-effects. But she was sharing with me how God is healing her and giving her freedom from this painful past.

She said, "Mary, I finally came to the conclusion that I could either magnify my past or magnify my Lord. If I magnify the past, I'll be defeated and depressed forever. So I've chosen to magnify the Lord in my life."

What are you magnifying in your life today? Are you so focused on the here and now that you can't see much of anything else? That was the problem for the disciples when Jesus told them that he would be leaving them and they would see him no more—but then he promised that "in a little while" he would return and they would again rejoice.

A saint of old, Amos Wells, wrote: "Heal me of my blindness that blots out eternity with this bit of mortal life close pressed." I wrote his prayer in my journal several years ago and have often repeated it to the

Lord. You and I often need to be healed of the blindness that prevents us from seeing the unseen, from looking with forever eyes. What “bit of mortal life” is closing in around you so much that it is blotting out your view of eternity? What “little while” is stealing your joy and your strength?

The Psalmist said, “O, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together” (Psalm 34:3 KJV). If you choose to set your sites on the wrong things, and they get magnified, then you’ll find yourself in lots of mental and emotional upheaval. Our challenge, therefore, is to keep our eyes on the Lord.

Will you make a commitment to magnify the Lord? When you do that, it will start to crowd out all the other negative things of this “little while,” and you’ll discover that life is sweeter, Jesus is nearer, and you have a little taste of what it’s going to be like in heaven when we’ll be right up front and see Jesus face to face.