

Euphoria

John 14:18-20

Words of comfort are only effective if the recipient is open to receive them. Still, these words might be useful even if they give no immediate relief. The recipient may remember the words of comfort and find solace in them at some future time. Clearly, Jesus was speaking into the future as He shared with the disciples in the upper room. This was necessary since it was impossible for them to comprehend the loss that they would suffer and the elation that would follow it.

Already, it seems as if Jesus has tried everything in order to reach the disciples and to bring them to a place of understanding and peace in respect to the coming trial. In answer to their feeling that He was abandoning them, Jesus had shown that He was only going away so that He could prepare a place for them. This was necessary so that they could eternally be wherever He was. He assured them that they would be ok in His absence since the Father would remain with them as he always had. Jesus also answered their feeling that He was betraying them by abandoning the cause. He told them that their belief in Him would continue to motivate them so that they would (in a sense) do more or greater works that He did (in respect to the response that they would receive). He was not abandoning the work since they would be asking for Him to help them and He promised to give them whatever they would ask for in His name. Jesus was not distancing Himself from them but drawing them closer as he prayed with and for them. He presented a permanent solution to a situation they all knew could only be temporary. He showed them that they would benefit now by the Spirit being in them instead of being only with them.

After all of this Jesus continued with the words, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you..." An orphan is a child with no parents. Even though a child might be orphaned by losing his parents by means of displacement, classically an orphan is a child with no parents because his parents have passed away. Jesus sometimes called His followers His children. He would be crucified on the very

next day after this conversation. Consequently, His "children" would then be orphaned. But, Jesus said that He would not leave them as orphans. He would be the remedy to this condition by coming to them. In a little while (about 24 hours) the world would see Him no more. But you will see Me (in about 4 days). Because I live, you will live also. After entombing Jesus upon His death by crucifixion, the world (those who did not believe in Him) never saw Him again. But, He appeared to the disciples and seeing Him changed everything.

We have to try to enter into the experience of the disciples in order to get what Jesus was saying to them. First, at the time Jesus said this in the upper room, they had no clue about what He was saying. They were blinded by their own involvement in what was happening. They were fighting against it. They could not accept it until it was over. They were to pass through the trauma of Jesus' death. That very night and all the next day would climax the horror they had most feared above all others. They continued in a conversation that clearly had the somberness of last words in the upper room and in the garden. They parted from Jesus in order to pray. They witnessed the "arrest," trials and tortures. They heard the bloodthirsty crowd cry "Crucify Him. They watched Him fall beneath the weight of the cross. They heard the nails driven through His feet. They felt His agony as they listened to His cries. They were there when He relinquished (let go of) His life. Then they waited. They knew better than to hope or even think about His words of resurrection. They were like dead men walking. But early that Sunday morning the tomb was found to be empty. A missing corpse became a living Christ. Reports and rumors lit up the city. Mary Magdalene had seen Him. Peter had seen Him. Two disciples had walked with Him for hours on the Emmaus road. He appeared to the gathered disciples in the upper room.

So, how do you experience the impossible when it is right in front of you, when you can see it and touch it and interact with it in every possible way. How deeply have you experienced agony only to see it resolved and turned into ecstasy? Possibly in a very close relationship, where a disruption is set aside and love triumphs. I have lived through gall bladder attacks that moved from the most intense agony to euphoric relief in just a moment. As a student I have studied in preparation for finals while in seminary. These finals were very demanding and

artfully designed by professors who intended that you know everything that they had taught over the course of the entire semester. So, you take the test and you're finished and then you get in the car to drive home and there is a lightness, a relief that is palpable, a sense that with this in the rear view mirror, the future must be bright for how could it possibly be worse than what you have just passed through? And none of these experiences of euphoria can possibly compare to the disciples experience of the resurrection. Before the fact, Jesus described it, "You will see Me. Because I live, you will live also."

Out of this experience the disciples would achieve certainty. "You will know." Certainty is very powerful. You can't stand against a person who is certain when you are not. The disciples would face down the Sanhedrin in the days to come with the certainty of the resurrection and all that it meant. "You will know." Jesus said. What would they know? "That I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." Jesus in the Father, believers in Christ, and Christ in believers. Here is certainty of truth, of power, of significance, of righteousness, of relevance. The resurrection is the foundation for everything that the church is and does.