

Life Group Discussion Guide

No Greater Love – Part 2: Remaining in Jesus
Week 6: Overcoming the World • John 16:23–33

Throughout this series, we've worked our way through what is known as Jesus' Farewell Discourse, which began with the Passover meal He shared with His closest friends. Today, we come to the close of this discourse—the final words of Jesus' final words. And what does He talk about? Joy, love, and peace.

All of us live for joy, love, peace, yet we seek to anchor our joy, love, and peace to flimsy foundations like finances, vocation, or relationships. In our text for today, Jesus paves a better way. He reveals three truths that lead to an unshakable, victorious life.

1. Jesus Anchors Joy to His Name

"In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." John 16:23–24

The invitation to ask in Jesus' name has been a major theme in this discourse. In each case, the invitation to ask:

- a. Is expansive (whatever you ask)
- b. Is in His name
- c. Is to the Father's glory
- d. Assumes the obedience of remaining in Christ and His words remaining in us

Each of these conditions sets boundaries around the phrase, "whatever you ask." Things like, "I want a million dollars; I want my co-worker to not get the job; I want a worry-free, illness-free life," do not square well with the name of Jesus, the Father's glory, and a focus on obedience. And yet, four different times now, Jesus has brought up this strong invitation to ask. So, why don't we?

"Maybe our dreams are not kingdom-minded. We're good at developing a track that makes sense to us, and we don't really need God to help us get there. Maybe it's because asking takes surrender. Asking takes waiting. Asking opens us to the possibility of receiving a No for an answer, and No's are painful. Or maybe we don't feel worthy. We don't have the boldness of a well-loved son or daughter."

If that's you, this passage holds good news:

- a. **The Father wants a relationship with you:** Asking someone for something assumes a level of relationship. Asking for whatever assumes deep relationship. The Father wants you to have

a relationship with Him where you freely ask for the things that are closest to your heart. He wants you to ask more than you're comfortable with, more than you think you're allowed.

- b. **Our requests don't hinge on our name or authority, but Christ's:** It's the worth of Christ that underwrites our requests. And there is no higher name in the universe. His name is power. His name is forever.

Ask in His name, and in that exercise of asking and receiving—and the enormous shaping of our souls that happens as a result—your joy will be complete.

- What happens in our hearts when we expect or demand something from God that doesn't align with Jesus' name? Give a personal example.
- What is the relationship between asking in Jesus' name and having fullness of joy? How have you personally experienced this reality?
- Is there something you've held back from asking the Father for? What's kept you from asking? Take time now to share your request with God in the name of Jesus and with the boldness of a beloved son/daughter.

2. Jesus Anchors Love to His Coming

"Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father." John 16:25-28

Here, Jesus continues to clarify what it means to ask in His name by making a wonderful distinction. He explains, "I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf." In essence, He's saying, "You don't need me to carry your requests to the Father as if you and I are close but the Father is distant and unapproachable." He declares, "No, the Father himself loves you." What a wonder! It begs the question, why does the Father love us?

- Take turns filling in the blank: The Father loves me because _____.

Does the Father love us because, as millions today would answer, we're *good people* or we do *good things*? Verse 27 makes it clear: "No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God." Do you see? Jesus anchors the Father's love for you to His coming. He came on a mission from God to save humanity, and you believe Him and you love Him for that mission, and so, God loves you. In other words, the Father's love for you has nothing to do with your works. It has everything to do with your belief in Jesus.

- Consider this quote from the message: "*Do you know where 'good person' thinking leads? Not 'the Father loves me,' but 'the Father owes me.' I've met many bitter people who feel God owes them something for their good deeds but hasn't come through.*" Have you ever

fallen into the mindset that God owes you for your good deeds? What's the danger in this way of thinking? What does it rob us of?

- Take time now to repent of seeking to "earn" God's love or favor. Declare your belief in Jesus' good work, receive His gift of grace, and revel in the Father's love!

3. Jesus Anchors Peace to His Victory

"Then Jesus' disciples said, 'Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.' 'Do you now believe?' Jesus replied. 'A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.'" John 16:29–32

The disciples are starting to feel quite confident. They think, "Oh, now we get it!" But Jesus responds, "Actually, now is when you will leave me. Every one of you will abandon me. You think you get it, but you don't—not yet." Knowing what's to come, look what Jesus says in His very last words to them before His arrest:

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Jesus loves them and us so well. If He had left them in their overconfidence, what would've happened when they failed? In essence, He says, "I've told you you're going to fail, but you can still have peace." How? Because our peace is not anchored in us, and not even in our belief in Jesus. As we know, from the Scriptures and from experience, our belief can be fickle and fail. So then what are we left with?

Jesus' victory: "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." This reality points to our **Big Idea: Our victory is secure because Jesus has overcome.**

Why can Christians have peace, love, and joy no matter what's going on with their lives or in the world? Because they're tied to Jesus' victory, His mission, and His name. And those things are never going away. This is what Jesus leaves His disciples with before He goes to the cross and then conquers the grave. His victory is secure, and so is yours.

- What happens when we try to find peace, love, and joy apart from Jesus Christ? Give a personal example.
- Why are the peace, love, and joy Jesus offers unshakable? How do we receive them?
- What have you allowed to rob you of the peace, love, and joy available to you in Christ? How do Jesus' words, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world," encourage you today?
- Take time now to confess the places you've sought peace, love, and joy apart from Jesus. Turn to Him and step into the overcoming, victorious life He's already won for you!