

# The Follower's Trail Guide

NAVIGATING THE PATH OF JESUS

**OPENING UP**

“No pain, no gain”, as the saying goes. Share a “gain” that you have had in life that was achieved through “pain”.

**TEXT****The Follower's Trail Guide | John 16:16-24 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup>“A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me.” <sup>17</sup> So some of his disciples said to one another, “What is this that he says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father’?” <sup>18</sup> So they were saying, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We do not know what he is talking about.” <sup>19</sup> Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, “Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me’?” <sup>20</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. <sup>21</sup> When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. <sup>22</sup> So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. <sup>23</sup> In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. <sup>24</sup> Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

**MESSAGE OUTLINE**

**Big Idea: The way of Jesus leads to fullness of joy.**

1. Follow Jesus in perplexing sorrow. (vv. 16-20a)
2. Follow Jesus in abundant joy. (vv. 20b-22)
3. Follow Jesus in confident boldness. (vv. 23-24)

## DISCUSSION



- The way of Jesus leads to fullness of joy. How is joy different than happiness? Describe a time in your life when you have felt *full of joy*. How does that experience help you to understand what Jesus wants for us as his followers?
- In verse 20, Jesus tells his disciples “you will weep and lament”. Jesus wants our joy to be full (verse 24), but sorrow and trouble are realities in this life. What does it look like to walk through sorrow with authenticity AND hope (including the future hope we find in verses 16-20 about Christ’s return)?
- Jesus likens the joy he gives with that of a mother who has just given birth through pain in verses 21-22. How does this alter your perspective on a difficult situation you are currently facing? Share any suffering you are going through and take the time to pray for one another, remembering the hope Jesus gives and the promise that God wants to answer our prayers (verses 23-24).
- Jesus acknowledges that the disciples are confused by God’s plan for Jesus that will bring suffering, but in verses 23-24 he predicts that they will understand after his resurrection. Have someone in the group read 1 Timothy 1:15-16 aloud. What do we now know about why Jesus had to die that the disciples wouldn’t have understood yet?
- Have someone in the group read Hebrews 10:19-23 aloud. What difference does it make for you that Jesus opened the way for us to approach the Father directly with our requests, in full confidence and assurance? How do these verses also point us to hope and joy in our suffering?

## LIFE CHALLENGE



Everyone wants joy in their lives, but many search everywhere without finding it! As Christians we know that the fullness of joy is only found in Jesus. Who can you share true joy with this week? How will you explain to them the joy that you have in Jesus, even in hard times?

What are some ways you can use your access to the Father through Jesus on behalf of those neighbors and friends? Share some things you are asking or could ask from the Father in Jesus’s name for others. Imagine aloud how seeing God answer those prayers will give you deep joy.

## CLOSING PRAYER



Jesus, thank you for the hope that you give us in the midst of our suffering in this world. We admit that we are facing really difficult circumstances, dilemmas, relationships, and losses. We know that it won’t last forever because you will give us eternal life with you. When you return, we will understand even more clearly how you use the trials in our life to bring us fullness of joy in yourself. Thank you for the access you give us to the Father and the assurance that he hears us when we make requests of him. You do not leave us alone in our hardships. So God, we ask in the name of Jesus that you open our eyes to the eternal purposes in our suffering and that you will give us fullness of joy in the hope that we have through Christ. Amen.