

**Notes from Sermon given by Ian Stackhouse – April 20th 2008**  
**John 16:17-33**

Ian can be describing his own experience of witnessing childbirth at first hand, and how true it was, just as Jesus said, that as soon as a baby is born, the woman forgets her anguish as she is overwhelmed by joy.

Jesus is describing this because he knows that the disciples are about to enter a short, sharp, intensely painful period. They will see Jesus crucified, laid to rest in a tomb, and they will weep and mourn as the world rejoices. But then they will see Him, and their grief will turn to joy. Easter Sunday is nothing less than the birth of a new world, a new nation emerging.

In a few chapters we will find ourselves at the foot of the cross, and then in the Garden with Mary Magdalene on the first day of a new world. These are cataclysmic events, there's an agony going on because a new world is coming about. Jesus' death and resurrection are the great End Time events. As P T Forsyth said : 'the world passed judgement on God and Christ took it; but still more, in Him God passed His judgement on the world and Christ took that also.' Why else does Jesus cry 'It is finished!' Jesus paid the full price of the wickedness of the world. Jesus carries the wounds He received into the very throne room of heaven. In the Upper Room when Jesus breathed on His disciples, because when God creates a new world he breathes His life into human beings, the Holy Spirit Himself.

2 Corinthians 5:17 something new is happening – the old has gone and the new has come. We have a ministry of reconciliation. In verse 23 – 'you will ask me anything and my Father will give you what you ask in my name.' This means that when Jesus goes to the Father and as we are in Jesus, in His Name, this is actually better than being with Jesus when he walked the earth. Because what is given us is immediate access to the Father. The Church understands this even though the disciples didn't at the time.

These days you can never get to talk to the Chairman of a company – you may pass through four or five people and even get to his personal assistant but still not get to speak to him. Not so with Jesus people. At different times Christians have tried to invent a system of hierarchies or intermediaries, but Jesus' people have instant immediate direct access to the very presence of the Living God. Because of the union of Father and Son and because you are in Jesus means that you have the same access. Jesus' sacrifice is driven by the mercy of God, it does not bring about the mercy of God. Mercy triumphs over judgement. God can give what he has longed to give unhindered access to His children.

Then Jesus talks about peace and overcoming the world. It is easy to feel defeated again and everyone becomes dejected. It seems hopeless, but the fact is - WE WIN!! The safest place for you to come is to launch your life in Jesus and you will overcome. For most Christians life is tough and you may even seem hopeless. Ian describes a Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovic. One man in the camp seemed strong in this God-forsaken place. He lifted the spoon to His mouth, rather than bending down. He kept his bread ration in a linen cloth. He is living the Eucharist, the liturgy of the Church. He is living the Resurrection in the place of despair.

As we come to take the bread and wine, live again and become overcomers.