



Special Music: "A Mother's Prayer"

Celine Dion

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcuMG\\_-159U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcuMG_-159U)

**John 16:19-22**

**19 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'?"**

**20 Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.**

**21 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.**

**22 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.**

## **CREATION'S COST**

**In the black nothingness  
Of all that never was  
Creation was born  
In galactic didactic  
Screams of intense pain.  
Bringing thought  
Into reality has a cost.  
From the very moment  
Humankind became a blip  
God's radar,  
The price tag of creation  
Would be hung  
On a crown of thorns.  
The cross was the cost.  
Blood would be lost.  
The very thought  
Brought both God and Christ  
To grief and tears  
And creation screamed in pain  
As the voice of God  
Spoke humanity into reality.  
Mother, father, sister, brother  
Engaged in an act of love,  
Each staring into the eyes  
Of creation's new soul**

**And joy erupts  
As heaven celebrates  
The beginning of  
Something New.  
Stars like confetti  
Scatter across the sky  
As sun and moon  
Chase one another  
To bring light  
To what never was  
But now is.  
Adam takes his first breath  
And we are called  
The children of God.**

I love the way Jesus uses the analogy of childbirth to explain the circumstances of the Cross. He knew exactly what was about to happen and even though he told his disciples about the events that were about to take place, they still didn't understand or want to believe. This passage in John uses an illustration to simplify things on a personal level. Jesus understands that His disciples are confused. The passage of scripture prior to our scripture for today reads like this:

**16 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."**

**17 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'?"**

**18 They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying."**

Obviously, they don't think Jesus can hear them whispering to each other. They don't seem to want to tell HIM that they don't understand, so they are just going to try and figure it out themselves.

I want to sidestep for a moment here. Don't we find ourselves doing this very same thing? We get confused by scripture or maybe by something a minister or Sunday School teacher tells us. Maybe we read something online that hints at a theology point that we don't quite grasp or maybe doesn't sit well with us. Instead of asking questions of the source, we kind of talk about it among ourselves thinking that doing so

will give us the answers we are looking for. We prefer to wrestle with it on our own rather than seek help. We don't talk to that minister or Sunday School teacher or address the issue in a forum. This is often true because we don't want to look foolish or uneducated. We prefer to grit our teeth rather than ask Jesus to explain it to us. But the only thing we can hope by doing things this way is that we will get either partial answers or no answers at all.

Jesus would rather His disciples just ask Him directly. He never places Himself above them or out of their reach. He's going to wash their feet. He isn't hiding anything from them. He's right there, in their presence, willing to answer any question, allowing the freedom to ask without condemnation. He is invested in them to the point that He will do anything to help them understand and what is happening. Eventually, they will not have Him around physically, so here is their opportunity for them to reach out and grab all the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding they can.

So, when Jesus speaks in verse 19 with regards to their whispering, they realize that it is pretty silly to try to hide things from Jesus.

**“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’?”**

It is pretty obvious to the disciples that Jesus has heard everything they are talking about. This seems to happen a lot to the disciples. They don't want to appear to be thick headed or ignorant, so they just talk about it among

themselves until Jesus calls them on it. “Enough. If you do not understand, just tell me and I will explain.” He approaches our confusions very way. We let some confusing issue eat at our soul to the point that Jesus calls us out on it and says, “If you don’t understand something, just tell me and I will explain.” He may do it through scripture. He may do it through a minister. He may do it through a Sunday School teacher. He may do it through a friend. He will give us understanding if we just ask Him for it and let Him give us His answer in His time.

Now, as far as this issue that the disciples are struggling with in this passage, Jesus has told them,

**“In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me”**

The disciples find this to be a very confusing statement. What in the world is Jesus talking about? When we look at this statement from Jesus, we have little trouble making sense of the statement. Jesus is going to die and then He is going to rise back up. It’s obvious. But it is all about perspective. We have what is referred to as 20/20 hindsight, meaning it is much easier to embrace something that has already happened as opposed to believe in something that is about to happen. Jesus’ followers did not have our perspective to work from.

But Jesus really wants His companions to understand what is about to happen. It is important. Too important to leave them to their own devices and mumblings.

To emphasize how important this concept is, He tells them this in verse 20:

**“Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.”**

In other words, He says, “What is about to happen is going to fill you with grief. You will cry. You will be racked with tears. You will weep and mourn. You will be confused and angry. You will be devastated. You will question why you ever got involved with me. And all of these feelings will be compounded because the world around you will be rejoicing at my death and that will lead to further confusion. What is about to happen will be beyond painful for you. I truly wish you did not have to go through this pain, but it is the only way. It is necessary to fulfill the reason that I came. It is necessary so that you can know the joy that comes after the pain. That joy cannot exist without passing through the crucible of pain and loss.” I’m pretty sure the Disciples looked just as confused as they did before He spoke these words.

And then, as Jesus is so often prone to do. He simplifies it by telling them a story, a parable. One of the shortest parables that He told. He compares this pain and agony that is about to occur to the pain that a mother experiences in childbirth.

I was there for the birth of all three of my children. I cut the umbilical for all three. My daughter’s birth was the most normal. I almost lost both my son and his mother when my first child was born. I almost lost my youngest son when he was born. Although my tears were real and the pain unimaginable as I braced for the worst, it still did not compare to the pain, exhaustion, and agony that my wife was going through. I will never know the agony of childbirth. And I am fairly

confident that as great as my joy was when I held my children after being born, it was not a match to the joy that my wife felt.

Jesus speaks about it this way in His parable,

**“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.”**

Now ladies, I'm not going to get into a theological batter over this. I'm pretty sure you remember the pain of childbirth. But I don't want to get hung up over a technicality. I still believe the analogy is worth exploring. The joy I saw in my wife when she was first able to hold each child was off the scale. That joy can erase just about any negative connotations of childbirth. It doesn't mean the pain wasn't there or that it didn't matter. It simply means that it was replaced by a joy that more than made up for it. I don't think I have ever spoken to a mother that felt that the joy wasn't worth more than every moment of the pain. And work? I've never met anyone who worked harder than a woman giving birth. The exhaustion is real and overwhelming. But somehow, that small package of unconditional love nestled in a mother's arms makes it all seem worthwhile.

I appreciate the sacrifices of motherhood. And no, it doesn't stop with that birth moment. Motherhood is hard. It is often filled with hardship and struggle. We generally don't let mothers know how grateful we are for their nurturing and protective natures. We often take it for granted. Like, that is just the way it works. It's like we're saying “I know what a pain I was growing up and I could



have made the struggle easier. I am truly sorry for my ingratitude. So, here's a flower on Mother's Day to show you how much I care."

Flowers, cards, and chocolates are nice, but what a mother really wants is our time. They want to spend time with those children they raised to know that it wasn't all for naught. They want to know that they are not forgotten. They want their unconditional and sacrificial love to be reciprocated. They want to know that their children and grandchildren grow into strong, grateful, and humble men and women. They want to hang onto the memory of that joy they experienced the moment they first held their child in their arms.

Jesus takes the analogy in the parable a little further. In verse 22 He says:

**"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."**

"And no one will take away your joy." Even when our children disappoint us, we can't help but smile when we remember the moment of their birth. Jesus is telling His Disciples that He knows how rough all this is going to be on them, how much pain they are going to be going through. But even when there are trials in the future, they will be able to retain the joy of that moment when He arose from the grave, that He will come back, victorious over death. No one... No one...

Absolutely no one will take away your joy. It will be a permanent part of you, a place to plant a flag, a constant reminder of the glory, wonder, grace, mercy, and love. A reminder to you of all that I have done for you and all that I will do for you.

**Today, if you are a mother, I would like to personally thank you for the courage, strength, stalwart protection, and love that you have for your children. I believe that God gives mothers an extra ounce of love, mercy, compassion, and grace just because the Divine know the struggles and hardships that mothers face.**

**Today, if you are a father, a son, or a daughter, I would challenge you to show your gratitude for the mothers in your life. You need to lift them up in constant prayer and provide them with the love and encouragement that is due the nature of their character. It isn't about the candy or the flowers. It's about the love and appreciation for all that mothers have done for each of us. If you are fortunate enough to still have your mother around, cherish her presence like the queen that she is.**

**Jesus did not use this parable of birth lightly. He never gave just a partial explanation. He was deliberative and inciteful. Christ could have talked about the groans at the birth of creation or His own immaculate birth, but He wanted to make the parable personal, just as our relationship with Him is personal.**

**When you are down, discouraged, and feel beaten, remember this: God loves you with every fiber of His being and is encouraging you by reminding you "No one... No one... No one will take away your joy!"**

**God bless you all and happy Mother's Day**

**AMEN**

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