

John 13:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.

Analysis

Little children (Τεκνία, teknia)—a tender diminutive used only here in the Gospels (but 7x in 1 John), expressing deep affection and paternal care. Jesus's tone shifts from confronting Judas to tenderly preparing His remaining disciples for separation. This term conveys both intimacy and the disciples' spiritual immaturity—they are children who need comfort.

Yet a little while I am with you (ἔτι μικρὸν μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι)—Jesus has 18 hours before crucifixion, 40 days until ascension. The phrase recalls John 7:33, where Jesus told hostile Jews the same thing. Now He tells beloved disciples, **Whither I go, ye cannot come**—they cannot yet follow Him to the cross (v.36) or heaven. His death is a solitary work; atonement cannot be shared.

Historical Context

Rabbis commonly addressed disciples as children or sons, but teknia is exceptionally tender. Jesus prepares them for His absence—unprecedented for disciples whose entire identity centered on following their rabbi. The Upper Room Discourse (chapters 14-17) elaborates this theme: Jesus is leaving, but the Spirit is coming (John 16:7).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus's tender address 'little children' reveal about His pastoral heart even in His darkest hour?
2. Why couldn't the disciples follow Jesus immediately to the cross—what work must He accomplish alone?
3. How does Jesus's preparation of His disciples for His departure model caring leadership during transitions?

Interlinear Text

τεκνία	ἔτι	μικρὸν	μεθ'	ὑμῶν	εἰμι·	ζητήσετέ	με	
Little children	yet	a little while	with	you	I am	Ye shall seek	me	
G5040	G2089	G3397	G3326	G5216	G1510	G2212	G3165	
καὶ	καθὼς	εἶπον	τοῖς	Ἰουδαίοις	ὅτι	Ὅπου	ὑπάγω	ἐγὼ
and	as	I said	G3588	unto the Jews	G3754	Whither	go	I
G2532	G2531	G2036		G2453		G3699	G5217	G1473
ὁμεῖς	οὐ	δύνασθε	ἐλθεῖν	καὶ	ὑμῖν	λέγω	ἄρτι	
ye	cannot	G1410	come	and	to you	I say	now	
G5210	G3756		G2064	G2532	G5213	G3004	G737	

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