
JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

PEACE AMID TRIBULATION

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on September 2, 2018

INTRODUCTION

In this message, we shall consider Jesus' words of warning and encouragement at the close of His final discourse in John 16:25-33. We shall seek to observe how Christians may enjoy Christ, who is the all-satisfying, joy-inducing, peace-bringing world-conqueror. We shall seek to learn how Christians may enjoy peace in Christ amid the tribulation of this world.

MESSAGE MADE SIMPLE

"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33).

Peace, tranquility, serenity... are these not valuable beyond measure in the human experience? How much would you pay to experience real serenity? What time would you spend acquiring tranquility? What would you trade for a month of truly peaceful days?

Christ promises His people that they may indeed enjoy peace, not only in eternity, but also in this world. This is an amazing promise indeed, but we are wise to consider the context of this promise. Jesus does not promise that peace will be the result of avoiding conflict or suffering. Quite the opposite, in fact. Jesus promises that conflict and suffering will most certainly be part of the human experience in this world.

However, Christians may experience peace, right in the middle of tribulation, because of Christ. That is, Christians may enjoy Christ, who is the all-satisfying, joy-inducing, peace-bringing world-conqueror. Because Christ has conquered the world, and because He shares His victory with all those who love and trust Him, and because He is ever-present with His people in this world, Christians may enjoy peace in Christ amid the tribulation of this world.

JOHN 16:25-33 (ESV)

25 “I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father.

26 In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; 27 for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

28 I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

29 His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! 30 Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.”

31 Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe?”

32 Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.

33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

THE POINT I’M AIMING AT TODAY

Christians may enjoy peace in Christ amid the tribulation of this world.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

(1) WALKING THROUGH THE PASSAGE

(2) YOU ARE WEAK IN A DISTRESSING WORLD

(3) IN CHRIST ALONE, THERE IS PEACE

(4) SOME APPLICATION QUESTIONS

(1) WALKING THROUGH THE PASSAGE

25 “I have said these things to you in **figures of speech**. The **hour is coming** when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but **will tell you plainly** about the Father.

- ***Jesus is talking about their lacking understanding of His words.***
 - When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, they were depressed and afraid, even after they had been told about Jesus rising from the dead. Jesus said to them, “**O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?**” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, **he interpreted to them** in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Lk 24:25–27)
 - So, the “*figures of speech*” or “*figurative language*” has more to do with their lack of understanding than it does with Jesus’ words.

- ***The understanding “hour” was Jesus’ resurrection & the arrival of the Spirit.***
 - And Jesus went on to say, “Then he said to them, “**These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you**, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” **Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures...** And behold, **I am sending the promise** of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until **you are clothed with power** from on high.” (Lk 24:44–49)
 - This is exactly what Jesus promised in John 16:12-15!
 - Jesus said, “**When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...**” (John 16:13).

- It is as though Jesus said, “**My words are still unclear to you now, but soon you will understand what I’ve been talking about all along...**”

26 **In that day** you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; 27 for **the Father himself loves you**, because **you** have **loved me** and have **believed** that I came from God.

- ***Jesus is describing gracious, loving, direct access to the Father!***
 - Jesus said, “**the Father himself loves you**” (v27).
 - Christians don’t have two gods, one gracious and one wrath-filled.
 - The Father sent the Son from the overflow of His own love (Jn. 3:16).
 - The Son came into this world to do as the Father commanded (Jn. 14:31).
 - The Father and the Son are in perfect agreement about the plan of redemption (Acts 2:22-24).
 - Jesus said, “**When you pray, pray like this: ‘Our Father in heaven...’**” (Matt. 6:9).

- ***But, only for those who love Christ and believe Him***
 - “**the Father loves you...**” Who? “**you**” who “**loved me and have believed...**”
 - Access to the Father is graciously available, but not to everyone without exception... You must love Christ and believe Him!
 - But what does it mean to believe?
 - **We must understand** that God is holy and just, and He will punish disobedience from any and all of His creatures.
 - **We must acknowledge** that we are disobedient to the core, utterly deserving of His righteous judgment.
 - **We must be made aware** that God has shown sinners grace by sending Jesus to live obediently and die vicariously on behalf of all those sinners who will trust and love Him.
 - **We must throw away** any pretense of self-assurance or self-preservation... we must run to Christ, expose our shame, and be covered by His righteousness alone.

- **We must set our resolve** to follow this Jesus wherever He shall lead us, for He is our highest prize and beloved King.
- It is as though Jesus said, “When you understand more clearly, you will realize that all those in me are beloved of the Father... so, you can ask Him for anything.”

28 I **came from the Father** and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and **going to the Father.**”

- ***This is a direct statement of divinity and glory***
 - Christ predated His appearance in the flesh (Jn. 1:1-3).
 - When He departs from this world, He is going to be with the Father; therefore, He must be righteous and glorious (Jn. 17:5)

29 His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! 30 **Now we know** that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; **this is why we believe** that you came from God.”

- ***The disciples claim to understand now***
 - Jesus just said that they would understand better later, but they are not content to be humble learners... they want to claim a better understanding right now
 - Carson said: “No misunderstanding is more pathetic than that which thinks it no longer exists.”¹

¹ Carson, D. A. *The Gospel according to John*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991.

31 Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? 32 Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when **you will be scattered**, each to his own home, and **will leave me alone...**

- ***Jesus immediately rebukes the disciples’ foolish pride***

- Not only do they not understand what they think they do, but they will utterly abandon Jesus in the darkest hour.
 - It is interesting that we mostly think of Peter as the one disciple who failed to stick with Jesus all the way to the end...²

...Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.

- ***Jesus says that even in His lonely hour He and the Father are one***

- But didn’t the Father “forsake” the Son upon the cross?
 - “**1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel... 6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; ‘He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!’ ... 16 For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. **But you, O LORD**, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid! ... 22 I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you: You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! ... 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations... 30 Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.” (Psalm 22:1–31, ESV)**

² John did follow behind Jesus at His mock trials and even at His crucifixion, but one can hardly argue that an aggressive onlooker counts as a faithful disciple.

33 I have said these things to you, that **in me you may have peace**. In the world **you will have tribulation**. But **take heart; I have overcome the world.**”

- **Here Jesus reminds His disciples of two things He’s been saying for the last 4 chapters...**
 - **One**, you are weak in a distressing world
 - **Two**, in Christ alone, there is peace

(2) YOU ARE WEAK IN A DISTRESSING WORLD

Let’s take this one in two chunks.

- A. The Distressing World
- B. Human Weakness

(A) The Distressing World

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. **In the world you will have tribulation**. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (v33)

- ***The world is spiritually blind and ignorant***
 - Jesus said that “**the world**” cannot “**see**” Him as His disciples “**see**” Him (14:19-21).
 - Jesus said that “**the world**” cannot “**receive**” the Holy Spirit, because “**the world**” does not “**know Him**” (14:17).
 - This is like what Paul says about the gospel of Christ being “**veiled to those who are perishing**. In their case **the god of this world has blinded the minds** of the unbelievers, to **keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**” (2 Cor. 4:3–4)
 - Though the world was created for God’s glory and our joy, the **natural posture** of humans is **blind ignorance** to the glory of Christ.

- ***The world is under the power of the devil***

- Jesus called the devil “**the ruler of this world**” three times in John’s Gospel (12:31, 14:30, 16:11).
- As we just read in 2 Cor. 4, there is a sense in which the devil “**blinds the minds of unbelievers**” (v4).
- Indeed, even Christ’s disciples are told to pray for “**deliverance from**” the “**evil one**” (Matt. 6:13).
 - There is a **real devil** whose **aim** is the **destruction** of your soul.

- ***The world is opposed to Christ and His people***

- Jesus said, “**If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you... I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you**” (15:18-19).
 - The world is **no neutral place**... the spiritual teams are chosen.
 - Christians ought to take note of this stark warning.

- ***We may speak of more examples of tribulation in the world, but these are the troubles most dangerous and most overlooked.***

- We could easily talk about **physical pains, emotional suffering, and psychological agony**... all **common** to fallen humanity.
- But these are but **symptoms** of a greater tribulation, a weightier reality.
 - This world is under God’s curse, and this is most dangerously manifested in:
 - Spiritual blindness
 - Devilish influence
 - Natural hatred for Christ and His people
 - **This world is distressing... and humans are weak**

(B) Human Weakness

“I have said these things to you, that **in me you may have peace [i.e. not in yourselves]**. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (v33)

• *Jesus showed us human weakness at the supper table*

- Jesus said, “**one of you will betray me**” (13:21), and everyone thought it might be them!
- Even when Judas left the table to perform the wicked task, still the disciples didn’t know which of them might be the one to betray the Lord of glory.
 - We are warned **not to arrogantly sit in judgment** of Judas.
 - Instead, we should **join the other disciples** in dismay at the **possibility** that we might **just as easily have been** that inglorious **betrayed**.

• *Jesus showed us human weakness as He rebuked Peter’s false courage*

- Peter proclaimed, “**I will lay down my life for you, [Jesus]!**” (13:37).
- Jesus answered, “**Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times**” (13:38).
 - Again, we are warned **not to condescendingly judge** Peter as being **weaker or less courageous** than we would have been.
 - Instead, we should **learn from the impetuous mistake** and **admit** our own **inability** to stand courageously **by our own power**.

• *Jesus showed us human weakness when He was still explaining foundational truths to His disciples when they should have known better.*

- Jesus said, “[**Because you see and know me**] you know [the Father] and **have seen Him**” (14:7).
- Philip said, “**Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us**” (14:8).

- Jesus answered, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?” (14:9-10).
 - Here we are warned **not to judge Philip for his unbelief**, but rather to **admit our own ignorance, doubt, and confusion**.
 - We should learn that **human efforts alone are completely unable to grasp the spiritual truths**, which God makes known to His people.

- **Jesus showed us human weakness by straightforwardly saying, “*apart from me you can do nothing*” (15:5).**
 - Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. **Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for *apart from me you can do nothing***” (Jn. 15:5).
 - Of course, we are not to think that Jesus means non-Christians literally don’t do anything....
 - No, we are to understand that Jesus is saying no ***one can do anything good or genuinely fruitful or God-honoring*** unless they are “in Christ” or abiding in Christ.
 - This may indeed cause many questions to arise in our minds, but the plain meaning of the text could not be clearer...
 - In your own power, **you are weak** to the point of **hopeless inability**

Summary: **Jesus** clearly stresses **human weakness** and the **expectation of tribulation or distress** in this world...

Segue: **So, where then are we to find peace?**

(3) IN CHRIST ALONE, THERE IS PEACE

- ***Jesus has overcome the world!***

- Jesus “**came into the world**” from “**the Father**” (v28), and He successfully waded through its distress without succumbing to it.
 - Jesus, who was “**at the Father’s side**” (Jn. 1:18), came into the world, though “**the world was made through Him**” (Jn. 1:10).
 - Jesus was “**tempted as we are, yet [He is] without sin**” (Heb. 4:15).
- Jesus reveals “**the Father**” to His people (v25).
 - John tells us, “**No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, He has made Him known**” (Jn. 1:18).
 - And Jesus also said, “**Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father... [and] I am in the Father and the Father is in Me...**” (Jn. 14:9, 11).
- Jesus is both the demonstration of the Father’s love and the one through whom the Father’s love is revealed (v27).
 - “**the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me...**”
 - “**God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life**” (Jn. 3:16).
- Though His disciples left Him alone (v32), He has Himself “**overcome the world**” (v33).
 - In Christ’s moment of greatest perceived weakness, “**He disarmed the rulers and authorities [of Satan and this world] and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them...**” (Col. 2:15).
- So, **all the distresses** of this world have been **overcome by Christ...**
 - For **He has endured them all** at fever pitch and is **forevermore *Christus Victor*** (or Christ the Conqueror)!

- **Therefore, in Christ alone, you may have peace... real and lasting peace**
 - “I have said **these things** to you, that **in me you may have peace**. In the world you will have tribulation. But **take heart; I have overcome the world**” (v33)
 - **How do we “have peace”? How do we “take heart”?**
 - We rest, hope, find ourselves “in Christ”!
 - Let me ask you something... and I want you to think about this carefully.
 - *Do you feel more loved by God because He makes much of you OR because, at great cost to His Son, He frees you to enjoy knowing Him and treasuring Him and making much of Him?*

If at the **bottom of your desires** there is merely an **arrangement of circumstances** [if only things were different]...

a **number of material blessings** [if only I had this or that]...

a **release from feelings of guilt** [I know that I’ve done so much bad stuff, but I don’t want to feel bad about it anymore]...

or some other **temporal thing**...

then it is possible that you aren’t “in Christ” at all!

Non-Christians want a **better life**, better **circumstances**, more **stuff**, and **less guilt!**

The difference between **non-Christians** and **Christians** is that **Christians want Jesus!**

They **treasure** Jesus!

They **make much of** Jesus!

Jesus is the **all-satisfying, joy-inducing, peace-bringing** world-conqueror!

You can have this whole world but give me Jesus!

Main point:

Christians may enjoy peace in Christ amid the tribulation of this world.

(4) SOME APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Will you admit your absolute weakness?

- a. Will you admit that you are too weak to make it on your own through this world... and (more importantly) to the Father?

2. Will you look to Christ as absolutely victorious?

- a. Will you behold Christ as the King of glory who came as the suffering servant in order to offer grace?

3. Will you embrace Christ as supremely satisfying?

- a. Will you treasure Christ above all else?

Main point:

Christians may enjoy peace in Christ amid the tribulation of this world.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

The Hope that Overcomes the World by John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-92/the-hope-that-overcomes-the-world>

The Secret to Peace and Contentment by Jon Bloom

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-secret-to-peace-and-contentment>

My Peace I Give to You by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/my-peace-i-give-to-you>

Jesus Has Overcome the World by Jon Bloom

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/jesus-has-overcome-the-world>