

Victory Amid Tribulation

In John 16:33, Jesus said, "*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*" With these words, Jesus comforted those who are fearful of His coming absence. Let us listen and consider the words of comfort which He spoke to His disciples.

Peace

Peace is the great Bible subject, the burden of God's message to men. But it is not so much peace with God that is here referred to as the peace of God. It is here that no wrath can reach us and no storm can disturb us. The peace of God rules in our hearts and is like an island in a storm-tossed sea. The peace that is discussed is a peace in Christ; not out of Him, nor apart from Him, but in Him (Colossians 3:15). We are in Christ, so we receive that peace. We are promised that through prayer we can have "*the peace of God, which passeth all understanding*" (Philippians 4:7). The person who listens to these words are overwhelmed with the idea of peace which Jesus taught.

Tribulation

Though we are not of the world, we are still in it. We are unfortunate partakers of its sorrows, though hopefully not of its sins. The people of the world seem to hate and trouble us, just as they hated the Master (John 15:18). Sometimes the world seems nothing more than a howling wilderness (Acts 14:22: Revelation 7:14). We have a lot of weaknesses in this body of flesh: weariness, disappointment, bereavement, farewells, bodily diseases, pain, poverty, loss, disaster, persecutions, hatred, and taunts. The Bible has taught tribulation from the beginning. We see it in Abel, Noah, Joseph, Moses, David, Jeremiah, and all the saints. We also see it in Jesus, the man of sorrows. The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent cannot get along. We must come out of the world, whatever the occasion. Tribulation makes us long for the coming; death makes us long for resurrection; weariness makes us long for rest. Thus we look for, and hasten to, the coming of the day of the Lord; the ending of the sorrow and the beginning of joy.

Victory

Jesus said, "*I have overcome the world.*" The world is powerful, but not all powerful. The seed of woman bruised the serpent's head. Noah condemned the world, but Christ overcame it (Hebrews 11:7). We can use the example of Christ and overcome the world too. Christ overcame the world both by

weakness and by strength. He slew death by dying. Christ conquered Satan by allowing him seemingly to conquer our Savior. No one could help Him win this battle. Yet the victory was complete, final, and irreversible. He is the conqueror; and, as the conqueror, led captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8). The victory Christ has won for us was both great and glorious. It was an eternal victory which decided the long battle between heaven and hell; between God and Satan; between sin and salvation. This victory can be ours by faith and obedience (1 John 5:4-5; Hebrews 5:8-9).

Cheer

Jesus said, "*Take courage.*" Do not be afraid of the world, its prince, or its tribulations. The world is conquered; it is conquered for you and it is conquered by Christ. Even at its strongest, the world had only minimal strength. Now, the world is broken because of the victory of Christ. Take courage! The victor fought your fight and won your victory. The world is His foe and yours; He fought and won; He was a leader and commander to the people, the captain of your salvation. It was you He had in view when He was fighting. He will make you more than conqueror (Romans 8:37). Take courage! The world was conquered by your Savior and your friend. The conqueror is mighty, and His victory has been acknowledged by the Father. It was our Lord Jesus Christ who fought and won. Take courage!

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Be cheerful in the days of darkness. You still have a battle which you must fight cheerfully and hopefully. Love not the world, but contend against it. In Revelation 2:10, the statement, "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,*" is the glorious promise that rings true to the one who overcomes.

Kyle Campbell