

Peace in Him

Text: John 16:23-33

Hymn: "Our Father, Who from Heaven Above" (LSB 766)

*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.*  
-John 16:33

Jesus was speaking to His disciples before He went to the cross. And He told them, "In this world you will have tribulation." If the disciples only knew. Jesus would certainly have His tribulation, but so would they. In our Gospel lesson they're finally telling Jesus that they understand, that they know that He is from God, and that they believe in Him. At the same time, Jesus is telling them that they will be scattered from Him in fear and they will leave Him all alone. They would have their time of tribulation. After He was dead, they would hide behind closed, locked doors in fear, wondering what the future might hold for them.

So, what's your tribulation? Is it that someone close, someone dear to you has died and you don't know how to act or what to do? Or is your tribulation that you are fighting cancer or some other chronic disease and each day is tough and you fear the future? Is your tribulation that you fear for your children and your grandchildren because you don't like the direction society is headed and you wonder what kind of world they will have to live in someday? Or are you terribly lonely and don't know how you're going to cope with the days and the weeks ahead? What's your tribulation? Everybody has one.

Pastors do, too. We're worried about people needing so much ministry, but the hospitals and nursing homes have been closed to us for eight consecutive weeks.

We're eager to open the church back up and yet afraid about the spread of disease. We wonder, in this economy, if people will be able, and if able, whether they'll remember, to continue to support the life of the church with their offerings. And while technology has helped fill a gap, we can't help but feel as though we're letting down the people God has called us to serve—proclaiming the Gospel to a camera lens is a pale substitute for eye contact with another soul.

Yes, pastors have tribulations, too. That's the way it is. But no matter what your tribulation, the emotions are the same: fear, worry, a sense of hopelessness or helplessness, uncertainty about the future, indecisiveness about the future, sleepless nights, long days. You know. We've all been there.

And then Jesus says to His disciples then and to us now, "I have said these things to you so that in me you might have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart I have overcome the world." Where can we go for a little peace? The Savior. Our Savior. Of course. Jesus says that the only place we're going to find peace is in Him. But so often that's the last place we look. As soon as tribulation comes, we start thinking about how I'm going to deal with it, how I'm going to manage it, how I'm going to get all this done, how I'm going to make the changes necessary. Seldom do we think about the fact that Jesus died for us and rose again and that's somehow helpful. "Yeah, I know He died for me and my sins are forgiven and He rose again for me and I have eternal life, but how does that help me now? How does that help me today with my tribulation?" And so we go on fretting and worrying, hopeless, helpless, sleepless nights, been there, done that. So have you. That's just the way we are.

Jesus says, "I have said these things to you so that in me you may have peace." He was talking to the disciples. How could they have peace? It was because of what He was about to do. He hadn't done it yet, but He's already making promises that are based on what He's going to accomplish. That He's going back to the Father. He's with them now, but He was going back to the Father. The Father loved them and they could come to the Father any time with anything because of what Jesus was about to do.

And so He went to the Cross. He went to the Cross and He did what we couldn't. He went to the Cross and He obtained the victory. He overcame the world for you and me.

"Take heart! I have overcome the world." And that's exactly what He did. That's exactly what He was doing on that cross. He had his own time of tribulation—the rejection, the trial, the mocking, the beating, the crown of thorns, the nails, the cross, His death. And in that suffering and death He was not just taking your sin. He was carrying on His back all your tribulations and carrying all the evil in this world. He was taking that upon Himself. He was defeating the pain and hurt of death. He was overcoming the sin of our nation and the world. He was overcoming all our fears and loneliness and worry. He was overcoming everything that plagues us and makes our lives miserable.

"Take heart! I have overcome the world." All of it! Everything that troubles you today. Everything. In this world you will have tribulation. Jesus tells us so. But the fact is He overcame it for you. We are in peace. We can have peace because He overcame the sin and the evil and the Father loves us and we can go to the Father. We have peace because we are confident that He overcame all the evil so it cannot

overcome us. It may kill us, but we have the victory and we live forever! We have peace, because He is in control and He handles it. He did handle it on the Cross.

In Me. Here. Today. As you hear His Word and as His Word abides in you, Jesus Himself dwells in your heart and you are in Him. When you come to receive the body and blood of Christ, He forgives you and He grants you peace. He says, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled nor let them be afraid. Take heart! I have overcome the world."

He did. So, you can find a little peace. It's there for you. He won the victory. And He gives you the victory and He gives you peace.

Pastor Brent McGuire  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church