

Fil-Am Community Church

Tribulation, Peace, and Victory

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“These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” – John 16:33 (ASV).

Here are four special points—the peace, the tribulation, the victory, the cheer. It is Christ himself who is the speaker of these words. He speaks them to us. Let us listen.

I. THE PEACE.

Peace is the great Bible subject; the theme of God's message to men. Peace on earth; peace with God; the peace of conscious reconciliation. But it is not so much "peace with God" that is here referred to, as "the peace of God"; not the peace obtained by receiving the embassy of peace, the reconciliation—but the peace of the reconciled soul. Into this region of peace reconciliation is the entrance.

Here no wrath can reach us, no storm can ruffle us; we are "kept in perfect peace"; "the peace of God rules in our hearts," and is perpetual sunshine, like an island of bright lushness in the midst of a stormy sea. It is peace in Christ; not out of Him, nor apart from Him—but in Him. It flows out of Him to us; or rather we are in Him, and so we get that peace. We get it by means of his words; *“These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace.”* His words are the words of peace. The soul that listens to these words drinks

in the peace, or, we may say, breathes the air of peace. Look at his words, "*Let not your heart be troubled*"; "*In my Father's house are many mansions*;" "*The Father coming in and abiding*;" the love of the Father; the little while; the coming joy. Yes, every word is loaded with peace; his own peace; the Father's peace; the Spirit's peace; the peace of heaven; peace even here on an earth, where all is trouble and disquiet.

II. THE TRIBULATION.

Though not of the world, we are still in it. We are partakers of its sorrows, though not of its sins. And besides, the men of the world hate us and trouble us, as they hated and troubled our Master. So that we have tribulation both in and from the world. The prince and god of this world is against us, and attacks us on every side, as the old serpent, the tempter, the roaring lion, the ruler of the darkness of this world. Our separation from it, and non-conformity to it, make it the more hostile. It will not let us alone. It is a waste howling wilderness; a land of storms, and barrenness, and enemies, and thorns, and briars. The law of the Church's present state is "tribulation"; "Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom."

There is also the weakness of this "vile body"—weariness, displeasure, disappointment, bereavement, breaking of ties, farewells and partings, bodily diseases, pain, affliction, poverty, loss, disaster, distressed circumstances, persecutions, coldness, hatred, the sneer and taunt—of these things the world is full. Its atmosphere is impregnated with the evil, and sadness, and gloom. So has it been from the beginning; we see it in Abel, Noah, Joseph, Moses, David, Jeremiah, and all the saints. It is the Christian's portion here. It was the portion of our Savior. He was a man of sorrows. And all this not because of inconsistency—but consistency; the more we are unlike the world, the more it hates us; the more we are like the Lord, the more will the world persecute us. The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent cannot agree or love. Therefore we must come out from it; stand aloof, whatever may be the consequences. And this non-conformity—this quarrel between us and the world—only makes us long more for the day of the great advent. Tribulation makes us long for the coming; death makes us long for resurrection; weariness makes us long for rest; partings make us

long for meetings. So we look for, and make haste unto, the coming of the day of God, the ending of the sorrow, the beginning of the fullness of joy.

III. THE VICTORY.

"I have overcome the world." It is a powerful world—but not all-powerful. It has been fought with and overcome. One greater than it, or than its prince, has come and vanquished it. The world did its utmost in this battle—but the Son of God prevailed. The seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head. Noah condemned the world—but Christ overcame it. It has now no longer any power left to it but what He permits. He overcame it both by weakness and by strength; He slew death by dying; He conquered Satan, the god of this world, by allowing Satan to conquer Him. He did it alone. None could help Him in such a battle. Yet the victory was complete, final, and irreversible. He is the conqueror; and, as the conqueror, led captivity captive. When He comes again, the victory will be manifested; now we only know it by faith. God has proclaimed the victory of his Son both in heaven and earth—but the world does not believe it. Yet the victory was great and glorious. It was a victory which decided the long battle between heaven and hell; between God and Satan; between the Church and the spiritual weakness in high places.

IV. THE CHEER.

Be of good cheer or courage. Do not be afraid of the world, or its prince, or its tribulations.

(1.) It is a conquered world.

Not in its full strength or flushed with victory—but routed, defeated. Even at its strongest it had but creature strength, and "Who are you that you should be afraid of a man that shall die?" It is now creature-weakness; a broken world. Be of good cheer!

(2.) It is conquered for you.

The victor fought your fight and won your victory. The world is his foe and yours; as both 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. Be of good cheer.

(3.) It is conquered by Christ.

Conquered by your Savior, your friend. The conqueror is almighty, and his victory has been acknowledged by the Father. It was Jesus who fought and won. Be of good cheer.

Be cheerful in days of darkness. You still have a battle which you must fight cheerfully and hopefully. Fight, and do not yield. Love not the world—but contend against it. Be faithful to death; the promise is to him that overcomes.