

The Victory of our Peace

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 04 March 2018

Preacher: Rev. Rory Stott

- [0 : 00] John 16 and verse 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, says Jesus. I have overcome the world.
- Billy Graham wrote many books, but one of the books that he wrote was a book called, Nearing Home, Life, Faith and Finishing Well.
- Now whatever we think of Billy Graham, he is a man I would say, well if you read this book, I read some of this book, I didn't read all of the book, you would say, share as a man who had peace.
- Share as a man who had peace in his heart and who had rest in his heart. It seems that we live in a world where peace is very much sought after.
- [1 : 08] In your community, in the circles in which you might go, people will look for peace, you yourself will look for peace in various ways. There is a guy by the name of Bono who was the lead singer and is the lead singer and a band called U2 wrote these lyrics.
- He said, I have climbed highest mountains. I have run through the fields only to be with you. I have run, I have crawled, I have scaled these city walls, these city walls only to be with you, but I still haven't found what I am looking for.
- He says, I still haven't found what I am looking for. I have looked all places around the world, I have tried various things, and yet I have yet to find what I am looking for.
- Jesus Christ comes and he says to his followers and he says to the world, I am the Prince of Peace. I am the one who brings peace into your hearts.
- I am the one who comes into the world and brings rest where there is turmoil in broken hearts and sinful hearts. Paul very similarly, he says in Philippians 4 and 6, he says, do not be anxious about anything.
- [2 : 27] In everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your request to God and the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- Peace is found. It is in Christ Jesus that this rest can be found where we cannot find that rest anywhere else or that peace anywhere else in the world in which we live.
- And so we have as well here, verse 33 of John's Gospel, I have said these things to you that in me, you may have peace. We saw just last night that there is a cost to peace.
- It's not easy being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not easy saying to our friends, now I'm going to church today, I can't go and have a party. It's not easy because there is that difficulty in being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- But we notice as well that the greatest cost of all is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. There is the great cost. There is the cost of our peace.
- [3 : 37] And yet we notice today that there is also victory in our peace. We also notice that his desire is that his disciples would have peace.

That is what he wished for them, that they would know this peace that he's talking about. That's his desire. He warned as well that his people would face trouble.

You live in the world he was saying in a sense. And in the world there is trouble. In the world in which you live there are difficulties. There is pain. There is sorrow. There is grief. There is cancer. There is motor neurone disease.

In the world in which you live it is the fallen broken world. There is trouble. There is a warning there for them. He didn't say to them, your life will be wonderful from now on if you follow me.

No, he said in this world there is trouble. But in me there is peace. In me there is peace. But he also brought them great comfort by saying, I have overcome the world.

[4 : 40] I have overcome the world. And that was comforting for them. Yet for there to be victory, we notice that there is a cost to this peace.

And as Jesus says, I have overcome the world, notice there that there is victory in his death. For there to be victory, surely there must be some sort of a battle.

Because for there to, for him to be triumphant, for him to have won something, for him to be victorious, because the language there is of victory, the victory of Jesus on the cross, which we are remembering today.

There must have been some sort of a battle for this victory to have taken place. And we go right back to the beginning of the Bible, where we have Adam and Eve, who decided, who chose autonomy, who chose self-rule.

Adam and Eve said to God, no, really what they were saying is, I don't want to follow you. And isn't it true, dear friends, that we don't like authority? It's ingrained in us that we don't like to be told what to do.

[5 : 49] We don't really like the minister to be talking to us in ways in which he does sometimes, and challenging us from the word. We don't like authority. And we don't like the authority of God.

Adam and Eve said, no, we would rather have our own rules. We would rather not God telling us how to live our lives. And so they chose autonomy, self-rule.

And therefore, from that time, there has been this lack of peace. There has been this separation from God. Separation from God means a lack of peace. When we are not in relationship with God, dear friends, we do not have that peace which surpasses all understanding.

We will look for it in many places, but we will not find it unless it is in the Lord Jesus Christ. We will not have that peace. It might be temporary.

We might try to find that peace in alcohol. We might try and find that peace by getting drunk. I wonder if we've been there.

[6 : 52] It's very temporary. You'll know that. It's great. And we look for that temporary happiness, and we get drunk. And it's great for the moment, but it's temporary. We wake up in the morning and, whoa, it's gone.

We feel worse. And yet the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is something that is different. And so from the fall, from this desire and from the heart, this desire and from choosing to go it alone, Adam and Eve, and because of Adam and Eve's choice, every single one of us are affected by their choice.

I'm afraid that's just the way that it is. Because of Adam and Eve's choice, we are in the same boat, unfortunately. The fall, sinfulness, evil, brokenness, and death in the world through their choice.

We are in that same boat. And separation from God. And a lack of peace. And only in Christ can we have that peace.

But it's very interesting, right, in the beginning of the Bible again, there was a hint early on that peace would be restored. Because sometimes we come to the Bible and we think the Gospel is in the New Testament.

[8 : 12] The Gospel is not only in the four Gospels and in the New Testament. It started right back. In fact, God warned us and He said to us, I'm going to give you good news. Genesis 3 and 15, what theologians might call the proto-Vengolian Vengellion, the first Gospel.

There was the good news. There was a forewarning that something great would happen in the world. That a Saviour would come into the world many, many, many centuries later.

The offspring of Eve would crush the head of the serpent. The offspring of Eve being the Lord Jesus Christ. And the head of the serpent would be crushed. And there is the triumph.

There is the victory on the cross. Jesus Christ, die on the cross. Death is defeated there. And so the good news comes into the world.

And so the possibility of peace inside here. Genesis 3, 15. And so Jesus would be victorious.

[9 : 20] The victory of peace. And so we notice, first of all, that it was Christ's victory. It was Christ's victory. It was nobody else's victory.

It was the victory of Christ. He says, but take heart, I have overcome the world. And only Christ could have done it. There is no other Saviour in the world.

Muhammad, dear friends, is not a Saviour. There is no other Saviour in the world. Only Jesus could save us. And only Jesus can save us.

Where many people might tell us differently, they might say, well, we can find that peace within us. If we search hard enough inside of us, then we will find that peace.

If we're positive enough, and my aunt is into new age stuff, and her whole thinking and philosophy is, if I'm just positive enough, then I can have that in a peace.

[10 : 18] And that's just simply not true. It's only in Jesus that we can have that peace. He ends this section in John 16 in an exultant way. He encourages them after telling the disciples some hard truths in John's Gospel here, in John 16 and the previous chapters.

Some hard truths. You will face persecution. You will go through hardship. It's not going to be easy for you. And he ends this section lifting them up.

We just got to ask the question, why? Why the exultant tone? Why is it in a bit of a buoyant mood right at this time in John 16?

And the first reason is that he has comfort from his father. He has comforted from his father. His father is with him, and we see that in verse 32. His father is with him.

He says, you will scatter to his disciples. You will leave me with my death and with my arrest and all that is going on. You will scatter. But he says, my father is with me. Now, if you know your Bibles, you might think, well, that contradicts another part of the Bible.

[11 : 25] And I wonder if you can know what I'm talking about. There is another section in the Gospels where Jesus cries out to his father and he says, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Do you remember that part? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He says, and yet here he says, my father is with me.

And we have to say that there is no contradiction here. And it's a really, really important point to make because the Gospel writers come with different emphases. They come with different angles.

They have different personalities. And they are wanting to emphasize different emphasis on what's going on, on the death of Jesus. So, for example, Mark will talk about the depth of agony.

He will talk about the suffering of Jesus. And that's what he wants to highlight. He is highlighting the suffering of Jesus on the cross. And yet John comes with a slightly different angle.

[12 : 28] He wants to portray the courage of Jesus, his perseverance, the courage of Jesus there on the cross, his obedience and his courage.

And in verse 32, John contrasts the faithfulness of the father with the fickleness of the disciples. The disciples will run, they will scatter, they will get all uptight and they won't know what to do with themselves like you and I do at times.

We get into a bit of a fix and we stop trusting God. Jesus knew that his father is faithful.

He trusted his father and he knew that his father would be with him. His father is with him. And here is his supreme consolation, the secret in a communion of the Godhead.

God the Father will not leave Jesus in that sense. God the Father will be with him. He will not fail him in the dark hours that lie ahead of him.

[13 : 29] There's horrendous things going on in Syria at the moment. The bombings in a place called Eastern Gouta. And there is a group of people who are called the white helmets.

Now in that area of Syria where everybody else is left, the support agencies are too scared to go into there because of the bombing, because of the danger of going into that area.

Everybody else is left and yet there are individuals who belong to this group called the white helmets and presumably they wear hard hats and they go in where there's been a bombing, they go and rescue people.

And the people know that the white helmets people are there and they have not left them nor forsaken them. When there is a bomb, when there is dust still going around, they go in there and they rescue them.

Imagine the comfort of those who are in this war zone, who are in this turmoil with dust still flying about, the bombing, the shelling going all over the place.

[14 : 35] The comfort to know that there are people who still care for them. That there are people who are there with them and will come and rescue them. Incredible when I read about that.

You know that God can be trusted in a similar way. Whatever you're going through today, whatever your circumstances, know that your God is faithful.

Know that he promises people that I will never leave you nor forsake you. Where we will fail him, where we will reject him, where we as the disciples denied him, no, I don't know him anymore.

God is faithful and we can trust God because he is faithful. Jesus knew that.

Jesus knew that his father was with him. And so we too can draw comfort that God will never leave us nor forsake us.

[15 : 58] He isn't thersed because he knows that his father was with him. He's also encouraged because he has overcome the world. He has done this great thing for fallen humanity.

And that is his death on the cross. In other words, that Jesus knows that he will have the last word. Satan will not have the last word.

Jesus will have the last word and he has had the last word. Through his obedience unto death, death itself will be defeated on the cross.

No longer will death have the last word. Death itself will be defeated on the cross as he dies. And I spent time this week and last week just reading through the gospel. And it's horrendous reading about the suffering and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But there's almost a relief as we get to the resurrection. We get to the part when he rises again and he engages with his disciples. And he says to his disciples, peace be upon you.

[17 : 03] There's almost that relief to know that he has not only died but he has risen and he has ascended to on high. Do you feel that dear friends? Do you know something of that relief of Jesus not only having died but death having been defeated?

In other words, we are those who are not without hope. So that means, if we're not getting a lot of what we're talking about here, it means that Christians are not those who are without hope.

The world doesn't have the hope that we have. We have hope. And it doesn't matter what our circumstances are.

It doesn't matter what relationship problems we have. It doesn't matter the struggles of ill health, of cancer.

We are those who are not without hope. The verb that is used there for overcome, it speaks and indicates victory.

[18 : 12] I have overcome, I have been victorious. And hence the gift of peace for you, he says to his disciples and he says to you today, I've been victorious on the cross and hence here is peace for you.

You are now forgiven for your sins. No longer does Satan and no longer does sin have its hold on you. I now forgive you through my death in the sense he is saying. Jesus has conquered the world in the same way as he has defeated the Prince of the world, Satan.

He has defeated him. What's the point? By his death, he has blunted the world's opposition.

He has blunted it. One of the most, forgive me for this illustration, but I think it is helpful. One of the most horrendous documentaries that I've ever seen is in an area, I'll be lying if I said I knew where it was.

I think it's Pakistan or Afghanistan, one of these places where they have bear baiting. And what they do is absolutely horrendous. They take the teeth out of the bear's mouth and then they set their dogs on the bears.

[19 : 28] And what it means is that the bear can't retaliate. What it means is that the bear has lost its bite. And there is a sense, dear friends, in which that is what Jesus has done.

Satan has lost his power. Satan has lost his bite. No longer does he have the teeth that he used to have in which we can be affected by his attacks and his bite.

Dear friends, in Christ we are protected from him. Satan has lost that bite. He has lost his power.

He has lost the ability to affect us. And that is our comfort as believers. That is our comfort today as we come to the Lord's table.

As we remember the death of Jesus, where death has been defeated itself, where Satan himself has lost his bite, he's lost his teeth. No longer can he destroy us in any way.

[20 : 39] What does it mean that he has overcome the world? It means in a sense that Christ is sufficient for our needs.

He is sufficient. We need no more than Christ and His finished work on the cross. We need to do nothing more because all that needs to be done has been done.

There is no burden too big. There is no anxious thought too big. There is no worry too big.

There is no disaster too big. You know, sometimes we look at the world and we look at all that is going on and we think, poor, I can't really handle this.

You know what? We can't. Because of Christ's finished work on the cross. We think about our relationship problems. We think about the cancer diagnosis. We think about our grief and we think, oh, I'll wake up in the morning.

[21 : 41] I can't handle this anymore. We come back to the cross. We come back to the triumph and the victory on the cross. And we say to ourselves, I can. I can because He has overcome the world.

He is sufficient. And do you know what, dear friends? It was not only Christ's victory. It was the disciples' victory as well. It was your victory.

If you're a believer and a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was your victory. It was my victory. Yet we have to be a little bit careful here. Only Christ can say that the victory is His.

Only Christ can say that the victory is mine. I have overcome the world because I've already said it, that only Christ could do the work that needed to be done on the cross.

Nobody else could have done that work. Only Christ could do that work. At the end, the triumph song is not we have overcome.

[22 : 45] That's not our triumph and song we have overcome. But the triumph and song is worthy is the Lamb who was slain. There is the triumph.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. And that's our cry of victory, if you like. It's all about Jesus on the cross. It's all about the blood that has been spilled on the cross.

It's all about Him being victorious on the cross and yet we share in that victory. We share in the triumph of Jesus.

The disciples will share and so by grace we share in that triumph. There's an old hymn that goes like this.

God, O God, our boast, the glory of our power, the sovereign grace is there, our fortress and our tower.

[23 : 48] We lift our heads aloft for God, our shield, is over us through Him alone whose presence goes before us.

We'll wear the victor's crown. No more by foes assaulted will triumph through our king by Israel's God exalted.

I wonder if you're a rugby fan here today. Scotland's were victorious over England last week. What a game.

What an absolute game the plays played incredibly. There were only 15 or 19 eventually players that went on to the field.

It was only them that could say we were victorious. We beat England. We were triumphant over England on the Games field. Yet how many Scots were saying we won.

[24 : 51] We won. And in a very similar way we say today, we've won. We've won.

Because we share in the triumph and the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. We share in what He has done. There's something else and we can't bypass it.

And that is that the disciples share in the victory of Christ despite their denial.

And I'm often amazed at this. There is Jesus and He says to His disciples, He says to Peter and He says to His disciples, You will deny me.

Knowing that He is going to die. And He says at the same time, not only you will deny me, He says, you will see me afterwards. And in a sense He's saying to Him, I forgive you.

[25 : 57] You will deny me. You will sin against me. You will reject me. And yet I will see you afterwards.

They share in His victory despite their denial. They will deny Him, but it will not be the end of them. They will deny Him, but it will not be the end of their relationship with God because of the grace and the love of God that He pours out on His children.

And perhaps we've come here today having needed to examine ourselves. Perhaps God has shown us the areas in our lives that are just not right, our sinfulness, our brokenness.

And yet He says, come repentant, but come to me. Turn from your wicked ways and come to the table and remember what I have done for you.

Jesus says to His disciples, He says, You will deny me. And I will still be victorious. And You will be my disciples. And You will go out and You will tell people about me.

[27 : 11] And You will serve me. And You will be my instruments in the world. And that's what He says to us as well. Amazing grace, dear friends. The amazing grace of God that we come in all our sinfulness today.

And yet He forgives us. What an amazing God we have. And so we come to the Lord's table. There are some who say, I'm not going to the table because I'm not one of them.

I'm a bad person. My dear friends, and I'm sure you've already been told this before. My dear friend, we come to the table because we know our badness is there.

We know and recognize our need for God and we recognize that we cannot do it by ourselves. We are imperfect in need of God's forgiveness.

And so we come to the table and we rest in God's grace. And we receive His peace.

[28 : 17] What an amazing God we have. And for the believers, for the children of God, for God's people, Jesus says, Take heart.

I have overcome the world. He says, take heart. He says, be encouraged. Be encouraged to persevere.

Be encouraged to persevere. And what is the grounding? What is the foundation of that perseverance? The grounding and the foundation of that perseverance is the triumphant work of Christ on the cross.

That's the roots. That's the foundation. The triumphant work of Jesus on the cross. I heard a story of an old minister who used to say very little at the door, except as the people went out the door at the church, he used to say, Keep going. Keep going. Keep going.

Keep persevering. And we keep going. The grounding of that is the finished work of Christ on the cross.

[29 : 27] But there's something else and I know I've been preaching a long time. One last thing is that not only are we to persevere, but we're also to share in the peace of Christ with others.

That's what Christ calls us to do. He says, go out and make disciples of all nations. He says, go out into the world and be salt and light. He says, go out into the world and be my instruments, be my arms and my legs, be my lips.

Be my loving kindness to the world in which you live. We're making curries and a curry is absolutely bland without salt. And the thing about a curry is that you put salt in it and it gives it all sorts of flavor.

And the thing about a curry as well is that if you leave it overnight, it marinates with that salt and with all the spices and it makes it so much more flavorful. Dear friends, we're asked to go out into the world to be salt in the world that is flavored and that's seasoned with the sweetness of heaven.

That's what Christ wants us to do and we're told to go and marinate the world in which we live and spend time in the world in which we live, to spend time with our families, to spend time with our colleagues at work and that aroma of heaven might move out into the world.

[30 : 48] And that is God working and that is that peace that is shared with the world in which we live. There's bow heads and a curtain. Father God, we thank you so much for Jesus.

We thank you for his triumph and we thank you that we are able to share in that triumph. Continue on in our presence we pray. In Jesus we ask it. Amen.