

## Be Encouraged!

John 16:33 . . . *In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.* This is the final exhortation Jesus gave to his disciples before he was arrested and went to his death.

- The command: *take courage*: be encouraged.
- The reason: *tribulation*: those things in life that pressure or crush you.

Every time the New Testament uses this term "be encouraged," it is in the context of sorrow and suffering. The Bible is raw and honest and faces right up to the realities of life on this planet. So Jesus says "in the world you are going to feel pressured and even crushed," and we say "That's for sure." He says we need to be encouraged, and again we say "That's for sure."

- The explanation: *the world*: the people on this planet who are opposed =to Him. (John 15:18)
- The people in the world oppose Him because they love their sin. They don't want Jesus to tell them what to do. (John 15:22)

So this is the explanation for all of the tribulation in this world: We human beings are like a mob of unruly hooligans, shaking our fist at God!

- *Name any problem on this planet right now, and it can ultimately be traced back to man's rebellion against God.*
- We live our own way, it's fun in the moment, but then the consequences are a mess - and we point the finger at God.
- "Hey, can't you see that we're sick? Can't you see that we're dying? Can't you see that this world is full of violent people? God, come on, are you blind? This isn't fair!"
- No, it's perfectly fair. We have lived like an unruly mob, shaking our fist at God. That's the true explanation. That's pretty discouraging.

But if we look back at John 16:33, Jesus says: *but take courage*: "You might be encouraged to know that *"I have overcome the world."*

- Overcome is the Greek word *nikaō*: the war word for victory.
- Jesus declares Himself to be a triumphant warrior.
- Be encouraged to know that Jesus was a king who came and conquered.

So "what does it mean that Jesus overcame the world?"

### 1. It should have meant that He overcame us.

- Wait, He didn't? No - He didn't crush us for our sin.
- He could have - we are guilty. But He didn't. *For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him* (John 3:17).

### 2. It did mean that He overcame Satan and death.

- Jesus said that Satan was like a strong man guarding his own house, fully armed, but Jesus was someone stronger who came and overcame Him and plundered his possessions (Luke 11; Eph. 2; Heb. 2:14; Col. 1:13).



- Jesus overcame our tyrant king who has power over us because we are guilty hooligans. Jesus overcame Satan's power by overcoming the penalty for our sin.

**3. It did mean that He overcame the penalty for our sin.**

- Only God can forgive sins - this Jesus was God Himself, in human flesh, and He came for the very purpose of dying to take the penalty we deserved for our sin. (Matthew 9:2; I Peter 3:18).
- If we are no longer guilty sinners, then Satan and death have lost their grip on us.

**4. It does mean that someday Jesus will come again and overcome all His enemies.**

- Every one of us will stand before Jesus as Judge. Those who reject Jesus and His rule will not end up on top They will actually end up experiencing Satan's judgment with Him. (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 17:14).
- Someday Jesus will overcome sinners (Acts 17:31). Jesus could have done that when He came the first time; but instead He came to save.

So each of us should ask ourselves: am I still part of the world?

- Am I still with the mob, living our own way?
- Do you really love your own way so much that you will not bow the knee to Jesus?

Be encouraged to know that the passing pleasures of sin are nothing compared to the blessings of following Jesus.

The big idea is that **we actually become overcomers together with Jesus.** (Zephaniah 3:16-17)

- When we come to Jesus, our tribulations don't go away - but we overcome them. They don't overcome us, we overcome them (Romans 8:37).
- Be encouraged to know that life's tribulation can no longer defeat you because of Jesus. As a matter of fact, Jesus turns around our suffering and produces eternal reward, heavenly riches for us through them. Jesus makes us overwhelmingly conquer.

And someday the greatest blessings are promised to the overcomers (Revelation 2 and 3; 21).

- Only overcomers go to heaven. We are not overcomers. But Jesus is.
- Overcomers are the people who have come to Jesus as their Savior and King - the people who have come to Jesus as their overcomer.

So back to the basic issue:

- You are either still part of the world, still a hooligan, facing Jesus as judge someday.
- Or you have come to Jesus as your Savior and King, and you are an overcomer with Him.

Be encouraged this morning that instead of coming and conquering us because of our sin, Jesus came and conquered Satan and the consequences of our sin - and if He is your King today, you have in Him a limitless fountain of encouragement available all the time.

