

Take Heart

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Date: 11 October 2026

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[0:00] Amen. You may be seated. Kids, you are dismissed to your King's Kids class.! And if you would open up your Bibles to John chapter 16.

! I'm going to be preaching on verses 16-33 on page 1072 and 1073 of your Pew Bible. And as you are turning there, yesterday I was riding my mountain bike next to the Pike River, making incredible speed. And I couldn't notice. I would take glances over at the river as I was riding, just to keep my eyes focused on the path, of course. And there are these autumn leaves that had been falling and they're kind of running down the river. It's just a beautiful sight to see.

The Pike River, you know, was running. And I could see at one point into the river and I noticed a salmon. Not going downriver with the flow, pointed upriver. It had been making progress up the Pike River, dodging obstacles, jumping over little baby waterfalls.

That fish had been swimming against the current. It's the fall run. Christian, you are to be swimming against the current of the world.

The world, as we are defining it in the Gospel of John, is sinful humanity in organized rebellion against God. And the world, billions of people are generating currents.

[2:00] Currents. Currents of thought. Currents of lifestyle. And as Christians, we're not to go with the flow downstream. We are to swim against the current. To live against the current. But the thing is, in order, Christian, for you to stand against the current, make progress against the current, do you know what you're going to need? Courage. It takes courage to go against the flow of the world.

It takes courage. And Jesus, at the end of the farewell discourse proper, he closes on a note of courage. Take heart. I have overcome the world.

Jesus has called us out of the world. We're no longer of the world, but we're still in the world to bear witness to Christ to the world. And that task of bearing witness and bearing fruit is going to be challenged by the world. Jesus spoke about it earlier as being hated by the world for his name's sake. You know what it's like. You start having conversations with people you care about, and you start making claims about Jesus that are very unpopular. You say things like, well, Jesus himself said he's the way, the truth, and life. No one comes to the Father but through me.

And what you're saying is, all other religions and ways of being, they are false attempts of salvation. There's only one true salvation. It's in Jesus. That sounds intolerant to the world.

It sounds narrow-minded. Culturally insensitive. We will say things like, there's real sin against a real God, and there are real consequences with real accountability.

[4:17] that result in judgment. That sounds old school. Something from the 1800s.

We will make claims that Jesus himself made. He embraced the biblical design of marriage and of men and women.

One man, chromosomal, one woman, chromosomal, united together by God for life in the covenant of marriage. And so we will say things like, there are only two biological sexes.

And trans men and trans women, though image bearers of God, these are distortions of God's good and purposeful design. You say things like that, you're going to be called intolerant, narrow-minded, bigoted, insensitive.

And you know what can result with that? You can start getting fearful. You can start just keeping your mouth shut. You can start avoiding conversations. You just kind of show up, but check out.

[5:42] We will encounter hostility from the world, because the words of Jesus, when abiding in us, we bear Christ-like fruit, and we will bear witness to Christ, and it is not popular.

And when we have these conversations with people, it's not nameless faces in a crowd.

If your life is anything like mine, these conversations are happening with real people. People I love, and they love me. And it's hard, and it gets awkward, it gets challenging and difficult.

These aren't nameless faces. These are sons and daughters of ours. These are moms and dads of ours. These are friends of ours, co-workers, teammates.

It gets personal, because the stakes are high. You're going to need courage, because it's really easy just to drift in the current of the world.

[6:49] You need courage to take a stand against the current. And this morning, you're going to see four reasons to take heart.

From John chapter 16, 16 through 33, let me read that now. A little while, and you will see me no longer. And again, a little while, and you will see me.

So some of his disciples said to one another, what is it that he says to us? A little while, and you will not see me. And again, a little while, and you will see me. And because I'm going to the Father.

So they were saying, what does he mean by, quote unquote, a little while? We do not know what he is talking about. Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him.

So he said to them, is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, quote, a little while, and you will not see me. And again, a little while, and you will see me, quote, question mark.

[7:49] Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrowed, because her hour has come.

But when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish. For joy, that a human being has been born into the world, so also you have sorrowed now.

But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. And that day, you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.

Until now, you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. I've said these things to you in figures of speech.

The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech, but will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day, you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf, for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came from God.

[8:54] I came from the Father, and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world, and going to his Father. His disciples said, Oh, now you are speaking plainly, and not using figures of speech.

Now we know that you know all things, and do not need anyone to question you. This is why we believe that you came from God. Jesus answered them, Do you now believe?

Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you, who say you believe, will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone, yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.

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.

Four reasons why, Christian, you must be courageous. Reason number one, you know the truth, you know the truth of the gospel, and not just the truth of the gospel, you know the gospel's transformational power.

[10:15] Throughout this passage, maybe you're picking up on it, Jesus is making a lot of references to time, about a coming time, but he's also kind of, at the beginning, speaking kind of like vaguely, even cryptically, he's talking about, a little time you will see me, or not see me, and then a little time you will see me.

Like what, his disciples were like, what is he talking about? What is this, what is this language?

Well, I'm going to come back, to what he's actually talking about, in a second.

But let me just point out, the time focus. Jesus says, a little while, verse 16, and again a little while. 17, the disciples are like, what do you mean by a little while?

And again, a little while. What do you mean by a little while? We don't know what he's talking about. Jesus then says, well, you want to know what I mean by a little while?

And again, a little while. And then Jesus, then starts talking about, this kind of like, then and now. You're going to have sorrow, now and then, you'll have joy.

[11:34] It's all time related. There's going to be this time, where you don't see me, and you are going to be sorrowful, and in anguish about that.

But then there's going to come a time, where you do see me, and when you do see me, you're going to be full of joy. And then he starts talking about, an hour is coming, verse 25, the hour is coming, will no longer speak to you plainly about the Father.

And he says, 26, in that day, in verse 32, behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come. So Jesus is like, pointing his disciples, at the end of the farewell discourse, he is saying, hey, in just a short time, some stuff's going to happen.

You're going to not see me, then you're going to see me, and when you don't see me, you're going to be sorrowful, but when you see me, you're going to be full of joy. Why, why is Jesus, speaking so vague?

Well, in verse 25, Jesus acknowledges it. The hour is coming, when I will no longer speak to you, in figures of speech, that's the reference, to the little while, that vagary, where his disciples are like, what is he talking about?

[13:05] They didn't understand it. But for us, who live 2,000 years, on the other side of the cross, because Jesus is saying this, just hours away, from being crucified, and then raised from the dead, when we look back, on these words, we can see, what the disciples, were clueless about.

They had no idea, that the Messiah, the Son of God, the Son of Man, in order to accomplish salvation, according to God's plan, this Messiah, would be crucified, and then raised from the dead. They had no idea. They would, if you told them at this point, did you know the Messiah, is going to be crucified, on a Roman cross? They would be like, that's ludicrous. That's not how the Messiah, is going to roll.

They weren't ready. So Jesus is speaking, in rather cryptic terms here, but then he tells them, I'm going to speak to you plainly.

But the thing is, the disciples think, that when he starts talking about, where is that, in verse 28, I came from the Father, and I've come into the world, and now I'm leaving the Father, and going to the world, they're kind of like, hey, he's like, we can understand that.

[14:24] He's finally speaking plainly. But they don't get it, because Jesus then rebukes them. They say, we believe, you're the guy.

We know you came from God. And Jesus is like, oh, now you believe. Because they don't fully believe.

They don't know, that this Messiah, the God in the flesh, standing before them, is going to be crucified, and raised from the dead, in order to accomplish, their salvation.

They don't know that. They don't believe that yet. But we do. They didn't know the truth.

But we know the truth. Brothers and sisters, take heart. You know the gospel. That Jesus himself, God in the flesh, was crucified, and then three days later, raised from the dead.

[15:35] And here's why that should be a tremendous encouragement to you. In 1 Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul talks about that as being of first importance.

Christ's death, according to the Scriptures, he was buried, and then he was raised from the dead three days later, in accordance with the Scriptures. Paul says, that's of first importance. Those gospel facts, Christ died, buried, raised, that is of first importance.

Do you know why? It's the only message that can save a sinner. I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power unto salvation.

This gospel, veiled here in John 16, has been made clear to us, and not only just clear, not just the facts of it, but the power of it.

Because many of us in this room have been transformed by this reality of Christ dying and being raised from the dead. And so when we encounter the currents of the world, and we feel the force on us, we know the truth.

[17:05] We're on solid ground. This is what is the true truth, Francis Schaeffer.

It's the most true truth. This sounds very narrow-minded and offensive.

When we say things like, but I know the truth. And the fact is, we do. We know God's plan of salvation.

We know it. Christ's death and resurrection. His name is the only name given among men by which we must be saved.

So, the first reason why you are to take heart in the world is because you stand on the solid ground of the gospel.

[18:29] Christ's death and resurrection, the power of God unto salvation. The second truth, the second reason, is we also have joy.

We know the truth. It's been made clear to us and we've been transformed by the truth or at least many of us in this room have, but we also have joy.

Did you notice the emphasis on joy in verses 20-24? Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. The world, when it crucified Jesus, was like, we're just giving you all a service.

We're just helping everybody out. Woo-hoo-hoo! He's dead. His disciples were grieved. But then Jesus says, your sorrow will be turned into joy.

And then he uses an illustration. He says, when a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

[19:47] Now, I have never delivered a baby and neither has Jesus, but he's using the illustration. So we can know these things now sorrow, then joy.

In verse 22, so also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again. I will see you again, Jesus says, and your hearts will rejoice and no one will take your joy from you.

Do you know what kind of joy Jesus is talking about? He's talking about an irrevocable joy, a joy that you never lose, a joy that's always present, a joy that is constantly bubbling up within you because of something.

And do you know what the because is? Because Jesus is alive. Because he's been raised from the dead. He didn't stay dead. And because Jesus has been raised from the dead, that means he is victory over sin, death, and the devil.

And we can celebrate that. And so when his disciples would see him three days later, they would be shocked and overjoyed that he's alive.

[21:06] What he said about himself is true. We have the benefit that when we see him, or when he sees us, we will be totally filled with joy at being in his presence.

You know, the disciples are dead now. Physically dead, spiritually alive. And I can say that they're spiritually alive because of John 11, where Jesus is speaking to Martha, verses 25, 26, and 27. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection, the life. whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?

And she said, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world. She didn't know at that point that the Messiah would be crucified and raised from the dead. But we do.

He's alive today. We can rejoice in knowing that our Savior is alive today. And there's coming a day when he will see you face to face.

[22:33] What this means is you don't need to fear your death. And what that means is what is the worst thing the world can do to you?

The Apostle Paul would use language like this. This is Philippians 121. For me to live is Christ. Hey, I'm going to fruitful labor for me.

And to die is gain. If I'm killed, I'm in the presence of Jesus. Win, win. And so he had this constant sense of joy.

And do you need courage to live against the current of the world? You have reason to be joyful. Jesus is alive. And your death day is not your last day. You will be ushered into the very presence of Jesus.

[23:40] Jesus. The Salvadis used to have a dog. We are a one and done dog family. Despite some people's objections.

His name was Gus. He was a black Labrador retriever. He's an English lab, which means he had a blockhead, just a massive blockhead.

He weighed 110, 115 pounds. He rode low. He was a low rider. And sometimes Gus would get out. He'd get lost.

Gus, Gus, come home. Where are you, Gus? And then Gus had a soft spot for food. So what we learned was you put some kibble into a cup and you just shake it.

And if he was 17 miles away, he would hear that and come running in low rider Gus fashion. Have you ever lost a dog?

[24:45] Christian, have you lost your joy? Are you wondering where your joy went? Where are your joy?

Come back joy. Do you know where you need to look to find joy? Look at the empty tomb. Look at what the Bible says where Jesus is not.

He's not dead. He's alive, seated at the right hand of God, reigning on high, bringing about, building his church, fulfilling the great commission.

Oh man, don't let your hearts be troubled. Our Jesus is alive, and his work is unstoppable.

Reason three, we've got capital B back up. We know the truth, we've got the joy, we've got capital B back up.

[25:57] Have you ever seen those police shows where two police officers arrive on a scene and they're observing a crime in progress? And one of them gets on the horn like, this is out of Mary 7, we need backup immediately, send backup.

And so they wait for backup because they're going to address the problem with numbers and force. brother, sister in Christ, you need backup.

And you've got capital B backup. Jesus has called us to abide in him and to bear fruit for him and to bear witness to him.

And when we bear witness to him, we bear witness to who he is and what he's done. He's died, he's been raised from the dead, he's reigning on high right now. We proclaim the gospel, we're unashamed of it because it's the power of God unto salvation, but that will not be welcomed by the world all the time.

In fact, it's not only the world that can grow cold to the gospel, it's not only the world that doesn't like being called to repent of sin and believe in Jesus.

[27:17] There will be times where brothers and sisters, am I not right? That where we're like, I think I'm just going to take the day off from following Jesus today.

I'm just going to give myself a break. You know what? You know what? Who's been to a water park in a lazy river?

Oh, glory. Just cruising around. I just want to float in the lazy river of the world. No big deal.

I'm not hurting anybody. I just don't want to be encumbered by Jesus today. I don't want to put the effort into bearing fruit.

I don't want to kind of ruffle feathers by bearing witness to him. I just don't want to treasure Jesus today.

[28:22] I don't want to pursue people in love who are unlike me and can get a little snippy with me. I don't want to do that today. I just want to coast today.

I don't want to tell other Christians about my life.

Because I don't want them to really know what I'm like and I certainly don't want them holding me quote unquote accountable. So I'm just going to drift. I don't want to really serve.

I'll just throw money at stuff. You know what? I don't really want to give because I've got other things I want to do with the money. You start daydreaming about oh man it was really nice when I was part of the world.

I could do everything I wanted to. I wasn't getting hamstrung by Jesus. I didn't feel nearly as bad as I do now.

[29:34] I feel worse now for being a Christian than I was when I was not a Christian. Because the Holy Spirit is living in you. Do you know what you need in those moments?

Backup. You need backup because you are adrift you have either forgotten the gospel that Christ died and was raised from the dead or you're disregarding the gospel or you've been distracted from the gospel or you're doubting the gospel.

I'm not sure if this is true. So you're thinking the thing is in those moments you're lacking joy too.

You're conflicted maybe even miserable because you know too much. You're like man I just want to coast with the world but then there's the Jesus thing.

And you know it's true. In those moments you need backup. You need to call in backup. You need to pray. You need to ask.

[31:00] And Jesus is very clear here. Ask your father. Ask your father in heaven and he is eager to give you what you need.

In verse 23 Jesus says this in that day you will ask nothing of me.

The day that he's talking about is after his resurrection when Jesus is making appearances but he's not necessarily present. And in his absence he's saying ask the father in my name because you're in me now.

And he will give whatever you ask. Until now you've not asked him nothing in my name because you've been asking me. But now when I'm gone ask and you receive that your joy may be full. What Jesus is saying here is that anyone who believes in him that person because of the gospel his death and his resurrection his blood and his empty tomb has given you 24 7 365 access to God the father all places at any time you can go to God the father the capital B backup.

[32 : 35] He's everything you need for life and godliness happiness. And what comes with that is fullness of joy.

Ask and you will receive. Now Jesus isn't saying like ask for a million dollars and you will receive it and then you will be really joyful. That's worldly. Jesus is when he says in my name he's talking about God for my name for my kingdom for the glory of God.

And so when we ask things in the name of Jesus we are thinking like oh God would you bear lasting fruit in me oh God would you empower me by your spirit so that I can give effective witness to Jesus.

You're wanting to please Jesus to please God. That's what you're praying for. And he's a giver of that.

He's got deep pockets. Your father in heaven well there is good news here. There's this old word it's the word backslider.

[33 : 59] And it's the idea of a Christian who's making progress slips and falls and then slides backwards. Jenny and I were at a football game this past Friday and there is this grass lawn and it was a little wet and it was on a hill looking over the football field.

And Jenny and I managed our way up on the top of the hill and then there's these teenagers like oh so and so. And they're running to meet each other and this girl totally slips falls on her back and then slides backslidden.

The world is a slippery place. It's easy to slide. It's easy to become dull. It's easy to become ashamed of Jesus.

It's easy to enter in a season where you're not bearing fruit. But you know what? You are loved.

In verse 27, for the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God, the proof that you're loved by God the Father is that at some point you were like, I believe Jesus.

[35 : 30] I believe that you came from God and you came from me. If you were to go to your Father and ask because he loves you, you can go with confidence.

Ask him to help you. To go from backslidden to fruit bearing. to bearing witness about things of this world that are passing away, to bearing witness to the salvation that's found in Jesus alone.

You've got capital B backup, Christian. And if you are facing a situation where you have to confront somebody and speak the truth and love but you're afraid but you know what pleases Jesus, call in the backup.

If you want to share the gospel with someone in your family but you're afraid that they're going to disown you for the rest of your life, call in backup. And then call in other people to call in backup for you.

Because when you are in a group of people and you're locked arms together in prayer to God while you are all experiencing the current of the world that that is actually a good place to be.

[37 : 02] The third reason why you can take heart is if we've got capital B backup. The fourth reason is the reason Jesus gives in 1633.

Take heart for you have for I have overcome the world. Again, this is at the end of the farewell discourse.

Jesus is wrapping up this kind of speech he's giving to his disciples. He's preparing them for his departure and he's saying bear fruit, bear witness, you're going to be hated but take heart, I've overcome the world.

When Jesus is getting his getting at in verse 33 is a tension, a normal tension for every Christian. Normal. Normal. And it's this.

In the world you will have tribulation. Now, Jesus could have been talking about kind of like the challenges, the hardship, the difficulties of living in a creation subjected to frustration.

[38:16] It's the hardships everybody faces because whether they're Christians or non-Christians, it's just part of living life in a fallen world. But that's not what he's talking about. Because contextually, the world he's talking about is sinful humanity and organized rebellion against God.

And he's been telling them, you're going to be hated. And so what he's saying is expect hardship from the world because you're being faithful to Jesus.

Expect it. but that's only part of the tension. The other part of the tension is peace and joy.

Jesus says, I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. He's talking about a simultaneous experience where from the world we're experiencing heat but because we're in Jesus we're experiencing peace.

It's normal. That's the way we live. That's part of life on this side of glory. It's attention.

[39:33] When we are abiding in Jesus we are bearing the fruit of the spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience and we are being hated by the world.

for his name's sake. The peace that Jesus is talking about is an experiential peace. It's a settled confidence that what matters most is pleasing to Jesus.

It's a joy that is forward aimed, a confidence. It's also known as hope. When you have joy and hope and peace in Jesus that things are, he settled everything between me and God.

And I just want to please him above all else. That that posture of heart is a peaceful posture of heart. And it doesn't mean there's not going to be hardship around you.

peace. Jesus is preparing us for both. This peace is a peace in knowing that Jesus' death and resurrection has already won the victory over the world, over sinful humanity and organized rebellion against God.

[40:55] He has cast down the devil and therefore he has also won the victory over the world. His grace poured out at the cross is an unstoppable release of power and life that will go for all time.

It's going to extend and radically change things, culminating in his coming and his judging and his recreating heaven and earth, giving us new resurrected bodies for those who believe.

That's the power of the cross. And so now it's as good as done. Did you know that every person that has ever lived will bow his or her knee before Jesus and confess him as Lord?

Did you know that? Some of us are going to be like, oh yeah! Other of us will confess in spite and in horror.

But Jesus has accomplished the victory through his death and his resurrection. It's just a matter of time before he comes back and he brings it to fruition.

[42:33] You know what that does? That gives you courage. It's a tender courage.

Because anybody that opposes us, our battle is not against flesh and blood. We've been united with Christ in his death and resurrection the moment we believed and therefore we too share in his victory over the world.

So the world's threats and the world's temptations, it's all passing away brothers and sisters. It's all passing away. four reasons.

You know the truth plainly of the gospel and its power to transform. You have the joy and the resurrection.

You have the capital P backup of God the Father 24-7 365 and you have the victory that Jesus accomplished because you've been united to him.

[43:44] Do you know what all this means? Take heart. Be faithful. Be bold. Don't shrink back.

Press on. Jesus purposefully ends the farewell discourse on an encouraging note because he knows he's calling us to live counter-culturally, to stand against the current of the world, world.

He says, take heart. I have overcome the world. Let me pray. Lord Jesus, we are so grateful that your death and resurrection has set us on solid ground in which we can stand against the world and the devil, even say no to our own sinful hearts.

God, we would ask that you would use these reasons in order to compel us to witness. Compel us to say hard things, loving things, but hard things to the people around us.

That we would make much of you, Lord Jesus. We would magnify you among all people. may may would come to know you, Lord Jesus, and give you the praise due your name.

[45:12] It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.