

Persecution: Peace in the Midst of Hardship

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[0 : 00] You're listening to the online sermon podcast ministry of the First Baptist Church of Jackson, Kentucky. Hi, my name is Jonathan Clemens and I'm the pastor of the First Baptist Church.

We've put this sermon archive together and we pray that it will be a blessing to the saints and edifying to those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as that it would be a light to those in our community who have questions about the gospel.

One of the wonderful benefits of the internet is that it can give us so much access to good quality Bible teaching materials.

But I want to encourage you not to use the internet as a crutch or a substitute for obedience to Jesus. It's so important that each and every one of you are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation and growing in spiritual maturity and in fruitfulness before the Lord.

And that requires obedience to His command to assemble and be a part of a local congregation. God calls each of us to go to church, but not just go to church, be a part of a church.

[1 : 05] And I want to encourage you, if you're not a member of a church, to find that biblical church. One that preaches and teaches the Lord Jesus Christ and one that will embrace you as an important part of the congregation.

And be active and involved. You can never use online materials to substitute obedience. Well, our sermon will follow shortly.

I pray that this ministry will be a blessing to you. And we would love to hear from you. Feel free to reach out to us over our Facebook page. You can contact us on our church website.

And of course, you're always welcome to join us on a Sunday morning. You'll find us at 1105 Main Street in Jackson, Kentucky. That's at the corner of Main Street and Broadway down by the police station and City Hall.

We gather at 1045 in the morning and we would love to see you. Have a wonderful day. God bless. God bless. John 16.

[2 : 17] We'll look at the full chapter today. And then what comes up next is John 17, which is the high priestly prayer of Jesus. And then we'll see His betrayal, His false trying, His crucifixion, His resurrection.

That's the path that we're on in this gospel. And Jesus is finishing His discourse with them. We started this back several chapters ago. And He was preparing His disciples.

These are the last words, or some of the last words, they're going to hear from Jesus before His betrayal. They're important words for them to consider. And we're going to see that today.

And He's speaking to them about the reality of persecution. This will be a continuance of what we have discussed in the past. And we're going to see here the importance of holding to Jesus during persecution and hardship.

We have received some promises of peace from Jesus during persecution. Of course, this dialogue, it started back in John 14.

- [3 : 25] In John 14.27, Jesus told His disciples this. He says, Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.
- Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come unto you. If you love Me, you will rejoice.
- Because I said, I go unto the Father. For the Father is greater than I. Why? Jesus tells His disciples right at the outset that He's going to leave them with peace.
- They're going to be left with peace. But here's the thing. It's not peace as the world would give them. It's a heavenly peace. It's a different peace.
- It's a peace that passes understanding. If you ask your worldly neighbors how to make peace, they're going to talk about compromise. I'm not a huge fan of compromise.
- [4 : 22] Perhaps in limited circumstance it can be useful. But more times than not, when compromise takes place, you have two sinners being stubborn, fighting with each other, and they both compromise to get a little of the sinful thing that they each want.
- The world has peace through compromise, or the world simply has peace through edge of the sword. We'll scare them into leaving us alone, or we'll beat them down into subjection so they'll leave us alone.
- That is how the world pursues peace. Jesus looked at Pontius Pilate and He said to him, My kingdom is not of this world. If it were of this world, my servants would fight.
- And of course we understand the Scripture is clear. Jesus' kingdom is in the world right now. It's being worked out in the world right now. Jesus said it's like that mustard seed that gets planted.
- It's a tiny seed, but then it grows to be this massive tree. He wasn't telling Pilate that there's no outworking of the kingdom in the real world. What Jesus was telling Pilate was that His kingdom was not of the world by the means of the world.
- [5 : 28] The Romans sent their legions forth and battered and beat people and slaughtered them and made them their subjects. Jesus looked at Pilate and He said, Not so with My kingdom.
- My kingdom is not of this world in the sense of the means of this world. Friends, the kingdom of Jesus is around us. We oftentimes think of it as the church.
- And the church is definitely a part of the kingdom. But the kingdom of Jesus is expressed through the people of God as we live in this world. You should have an expression of God's kingdom in your home.
- You should have an expression of God's kingdom in whatever business or line of work that you're in. We should be visible in this world because we're expressing the lordship and love of Jesus Christ around us.
- So the kingdom of God is the church, but it's a little bit bigger than the church. It's the effect of the church and the world. Of course, Jesus says, I bring you peace, but it's not peace after this world.
- [6 : 31] It's going to be a heavenly peace. We'll see today it's a peace that we can have in the midst of outright tribulation. Jesus also told those same disciples back in John chapter 14, 26.
- He said this, He said, But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.
- It's the promise of the Holy Spirit given to these disciples that walked with Jesus. One of the ministries of the Comforter would be giving them recall, giving them memory.

It's supernatural help in remembering the lessons of Jesus, the teachings of Jesus, the signs of Jesus, the ministry of Jesus. This would be part of the apostolic ministry, this exact, accurate, inspired recall of the words Jesus had given.

They were after all the ones that God used to write the New Testament, them and their close associates. The Spirit gave them this inspired ability. Now for us, we're not apostles, are we?

[7 : 39] We didn't walk with Jesus, did we? But the Spirit has a similar ministry for us. In that He ministers to us through the testimony of the apostles.

He ministers to us through the Scriptures. If you will but pray and seek the Lord and read the Bible and fill your heart with His Word, you can have conversations with God, if you will.

You'll bring your problem to God in prayer and He'll bring the Scripture to mind that you need to know. The Spirit speaks to us through the Word of God, through the recall of the truth that we have internalized and learned.

This is why it's important for us to study the Scriptures throughout the week. You might or might not be able to flip to the Bible and find the answer you're looking for. But if you hide the Word of God in your heart, the Spirit of God will bring that to you in your time of need.

He ministers to us. If you're ever in a difficult circumstance where you must share the Gospel or speak up, the Spirit will give you the help and the aid and the resolve from the Scriptures.

[8 : 44] We only need to walk with Christ to experience this blessing. Of course, these promises are given to the disciples. And He warns them, of course, we saw this in John 15, of imminent persecution.

And of course, we looked at the definition of the act of persecution. It's very formal. But the act or practice of persecuting is the infliction of pain, punishment, or death upon others unjustly, particularly for adhering to a religious creed or mode of worship, either by way of penalty or compelling them to renounce their principles.

That's the textbook definition of persecution. It's the idea that the world would look at Christians and say, no, you can't do what God has called you to do.

We're going to hinder you. Or we don't like you, so we're going to silence you or shut you down or kill you or just get rid of you. That's the idea of persecution. And there are many degrees of persecution that can be seen in the world.

At its worst, it involves torture and death. It happens around the world even today. But there are varying degrees of trying to put down Christians, to silence Christians.

[10 : 02] And they're at work in the world today. Of course, last week, by way of caution, we realized that Christians can just be obnoxious people.

It can happen. And if you say, I've never met an obnoxious Christian in my life, friend, you might be that obnoxious Christian. I had a college professor who explained it this way.

He says, if you don't know who I'm talking about right now, he says, you're that guy. But Christians can be obnoxious. Don't go get up on your rooftop with your PA system at 4 a.m. in the morning and start preaching the gospel.

And when the police come pull you down and put you in the back of the cruiser, say, I'm being persecuted. That's not persecution. You're being ungodly and unwise in your behavior.

Persecution comes when a Christian is seeking to simply obey God in a loving way. When the Christian simply says, the Bible says it, I'm going to follow it.

[11 : 12] The Bible says, share the gospel. I'm going to share the gospel. They might not like it. But you're doing what Jesus said in a loving and thoughtful way. That will invite persecution into your life.

And persecution will come to believers. We saw that we would be persecuted for merely believing in Christ.

And it's really difficult to merely be a Christian, isn't it? Right? To do what the Bible says. To be faithful in your home and in your family and in your work and in the community.

To be diligent in your sanctification. To be in the Word. To just merely be a Christian. To be just merely one who believes in the gospel and seeks to live out those principles.

But if you seek to just merely be a Christian. People won't like it. People will persecute you. I used an example of right out of high school working at that chicken slaughterhouse.

[12 : 19] Me and my Christian friend were not popular because we worked. Just merely being Christians. Doing what the Bible said which was working. Brought about hardship.

But we're not called to be mere Christians, are we? We're not called just to live. We're called to go out. We're called to engage. We're called to share.

So if the fact that we merely exist is going to agitate some people. What's going to happen when we start doing what we're supposed to and sharing the gospel with them? That will certainly invite more opposition.

Jesus warned the disciples in chapter 15 verse 18. He said, if the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. He says, if the world hates you, you know that it hated me first.

He said in verse 21, but all these things they will do unto you for my name's sake. Because they know not him that sent me. The persecutions will come if we're seeking to live a godly, faithful life.

[13 : 26] Again, not because we're being obnoxious. The persecutions will come purely and solely because of Jesus. That's all that it will take. Because we love Jesus, because we serve Jesus, that will invite persecution.

Because of the name we confess. The Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus went on to tell the disciples in verse 26 of chapter 15 this.

He said, but when the Comforter is come, whom I send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness of me, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

There are two witnesses here that Jesus refers to as being in the world. The church, that is the disciples, and the Spirit that ministers through the Word.

Those are the witnesses here. And of course, in biblical thinking, before a person can be found guilty, before a truth can be established, you have to have two or three what? Witnesses.

[14 : 32] The church and the Holy Spirit working together. And you say, well, how exactly does that work? Well, just an example, when we share the Gospel. When we share the Gospel, you have a person of the church sharing the Gospel, but what's happening behind the scenes?

What's happening in the spiritual realm? The Holy Spirit is at work. Convicting them of sin. The Holy Spirit is always at work in the spiritual realm.

So as we minister, we're not ministering alone, as Jesus makes clear. There is a Comforter there. There is one who is at work there. The Holy Spirit who testifies of Jesus.

So that brings us to our passage today. John chapter 16, verses 1 through 33. Today we will see that in Christ we may have peace, but in this world we will have tribulation.

In Christ we may have peace, but in this world we will have tribulation. It's a guarantee. John chapter 16, verses 1 through 33.

[15 : 49] These things I have spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues.

Yea, the time cometh that whoso killeth you will think ye doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me.

But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I have told you them. And these things I have said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

But now I go my way to him that hath sent me. And none of you asketh me, whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.

[16 : 52] But if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he has come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Of sin, because they believe not on me. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father. And ye see me no more. Of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.

For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that he shall speak. And he will show you all the things to come. He shall glorify me, for he hath received of mine, and shall show it unto you.

All things that the Father hath are mine. Therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and show it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me. And again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

[18 : 02] Then said some of the disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us? A little while, and ye shall not see me. And again, a little while, and ye shall see me.

And because I go to the Father. And they said therefore, What is this that he saith? A little while. We cannot tell what he saith. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him.

And said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of what I said? A little while, and ye shall not see me. And again, a little while, and ye shall see me. Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, But the world shall rejoice.

And ye shall be sorrowful, But your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in travail, Hath sorrow, because her hour is come.

But as soon as she is delivered of the child, She remembereth no more the anguish, For the joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow, But I will see you again, And your heart shall rejoice, And your joy no man taketh from you.

[19 : 18] And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He will give it to you. Hitherto ye ask nothing in my name, Ask and ye shall receive, That your joy may be full.

These things I have spoken unto you in Proverbs, But the time cometh, When I shall no more speak to you in Proverbs, But I shall show you plainly of the Father. And that day ye shall ask in my name, And I say not unto you, That I will pray to the Father for you.

For the Father himself loveth you, Because ye have loved me, And believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, And I am come into the world again.

I leave the world, And go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, And speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, And needest not that any man should ask thee.

By this we believe that thou camest from God. And Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, Yea, is now come, That ye shall be scattered, Every man to his own, And leave me alone.

[20 : 41] And yet I am not alone, Because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, That ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

This is the word of the Lord. So Jesus is preparing his disciples for two periods of persecution, If you will.

One, where they are going to see Jesus crucified, And be scattered. But of course he is going to raise from the dead, Isn't he? He is going to visit with them for forty days, Then he is going to ascend into heaven, And then the Holy Spirit, The comforter, The advocate, Will come down, And empower them for the work of the ministry.

But he also prepares them, For the persecution in general, In the future. For the putting out of the synagogues, For the killing of Christians.

The persecution and hardship, That Christians have experienced, Since the ascension of Christ. So today we will see that, In Christ, We may have peace, Though in the world, We will have tribulation.

[21 : 59] Now as we look at such a large passage of Scripture, I think it would be important for us to look, At perhaps the key verse, In this chapter, If not for the previous few chapters.

And if you would please look with me, At verse thirty three, Of chapter sixteen. Jesus is summing up, His message he's just shared with them, Before he goes to the garden.

And this is what he says here in verse thirty three, These things I have spoken unto you, That in me, Ye might have peace. In the world, Ye shall have tribulation, But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

Jesus has overcome the world. And what he's communicating to these disciples is that, Because he has overcome the world, This fallen and sinful and evil world, Even though the world might bring them into tribulation, In hardship, Jesus imparts to them, His peace.

Again, this is a very different understanding of peace. The world's peace is a lack of conflict. Usually gained through some worldly means.

[23 : 26] But the peace that Jesus gives, Is a peace in the midst of tribulation. It is a peace, As Paul would say, That passes all understanding.

This is what Paul wrote, In Philippians four, Six, He said, Be careful, That is worry, For nothing, But in everything, By prayer and supplication, With thanksgiving, Let your requests be made known unto God.

Doesn't that sound a lot like, What Jesus just said to them about prayer, And their prayers being answered? He said, Do not be anxious for anything, Pray. Verse seven, And the God of peace, That's one of God's titles, The God of peace, Which passes all understanding, Shall keep your hearts and minds, Through Jesus Christ.

Jesus gives us a peace, That passes understanding. It's a peace that we can possess, In the midst of hardship, And turmoil.

It's a peace that can experience, Loss and grief, But still exists. Peter talks about joy, In a similar way, And of course, Jesus mentions their joy, Here in chapter 16.

[24 : 41] Peter says this, In 1 Peter 1, 7 through 8, The trial of your faith, That is their experiencing persecution, Being much more precious than gold that perisheth, Though it be tried with fire, Might be found unto praise, And honor, And glory, At the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Whom having not seen, Ye love, In whom, Though ye now see him, Though ye now see him not, Yet believing, Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, And full of glory.

So they're going through persecution, And they're going through hardship, And because of Jesus, Who they love, Though they haven't seen him, They have joy unspeakable. Joy unspeakable, In the midst of persecution.

Joy unspeakable, In the midst of trials, In hardships. Peace that passes understanding, In times of great difficulty. There are times that, Folks will get so worked up, So worked up about things, And might I suggest to you, That if you, Now this is counter intuitive, But if, If you have no inner peace, In your heart, If you have no inner peace, In your life, Perhaps it's because, There is no conflict, With the world.

Think about that. You might have an outward peace, But, Your inner peace is gone. Because there's no tribulation.

[26 : 23] And there's no tribulation, Because you're not resisting the world. You can have, Outward peace. You can have, Outward comfort, And be a mess on the inside.

If you just go along, With whatever society wants. If you speak when they say speak, And you be silent, When they say be silent. But, If you're following Christ, You will have trials, And you will have hardships, But you will have joy unspeakable, And full of glory.

You will have peace, That passes, All understanding. You know, That internal peace, That we all crave, And that joy, And that contentment, That we all look for, And society teaches us, To look for around us, Is actually found, By following Jesus.

And it's found, Through earthly trials, In hardships. And Jesus says, That he speaks, These things unto them. Why does he, Speak these things, Unto them?

Well, He's mentioning, His victory, Isn't he? He's mentioning, His overcoming, Of the world. He tells them this, In verses 22 and 23. He says, And now therefore, Ye have sorrow, But I will see you again, And your heart shall rejoice, And your joy, No man taketh from you.

[27 : 53] Do you hear that? No man will take their joy from them. And in that day, Ye shall ask me nothing, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye ask, In the name of, Ask the Father in my name, He will give it to you.

They're going to see him crucified, And have great sorrow. And then, Because of his resurrection, What are they going to have? Joy, Joy, That no one, Will take from them.

Joy unspeakable. We have joy in Christ, And peace in Christ, That no one, No circumstance, Nothing can ever take from us.

And if you're not experiencing that, And you're not walking in that, That is an issue of faith. Because you're not really believing, What Jesus says. And you're not really believing, The gospel.

If your life is not characterized, By the inner Christian peace, And joy, That comes from knowing Christ. If you're ruled by worry, Fear, And discontent, Friend, That is a sign, Not that you need to be less worrisome, And more content, That is a sign that you lack faith in Christ.

[29 : 01] It's a faith issue, At root. And he tells his disciples, That in me, Ye might have peace.

And he goes on to say, In the world, Ye shall have tribulation. If you like poetry, Or you like music, Or riddles, Or word rhymes, Things like that, There's a grammatical contrast here.

That you can really break down, And look at. He says, In me, Ye might have peace. In the world, Ye shall have tribulation. And each portion of that sentence, Contrasts with the other one.

He says, In me, Is where the peace is. Our peace comes from being in Christ. Now the word, The word in Christ, Or of Christ, Or with Christ, Or by Christ, Or through Christ, Those are, Those are what, What I was told in seminary, Is called rabbit hole words.

You go in the rabbit hole, Through the rabbit hole, Right? The rabbit hole words, Those speak to our union with Christ. If you're in Christ, It means you're in union with Christ.

[30 : 17] If you're saved through Christ, It means you're saved through your union with Christ. You see, When we become Christians, We die to ourselves. The scripture is clear, We're not our own, We're bought with a price, And it was a very precious and costly price, God's only son.

And we belong to God, When we become a Christian. We're in union with God, We become a part of the church, The body of Christ, And what's the church called? It's the bride of Christ.

The scripture lays out marriage, For us as a picture of union. It says, A man shall leave his father and mother, And hold fast to his wife, And the two shall be one flesh.

When a couple gets married, They are in union. They are one. And when we become Christians, We, Along with the church, Are one, In union, With Christ.

And it is in union with Christ. It is in Christ, That God looks at us, And all we have to do is ask for something in His name, As He says right here. We just ask for it in His name.

[31 : 21] Why? Because we're clothed with His righteousness. We're loved, The Father loves us as much as He loves the Son. Why? We're one with Him. We're in union with Him.

God treats us as He would His very only begotten Son. Because of the righteousness of Christ, Given to us through our union with Him. So in Christ, In union with Christ, And this is only what a believer can experience, In union with Christ, We will have peace.

If you're in union with Christ, You will have peace. A life with no joy, A life with no peace, Is not a Christian life. But remember, This is joy unspeakable.

And this is a peace that passes understanding. It's different. And we also understand, That we're complex people, Right? We don't just feel one thing at a time, Do we?

We're complex. We don't just emote and change and emote differently. And for the Christian, You know, We go through times where we weep. We go through times where we mourn.

[32 : 33] But you know deep down what's going on? Is that joy unspeakable? Though we weep and mourn in those times, And it is appropriate to do so. We have the joy of the Lord to warm us like a fire.

And we have the peace that passes all understanding, To wrap ourselves with and comfort us in the storm. You see, We go through hard things as Christians. The scripture encourages us to pray for our authorities.

Why? So we can live godly and peaceable lives. That's a good thing, right? But we shouldn't invite trials. We understand they'll invite themselves in, Won't they? Right?

But when those hardships come, We will still have the joy of the Lord. And the peace that passes understanding. If our faith is strong and in Christ.

Are you growing in your faith with Christ? Are you feeding your faith? You say, Well, how do I feed my faith? Faith is just like you. Quit eating. Quit drinking water.

[33 : 40] And see how well you feel in just a few days. The bread and water of our faith is the Word of God in prayer. Pray and read your Word.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ. Christ will strengthen your faith. Walk with Jesus. Seek Him. Pray. And your faith will grow stronger. And then when the trial comes upon you, You will be able to endure it.

But if you're emaciated and weak and dehydrated, And a hurricane comes upon you,
Good luck enduring that. Good luck enduring that.

We must seek God. We must seek God while it is today. There is always harder when the storm comes. So in Christ we have peace.

In the world we have what? Tribulation. Hardship. Are we all still in the world right now? Right? We are.

[34 : 46] And if we're doing what Jesus has called us to do, We're going to have some tribulation and hardship. Someone might pick up rocks and throw it at you.

Like they did in the Bible. But when you're seeking to live the priorities of the kingdom, Oftentimes that hardship comes in ways that we might not realize. If you're seeking to have a kingdom family, And one of the children decides they're going to follow after the kingdom of darkness.

That's the type of hardship we experience. Jesus will be with us during those hardships. The world, we will have tribulation. In Christ we can have peace.

And of course the great contrast here is also through peace and tribulation. We will experience both if we're Christians. And both at the same time. So as Christians we will experience both peace and trials.

Now I want us to dig into this passage of scripture here. We're going to look at particularly three things in this passage. We'll spend the most time on probably the first one.

[36 : 01] And then the other two we'll look at towards the end. And first what we're going to see is how can we have peace with God. Or why can we have peace with God. That's perhaps the best way to say it.

Why can we have peace with God. Well Jesus lists out a few reasons why we can have peace with God. The first, we can have peace with God because we understand the trials are going to come.

In other words, Jesus warned us about the trials. So we're not surprised so we can have peace with God. We've been warned by Jesus. Second, the Spirit will minister to us.

And alongside of us. Isn't that exciting? The Holy Spirit not only helps you grow in your faith and helps you in hardships. He's there, right there with you, ministering.

We're never alone. The Spirit will minister to us and finally, Christ has ultimate victory. That's why we can have peace in Christ.

[37 : 01] He warns us. It is to be expected. It is a part of our Christian walk. The Spirit will minister to us. And Christ has victory. So first, we can have peace because Jesus has warned us.

Jesus said this, These things I have spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues. Yea, the time cometh that whoso killeth you will think he does God a service.

And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me. They will treat Christians poorly because they don't know the Father.

To put it differently, they don't have the light of God in them. They live and dwell in complete darkness. And the darkness hates the light. And the light is persecuted.

It's fought by the darkness. Why? Because the darkness loves evil. And light reveals evil. And Jesus says we're the light of the world. This is why being a mere Christian gets people's ire up.

[38 : 04] Because when they look at the testimony of the mere Christian, and they are convicted. They're convicted. The darkness hates the light.

These people will persecute God's people, and the light of God is not in them. And Jesus says, I've spoken these things to you, that you should not be offended.

Offended. Of course, we're familiar with the idea of offense. There's a lot of offense in the world today, isn't there? I think everybody's got a chip on their shoulder now, a brand of offense that they subscribe to.

Of course, when you look at the Greek, the word for offense here, it can be translated ensnared, or to be made to stumble. It's the idea of Jesus is communicating.

He's letting us know these things will happen, so we don't get tripped up when they happen. Right? Don't be surprised when they happen.

[39 : 05] Jesus says, count the cost for us to become His disciples. He lets us know the cost of being His disciple. We will be persecuted.

And He warns us so we don't stumble. And you know, what totally defeats the purpose of a snare, or a minefield, if we put it in modern terms, is if you know where it's at.

That ruins the whole thing. I remember as a child, you know, the Chinese finger trap. You ever get stuck in one of those?

I remember as a little boy, being given the Chinese finger trap, and you get trapped, and what do you do? You destroy the trap. Right? Someone's deceived you.

You can't get out of it. You destroy it. Well, that kind of takes all the fun out of it. Right? There's supposed to be that lesson that went along with it. You see, Jesus is revealing to us the snare, one of them, that Satan is going to use to try and trip us up with.

[40 : 09] That's persecution. One of the biggest struggles that Christians have, even in America, which has very mild persecution compared to the rest of the world, is people are afraid of what other people think.

That's a problem. Right? Now, that doesn't mean we should be rude. Right? We can be rude. That's not loving, is it? But people are afraid.

Well, if I share the gospel with them, they might say I'm rude for talking about religion. Fear of man. More concerned about what your neighbor thinks than what God thinks.

More concerned that your neighbor might not like you than for their eternal soul that will perish for all of eternity if they do not trust in Jesus. This is one of Satan's snares is inciting fear in God's people.

And one of the ways he can do that is through persecution. Well, they'll make fun of you. Well, they won't take you seriously. You'll be finished. Done.

[41 : 21] You'll not be able to work or you'll not be able to live. You'll have to leave your community. You'll have to leave your family. You'll be scattered.

You'll be a refugee. Those are the things that Satan uses to try and cause Christians to stumble.

Fear of what unbelievers think or will do if they find out. And you know what?

When persecution comes there's a great winnowing of the church. You find out who's susceptible to the trap of fear and who's committed to Christ.

It has a way of separating the wheat from the chaff. And we're warned here by Jesus that these things are coming. We're warned here that persecution will be a part of the Christian life.

[42 : 25] And that's not meant to scare us. He's not selling us an air filter for our bunker or a kerosene lantern, right? That's not what Jesus is doing. He's warning us because He loves us and wants us to have strong faith when we go through those hardships.

He's not using fear to manipulate as the world does. He doesn't want us to be afraid of the world. He's warning us so that we don't fall prey to Satan's trap of persecution.

Now what are the ways that the world will persecute? Well, back in the previous chapter in verse 19, in verse 19, well, I'm sorry, we need to actually go back to verse 18 on that one.

In verse 18, Jesus simply says, they will hate you. And that's very broad. You know, verse 19, He says that the world loves its own.

That's very broad. And again, verse 20, they will persecute you. Again, very broad. He's speaking in broad generalities because we understand how do people treat people that they hate?

[43 : 51] We could list out all day the nasty things they do to people that they hate. Jesus didn't need to list that out. They will hate us. They will hate the Christians.

They will not love us. They will not come to our defense. We had a school official in a town next door get into a lot of trouble.

It's been in the news. And they're having rallies coming to His defense in public. Why? Jesus said the world loves their own.

They're just as ungodly and worldly. Don't expect that, Christian. If you're mistreated by your family or you're mistreated at work or someone snubs you because you're a Christian or you don't get the invitation or whatever, don't expect anybody to go to a park and throw a fit on your behalf.

Why? The world loves its own. And we are not of the world. The world will hate us. And Jesus says in these broad generalities this truth.

[45 : 04] He said, if the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you. Now specifically, Jesus gets into two specifics in chapter 16.

I like the specifics to look at. He doesn't leave two things up to imagination. Verse 16. This is one of the snares he warns them about.

He said, they shall put you out of the synagogues. That's the first thing he says that they'll do. They'll get kicked out of the synagogues. Now, Scripture doesn't record when this happened.

But Jesus said it was going to happen. So at some time, in that Galilean synagogue up where Peter was from, there was likely a list and his name was crossed right off of it.

You won't be welcome, Jesus says, in the synagogues. They'll put you out of the synagogues. We perhaps don't fully appreciate or understand what this would mean for a Jewish person.

[46 : 24] But, perhaps to put it in modern terms, imagine being banned from the courthouse, the church, and the schools. Right?

The courthouse, the church, and the schools. Jesus says, they'll put you out of the synagogues. That was the epicenter for religious culture.

Just as the temple was the place where the entire nation would go up to worship, a town had a little synagogue in it. There might be a descendant of Levi in there.

He might be reading passages of Scripture and teaching. The little boys, before they would apprentice, would go to Hebrew school there. It's where weddings would take place. Funerals would take place.

It was the epicenter of Jewish culture. And he said, they're going to put you out of the synagogues. He's explaining to them that the persecution they will experience, particularly here, is a religious persecution.

[47 : 26] There will be the falsely religious who will persecute God's people. Now, when we read the book of Acts, what we see is there's this outworking of the Jews are oftentimes the instigators.

Early on in the book of Acts, it's the Jewish authorities just as they persecuted Jesus, they persecute the Christians. Then they start following Christians to other cities or going to the Gentiles and throwing fits and trying to get them persecuted.

We understand that it grew and eventually non-Jewish people, non-Jewish religious people, were persecuting Christians. But it never ceases to amaze me that persecution oftentimes takes on a religious nature.

A self-righteous nature. Jesus goes on to say that whosoever will kill you, that's the second specific thing He mentions, it's all the way persecution, right?

It is everything going from getting kicked out of the synagogue all the way up to death. and all the beatings and everything in between. That is a part of it. He says they will think they're doing God a favor.

[48 : 39] He says that they think that they're doing a good thing. It is a self-righteous, a self-righteous, a self-righteous persecution. And if you look at world history throughout the ages and you find great persecutions or you find great evils, oftentimes the person doing it is very self-righteous and feels very justified.

You say, how in the world could Germany do what it did during World War II? Look at what they said. Look at what they said about the Jews in their midst.

They felt righteous about what they did. They felt like they were being good people by doing that. Some of the greatest atrocities in the world are committed by people who feel like victims trying to get justice.

Some of the greatest atrocities come from those types of individuals. And here we see early on in the church it would start with the Pharisees. We just want God's name to be glorified. These Christians they're heretics.

We must kill them as we would a heretic. We're doing God a favor. That self-righteous persecution still exists even today. Christians are blamed.

[49 : 56] Christians are persecuted. And there's a self-righteous attitude behind that. What types of persecutions have saints experienced in the past?

Well there's really no limit but here's just a few. Hebrews 11.36 The hall of faith and others had trial of cruel mockings they're mocked and scourgings beaten yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment and they were stoned and they were sawn asunder that's a torturous death they were tempted that is compelled to fall they were slain with sword they wandered about in sheepskins in goatskins being destitute afflicted tormented of whom this world was not worthy they wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and in caves of the earth that's what persecution looks like you say well that's the Old Testament version what's the New Testament look like?

ok well it's pretty much the same thing 2 Corinthians 11 23-30 Paul says this I speak as a fool I am more in my labors more abundant in my stripes above measure in prisons more frequently in deaths often from the Jews 5 times I received 40 stripes minus 1 and these are lashes with that instrument known as the cat of 9 tails more than likely lashes repeated over and over again being reduced to a shredded pulp 5 times I received 40 stripes minus 1 and 3 times was beaten with rods once I was stoned 3 times I was shipwrecked a night and a day I have been in the deep you ever been at drift at sea for a night and a day in journeys often in perils of waters in perils of robbers in perils of my own countrymen in perils of the Gentiles in perils of the city in perils of the wilderness in perils of the sea in perils among false brethren in perils and toil in sleeplessness often in hunger and thirst in fastings often in cold and nakedness besides these things what comes upon me daily of my concern for all the churches who is weak and I am not weak who is made to stumble and I do not burn with indignation

Paul I like how he kind of listed all those horrendous things he was through and he's like and my concern for the churches this is calling his vocation you know Christians will go through trials and hardship and at the end of the day we still have to balance a checkbook at the end of the day the dishes are still waiting at home at the end of the day we still have to fulfill our responsibilities persecution hardship so what Christians face and Jesus says he speaks to them so that they will not stumble he warns them and of course in this we can see the special relationship Jesus had just the very fact that Jesus would tell them and us through the scriptures of these things points to the special relationship Jesus has with us Amos 3.7 says this surely the Lord God will do nothing but he reveal his secret unto his servant the prophets

Amos of course thinking of the special relationship the prophets had as God did things in the world he would tell them he would tell them of the things he was doing and here Jesus is telling his disciples of the things to come verse 25 he says these things I have spoken unto you in Proverbs but the time cometh when I shall speak no more to you in Proverbs but I will show it to you plainly of the Father he's speaking to them clearly in ways they can understand his disciples said unto him verse 29 lo now speakest thou plainly and in no Proverbs now we are sure that thou knowest all things and needest not that any man should ask thee and by this we believe that thou camest forth from God see the special relationship there of sharing Jesus doesn't send you through this with ignorance and a lack of knowledge he doesn't leave you alone or forsake you he speaks to you you need only to look in the scripture the spirit will fellowship with you and warm you with joy and peace that can only come from God we see them saddened in verse 6

[55 : 05] Jesus acknowledges it Jesus looks at them and says this but because I said to you these things unto you sorrow hath filled your heart we see a genuine love and a genuine affection between Jesus and his disciples Jesus has a genuine love for us also and we see that Jesus intends to comfort them verse 7 through the sending of the Holy Spirit he says nevertheless I tell you the truth it is expedient for you that I go away and if I go away the comforter if I go away not the comforter shall not come unto you but if I depart I will send him unto you Jesus makes abundant provision he warns them he doesn't want them to be ensnared he doesn't want them to be offended caught off guard surprised by what happens to people who follow Jesus and by extension he says the same things to us this morning if you listen to the ears of faith Jesus is warning you of persecutions and he is promising to be with you through them no matter what this brings us to our second point we'll consider we can have peace because the spirit will minister both in us and with us it's the second reason we can have peace it is a daunting task to do ministry ministry

I know some preachers that think that it's their job to persuade people to do things that they don't want to do you ever meet someone like that I think that's the role of ministry and preaching that's not it's proclaiming the gospel it's proclaiming what God has done and when I'm here I have this confidence and I've seen God do it so much I share and the spirit takes care of the rest that's it that's it it's just like when you read the bible you read the words and who takes care of the rest the spirit when you share the gospel with your friends and neighbors you might not feel like it's done anything but you share and God does the rest you just do what's right you just say what's right and don't worry about it God does the rest he will win the people over he will bring the people in we don't have to manipulate them sell them twist their arm

God does the rest now one of the things the spirit does is what we can see in verse 8 Jesus says this and he has come he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment this is that proactive ministry of the Holy Spirit I think we have enough football fans in here to know that there's an offensive line and a defensive line right your guys that are the fastest runners and the best throwers they're going to have them on the offensive team and your big heavy slow guys that just aren't going to be moved you want them on your defensive team right the Holy Spirit has two functions the offensive function to go into the world and the defensive function to protect the church this is his offensive function this is the Holy Spirit testifying in the world he convicts the world of sin verse 9 of sin because they believe not on me that is one of the Spirit's functions as we seek to glorify God and testify of him the Spirit is going to convince them or convict them that they don't believe on Jesus they're going to hear the gospel and they're going to realize

I've not trusted in Jesus so what do they do with it well they reject it embrace it or think about it and God works on their heart right but we share and he does the convincing he convinces them he convicts them because they believe not on me he comes to convict the world of righteousness Jesus says because I go unto my father and you see me no more the Holy Spirit is an expert at challenging false righteousness isn't he he can overturn the most stubborn of self-righteousness in the human heart as a matter of fact if you're a child of God you will have experienced this at points in your own life that old saying pride comes before the fall God will discipline us and he will correct us and he will root out self-righteousness why because there is only righteousness for us that comes through Christ it's Jesus or nothing and Jesus where's he gone he's in heaven and the spirit convicts the world of righteousness of their lack of righteousness and the fact that they don't believe and need the righteousness of the

Lord Jesus Christ and the spirit also convicts the world of judgment judgment now now if I just stop there in my reading of it I would say because Jesus is going to come back and judge them and the spirit does convict them of a coming judgment although I think most people sense that deep down already what the spirit is doing is convicting people and convincing people of a specific type of judgment on a specific person verse 11 of judgment because the prince of this world is judged friends Satan is already judged Satan is already defeated Satan has already been mortally stricken and it's his great shame and embarrassment that the gospel is proclaimed and people hear about his defeat now he's still a dangerous enemy but his quest to completely destroy and conquer the image of God has ultimately failed in

[61 : 30] Jesus Christ the perfect man this is what Paul says in Colossians 2 8-15 he said beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ for in him dwell all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and ye are complete in him which is the head of all principality and power in whom ye also are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ buried with him in baptism wherein also ye are risen with him through faith in the operation of God who raised him from the dead and you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh he hath quickened together with him having forgiven you all trespasses blotting out the handwritten ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us and took them out of the way nailing it to the cross and having spoiled principalities and powers he made a show of them opening triumphing over them in it in the cross our sins were nailed to the cross and Jesus triumphed over the prince of this world he triumphed over principalities and powers and made a show of them openly

I like how one translation puts it he put them to open shame do you ever feel embarrassed do you ever feel really embarrassed there's a certain point where embarrassment crosses a line to just shame you don't even want to look at yourself in the mirror Satan and the powers of darkness are put to open shame by the gospel of Jesus Christ Satan is a defeated foe he couldn't stop Jesus Jesus has done exactly what the gospel promised he would do in bringing his people salvation the ruler of this world is judged we say it the spirit persuades people of it Jesus has won we'll also see that defensive nature of the Holy Spirit that's the Holy Spirit out in the world ministering but he ministers to God's people verse 12

I have yet many things to say unto you but you cannot hear them now how be it when he the spirit of truth has come he will guide you into the truth the spirit has a teaching and guiding role for believers now specifically we need to remember the context these are apostles right these are the people that God is going to use to write the bible we are not apostles if you start writing a bible I'm very concerned for your soul right how does this apply to us today well faith comes by hearing hearing by the word of Christ the testimony of Christ and the apostles those hand picked representatives by God are left to us in the scriptures the spirit works in concert with the word leading us and guiding us into truth this is the truth of God's word don't follow bubbly emotions don't listen to voices in your head follow

God's word follow the truth of God as revealed in scripture that is how the spirit of God leads people he leads them through the word of God he brings it to our remembrance he speaks to the spirit of truth not the spirit of subjective human experience he guides us into truth and he has a specific ministry in this in the church he shall not speak of himself verse 13 the second half Jesus says but so whatsoever he shall hear that he will speak and he will show you things to come just as Jesus came and his goal was to preach the message the father gave to him and glorify the father the holy spirit has come and his goal is to preach the message that Jesus has given him and glorify the son people say why why is the holy spirit the most misunderstood member of the trinity why isn't he talked about as much well

Jesus came and made much of the father and not of himself and the spirit has come making much of Jesus and not of himself just as Jesus wasn't ostentatious and showing off trying to impress people neither does the holy spirit do that his workings are secret his workings are meant to glorify Jesus if someone claims to be led of the spirit but Jesus is not glorified that is not the spirit of Christ that is leading them the spirit's goal is to glorify Jesus he says verse 14 he shall glorify me for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you all things that the father hath are mine therefore I said he shall take of mine and show it to you see the ministry of the spirit Jesus wins it for us and he is in heaven and the spirit takes and applies the spirit is the one who caused us to be born again the spirit is the one who causes us to understand the gospel and be justified the spirit is the one who walks us out and causes us to grow in our sanctification the spirit is the one who equips us for the ministry the spirit is the one who gives us the strength and the wisdom that we need to do what

[67 : 29] God has called us to do the spirit is the one who applies the riches that Christ has won for us he is ministering to us he's fighting alongside of us and he's ministering to us he's keeping us strong we can have peace in the midst of persecution hardship and troubles because we're not in this alone we have resources beyond measure beyond understanding through the spirit working in our hearts and the spirit is working in the hearts of others around us also we simply need to trust and obey it's that simple if you want to see the world changed if you want to see the kingdom of God expand if you want to see people come to know Christ just trust and obey you say surely that will never work all those books that the church growth experts publish and send us in the mail and their blogs and their articles and their videos they all say we need a special formula and look at the state their churches are in right now people are saying all the church in

America is collapsing probably not the church that men have made is collapsing the church of Jesus Christ will overcome the gates of hell the church of Jesus Christ will persevere it is that simple as trusting and obeying Jesus but to worldly people that's boring and that certainly would never work but it was through trusting and obeying Christ that the apostles gave us the New Testament and the gospel message went forth and it is through those who have trusted and obeyed him throughout the ages that you and I personally know the gospel think about that we we don't we don't know the lineage but there is a lineage of people telling the truth that goes all the way back to Jesus with the gospel think about that and you're a part of that if you're trusting in

Christ you're a child of God finally we can have peace and joy because Jesus has overcome Jesus tells them verily verily verse 20 I say unto you that ye shall weep and lament but the world shall rejoice and you shall be sorrowful but your sorrow shall be turned into joy he goes on to say a woman when she is in travail hath sorrow because her hour is come but as soon as she has delivered the child she remembers no more the anguish for the joy that the man is born into the world now therefore ye have sorrow but I will see you again and your hearts shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you

Jesus has overcome they were in the travails of childbirth metaphorically speaking when Jesus was in the tomb but Jesus came out of that tomb didn't he he didn't stay in the tomb he got up and walked away he visited with them for forty days he ascended into heaven he sent the spirit and their joy no man ever took away he says this I have overcome the world be of good cheer we will face many persecutions many hardships many difficulties in this life if we are faithful and follow Jesus but we have promise of peace and we have a promise of a joy that can never be taken and that's found in Christ in the world we will have hardship but in

Christ we might have peace let's go to him and