

I Have Overcome The World

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[0 : 00] Would you turn with me to the Gospel of John, chapter 16, verses 25 through 33. That's where we'll pick up our sermon series.

John, chapter 16, verses 25 through 33. That's page 849 in the Pew Bible, if you want to follow along there. Well, as we turn there to John 16, let me pray for us.

Father, we ask you this morning for your favor as we come to your word. God, we know that in our own strength, in our own intellect, in our own wisdom, God, we can't put all the pieces together.

So we need your help now, and we need your spirit to come. Give us ears to hear, eyes to see, hearts to receive what you are telling us about yourself, about your Son, Father, and about your saving purposes in the world.

We pray all this in Christ's name. Amen. All right, let me read John 16, 25 through 33 for us. Jesus says this, I have said these things to you in figures of speech.

[1 : 08] 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 I believe that I came from God.

I've come from the Father, and I've come into the world, and now I'm leaving the world and going to the Father. His disciples said, Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative 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 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.

So, when a speaker, or when a teacher gets up and says, In conclusion, at the end of a lengthy lecture or lesson, what do you expect to hear next? Now you might be thinking to yourself, Wow, the preacher's done already, he just said in conclusion, this is going to be a short sermon, all right.

[2 : 42] No, well, when the speaker gets up and says, In conclusion, usually you're expecting some sort of powerful summary, some sort of main point of everything that's come before. Here comes the big takeaway, the parting shot.

And what we have before us, in verses 25 through 33 of John 16, are Jesus' concluding remarks, to what we've come to call his farewell discourse.

Remember, these last few chapters of John, are the words that Jesus spoke to his disciples in the upper room, right before his arrest and crucifixion. And these are his sort of concluding, summarizing remarks.

Now, what makes us think that, what makes us think that these are Jesus' concluding remarks? Well, we see twice in this passage that Jesus says, I've said these things to you. And these things, as he puts it there, probably refer to the whole of chapters 14 through 16.

This is all of what he's been saying. I've been saying all these things to you. And at the heart of this conclusion, in verse 28, Jesus gives us a summary of his mission.

[3 : 45] Verse 28 says, I came from the Father, and have come into the world, and now I'm leaving the world, and going to the Father. Now, we've seen this kind of language often in John's Gospel, most recently at the beginning of chapter 13.

But what Jesus really wants to drive home, in this conclusion, isn't just what his mission is, but what it achieves.

Notice in verse 25, Jesus says, the hour's coming. And in verse 26, in that day, and then again in verse 32, the hour's coming, the day, the hour. This is how Jesus, throughout John's Gospel, has referred to the climax of his earthly mission.

The great event, that's going to change history forever. Something big is coming, and now it's here. The hour I've talked about, Jesus says, the day you've been waiting for, all that my mission is meant to achieve, it's all impinging right now, right here.

So what is it? What does it all achieve? What benefits come to us, as a result of Jesus' mission? What has the finished work of Christ, actually accomplished?

[4 : 56] What reality has this new day brought about? You know, I wonder if many of us, whether you're new to Christianity, or whether you've been a Christian for a long time, I wonder if many of us don't really grasp the fullness of what Christ has achieved.

Now, if you're new to Christianity, or if you're here sort of exploring spiritual things, we're really glad you came out this morning. And if you've been around Christianity for a long time, we're glad you're here too.

But you know, could it be that all of us need Jesus once again to show us what he's actually achieved for us through his death and resurrection? What if we're only getting like 10 or 20 or 30 percent of it?

I mean, wouldn't that be a tragedy to go through life only seeing part of the picture? What if the reason Christianity hasn't really worked for you, again, whether you're totally new to the faith, or whether you've been in the faith for a long time, is because you're trying to ride the bicycle with only one pedal.

Right? It doesn't seem like a very smooth ride when you're just sort of going like this. Maybe we're missing something. So let's look again. Let's hear how Jesus brings his discourse to a conclusion.

[6 : 16] And what we see is that the finished work of Christ brings about at least the things that Jesus mentions here. He mentions three things. Three massive benefits that flow to us through his finished work.

And the first one we see in verse 25. And it is this. Jesus says, the first thing that my finished work is going to bring to you is at last clear knowledge of God the Father.

Let me read verse 25. Jesus says, 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.

So up to this point, Jesus has been trying to teach the disciples using what he calls figures of speech. Metaphors, stories, parables, hyperbole. And at times, it's all seemed a little enigmatic.

It seemed a little cryptic at times. Figures of speech. You see, Jesus knew that his disciples wouldn't really understand all that he had to tell them until his hour had come.

[7 : 22] And again, in John's gospel, Jesus' hour is the hour of the cross and the resurrection. But once Jesus accomplishes that work, the figures of speech will finally become clear.

And Jesus himself will then be able to speak to them plainly about the Father. We read in the book of Acts that after his resurrection, Jesus spent 40 days with the apostles and with those early disciples teaching them about the kingdom of God.

And one of those times, one of the first happened on the road to Emmaus. You remember that story from Luke 24 when Jesus met two downcast disciples who were heading out of Jerusalem. They thought that Jesus was the Christ, but then they had watched him get crucified and who had ever heard of a crucified Messiah?

So they were discouraged and downcast. But Jesus, the risen Jesus, meets these men and walks with them. And they don't recognize him at first. And as they're walking along and they share with him what they've been thinking and what they've been feeling, the risen Jesus says to them, don't you see, was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer and then to enter into his glory?

And then the gospel of Luke says, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus began to interpret to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. In other words, after his death and resurrection, Jesus starts teaching them plainly about the Father and about the Father's plan and how it has all been achieved through his own death and resurrection.

[8 : 53] Because now that he had died and risen again, the full knowledge of God could be had. So let me put this another way. You and I can't really have a clear knowledge of God apart from the cross.

Jesus could have tried to tell them. In fact, at times he did try to tell them. But until the disciples saw the cross and met the resurrected Jesus, only then did it all make sense. Only then could Jesus' plain words finally hit home.

And it's the same for us. You and I can't really have a knowledge of God apart from the cross of Christ. Do you want to know the wisdom of God?

Do you want to know the mercy of God? Do you want to see and understand the justice of God? Do you want to grasp the goodness of God?

Then friends, you have to look at the cross. John Stott, the 20th century English pastor and writer, once said, and I'm paraphrasing here, he said, you know, in a world of so much suffering, he said, I wouldn't even believe in the existence of God if it weren't for the cross.

[10 : 15] But in light of the cross, in light of the fact that God enters into human suffering and doesn't remain distant or uninvolved or unaffected by the world's suffering, in light of the cross, John Stott says, now I can actually believe in a God at all because we see that God is there and that he is merciful and that he is just and that he is wise and that he is good.

The Old Testament is filled with prophets through whom God spoke and through whom God showed us what he was like. But the crucified and risen Jesus is the true and better and best prophet who is able through his own person and work to speak to us plainly and openly and clearly about who God is.

No one else could do that the way Jesus can. We don't need to guess or to grope or to hope that maybe one day we could possibly figure out what God is like.

Jesus has come and he speaks to us plainly. Isn't that good news? Now by a way of quick application where do we find this plain speech of Jesus today?

Where do we go and get it if we're interested in reading it or understanding it or hearing it? Is there any record of what Jesus taught the apostles after his resurrection? Or has it been sort of lost in the hands of history? Well friends this is the good news.

[11 : 50] The apostles didn't just teach and preach the message that Jesus gave them. They actually wrote it down. When you read the New Testament you aren't reading a document that was written like hundreds of years after the fact in some sort of long historical game of whisper down the alley.

No. You're reading the accounts of the eyewitnesses. You're reading the letters of the apostles themselves. And as we saw a few weeks ago in verses 15 through 16 of chapter 16 Jesus himself promised that the Holy Spirit would be at work in those apostles making sure that they taught clearly and truthfully all that Jesus had taught them.

So friends whether you're new to the faith or whether you've been in the faith for a long time if you want to hear the plain words of Jesus about who God is and what God's plan is like read the apostolic witness that is the New Testament.

There it is. The plain speech of Jesus given through the apostles for us. Read the New Testament. Read it with others. Wrestle with it together.

Ask the Holy Spirit for help. And always read with the cross before you. And then we can enjoy this first great blessing that Jesus has won for us.

[13 : 06] A clear knowledge of God. But that's not all. The finished work of Christ doesn't just bring the clear knowledge of God. It also brings the direct love of God the Father.

And we see this in verses 26 and 27. Let me read those verses again and let's look at those verses again. Jesus says, In that day, that is after Jesus' death and resurrection, 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 I believe that I came from God.

Now multiple times in the last three chapters and if you've been here this summer, you know as we've been walking through John 13 through 16, multiple times in the last three chapters Jesus has spoken to the disciples about prayer.

And the next chapter, chapter 17, actually is Jesus' prayer for his apostles and for us. And we're going to get to that in the next few weeks. So Jesus has talked a lot about prayer in this section.

And in particular, he's talked about praying in his name. That is on the basis of all that he's done. But here, Jesus wants to clarify something. He wants to clarify that asking in his name does not mean that Jesus has to sort of go to the Father on our behalf as a sort of go-between in our prayers.

[14 : 29] Jesus is saying, no, it's not like sort of asking your manager to talk to their boss to see if you might maybe get that new computer you need at your desk. No, as a result of what Jesus has done, Jesus himself says we now have direct access to the Father.

Why? Jesus says, because the Father himself loves you. Do you see, friends, because of the cross, because of how simply, the simple, sheer magnitude of the cross, you don't need a go-between.

You don't need Mary to take your request to God. And you don't need saints to take your request to God. Listen, Jesus says, you don't even need Jesus now to take your request to the Father on your behalf.

He has so fully and utterly forgiven all of your sins. Jesus says, so fully and utterly turned away the wrath of God from you that you are free and welcomed and loved to bring your request directly to the Father.

When we come, as the end of verse 27 says, to love Jesus and believe that He came from God, we have the love of the Father. loving Jesus and believing that Jesus came from God, this ushers us into the unmediated love of God the Father.

[16 : 07] Now, of course, it's also true that the love of the Father precedes, comes before our love of Jesus as well, right? John 3.16 has made that abundantly clear to us in our series of John, right? God's love comes before our ever-loving Him.

We love because He first loved us, but when we embrace the love of God in Christ by faith, it's as if then the love of the Father doubles back again, wave upon wave of love.

God loves us first in Christ. We respond by loving Christ and then the love of the Father washes back over us. And this is a love that welcomes all of our requests.

You know, the priests in the Old Testament would mediate for the people of God. The priests would bring their sacrifices and bring their requests to God on the people's behalf. But don't you see that the crucified and risen Jesus is the true and better priest, the priest to end all priests.

He has accomplished a reconciliation so full and so final that we can come to the Father with utter liberty and make all our desires and all our requests known.

[17 : 19] And the Father listens, and the Father delights in you and you have his full approval because of what Jesus has done. Isn't it true that so many of us are living, whether consciously or unconsciously, for some kind of approval?

We're so anxious to be liked and accepted. Often we end up saying or doing things that we don't even necessarily maybe agree with at the time because we want to really be accepted and we want to really be liked.

But friends, look at the new day that Christ has opened up for you and for me. You don't have to live for the world's approval anymore.

You can lay that down and you can rest in the only approval that really matters, the love of God the Father. And here's the thing, when we stop needing the world's approval, then we can actually begin truly loving the world in grace and truth.

No longer are we worried whether people like us, now we can be concerned about how we can truly be salt and light in the world for the world's sake, that they might see the love of the Father through us.

[18 : 43] So the finished work of Jesus brings a clear knowledge of God the Father and the direct love of God the Father. But the third thing Jesus mentions and the last one we'll talk about is that it brings the victorious peace of Jesus' Son.

And this is verses 28 through 33. Let me read this paragraph again and let me invite you to follow along. Jesus says, I came from the Father and have come into the world and now I'm leaving the world and going to the Father. His disciples said, Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative 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 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've 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.

So in verses 29 and 30, the disciples sort of mistakenly think that now they've got it all figured out. Oh, Jesus, you said you weren't going to speak in figurative speech. Oh, we're here now, right?

[19 : 56] We get it. We know it all. We've made it. We've got it. And yet this is one of those many moments in the Gospels where the disciples are putting their foot in their mouth, right?

Jesus knows they don't quite get it yet. In a few short hours, they would all be scattered. Judas would betray him. The disciples would abandon him.

Peter would deny him. And they would all fail him. Every single one. They would all fail him. And friends, so have we.

So far, Jesus has been talking about the knowledge of God and the love of God, but how does this knowledge and love hit home when our souls are troubled and tossed by our own failures?

others. This month, this week, this weekend, have we, like the disciples here, made a very good show of professing to believe in Jesus only to turn around and when the pressure comes, fail him.

[21 : 11] And at times, fail him miserably. Jesus says, in this world, you will have tribulation. And yes, that word tribulation means persecution or oppression, but you know, the root word of that word tribulation means pressure.

Pressure. Jesus is saying, in this world, the pressure's gonna come. The world's gonna pressure you to perform, to act in all the right ways, to measure up, to meet the standard, to prove yourself through your own ability and through your own wisdom and your own strength and your own good deeds.

And the world's not just gonna pressure you to perform, the world's gonna pressure you to conform, to say and do things that everyone else is saying and doing, to fall in line, to go with the flow. In this world, you will have tribulation, trouble, pressure.

Brothers and sisters, is your soul troubled today? Do you feel the pressure, not just of the world, but of your own sin, of your own failure to withstand the pressure of the world, your own failure to follow and obey him when that pressure comes?

But listen to what Jesus says here. He says, Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and leave me alone, yet, I'm not alone, for the Father's with me.

[22 : 47] Do you see what Jesus is saying here? He's saying that even though the disciples have abandoned him, Jesus' mission still goes ahead. The Father is still with him.

The triune God marches forth utterly alone, without any human help, without any human contribution. The Father and the Son go forth together, and accomplish the redemption of all who believe.

And the disciples contribute nothing to the saving work of the Messiah. They bring nothing but their own failure and their own abandonment.

And yet, God does all the work. And friends, what do you and I contribute? Nothing but the same. We bring our failures and our faults and our sins.

And what does Jesus give us in return? Here's the great wonder of the gospel. What does Jesus give us in return? He gives us peace.

[23 : 56] Peace. Jesus offers peace to troubled souls utterly and completely free of charge. Do you remember the first thing that the risen Jesus said to his disciples when they were huddled in the upper room, afraid and scared and feeling probably all sorts of guilt and shame?

Jesus shows up and he says to them, peace. Now, peace was a sort of typical Hebrew greeting in the day. But can you imagine how it would have rung on the ears of those apostles when they heard it for the first time?

The risen Lord Jesus with nail marks in his hands coming to them and saying, peace. Why does Jesus offer peace to our troubled souls utterly and completely free of charge?

Because although the world may do its worst, Jesus says, I've overcome the world. Literally, I've conquered it. I have reigned victorious over it.

The Old Testament is filled with kings. Some of them are good. Some of them are not so good. But Jesus, friends, is the true and better king. The king of all kings who once and for all, hanging from a Roman cross, raised on the third day, ascended on high above every principality and power at God's right hand, Jesus has overcome the world.

[25 : 30] All of its evil, all of its violence, all of its hatred, and all of our evil, and all of our violence, and all of our hatred, all of it has been dealt with at the cross.

And now, there's peace. A peace that passes understanding because it rests not on our own performance, but on the work of the triune God, the Father and the Son and the Spirit working out in history what they had planned from eternity, the peace of God for all who are in Christ through faith.

Now, it's worth asking ourselves, whatever is it, whatever it is that we happen to cling to from time to time for peace, can you think of that in your mind when you're feeling troubled?

Where do you go? Where do you run? What do you seek? It's worth asking yourself, is it working? Could it be that our troubled souls need something deeper than the surface distractions and entertainments and exercises that this world so often offers as the key to lasting peace?

Our souls are troubled because we need to be reconciled to our Creator. But here's the good news, in Him, in Christ, peace, reconciliation has been made.

[27 : 05] If you are troubled in conscience, Jesus offers lasting peace, the forgiveness of all your sins, the indwelling presence of God the Holy Spirit, the certain hope of eternal life, and for all your earthly days, a purpose, a mission to live for His glory and for His kingdom, to live at peace and to be a peacemaker wherever you go.

So friends, in conclusion, this is how Jesus concludes. This is what His finished work has accomplished, the knowledge of God, the love of God, and greatest of all, the peace of God.

So brothers and sisters, as our Lord says here, take heart, have courage, and let's keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, our prophet, our priest, and our king, and let's live in all the fullness of all that He's accomplished for us.

Amen? Amen. Let's pray. Our Father, by Your Holy Spirit, we pray that You would help us to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is Your love for us.

By Your Holy Spirit, enlarge our minds and our hearts to grasp all that You've won for us on the cross and help us to live the lives of freedom and humility and courage and peace that You have won for us.

[28 : 35] We ask this in Jesus' name, Father. Amen.