



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 16:25-33

"Trials and Triumphs through the Triumphant Christ"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Now we are studying the 16th chapter of the Gospel of John and we're looking particularly at the last bit of instruction that the Lord Jesus gave directly to the apostles. In the few weeks that follow this message we will look at the high priestly prayer. Instruction is there but indirectly. Here is the concluding section of direct instruction that Jesus gives the eleven.

And the Scripture reading for today is chapter 16 verse 25 through verse 33. The Lord continues, "These things have I 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." The term proverbs in English is a little confusing and probably misleading. This Greek word means something like "figurative speech", or "figurative sayings", or "enigmatical utterances".

"So these things have I spoken unto you in figurative utterances but the time cometh when I shall no more speak to you in figurative utterances, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you for the Father himself loveth you because ye have loved me and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father and 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 figurative utterance. 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 forth from God.' Jesus answered them, 'Do you now believe?'"

Now, this particular statement may be translated in different ways. And some of you may have the New International Version which contains the expression, "You believe at last!" with an exclamation point after it. The Greek expression is one that may be rendered as a direct statement, a declarative statement like that. "You believe at last!" Or we may punctuate with a question mark and take it to be an interrogation. Either one is possible. Almost all of the versions take it as a question. And I personally do not really understand exactly what went on in the minds of the translators of the New International Version when they punctuated this with an exclamation point and took it as a declarative utterance because the very next verse argues strongly for a question. "Do you now believe? Behold the hour cometh, yea has now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own and shall leave me alone. And yet I am not alone because the Father is with me." In other words, that statement seems to plainly indicate that the Lord did not think they had really come to the faith that they have expressed.

Well, it illustrates the fact that no translation is a translation upon which we can finally and completely rely. It is the original text that we must ultimately rest upon. And in this instance a good translation, the NIV, is in my opinion wrong. The New American Standard Bible is correct. The New English Bible is correct, and almost all of the other version are correct in taking this as a question. And the Authorized Version in this instance is correct as over against that recent translation. I say I don't know what went on in the minds of the translators, among whom I was, when they translated this particular thing in this way. I did not work on John 16 so I'm not suggesting I was asleep at the time. [Laughter] I may well have been. In fact someone may say, "But you were there with John 16." And I would have to say -- well, I am forgetful like the professor who heard his telephone ring and the caller said, "Is this 789-4583?" And this professor says, "No, this is

789-4384." "Oh, I have the wrong number. I'm sorry to have bothered you." To which the professor replied, "That's quite all right. I had to get up to answer the phone anyway." [Laughter]

Now, in verse 33 we can -- that was not in the Scripture reading incidentally. [Laughter] In verse 33 we conclude the reading with, "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." May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we bring to Thee the needs of our hearts today. We know, Lord, that in this audience there are represented many concerns, and many cares, and tribulations, and trials, and difficulties. And we thank Thee that when we come to Thee we come to one who is sufficient for all of the experiences of life that really matter. We are so grateful to Thee for the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ and the promise of Thy protecting father's hand over us in all of the experiences of our lives.

We would especially pray for those who are listed in our calendar of concern and some who are ill who are not in our calendar of concern. And we pray for them and we ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon them. Encourage them, and strengthen them, and give healing and minister to all who are involved.

We are grateful for Thy blessing, Lord, and we pray that Thou wilt sustain us in the experiences of life on the way home. We remember that we are pilgrims and sojourners here upon the earth and we are on our way to the city which hath foundations, the city of God. And so Lord we look forward to the future and we pray that Thou wilt be with us. May Thy hand be upon us for our spiritual good in the meantime. We commit to Thee these matters that we've been discussing concerning the outreach of the chapel and pray that Thy perfect will may be done. We know, Lord, Thou art able to move literally any particular mind that Thou dost care to move. The cattle upon a thousand hills belong to Thee. All of the men of this earth belong to Thee and Thou art able to move in their minds and hearts to do Thy will. And so we look to Thee. We pray that Thou wilt

give guidance to the elders, and to the deacons, and to the members of this congregation. Bless the outreach of the chapel. May it be fruitful and profitable. May the Lord Jesus Christ be lifted up in the ministry that Thou hast given to us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for this morning is worded slightly differently from the bulletin. I didn't mention this in the 8:30 service because Mrs. Ray is there and she'll be mad at me because I gave her the topic earlier in the week and I've changed it slightly for this morning. It is "Trials and Triumphs through the Triumphant Christ". But we are talking about the same message and so the difference is only title, "Trials and Triumphs through the Triumphant Christ."

All of us who have lived any length of time at all know what it is to have trials and troubles. Who is without them? Even very young people have their trials and their troubles. And especially those of us who are getting much older, we too have our trials and our troubles. There are many of them that are just naturally trials and troubles that come from the daily round. That is they're part of just living. They're part of the experience that we all have as we move from one age bracket into another.

The Lord Jesus, of course, speaks about those things but in this passage that we're looking at the kinds of trials and troubles that he is speaking about are things that are of a much fiercer sort than those daily trials and those common troubles that we all have. He was leaving the apostles and they were faced with the fact that the world was a very hostile world. In chapter 15 and verse 19 he had said to them, "If ye were of the world the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word then I said unto you, 'The servant is not greater than his Lord.' If they have persecuteth me they will also persecute you. If they have kept my saying they will keep yours also." And then the Lord went on to specify some of the things that those believing apostles might expect to experience and they were not simple common ordinary trials and troubles.

He said, "They shall put you out of the synagogues," which was a kind of social segregation which was of a very very serious kind because all of the life of the Jews revolved around the synagogue. And if they were put out they lost their friends. They lost their business. They lost everything. But even that is not all that Jesus speaks about. He says, "Yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." So the Lord Jesus says in simple terms, "The world has hated me. You are my servants. You are to represent me. The world's character was manifested in the way it has treated me. It will treat you similarly, which means of course practically that if we are witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ and if we are true representatives of him we shall experience the same kind of scorn, and ridicule, and persecution and hostility from the unbelieving world that the Lord Jesus and the apostles did experience.

From tradition, and it is only from tradition, most of the apostles lost their lives ultimately. John served out a long exile on the isle of Patmos and so far as we know died a natural death in exile. But all of the apostles lost their lives through the hatred of the world. Now, Jesus warned them of this so that when it happened they would not be surprised. Of course, I'm not talking about the kind of hostility the world exercises toward us because we haven't been good representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we do foolish things and when we do fanatical things that are not the fanatical things of the Scriptures then of course we deserve the persecution that we receive. But the Lord Jesus is speaking about the faithfulness of believers in the light of the hostility of the world, and the world will do its work of hatred and of persecution.

But he has promised them the coming Holy Spirit. He said, "The spirit is going to come and the spirit is going to aid you in your ministry. In fact, he's going to do the ministry in you. He will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." And so he urged them in the light of what was going to come to pass and what he was going to do for them that they stop being troubled over the future. Twice in the 14th chapter he said to them, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me." And then in verse 27 after that first verse he said, "Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid." The intervening verses in John 14 -- between those two

occurrences of, "Let not your heart be troubled," give the remedy. And the remedy has two aspects. I'm sure that most of you who've been [in] Believers Chapel for any length of time, you know these remedies. But the remedy first of all for the troubles that we face and the tendency to be troubled is the peace that comes from the sense of divine expiation of our guilt. In other words, the Lord Jesus has come. He has offered the atoning sacrifice. He has poured out his blood under the judgment of God. He has paid the penalty and therefore heaven itself can bring no further charge against those who are believers in Christ. Our standing is perfect. It is complete. It is secure. We have life. We have righteousness. And we are the sons of God. We are members of the true church of Jesus Christ. We are priests of God. We have all of these great positions before God. Nothing can change them.

Now that, of course, should give us a great sense of comfort in the midst of the trials of life. When Paul wrote to the Romans he wrote about this in saying, "Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God." So the peace of expiation, the peace that comes from the knowledge that our sins have been paid for -- that's one of the greatest sources of tranquility in our lives.

And then the second of the aspects of the remedy is the peace of Christian experience. Now, it is possible for us in the midst of our Christian experience to have no sense of daily peace. But the whole of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is directed toward bringing us to the place where in the midst of the trials of life we may have peace; the peace of Christian experience. Listen to the Apostle Paul. He said in Philippians chapter 4 and verse 6 and verse 7, "Be careful for nothing (that's be anxious for nothing) but in everything by prayer in supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." We have peace with God through the blood that was shed. The enmity is gone between the Lord God and the believer and the peace of God comes through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The Lord Jesus, it seems to me may be speaking of these two things in John 14:27 when he says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Now, if we are to distinguish between the

peace that he leaves and the peace that he gives, the peace that he gives is the peace of expiation. That is the sense of the knowledge that our sins are forgiven and peace exists between God and us. And then the other, "peace I leave with you," is the peace of Christian experience. So these are the two remedies in the midst of the experiences of life, the hostility of the world and the problems and trials of Christian living.

Now, the Lord Jesus in the last of John chapter 16 goes over some of these things. And there are three cycles of thought in his final instruction to them, and we'd like to look at them in the remainder of the time that we have. He is a strange teacher is he not? Did you notice as we were reading through this last section the Lord Jesus is speaking as one who is soon going to leave them? But while he is soon going to leave them he does not say that he is going to stop his teaching of them. Notice, "These things have I spoken unto you in figurative sayings, but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in figurative statements but I shall show you plainly concerning the Father." Now, isn't that striking? Here is a teacher who says I'm leaving you but I'm continuing my teaching. Strange teacher. In twenty-four hours or so he will be dead but he will continue as the world's teacher through the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the apostles and others to whom is committed this teaching. He is a strange teacher. In fact, he is a sovereign teacher, a living teacher, one who never stops his teaching. And though he is at the right hand of the Father at the present time he is still carrying on his ministry of teaching through the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit, remember, is taking up the things of Christ which he hears from him and bringing them to us, so the Lord Jesus has said in the earlier part of this chapter.

Now, verse 25 and 26 tell us essential that the time is coming when you will have unmediated speech with the Lord God. You see, up until this time every speaking acquaintance that the apostles had with the Lord God was mediated through the Lord Jesus. He was and is the mediator for that matter. But he says, "The time is coming when I shall no longer speak unto you in figurative sayings but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day you shall ask in my name. I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you." So the enigmatical figurative speech is going to stop

and from his new position at the right hand of the Father he's going to bring them teaching by the Holy Spirit.

Now, we know of course that this has transpired when the Lord Jesus died and was buried, and then rose again from the dead in the great encounter with the disciples on the Emmaus road he continued his teaching. In verse 27 of Luke 24 we read that he said to them, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" And beginning at Moses and the prophets he expounded unto them, and all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. He was showing them even more plainly than he had up to this time the things that characterized his ministry, it's meaning and significance. And then later on in that chapter in the 45th verse of Luke 24 we read, "Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures." So what our Lord is saying is, "I'm no longer going to plead to the Father for you. The work will have been finished. I will have accomplished the atoning work that makes it possible for you to have direct access to the Father. And so then you will be able to go directly to the Father in my name." Up to this time their contact with the Father had been through the Lord Jesus as the earthly mediator of their relationship to him. But then after he gone as they come in his name -- that is, in the light of what he has done for them then they shall have direct access to the Father. The Father himself loveth you because you have loved me and have believed that I came out from God.

John Calvin has a very interesting and I think important statement to make in connection with this. He says, "We have the heart of God as soon as we place before him the name of his son." That's a magnificent statement. We have the heart of God so long or as soon as we place before him the name of his son. In other words, when we come to the Lord God in the name of the son we immediately have the heart of God exercised towards us because if there is anything that God the Father loves and dotes upon it is God the Son. And so when we come to him in the name of the Son, because of our union with him we have the assurance that God's heart is directed toward us.

Now, of course when the Lord Jesus says here that he is going to show us plainly of the Father he's saying he's going to continue to teach. And we've talked about that in one of the

previous messages. The spirit is continuing his teaching. He's continuing his teaching today and there is a reasonable expectation as we look at the word of God that we too may come to new understanding of the word of God. I know there are people who say, "Well, I could not possibly do this. After all, there are Christian men that I know who spend all of their lives studying the Bible. They know Greek. They know Hebrew. They know Aramaic. They can study the text. And they may get something, but as for me -- oh, I don't think that I can get something new." Ah, but that is just what our Lord says. He says the Holy Spirit is the teacher. He will continue to teach. He is still teaching. We are still here. And those of us who study the Scriptures may have the legitimate hope that he will show us truth from the word of God, and it might be something that someone has not to this point been taught by the Holy Spirit.

It's a magnificent thing to remember that as far as the teaching of the word of God is concerned it is open-ended. Now, we don't expect to go back and find that the foundations of the faith are swaying and crumbling because of some utterance that some isolated individual may make saying he has special revelation from God. But we may expect the finer points of Christian truth to be subject to further teaching from the Holy Spirit. We are still here upon earth and he is still teaching. And so we look for new truth as we look to the word. And therefore, we are legitimately suspicious of any creed that professes that contain all the truth that we may discover from the Bible.

Now, let me hasten to say there is nothing wrong with a creed. The Westminster Confession of Faith is a good creed. The cannons of the Synod of Dort contain much good true information. The Heidelberg Catechism, for example, has a lot of excellent things. The Augsburg Confession has a great deal of scriptural truth. There are people who say, "We don't believe in creeds. We just believe in following the Bible." Now that, of course, is a very immature kind of statement. The term creed comes from the Latin word *credo* which means simply, "I believe." The word believe comes from a Germanic Anglo-Saxon background and it means the same thing as creed. So they are synonymous words, "to believe" and to have a "creed". And so in the light of this simply linguistic fact it's nonsensical for someone to say he wants to eliminate a creed. You might as

well say, "I want to have faith without faith or belief without beliefs." It cannot be done. Even your unbelief in creeds becomes your creed. So it is perfectly all right to have a creed.

Mr. Kuyper used to say, "The only thing wrong with making a creed is in stopping making creeds. The wrong lies in the ceasing to make creeds as we learn further truth from the word of God." So we're not against creeds -- or we ought not to be against creeds. In fact, we ought to be willing to expand our creed if we have legitimate grounds for it, and even modify our creed. So the Lord Jesus promises that there is going to be an unmediated through the earthly Jesus kind of teaching that they are to have. And the reason for this is, "The Father himself loves you because you've loved me and have believed that I have come out from God." He will have finished the work and he will have brought them into relationship to the Father. And the Father loves them because they love the son. As Calvin said, "We have the heart of God when we bring before him the name of his son."

It's interesting to notice in that 27th verse that when we read, "For the Father himself loveth you," the Lord uses the term for love that means to have affection. It is the term *phileo* not the term *agape* or *agapao*. For the Father himself has affection for you. Now, when you have affection for someone it's because you have similar interests. The *agape* kind of love of which the New Testament so often speaks is the love of the directed will toward an object that usually requires some self-sacrifice. But the love of affection is the kind of love that you have for an individual because you have common interests and common likes. And in this case, "For the Father himself loveth you (or has affection for you)" well, the affection the Father has for us he has for us because we and the Father both love the son. So you see, when we bring to the Father the name of the son the Father's heart is directed toward us. Now, of course he does not mean that on the basis of the merits of your love for the Lord he will do something for you. That is not true at all. Augustine said, "He would not have wrought in us something he could love were it not that he loved us before he wrought it. And so he loved us before he wrought it but he wrought in us something with which he may have common affection; the love of the son the Lord Jesus Christ." That's what that missionary was

talking about when he wrote me that letter, that the sense of the fact that God had loved him initially was the thing that brought him through the trials and troubles that he faced.

Well, now the Lord Jesus in the 28th verse moves to a discussion of his return to the Father, and then the apostles respond to it. It's a magnificent verse, this 29th verse. In fact, it's a concise statement of the central normative ministry of Jesus Christ. Look at it. It's very simple and yet it is so profound. It's the reason some people {[say] the Gospel of John is one of the simplest books in the Bible and yet one of the most profound. "It's a book in which a child can wade or an elephant can swim," someone has said.

Now, look at that 29th verse. "I came forth from the Father. I am company into the world. Again I leave the world and go to the Father." Only two words with two syllables; "again" and "Father". Everything else is so simple, but it is a central normative statement of the ministry of Christ. These great words, these simple words have behind them all the facts upon which the whole of Christian faith is built. And notice if you eliminate point one, point three and four as so many modern contemporary theologians do, you have no Gospel that saves souls. If you lay stress simply on the fact that Christ came into the world then you do not have any saving ministry. And it is useless to talk about Christ as being the great example if we do not have an atoning Christ.

Now, these four statements express the incarnation, "I have come forth from the Father. I am come into the world (that is his life.) I leave the world (that is his resurrection). I go to the Father (that is his ascension)." And notice that all of these things are voluntary things. It is not, "I was told to come into the world. I was forced to live here. I was dragged to the cross. And I hate to leave but I'm forced to ascend to heaven." This is all the sovereign ministry of the Lord God. He's the only person who is able to determine where he is born, and when he is born, and how he is born and voluntarily is able to determine his future. He never says for example, except once to a heathen man that he was born. His characteristic word is, "I was sent and I have come." And so here we don't say, "I came into the world August the so and so nineteen hundred and such and such. We say,

I was born. But the Lord Jesus says characteristically, "I came. I was sent." That's the sovereign directive will of the Son of God.

Brook Foswesker, the great English exegete called this the mission, the nativity, the passion, the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. One contemporary scholar has called it a complete summary in John's manner of the Christian faith. And another Australian scholar, Leon Morris who's going to be on the faculty of Trinity Seminary next spring, has called it the great movement of salvation. Now, it's such a striking text and it's so plain and clear that I'm not surprised that contemporary theologians have found ways to circumvent its plain meaning. There is a movement in scholarly Christian circles today to substitute for the uniqueness and exclusiveness of the Christian faith and inclusive universalistic aspect of religious teaching making Christianity one of a number of the great world religions through which there is a path to God in each one of them. That's an amazing thing and you would think that Christian men of all people would not do that. But much of the impetus has come from Christian men. And what they don't like are, to use their own expressions, the uncomfortable onlys of the Christian faith. And what they mean by that, the uncomfortable onlys are the claim that only in Christ do we have salvation. Only in Christianity do we have a sure knowledge of God and so on. That's one of the uncomfortable onlys of the Christian faith that Christian professors and theologians reject.

Plain statements like the Lord Jesus', "I am the door. I am the way, truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Just this past week I read an article by a leading professional theologian and philosopher who said that this language of the New Testament is mythical language or mythic language, which does not mean that there is no reality at all behind. But like so many theologians do they like to confuse us if possible. And what they mean by that is that the language itself is language imposed upon the facts of the Christian faith. For example, Jesus did not designate himself Messiah or Son of God. Jesus is unique but he's not an exclusive figure in salvation. The church deified Jesus. He never claimed to be God. He never thought of himself as God. They moved from what he said he was, the Son of God, to God the son. Why? Well, they do

not tell us why the church did this, and why the early church should do it, and why we would not do it. These are some of the unexplained facts. So this leads essentially to the view that Jesus, though holy God, is not the whole of God -- if you can distinguish between the two. In other words, he is God in the sense that God's love is genuinely at work in him. So by this we escape the uncomfortable onyls of the Christians. "Only Savior", "Only final form of revelation", *et cetera*, and what we have then in Christianity is ultimately relativistic. That is, this is one way to God but not the only way to God. All of the religions have their way to God and they're all ultimately valid, even if we say that Christianity's way is the best of the ways.

But if you read the New Testament of course, read it carefully, you will discover that does not square with the New Testament teaching. The New Testament teaching is quite different. The apostles give us no indication whatsoever that they regarded this language as mythic language. They speak very plainly of the finality and the universal normatively of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no religion whatsoever upon the face of this earth that can possibly be compared with Christian. Not a single one of them has in it a divine Savior who offered an atoning sacrifice, rose again from the dead on the third day as manifesting the divine approval at what he did and now sits at the right hand of the throne of God. No system of religion has anything like, "I came forth from the forth. I'm come in the world. I leave the world. I go again to the Father."

And what makes this so impossible to believe is that if Professor Hick and others are correct then Jesus was a great unique but not universal leader in religious thought. But at the same time he was a plain liar because he claimed to be the things that they say Christianity does not really teach. Those uncomfortable onyls. Now, no man would be a great teacher and a great leader, and we can follow no man whose teaching is manifestly false. I love that little statement you see because it's so simple and it sets out so plainly a summary and résumé of the ministry of the Lord Jesus that marks him out as absolutely unique. Oh how important, my dear friends and listeners, it is that you be in right relationship to him.

Now, the apostles -- they do not understand everything that is going on. They lived on the other side of the cross. Let us not forget that. His disciples said unto him, "Lo, now thou speakest plainly and speakest no figurative saying." It's almost as if they were saying, "Lo, you are speaking plainly and easily understood language, and you are not speaking mythic words like Professor Hick will talk about." It's almost as if they are saying that. "You are telling us plainly now." Now they say, "We are sure that thou knowest all things and needest not that any man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

Well, often we try to bluff our way through things. And I have a hunch that the apostles were bluffing a bit here because our Lord will say to them in a man, "Do you now believe?" You see, they've over-extended themselves like Peter when he said, "I will never deny thee. I give up my life for you." And Jesus said, "Before the cock crows twice thou wilt deny me thrice, Peter." They didn't really know themselves.

You know, I have a friend who's on the faculty with me at Trinity Seminary and in one of his books he comments on the fact that people often bluff their way through life. Several years ago on Canadian television an interviewer was out on the streets asking a number of people in Winnipeg and Manitoba what they thought of the political performance of Mr. Darcy McGee, who was a cabinet minister. But the interviewer neglected to mention that McGee died in the last century in 1868. And so the passers by not unnaturally thought that they were being asked about the performance of a current political figure. But only a few admitted that they didn't have a clue to who McGee was. Most replied with answers like this, so my friend said. "Oh he's all right I guess, for a liberal." [Laughter] Or, "Terrible, just terrible. But he's not as bad as Mr. So and So." Or better yet, "I saw him the other night on television but I haven't decided about him yet." [Laughter] That's characteristic of us. There's hardly an individual who hasn't claimed to read a book, for example, that he only thumbed through. You know? We say around school circles, "Have you read so and so's latest book on this?" And maybe you thumbed a page, and perhaps you even read a review about a paragraph or two, or maybe a few pages long and you say, "Yeah. I'm acquainted with that."

And really you're not telling the truth. Well, the apostles are very much like that and so Jesus has to say to them in the final section here when he talks about the trials and triumphs that face them. He says, "Do you really believe? Or do you at this moment believe?" The word for now is a word that means "at this very moment". "Do you at this moment believe?" They don't really understand. It's not but just a few hours when he's hanging upon the cross. And we read that they all forsook him and fled. The men went off in hiding; skulking and hiding. And a few of the ladies stayed around the cross, and then John later evidently sneaked back there because Jesus had one little word for him. But they thought everything is gone when finally the Lord Jesus was crucified. And when he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" all had forsaken him and fled but a few of the women and perhaps the apostle John. But of course, the presence of God was with the Lord Jesus Christ. The sun had moved behind the clouds for a moment but the son was still there. For he says, "The hour cometh (in verse 32) ye is now come that ye shall be scattered every man to his and shall leave me alone. And yet I am not alone because the Father is with me."

And so out of his human nature on the cross he cries out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Although in his divine personality he remained in the fellowship of the father which he had from the beginning of eternity.

Now, in the 33rd verse -- I should mention this. Isn't it striking that the Christian church is built upon such discredited men? Isn't that striking? "The foundation of the Christian church is the apostles," so the Apostle Paul says. The church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and New Testament prophets, and the apostles are men who fled at our Lord's crucifixion. Discredited men become the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ which just stresses the fact that the important thing is not the apostles or the prophets but the Lord of the apostles and the prophets. He is the real foundation and sustainer of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Now, he concludes with, "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." The world infallibly means tribulation for them. But in spite of their failure they are in him. In him,

that's their position. But even though they are in the midst of tribulation and even though the trials are heavy, and the darts are flying by them thick and fast he says, "In me you might have peace." In other words, heart trouble finds relief. It's still trouble but they have relief in trouble.

I like that story of the two artists who agreed to paint pictures that would portray their respective ideas of what peace was. One of them painted a picture with a calm little pond. There were trees and a forest around. There wasn't a sign a that breathe of wind was blowing. And that was his concept of peace. On the other hand, the other artist painted the scene as a windswept landscape. The wind was blowing fiercely. There was a raging torrent flowing right down through it and by the side of this raging torrent of a river there was a tree that was leaning over the water. And then there was a limb out over the water just over the rapids of the water. And there were sitting two little birds singing. That was his concept of peace. Peace in the midst of turbulence -- that's true peace. The other was stagnation. When Jesus says in verse 33, "These things I have spoken unto you that in my ye might have peace. He's not saying that you're not going to have tribulation, and difficulties and trials and troubles. He's simply saying that in the midst of the difficulties, and trials, and troubles, the hostility of the world, the persecution, perhaps even the loss of life, he will be give us peace -- sense of the calm that comes from the assurance of the expiation of our sins and of a heavenly Father who through the spirit is with us in all the experiences of life.

Now, one last thing. Isn't it striking that he says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." You would expect problem, "You have overcome the world." But it's "I have overcome the world," because of course our victory lies in his victory. What he has done is the basis of our victory. Many years ago my daughter, and my son and some of the neighbors were looking for something in the neighborhood that had been lost. And they were looking -- or the whole pack of little children. Some were eight or nine years of age, and then Gracie, my daughter, was about four years of age. And suddenly she came rushing up to the house, "We've found it. We've found it." And she didn't even know what they were doing. [Laughter] But someone had come back with it and she had so identified herself with the crowd that she said,

"We've found it. We've found it." That's what our Lord means when he says, "I have overcome the world and I have overcome the world for all who are in me." And we can say, "We shall overcome because our great leader has overcome."

As Paul says in Romans 8:38 and 39 -- and I'll have to stop with this. "I'm persuaded that neither death, nor life," -- oh, I should have started with verse 37. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Oh, the quiet majesty of the Lord in the face of the seeming crash of his world about him in his death. And what a magnificent Lord we have to follow. May God give us grace to truly follow him, rejoicing in his victory because his victory is our victory.

If you're here this morning and you've never believed in him you don't have this peace. You cannot have this peace. You cannot know what it is in the midst of trials and tribulations to have the assurance of the hand of God upon you. Come to Christ. Believe in him. Trust him and his saving work and you shall come to the sense of peace that comes from the expiation of your sins and be on your way to the life in which you have the experience of the peace that God through the spirit gives to his saints in the midst of trials and troubles. Come to Christ. Believe in him.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent words of encouragement to us. We have overcome because he has overcome. We thank Thee, Lord, for the encouragement, for the hope. And O Father if there are some here who have never believed in him, may they at this very moment be confessing the fact that they are sinners, that they...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]