

In this world you will have trouble

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[0 : 00] In this world, you will have trouble. Jesus was certainly right about that, wasn't he? In this world, we do have trouble, crime, corruption, stress, droughts, hysterosis outbreaks, depression, illness, chronic illness.

I know many of you battling with some form of chronic illness. The medical aid fees to pay for that, the treatment of the chronic illness. And then in our relationships, we have trouble. Broken relationships, betrayals, heartbreaks, failing marriages.

Yes, Jesus was right, wasn't he? In this world, you will have trouble. There's no escaping trouble in this world. There's absolutely no escaping. No matter how much you try to avoid it, trouble has a way of finding us all, doesn't it?

But if we think that's true for us, it was even more true for the original disciples who Jesus was speaking to here. These were men who would later face arrest, floggings, stonings, starvation, shipwrecks, desertion, exile, and for most of them, the prospect of a violent death.

In this world, you will have trouble, Jesus promises his disciples. You see, not all of Jesus' promises are encouraging, are they? This is not exactly a promise that you'll stick on your fridge.

[1 : 27] Although, if you go on to read the rest, maybe you will after all, because look what else he says. He doesn't only say, in this world you will have trouble. He also says, But take heart.

I have overcome the world. Now, what does he mean by that? It's a very important verse, a very important thing that he says for us to understand. What does he mean by, I have overcome the world?

And how does that help us to face the trouble that we inevitably all will face as we go through this life? Well, to understand that, we've got to look at what he says just before that. Verse 33, you can look in your Bibles, he says, I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace.

And then he says, In this world you will have trouble, but take heart. I have overcome the world.

And so what he's just told them in this passage, These things I've told you, He says, What he's just told them, explains to his disciples how he has overcome the world, so that they can have peace despite all the troubles that they're going to face.

But not just them, you and me as well. As we read his words, we can also discover in this very passage, the secret to peace in a troubled world. That's what this passage contains, if we dig into it and understand it.

[2 : 42] The secret to peace in a troubled world, which is something that we all need to hear because none of us are immune to trouble. Every single person sitting here this morning will face trouble in this life in various degrees.

But we will all face trouble sooner or later. And so we all need to hear what Jesus has to say to us this morning. So let's see what he says. Now he begins this passage by telling his disciples what's about to happen.

Now remember, this is the same night that he's going to be betrayed, arrested, and the next day executed, and the disciples' world is going to fall apart. They don't know it yet.

They don't get that yet. But Jesus knows that. Jesus knows exactly what's going to happen. And so here he is trying to prepare them for that crisis in this passage. He's trying to prepare his disciples for the next kind of 24 hours.

And in verse 16, he breaks the news that he's going. He's going to leave them. And of course, we know he's referring to his death. And the consequence, he says, of him leaving them will be, verse 20, Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices.

[3 : 52] That is a prediction of what's about to happen. When he dies, when he gets crucified, when he gets executed, and the Jews and Gentiles alike are rejoicing, and yet his disciples are absolutely

torn.

They're in pieces. And he tells them that's what's going to happen. And it's all because they followed him. It was only the friends of Jesus. It was only his disciples who would weep and mourn while everybody else was rejoicing.

Because they attached themselves to him, they're going to suffer. They're going to have suffering that they wouldn't have had if they didn't attach themselves to him. Their association with him would cause grief.

Which reminds us, just right there, doesn't it, that following Jesus is no guarantee of a trouble-free life. Don't believe that for a second. Being a Christian doesn't mean that God takes your troubles away.

In fact, being a Christian, more often than not, brings more troubles. And yet, look what Jesus goes on to tell his disciples. Verse 20, he says, You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

[4 : 56] And that's the difference right there between the trouble that a Christian faces and the rest of the world's trouble. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

Grief and trouble for a disciple of Jesus, intense as it is, is always temporary. That's what he's telling his disciples here. Jesus guarantees them that there will come a moment when their grief will suddenly, out of the blue, unexpectedly transform to the very opposite thing of grief, to joy.

And he actually uses an illustration here to make the point. He likens it to a woman giving birth, right? Now, I can't speak from personal experience here, but I'm told that childbirth is not the most comfortable experience.

In fact, I'm told it's rather painful. Tracy, you might not want to hear this. But Jesus admits, verse 21, that a woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come.

Now, apart from an epidural, which, by the way, I highly recommend, apart from that, childbirth is a painful experience. It's painful for the mother going through it.

[6 : 12] And depending on how hard she's gripping her husband's hand, it might be painful for the father as well. And that's the point here. The childbirth is painful. You can't get away from that fact. But no matter how painful it is for her, all that pain instantly disappears the moment that baby is born, doesn't it?

For those of you who have given birth, you know the feeling. Jesus says that. He says, But when her baby is born, she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.

That joy of seeing that baby totally overrides any pain she experiences. It's like a distant memory already. Well, Jesus says to his disciples here in verse 22, So with you, now is your time of grief, but I will see you again, and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

Okay, so he's saying to these men, he's saying there will be a time of pain that you will need to go through. But after that, he says they will rejoice with a type of joy that will completely override the grief that they felt before, as if that was nothing.

That's how intense their joy will be. And if you think about all the grief that they're going to go through, that must be quite some serious joy that Jesus is promising. And so what is this joy that he's talking about, and where does it come from?

[7 : 33] What is the origin of this joy? How can he guarantee these disciples that they will have this overriding joy? Well, he explains in the next verse. Verse 23. You can look in your Bibles and follow along.

He says, In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name.

Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. Okay, so to understand what he's saying here, consider for a moment why these disciples are going to grieve. Why are they going to face so much grief in the first place?

Well, we know it's because Jesus is going to die. But what we've got to understand is why that was such a disaster for them. Jesus dying. It's not just that they liked hanging out with him.

It's not just that he was a cool guy and they're going to miss him. No. The reason that they had grief here, and they will have grief when he goes, is because Jesus was their connection with God.

[8 : 33] As Jews, this was incredible that they could have a connection with their Creator. And this man, they had come to realize that he is the revelation of God that the entire Jewish Bible had been anticipating for centuries.

He is the bridge. And we've seen that throughout John, haven't we? We've seen that proven through his signs and through the prophecies that have been fulfilled in his life. He came to be the bridge between humans and their Creator.

And they didn't want to lose that. They had come to discover that, that that's who Jesus was to them, and they didn't want to lose that. And that's why the prospect of Jesus leaving them is so terrifying. But what they didn't realize, and what he's saying here, is that him leaving them is necessary because it's going to lead to something even better.

It's going to lead to something beyond what they ever expected. Look at verse 23 again. In that day, you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly, I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

So why would that happen? Well, he goes on in verse 26. In that day, you will ask in my name. I'm not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. You see the point he's trying to make here?

[9 : 47] No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. And so what he's saying is that him going away, him dying, is not going to sever these disciples' connection with God like they thought it would.

Rather, it's going to bring them closer to God than they ever thought possible. He's saying, you don't even have to talk to me anymore. You have a direct connection with my Father through this. A relationship of love. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me. Jesus is revealing to these disciples that there is now a way that they can enter into a real relationship of love with their Creator.

love and enjoy Him and know that He loves and enjoys them. And that, he says, is when, verse 24, their joy will be complete.

Their joy will be fulfilled. Their joy will come to its completion. Now, we live in a world where everybody's joy is lacking. We're all trying to find that joy. We're all trying to find that security and that peace and that happiness and we're chasing after all the things in this world to try to give it to us.

[10 : 59] That's our natural inclination. But the implication of what Jesus is saying here is that the greatest human joy that a human creature can ever experience is knowing God their Creator.

He is where we will find completeness of joy. That is what Jesus is saying. He is where all our happiness comes from anyway, if you think about it. Because He is the source and the Creator of everything that makes us happy.

even if we fail to realize that everything good in our lives comes from God. Even the capacity that we have to experience happiness and joy comes from God.

And so, to not want Him in our lives is kind of like being thirsty but refusing to turn on the tap. It's actually not going to the source of where we were made to find our satisfaction.

God is the source of all happiness and He designed us to be truly happy only, fully, completely in a relationship with Him. And that is what these disciples were going to experience.

[12 : 07] And that's why their grief was going to be turned to joy because Jesus was going to open up for them the ultimate relationship that they were made for, their relationship with God.

But the question is why did they have to go through the grief first? Why couldn't Jesus just give them that relationship there and then? Well, because Jesus had to die first for that to be possible at all.

There's no way that sinners can be in a relationship with a perfect holy God. We've all sinned. And that's what cuts us off from God. That in fact is what causes us to not be able to have joy in our lives ordinarily.

Our sin destroys our joy. And what's ironic is that people chase after joy by sinning more, by going further away from their Creator. and they wonder why they're not satisfied.

And they keep needing a greater high. But our sin actually, it distances us from God and destroys our joy. Because not only does it mess up our relationships with other people, and we know all too well it does, isn't it?

[13 : 07] Our sin is what causes our relationships to be messed up, no matter how much we point the finger at the other person and say, no, it's their fault, it's what they did to me, it's what they said. No, it's actually our sin and our reactions and the attitude we've had which has caused the relationship breakdown.

It does take two. But more than that, our sin breaks our relationship with God. It prevents us from having that relationship that we were made for, that we were made to find our completeness of joy in.

And that's why Jesus dying is going to bring joy to these disciples. And that's why the day we remember his death in a couple of weeks' time is called Good Friday, not Bad Friday, not Sad Friday, but Good Friday.

Why? What was good about it? Well, Jesus died, but why is someone dying good? Because when he died, he, and only he, he uniquely qualified to do this as the Son of God, could take the sins of others on himself.

And he took the sins of people on himself. He was punished on our behalf, and that's the best thing that could ever happen for us in the history of this world. And that's why it's called Good Friday.

[14:17] Because that satisfied God's justice for our sins. There's no need for God to punish our sins if we trust in Jesus. Because, like it or not, this is a just universe.

And, of course, we don't always see justice done immediately. But hopefully, in the news of the last week, we might well see justice done that we've been hoping for. And we do, we do see, don't we, snatches of justice.

And we're satisfied by it, we want justice done, but then we go to God and say, well, you know, will you just sweep my sins under the carpet? Will you just ignore my total rebellion of you and your rule in my life?

No, God can't do that. He's a just God. He made a just universe. And he must punish sins. And that's the reason Good Friday is good, because Jesus took that punishment.

And so we can enter into that relationship with God that our sins previously didn't allow if we put our trust in him. And that's what's going to give these disciples joy after Jesus dies for them.

[15:19] That's why he has to go through that. That's why they have to go through that grief in order to access that joy. That relationship with God is what is going to give them completeness of joy.

And that's what should give all true Christians joy today, knowing that we can have that relationship too. That's where we should be looking for our completeness of joy.

Not in the gifts that God has given us. The people that he's put in our lives and the resources that he's given us and the homes that he's given us. We're not meant to look for joy in those things.

All of those things are meant to point to our giver, our creator, the giver of those gifts. And that's where we're meant to seek our joy. That's where we will find completeness of joy in relationship with the giver, not the gifts.

But that's not the only thing that's going to give these disciples joy. Look again at verse 22 with me. Jesus says, So with you, now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice and no one will take away your joy.

[16:26] No one will take away your joy. That's quite a promise because it's very easy, isn't it, for people in this world to take our joy away, to make us unhappy, to upset us.

But of course, we know if we've ever studied what joy really means that it's more than just situational happiness. Joy is a deep-seated contentment and a deep-seated solid understanding that you're in the right place and that you're going to the right place.

And knowing your situation, knowing your future, knowing your present, to the point that the situation doesn't get to that joy. So joy is a much more deep-seated thing than situational happiness, right?

But Jesus says, what is going to make this joy permanent? So even this deep-seated joy that we can experience can be taken away by other people. Jesus promises to his disciples no one will be able to take their joy away.

It will be permanent. What will make it permanent? Well, he says there, I will see you again and they will see him. In other words, seeing Jesus risen from the dead is going to give them this unshakable joy.

[17:44] It's going to make it permanent when they see the resurrected Jesus and they get it. And in that moment, they understand that resurrection is real.

It's not just a Jewish myth that there is life beyond the grave, that this life is not all that there is, that in Jesus, they have access to resurrection life themselves.

And that's what will never take their joy away, just that knowledge that resurrection is real, that this life is not the end. That is what is going to be the foundation of their unshakable joy.

And that's what transformed the lives of these men, these disciples that Jesus was talking to from that moment on when they saw the risen Jesus. Because before they saw the risen Jesus, they were a bunch of defeated, dejected men hiding away in fear of the authorities.

They were pathetic. And they were running away. One of them even ran off naked because he was so scared when they came to arrest Jesus. The other one betrayed Jesus and he couldn't help it.

[18 : 46] They were all just pathetic men after Jesus was arrested and crucified. But you know what happened after they saw Jesus alive again? They completely changed.

We read in the book of Acts, They became the most fearless and passionate evangelists, boldly talking about Jesus everywhere with everyone despite arrest and persecution. They even sang songs together in a dungeon.

Much to the surprise of the wardens and the other prisoners, I'm sure. Because no one could take their joy because they had seen the risen Jesus. Even when they were in the worst circumstances, they had seen the risen Jesus.

And so no one could take that away from them. because they had entered into a relationship with God that they knew now would never end. Not even death could touch it. And that is the greatest knowledge a human can have.

And that was the secret to their peace in a troubled world. That is the secret to peace in a troubled world. And that's what Jesus meant when he said to them, Take heart, I have overcome the world.

[19 : 51] In his death and resurrection, Jesus overcame the world's ability to defeat his people. Even though they could still face trouble and even though they would still face pain and grief and difficulty, Jesus overcame the world's ability to take them out, to defeat them, to bring them down because they had seen him risen from the dead.

Even though they were still going to face trouble. It's like a war. In a war when a defeated army, you know they're defeated but the war's still going on. And so this army is still giving you trouble.

Like in World War II, we see in history in 1945, the Allies were advancing into Germany. They had crossed the borders into Germany, advancing onto Berlin. And the German army was still fighting. The German army was still giving them trouble.

It still resisted even though long ago it had been overcome. Well in the same way, this world will still give Jesus' disciples trouble. But ever since the cross, this world's ability to defeat them has been taken away, has been overcome.

In this world you will have trouble but take heart, I have overcome the world. And this promise doesn't only apply to those original disciples.

[21 : 05] Because Jesus says this as well in verse 33, he says, I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. He's not saying everybody can have this peace but in me you may have peace.

And so this peace is available to anyone who is in him, who is in Jesus. Anybody today who follows him, who stands up and associates themselves with him, attaches themselves to him in repentance and faith.

Peace in a troubled world is available therefore to you as well. joy that overcomes that overcomes any kind of situational trouble is available to you too.

If only you would come to believe what these disciples came to believe if you haven't yet. That Jesus died for your sins and he rose from the dead and that he's opened the way for you into a real relationship with your creator and eternal life.

If only you would come to believe that you too can have this peace in a troubled world. But I know many of you have come to believe that. And so what does this passage have to say to you?

[22 : 13] What must you do now? And that's an important question to ask whenever we read any passage in the Bible. What does this mean for me? How do I respond to this? Well what's interesting in this passage I wonder if you noticed Jesus only gives his disciples two instructions in this whole passage two imperatives two things we must do in response to these truths.

The first is in verse 24 ask that's the first actual instruction Jesus gives his disciples in this whole passage ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete.

Now what he's talking about is one of the benefits that his disciples will have by their relationship with God and that is that they can now ask God for things and that's an incredible benefit and know

that he will love them and happily give them whatever they ask in accordance with what is best for them ultimately eternally because he loves them.

Now that might not be everything they ask for because God knows best and God sometimes withholds what we ask for our eternal good but just this whole idea that they can approach God and ask him for help whenever they need is something that they wouldn't do naturally and that's why Jesus tells them they've got to do it ask Jesus gives instructions to people because they are things that we don't naturally do asking God relying on God daily is a discipline that disciples need to develop because we're proud aren't we naturally and proud human beings struggle to ask because we like to be self-reliant we don't want to admit that we can't handle life we don't want to admit that we have to rely on another but asking for something is an admission that we rely on another and it it's a hard thing to do for proud self-reliant human beings thing is though while it may hurt our pride it's so important to do because it's actually the key to our peace and joy anxiety anxiety and stress in life come when we think we have to rely on ourselves when we think that all we have is to rely on ourselves that's when anxiety and stress come but you see this relationship with God that we can have through Jesus means that we don't have to rely on ourselves anymore we can admit that we weren't ever meant to be self-reliant creatures we weren't made to rely on ourselves we were made to rely on our giver and provider and sustainer and creator

God that is what he made us to do we were never ever meant to be self-reliant and it's in realizing that and it's in exercising that daily reliance bringing our troubles to God leaning on him leaving our problems with him it's there that we find true peace and in the second of the only two instructions Jesus gives in this passage anybody can anybody tell me what it is anybody tell me what the second imperative is the second instruction in this passage take heart is it on the screen behind me no good he didn't give it away absolutely thank you brother take heart verse 33 that's the second of the only two instructions Jesus gives in this passage take heart more literally be of good cheer that's that's literally what he's saying be of good cheer in other words knowing what you know now knowing what I'm going to do for you don't let the world get you down you don't have to this is a command to have a certain type of response to adversity which marks out true disciples of Jesus they will take heart even in their troubles and we saw it didn't we in the first disciples when they sang songs in the dungeon that is an example of being of good cheer being in good cheer even in the worst circumstances and it's something that all true believers will be able to do because of their relationship with God they will be able to have the bigger picture even the worst situations in life now that doesn't mean we won't feel grief it doesn't mean we won't cry it doesn't mean we won't suffer the effects of a broken world it doesn't mean we won't be depressed and face all kinds of troubles in this life but it does mean that we will still be able to walk on through the valley in good cheer because we know where it ends and we know who's walking there with us that's what [26 : 45] Jesus means and that is the testimony of all true Christians over all the ages I want to end with the last words of a Korean Christian before he was executed for his faith by the communists as they prepared to shoot him he lifted his eyes and he simply said in a peaceful voice you may take my life from me but you can never take Christ from my heart and then they pulled the trigger Jesus promised to him stood firm didn't it and it will for all his disciples in this world you will have trouble but take heart I've overcome the world let's pray Lord thank you so much for this promise thank you for being realistic with us and telling us that we will face trouble we know that this is true and we know that as long as we are in this broken fallen world there is no true escape from trouble but thank you that you give us an ultimate escape through the resurrection the promise of the resurrection and all that you have done to give us a relationship with our creator thank you for taking our sins so that we can have peace in a troubled world help us

Lord to be disciplined to come into that relationship through Christ I pray for all here who have not yet put their trust in Christ that they would enter into the relationship that they were made for through Jesus I pray for all here who have already done that that they will daily every day this week and this month and this year and beyond that they will daily enjoy and lean upon the relationship that you opened up the relationship with our heavenly father and that we will find great peace and joy every day through that relationship thank you Lord Amen I Anyways have I have