**I Have Overcome the World**

**John 16:23-33**

Rogate – 6th Sunday of Easter

05.09.2021

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Who do you know that keeps their promises? Today is Mother’s Day, and we all know that mothers always keep their promises, right? Well, OK, they usually keep their promises. And, if they have to break their promises, it is usually dad’s fault. Right?

Whether intentionally or not, we have all broken promises, even mothers have broken promises. There is One who has never broken a promise – God. Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, also true man, born of the virgin Mary is the only Man who has never broken a promise.

Although, Jesus makes a promise in our text that I wish would not come true. He says, “In the world you will have tribulation.”

Right now you are probably thinking, “Great! Thanks for pointing that one out. It isn’t like I did not already know that. From March of 2020, the COVID, and the continued uncertainty now, some 15 months later – how much more tribulation and trouble do we need. I was looking for some nice promises from God, something that gives me evidence of God’s love.”

We do not like to hear such things. What we want most is a quiet place to which we can retreat from the worries and troubles of life, a happy place where we can be refreshed and renewed. When we come out of that respite place, life will go smoothly.

There are all sorts of well-intentioned, but false preachers out there who tell you that if you only believe strongly enough and pray hard enough, everything will go smoothly. They like to tell the people that God wants them to have a successful and prosperous journey through life, that He gives them all the desires of their heart. Falsehood from the lips of such preachers sounds nice. And the truth is that this falsehood in name of God is preferred to the words that Jesus spoke in our text.

You and I know that life is not a smooth and seamless ride. Just when we get our life in order and things seem to be sailing smoothly along, something barges in and ruins the ride: illness, the death of a loved one, loss of a job, or unexpected bills. Or maybe it was a relationship that has gone sour, strained to the breaking point. It is amazing how even a simple misunderstanding gets blown up and ruins friendships. And there are always unexpected crises that crop up, whatever they may be.

No matter what happens, Jesus’ promise looms large, “in the world you will have tribulation.” It is too true! Tribulations always seem to be the one thing of which there is always an abundance. Life seems to be sailing when suddenly the boat is upended, almost drowning us in the tempestuous sea of life.

All by itself, that one phrase, “In the world you will have tribulation,” sounds pretty forlorn and without hope. It certainly does not sound like evidence of God’s love. However, it is an honest appraisal of life in this world. While all people want life to be peaceful and without troubles, we also know that is not the way it is.

But is that the last truth? Listen to Jesus’ words just before that promise of tribulation, Jesus says, “I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace.”

Together, these two phrases do not seem to make sense for they do not seem to fit together in any way. We would like to ask Jesus, “Are you telling us that we will have tribulations in order that we may have peace?”

I do not know if you realize it, but Jesus’ promise frees us from some things. Knowing there is tribulation frees us from having to put on an act that everything is fine. We do not have to fake that moms are perfect at all times, or that our children are angels. We do not need to pretend that our spouses are perfectly loving toward us, or that parents, even mothers, are always self-sacrificing and caring.

“In the world you will have tribulation,” is not Jesus simply talking about the world around us. This is also His commentary concerning the world within us. These words call the Old Adam, our sinful nature, what it is. Sinfulness keeps us from perfectly loving our family members. Sinfulness keeps children from always honoring their parents. Our sinful nature takes God’s blessings even of our own family, given to us by God, and we turn it into ways we hurt one another.

When we read those words, “In the world you will have tribulation,” it is this brokenness that we think of. They are also words which should call us to repentance.

It is a word that confronts us in our sinfulness, grumbling against God, that life has too many tribulations. We are like the Israelites who grumbled against God. Their sinfulness made evident in their whining about how poorly they had it, although God was providing for all their needs for this body and life. We are never satisfied, we find it hard to be content in the blessings of God – we always want more than God knows we need.

In repentance we need to remember that Scripture always needs to be read in context. We need to remember that Jesus said, “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.”

“I have overcome the world,” He says, “I have conquered the sins of the whole world. I have overcome your sins. All the things that trouble you, I have overcome. I took on human flesh – the same flesh you live in. I endured the tribulations of this world – even to the point of sweating blood in the Garden. I know heartache and disappointment. Close friends betrayed Me. Those who promised never to abandon Me, fled in My greatest hour of need. All those things that trouble you now, your health, your losses, your broken heart, your sinfulness – I took into Myself upon the cross of Calvary.”

It is in His suffering and death that Christ endured the worst tribulations of this life, and He proclaimed that it was for “this hour” that He had come. He came as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,” to overcome the tribulations in this world. He defeats death by swallowing it up in the victory of His own death, His resurrection boldly proclaims the sacrifice accepted – death no longer has dominion. Christ’s resurrection declares that the most vile evidence of sinfulness in this world, death, is overcome.

Upon the cross Jesus overcomes the world. That one event is more than just the most vivid evidence of the Father’s love for you – for me – for all. It is that love of God enfleshed. He ordained that His Son endure suffering and death, to bring you through your tribulations. Easter’s empty tomb nearly screams the victory won on the cross, “See, it is true, I have overcome the world. Death has no claim on me, neither does it upon you. All that is mine, is yours. I have overcome the world.”

Jesus’ cross is not some event left in the past. It is not simply something fondly remembered. God’s love, given unto death upon the cross, is delivered to you here. Your grumbling against God is forgiven in the blood Jesus shed, applied to you today in the Word of forgiveness spoken into your ear. Sin and death are gone. In Christ, declare, “I have overcome the world.”

Your hunger and thirst for more is satisfied when the body of Christ is placed into your mouth and His blood is poured between your lips. This is eternal food, granting you forgiveness of sins and eternal life, it proclaims to you, “I have overcome the world.”

Jesus warns us of tribulation that we may have peace. He knows our sinfulness brings sorrow and tribulation into our life and our little corner of the world. Christ overcomes the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, and so, it is in Christ that we have peace – a peace which surpasses all understanding. We are in a newly restored and right relationship with God though His love in Christ Jesus. We are restored in the relationships we have broken with others, by the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Although we have tribulations in the world – Christ has overcome the world.

You and I dear friends, are in Christ Jesus. Baptized into Christ – baptized into His death and resurrection. As Christ has overcome the world, all that is His, is ours. Christ has overcome the world for us and now in us.

Now we wait to see that day come when all will be fully and finally realized. Your baptism is your daily strength of true peace when facing tribulations, for in your baptism you have already been brought through them. In Christ, who has overcome the world, so have you. As Christ rose, you have arisen In Christ to live a new life.

On the last day, as Christ is risen from the dead, you too will rise. Once risen, you will enjoy eternity with Christ where there will be no more tribulations.

The will of the Father is simple, believe in the One He sent into the world – to overcome the world for you. He invites you to call upon Him in your tribulations, knowing that He also has endured them. You are His dearly beloved children. Jesus has returned to His Father’s side – to send Himself to you, His body and His blood. While yet remaining in this life, and flesh, and world – remember His word to you, “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.”

In Christ you have overcome the world – today and forever. Amen.