

PEACE IN A TURBULENT WORLD

Request: “We seem to be in great turmoil in our nation with war, economy, crime, and families falling apart.” The media has identified it as affecting everyone one from Wall Street to Main Street. I know that it is affecting many within our church. Could you teach a lesson of encouragement to the pivot?”

Jesus was dealing with a somewhat similar situation with His disciples in our lesson text (Jn.16:29-33).

However, we need to understand that the background for our lesson text occurred during the Upper Room Discourse (Jn.13-17).

This was the night before His crucifixion: “Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of the world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” (Jn.13:1)

How did Jesus prepare His sheep for what they are about to face when the Shepherd is dead? “Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered.” (Zech.13:7) [Prophesy]

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘You will all fall away, because of Me this night,’ for it is written, ‘I will strike down the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.’ ‘And after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.’” (Matt.26:31-32) [promise is greater than problem]

Our situation may not be this grave. And we have the promise that Jesus will never leave nor forsake us – “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.” (Heb.13:5; Matt.28:20)

<p>Nevertheless, there are at least four doctrinal principles for us to learn to have PEACE IN A TURBULENT WORLD.</p>
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1. After three years of intensive bible study, His disciples have reached an important doctrinal conclusion regarding the person of Jesus Christ – “By this we believe that you came from God.” (Jn.16:30b)

What made them reach this conclusion? There is an important phrase, “by this (en + instrumental of means; touto / inst.s.n).”

“**By this**” was reference to a change in His teaching method – “His disciples said, ‘Lo, now You are speaking plainly, and are not using figure of speech (paroimia) [the double Amen / truly, truly].” (Jn.16:29)

They were convinced that Jesus was a great bible teacher – “Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You.” (Jn.16:30a)

But His disciples had challenged His teaching method earlier – “And the disciples came and said to Him, ‘Why do You speak to them in parables?’” (Matt.13:10)

Answer: “Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.” (Matt.13:13; Isa.6:9-10)

“But blessed are you eyes, because they see; and you ears, because they hear.” (Matt.13:16)

2. I believe that Jesus replied to their acknowledgement of His person was sarcasm – “Do you now believe?”

I believe this because of the following remark – “Behold, an hour is coming, **and has already come**, for you to be scattered, each to his own house, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.” (Jn.16:32; Matt.26:31-35; Zech.13:7)

Note the three things that the disciples would probably do in the midst of great adversity associated with the crucifixion of Jesus.

I say probably because there was one disciple that cycled the Upper Room Discourse teaching of Jesus and walked away from this bible study with truth. And it was John’s faith in this truth that put him at the crucifixion of Jesus the next day at great peril (Jn.19:26-27).

Anyone familiar with believers who are **dull of hearing** could have predicted this outcome (Matt.13:14-17). This was not a prophecy but a statement of reality.

- Can you imagine what Jesus must have been thinking when He said, “And yet I am not alone.” He certainly knew that Ps.22:1 would be fulfilled this very day -“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matt.27:46)

3. Jesus tried to encourage them for the immediate tribulation that was coming upon them.

“These things I have spoken (laleo / perf.a.ind.1ps) to you (humin / d.pl.m / dative of advantage), that **in Me** you may have peace. **In the world** you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome (nikao / perf.a.ind.1ps) the world.” (Jn.16:33) **These are words for us to live in times of tribulation.**

Note that Jesus contrasted the union and its results between Him and the world.

- **In Christ** **Peace** (eirene) God’s peace is not without tribulation (Rom.5:1; Phil.4:7).
- **In World** **Tribulation** (thlipsis) This is tribulation without God’s peace (Acts 14:22; 2 Cor.1:3-4; Rom.8:35-37).
- **In You** **Courage** (tharseo) This courage is based on the promise of victory over the world and its tribulations. Jesus was cycling the truth of the word of God for Himself as well as for His disciples as he turned His face towards the cross.

4. The New Covenant doctrine regarding tribulation of the world is to maintain a peaceful attitude of rejoicing.

In **Rom.5:3-5**, we are told that tribulations develop capacity for God to pour His love within our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

In **2 Cor.4:16-18**, we are told to not lose heart but to fix our expectations on new man thinking.

In **Phil.4:4-7**, we are told to not become anxious but to pray with thanksgiving.

In **Phil.4:11-13, 19**, we are told we can rejoice under all conditions because we can do all things through Christ.

In **1 Pet.1:6-9**, we are told we that God often brings distress to CWL in order to exercise the faith cycle.