

## Christ, Our Peace

Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1985

### John 16:33

*“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.”*

In the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of John’s Gospel, verse 33, our Lord said to His disciples; *“These things have I spoken unto you that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation, (trials, and trouble), but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”*

I want you to listen very carefully to me today; I have some things to say on this subject: “TROUBLE, TRIALS, TRIBULATION, AND REAL PEACE.” What is peace and where it is found?

Now, for some questions: Wouldn’t it be refreshing and wonderful if all the time, every hour of the day, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, we could all live in an atmosphere of worship and praise? Wouldn’t it be wonderful that if every day, all day, clear into the night, we could spend our time fellowshiping with believers, singing and praising God, and studying the Word of God? Wouldn’t that be something?

This is just not to be, it is just not so. We are flesh and we live in a world of flesh. We have to make our living in a world of flesh.

The preacher has an advantage; he may live in his study and he may live in services, Bible Conferences and revival meetings week after week and day after day.

Most of you have to live in the world. You have to work in the world and you have to deal with the world. We are in these services and there is singing, praising God, and worshipping publically three or four times a week; most of the time you are in the world.

Our Lord prayed for us; He said, *“I pray not that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one.”* Wouldn’t it be a blessing to always have about us, people who love Christ, and who love the Word of God? Wouldn’t that be something?

Wouldn’t it be something to have no one ever in your presence, not to have to associate with anyone, do business with anyone, and talk to anyone who didn’t love Christ or didn’t love the Gospel? Wouldn’t that be refreshing and wouldn’t that be a blessing to have no conflict, no cursing, no bitterness, and no blasphemy? It is not to be, it is just not so!

You have to go to work and you have to work with people who literally hate God, hate the Gospel and hate the Bible. These people delight to take God's name in vain.

You have to go to school. You young people go to school and associate with children. There are boys and girls, teenagers, and young people who drink, who take dope and do everything they can to cause their parents grief. They will not submit to the authority of the school, teachers, and principals. These young people are just trouble makers and rebels.

You have to go to the store and live in the world. The Scripture says, "*Marvel not my brethren, (the Master said), if the world hate you,*" (if you are an object of their scorn, ridicule, and hatred). It is just not to be in the world, always being in the presence of people who worship God.

A preacher has an advantage here. If people know he is a preacher, then they will watch what they say. He can't sympathize with you and I can't sympathize with you. I spend my time in my study and am always in the presence of people who love the Gospel, who receive my message. Even those who don't love the Gospel, when they find out that you are a preacher; they will curve their words and curve their blasphemy.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have all of our needs met miraculously; wouldn't that be something to have all our needs met miraculously by the hand of God? There would be no more sweat, no more toil, no more care. There would be no more care or concern for rent, taxes, payments, clothing, food, and shelter.

Money, means, possessions, and materials would be falling from heaven like manna; wouldn't that be something? It is not meant to be. A lot of these preachers have the advantage on you who are in the pulpit and on the television. They just beg and ask folks to send money; it flows in a million dollars a week.

You have to work, hold down a job, pay taxes, and furnish your own home, your own automobile, your own gas and your own utilities. It would be wonderful if heaven would open and these things would just fall out into our hands. This is just not so!

God said to Adam; "*In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread until you return to the dust. For out of the dust you came and to dust you shall return.*" Men and women are going to have to work hard, labor, sweat and toil. Paul said, "*If men won't work, don't let them eat.*"

Wouldn't it be great and wonderful to never encounter or wrestle with our old natures anymore, never again to have every thought pure and every imagination holy? Wouldn't it be wonderful to have every word perfect and to have a righteous attitude? Wouldn't it be great to never be angry anymore, never to offend in word, thought or deed?

Wouldn't it be wonderful if from now on you never encountered your "old self," your old nature, old passions, old tempers, old desires, and old conflicts? Wouldn't that be something? It is not so, I don't care what they say!

You can get a second work of grace or a "14<sup>th</sup> work of grace," or whatever you want to. You are not going to eradicate that old nature, (tell the truth now) be honest with yourself, with God, and with people. *"If any man says that he does not sin, he is a liar and the truth is not in him. Any man who says that he has no sin is deceived and makes God a liar."* That old nature is there and she is going to stay there until they bury you and it and you go to be with God.

The believer is a person of two natures, a holy nature, in the image of God who created it, and that old nature which is in the image of Adam from whom we received it.

Galatians 5:17 says, *"The flesh is in conflict and warfare against the Spirit."* Paul said, *"When I would do good, evil is present with me. I find within me a law warring against the law of my mind,"* (the spiritual man) it is there. Oh sure, it would be wonderful to never encounter that monster again. You will encounter him in every turn of the road.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to be eternally young and to always be in perfect health? That is what I hear preachers talking about, "health, wealth, and prosperity." They talk about having a Cadillac in every driveway, never being sick, never being in sorrow or trouble. They talk about you feeling good all the time and having no conflicts, no suffering, no pain or headaches. This is just not so!

Afflictions, trials, sickness, and death is the result of a sinful nature; *"In Adam all die."* These things are going to be with us, these difficulties, trials, afflictions, and sicknesses. These things are going to be with us until we leave this world.

*"It is appointed unto men once to die."* That is it and that is so; there is not other way around it. Let's be realistic, we are not playing games; let's be honest with ourselves, honest with our hearers, honest with the Word of God and be honest before God Almighty. This is a real world, a dying world but a real world; *"The fashion of this world will pass away,"* but it is real.

You will never find any true assurance, true comfort or true peace in a make-believe religion or in a fantasy world of false religion. False religion claims that something is not there just because the symptoms are; it is there and it is real.

Our Lord said in John 16:33, *“These things have I spoken unto you that in me you might have peace,”* and nowhere else, only in Christ; *“He is the Prince of Peace.”* He says, *“My peace I give unto you,”* not as the world gives; the world cannot give any peace.

*“In the world you will have tribulation.”* Do you know what tribulation is? Tribulation is trouble and trial, sickness, sorrow, and death. *“Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”*

Listen to me; will you listen honestly? Let's be honest; let's not play games. I want a faith that I can live by day by day. I don't want to have faith just when I am in a church building where a bunch of people are raising their hands, hollering, and having the preacher scream at me.

I have to have the kind of faith that supports me and strengthens me when I am out yonder in the world, out there on the street, when I am by myself or wherever I am. I have to have a real relationship with God, not a professed relationship or a phony relationship or a fantasy relationship or a relationship that needs a half a dozen people around me carrying on. I have to have a real, living union, with a living Lord. You need to have this too!

You are in the world and you will have tribulation. Our Lord is talking about real trials and real tears. Some of you have shed them and the rest of you will. You have had real trouble and have experienced this.

All experience this; He experienced it. Our Lord is talking about real sickness; *“Epaphroditus was sick unto death,”* Paul said. Several of his friends were sick. Sickness is not always lack of faith nor is it always a chastisement of God, it is part of this sinful nature.

If no one ever got sick, no one would ever die. Did you realize that? How do these perfectionist preachers explain death? These preachers are going to die. We are talking about real suffering and real sorrow. Our Lord is talking about real disappointment, tribulations, trials, and real defeat.

Our Lord is talking about real flesh too, the passions, conflicts, temper and these things with which we live. He is talking about real work, hard work and weariness. He is talking about *“wars and rumors of wars”* that will be with us until the end.

Our Lord is also talking about wayward-children. Do you know anything about that? There will be broken hearts. He is talking about the daily cares of home and family. You know something about those things, you live with them. Anyone who is over 30 years of age knows something about this.

Trust does not exempt you from trial. Trust in the Lord does not exempt you from trouble. Our Lord said, *“They that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. It is given unto us not only to believe on Him but to suffer for His sake. In this world you shall have tribulation.”*

Faith does not exempt you from affliction. David said, *“It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn the statutes of God.”* This has been the lot of every son of Adam, saved and unsaved, troubled in trial, sorrow, and heartache. This has been the lot of every son of Adam, believer or unbeliever.

This all started in the Garden of Eden when man rebelled against God. Our Lord said, *“These things have I spoken unto you.”* If you will go back and read John chapters 14, 15, and 16, you will hear our Lord comforting His disciples about the trouble that they are going to have.

Our Lord said, *“They will put you out of the synagogue. There is a time coming when people who kill you, will think that they are doing God a favor.”* He said, *“You are going to have trouble on every hand, but I have spoken these things unto you that you might understand them, lay hold of them, enter into them, that in me you might have peace in days of trouble, rest in days of conflict, comfort in tribulation.”*

Where is this comfort? This comfort is in Him. He said, *“In the world you will have tribulation but in me you will have peace in the world.”* That is where you live and that is where your address is (221 14<sup>th</sup> St. Huntington, W.Va., USA). *“In the world you are going to have tribulation.”*

It says in Romans 5:1; *“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Watch this carefully: Our Lord said, *“In the world you will have trouble but in me, (through faith in Me, through a living union with Me, being in Me by God’s grace), you*

*are going to have peace.*” It doesn’t matter how much trouble you are going to have, you are going to have peace.

The peace is the peace that He gives, not what the world gives, but a genuine peace, joy, rest and comfort that is in Him. He said, *“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”* In Christ, we have peace with God.

I have had people say, “Well; I sure wish that I could be at peace with my relatives.” He didn’t say that you would have peace with your relatives; He said that you would have peace with God. That’s right; our Lord said, *“I didn’t come to send peace to the world; I came to bring peace to my people.”*

*“I didn’t come to bring peace to the world; for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law and a man’s enemies shall be those of his own household,”* because of the Gospel. Isn’t this what He said?

So, He didn’t say that you would have peace with all of your relatives; He said, *“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”* You might say, “I wish I could have peace with the world or fellow workers; I wish I could have peace with them.”

Our Lord didn’t say that you would have peace with the world; He said that you would have peace with God. The Scripture says, *“The world will hate you.”* Christ said, *“The world hated me, before it ever met you.”*

Then, someone might say, “I wish that I could have peace with my conscience.” I don’t read where it says that we will ever have total peace with our conscience if we tell the truth or face the truth. David said, *“My sins are ever before me.”* Isaiah said, *“I’m cut off; I’m undone; I’m a sinful man with sinful lips.”* Job said, *“I abhor myself.”* Paul said, *“O wretched man that I am.”*

Do you want anymore examples? These are honest people; these are not the phony, fantasy religionists of our day which claim perfection in the flesh; it is not there. These are honest men and honest people that won’t wind end up in hell.

*“Be of good cheer; in the world you will have trouble,”* in the social world, in the political world, in the working world and in the religious world. *“Be of good cheer; (I have good news); I have overcome this world.”* He is bigger than this world; *“Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world and in me you have peace.”*

Our peace, rest, and comfort is not in ourselves, our accomplishments, our deeds, or in our positive-mental-attitude. There is a saying, "I'm ok and you're ok." Our peace is not in ourselves it is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our peace is not in human dignity; our peace is not found in ourselves, our peace is found in Christ.

What is this peace that we have in Christ?

First of all: This peace is peace with God. That is where it begins; that is where any genuine peace begins. You can't have peace in your heart or have peace of conscience or anything else unless you have peace with God.

If heaven is at war with you there is no possibility of peace. He says, "*We have peace with God being justified freely by his grace,*" (being forgiven and pardoned by Christ's precious blood and perfect life), *we have peace with God.*"

You see, God's Law was against us and Christ satisfied it. God's Justice had a curse upon us and a charge against us; Christ met it and fully satisfied that Law on our behalf. Therefore, God who is holy and just can justify sinners and not cease to be the holy God. We are sinners and haven't ceased to be sinners.

In Christ, we have "*Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*" Christ as our Saviour and Substitute, has made peace for us through the blood of His cross. "*God was in Christ reconciling (making friends), the world unto Himself. He hath reconciled us to God.*" The war is over, the war has ended; "*We are accepted in the beloved.*"

That is peace with God. That is the most joyful, wonderful, unspeakable gift that a man could have, to have peace with God. You will hear about people who say that "they have made their peace with God." You don't make peace with God; Christ makes peace with God. "*He is our peace.*"

"*Having made peace through the blood of His cross,*" there can be no peace as long as the Law is not satisfied or His justice is violated. Because Christ Jesus the Lord is our perfect Righteousness and our perfect Representative and our perfect Sin-offering, then our debt is fully paid. We are at peace with God.

Then, we have peace in our hearts and rest in spirit. My body may be aching and may have many weaknesses and frailties. I may be stooped-shouldered, weary, and getting old and tired. I have peace in spirit; I am forever young. I have rest of mind.

He said, *“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.”* I shall not lack for anything. I shall not want for mercy. I shall not lack righteousness. I shall not want for daily bread. David said, *“I have been young now I am old;. I’ve never seen God’s seed begging bread. The Lord will provide.”* That is one of His seven names, *“The Lord will provide.”*

I shall not want for anything needful. I may have a lot of things that I want to do and a lot of wishes and desires that this old flesh stimulates; I will never want for anything needful. I know this, this peace and rest of spirit is through a vital union with Christ. The Scripture says, *“I know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”*

I don’t care what it is, something good, bad, successful, failure, sickness, death or health. God is working all things together, all things, in heaven, earth, and under the earth, all people, events, people, places, and crises, whatever it may be. He is working all things together for the eternal good of those who love Him.

That is the reason that Job could say, *“Though He slay me, I will trust Him.”* If He slays me that is for my good and for the good of my family if they believe on Christ.

Samuel said to Eli, *“The Lord is going to kill your sons”* because you didn’t discipline those boys. You let them run wild and God is going to kill them. They have violated God Almighty’s Law.” Eli said, *“It is the Lord, let Him do what He will.”* That is peace and rest. He left everything into God’s hands.

That peace is not only with God and is not only in spirit and heart. I may not be in peace outwardly, but I may be greatly and visibly disturbed over some conflict. I am at peace with it; I am going to do what I can to deal with it and do what I can to suppress it. I am going to do what I can do to handle it but I am at peace about it because God has promised it and it is in God’s Word.

This peace is eternal, this rest of spirit. *“Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”* This peace is eternal. Christ said, *“My sheep hear my voice and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they will never perish.”* He said, *“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the earth.”*

Again; *“The Lord is my life and my salvation; whom shall I fear? I will not fear what man can do.”* Man is a puny, little creature. God rules all things.

I want you to look at Abraham for a moment. Abraham is called *“The friend of God. God spake to Abraham as a man speaks to his friend face to face.”* He is called *“The father of the faithful.”* In one place, he is actually called *“A pattern of those who believe.”*

Do you think that he lived in a temple all the days of his life? Do you think that is where Abraham lived? Abraham lived in a tent. He was a sojourner, that is tough living. He didn't just go to the mountains for a two-week vacation to rough it in a tent and to come back to his air-conditioned home. Abraham lived in a tent and he never called a foot of ground his own. He lived in a tent all of his days walking with God.

Do you think Abraham was always on the “hallelujah side?” Do you think that Abraham was a man without trouble? He certainly was not, but he was a man who believed God. He was a man who had peace.

For example, God came to him and said; *“You leave your father's house.”* Abraham was 75 years old. God said, *“You leave your father's house; I'm not going to tell you where you are going. You just go to a land that I will show thee.”*

Brethren, that was a tough time for Abraham; there were all of the good-bys and the tears. He and Sarah took off into the desert; that was difficult. What if you had to do that? There wouldn't be any “hallelujahs” that day, would there?

What about that strange land when he thought that the king was going to kill him to take his wife away from him? Do you reckon that was a happy day? That was a time of trouble and trial. In fact, Abraham's faith failed him for a moment. He said to Sarah; *“Just tell him you are my sister, so that he will let me live.”*

What about Lot, when his men had a conflict with Abraham and his men? Abraham was to pick out the land that he wanted. Old Lot chose the fertile valleys of Sodom. Abraham, the old man, had to head to the mountains to graze his sheep, oxen, and asses up on the side of the hill. His nephew, (his up-start nephew), was down there living on the best land in the whole plains. That wasn't too easy.

Abraham had a son by the name of Ishmael, who was 14 years old. This was the only child that he had. Here he was, nearly a hundred years old and didn't have an heir. That wasn't easy, that was a trial. The barren womb was a curse in that day.

Here he has a son 14 years old and God comes to him and says, *“Send him away; send him out; he cannot stay here with the child of promise.”* That is one of the toughest days that Abraham ever had in his life.

To top it all off, the Lord came to him and said; *“Take your son Isaac and offer him on an altar as a sacrifice to me. In the world you will have tribulation,”* if you belong to God. *“If you be without chastisement you are a bastard and not a son anyway.”*

Christ said. *“In the world you will have tribulation. I have overcome the world. With Me you will have peace.”*