

Truths For Peace in Christ (John 16:28-33a)

Please take the word of Christ and turn to John 16 and as we teach through this gospel we're at the last part of this upper room message that began back in chapter 13. This is a world-changing message, the most important words Jesus had for His disciples before the most important event in history, His death on the cross and His resurrection. All of God's Word is inspired and profitable, but this part is especially directly relevant for life application and potential transformation in every part. Before Jesus died He left them urgent truths, these vital realities to sustain them after He would be gone, essential promises that culminate in peace and victory in a world-overcoming Christ. 16:33 *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.*

William Hendriksen wrote on this: 'Truly beautiful and full of majesty is the finale of Christ's Farewell to his disciples. The note of victory prevails. We behold the Son of Man in the full consciousness of his triumph. Every word spells exultation over the accomplishment of the task ... assigned. Every clause is filled with resolute determination to carry out the Father's will.'¹

There is so much just in v. 33. The 2nd half of the verse ('*take heart, I have overcome the world*') could be a whole sermon in itself, and it will be, next week Lord-willing. We'll talk about how Christ overcoming and conquering should give us courage and strengthen our hearts in a world of trouble. But for today, there's plenty in just the first part of v. 33, how we can have peace in Christ through His words even when tribulation rocks our world. There's so much just in the first sentence of v. 33, one message won't exhaust it or plumb its depths. But let's at least begin the exploration for our edification, and above all for the exaltation of our glorious God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Let's look at the context starting in v. 28: '*I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.*'²⁹ *His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech!"³⁰ Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.*'³¹ *Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe?"³² Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.*³³ *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.'*

This is a world of trouble, personally, internationally (ISIS, Iran, N Korea). A little under 80 years ago the world was in tribulation and turmoil over the threat of war from Nazi Germany. Britain tried to avoid war and to appease Hitler as British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain met with him in 1938 along with Mussolini and the French Prime Minister to negotiate a peace. Many of you know the famous words Chamberlain declared as he returned to London ‘peace for our time.’ I heard a recording of the speech, Sept ’38:

‘which has now been achieved is, in my view, only the prelude to a larger settlement in which all Europe may find peace [applause]. This morning I had another talk with the German Chancellor, Herr Hitler, and here is the paper which bears his name upon it as well as mine [great applause] ... We regard the agreement signed last night ... as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.’ [later shouts of ‘3 cheers for Mr. Chamberlain’ then the crowd sang ‘he’s a jolly good fellow’]

Later that day in the area of Buckingham Palace he addressed leaders of the British royalty, government and nation, announcing this effort had brought ‘peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time.’ But less than a year later, Hitler invaded Poland, and Great Britain went to war with Germany. Europe and the world were soon engulfed in World War II, the deadliest conflict in human history. Man’s promises of peace are empty and short-lived, but the Lord Jesus promises a true lasting peace for His people that can’t be broken: *‘my covenant of peace shall not be removed says the Lord’* Isa 54:10. He didn’t just announce it, He achieved it, signed it in His blood.

What Jesus promises here isn’t peace in military agreements. He says in v. 33 *‘I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.’* It’s ‘in me,’ He says, not ‘in military might.’ This isn’t the peace that Chamberlain thought he had - the absence or avoidance of conflict – this is peace actually in the midst of conflict, as the next phrase in v. 33 shows: *‘In the world you will have tribulation...’* Just one day earlier Jesus spoke of tribulation in the world till the end, wars and rumors of wars till His second coming (Mt 24). Christians don’t avoid tribulation, they’re promised tribulation, but here He promises peace – not internationally but internally – peace despite conflict. He says in v. 33 *‘in the world you will have tribulation’* but *‘in me...peace’*

Before we can unpack this promise and peace in v. 33 we need the context:

1. What this means in the original context
2. What the means of peace are, i.e., what it means for us, application

What does it mean starting v. 28? *'I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.'*

That's really a summary of the gospel that's the source of peace in Christ:

- **Deity** of Jesus—Jesus is God (*I came from the Father ...*)
 - o 1:14b *'his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father...'*
- **Incarnation**—God became man (*...and have come into the world...*)
 - o 1:14a *'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...'*
- **Cross** of Jesus – His Death (*...and now I am leaving the world...*)
- **Resurrection** and ascension to heaven (*...and going to the Father.*)

Without the gospel, there can be no peace with God. The peace promised in v. 33 is *'in me,'* Jesus says. It's *'in Christ,'* meaning for those in relationship with Christ, in union with Christ, which is part of salvation by faith in Him. This is the new covenant peace of the OT prophets, not just salvation peace when we first believe, a subjective peace we experience more and more the more we put our trust in the Lord. Isaiah 26:3 *You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you.* Perfect peace for minds stayed on God. Isaiah 66:12 *thus says the LORD, "Behold I will extend peace to her like a river..."*

Peace like a river attends my way when sorrows like sea billows roll

Whatever my lot Thou hast taught me to say it is well, it is well with my soul²

Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace...perfect yet it floweth fuller every day

Stayed upon Jehovah hearts are fully blest, finding as He promised perfect peace³

The prophet Isaiah said *there is no peace for the wicked* (48:22) but *'unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...his name shall be called wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of _____.* *Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end'* 9:6-7.

That Son from the Father was the mighty God, and He came into the world as a man, a child born, so He could be the Prince of Peace. That's why as the child was born in Bethlehem, when the son was given to Mary, angels announced *'peace on earth.'* But the mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled part of the Christmas song also needed the 3rd part of v. 28 here, the God-man leaving the world in death. The prophet Isaiah also explained that, too, that Messiah would be *'pierced for our transgressions...crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed'* (53:5). And the same context of Isaiah spoke of the 4th part of this gospel summary, as He rose in victory, Isa 52:7 says *'How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace...who proclaim salvation...'* (NIV). The feet of Jesus once nailed to the cross proclaimed salvation as He rose and they stood on the mountain where Jesus brought good news, the gospel proclamation of peace

Turn to Jn 20 and I want you to see this. The beautiful Savior's nail-pierced feet stood before His disciples after the resurrection. What's His first word? 20:19 *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "**Peace be with you.**"*²⁰ *When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.*²¹ *Jesus said to them again, "**Peace be with you.**"*...²⁶ *Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "**Peace be with you.**"* To fearful and doubting believers, peace in Christ is promised through the gospel, Christ's life, death and resurrection.

[Rom 5 lists the first benefit of the gospel as peace with God in Christ]

Peace on earth was promised at His birth and peace was accomplished after He died and rose. Everything in 16:28 He did for their peace. He came from God the Father as God the Son the Prince of Peace to bring peace on earth in His earthly life. And when He left the world in death then rose again, His first word repeatedly is *peace*. Alexander MacLaren wrote of these 4 gospel facts in 16:28 starting with the deity of Christ in heaven, then 'the voluntary coming to earth; the voluntary leaving earth, and again, the dwelling with the Father – are the walls of the strong fortress into which we may flee and be safe...Strike one of them away, and it totters into ruin. Make the whole Christ your Christ: for nothing less than the whole Christ, 'conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, ... crucified, dead, and buried ... ascended into Heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God' is strong enough to help your infirmities, vast enough to satisfy your desires, loving enough to love you as you need, or able to deliver you from your sins...'"⁴

An old hymn says: For He called me closer to Him, Bade my doubting tremors cease;

And when I had fully trusted, Filled my soul with perfect peace.

O the peace my Saviour gives, Peace I never knew before... Since I learned to trust Him more.

So back in Jn 16, before you can have peace in v. 33 you need the gospel of v. 28. There is no peace for the wicked, the Scripture says, so the first step toward peace is to repent of your wicked ways, turn from your sin and trust in Jesus as v. 28 reveals Him: He's fully God but He came from the Father into the world as fully man to bring peace on earth, He left the world dying for sins to purchase our peace, and He rose to speak 'peace' to His disciples and returned to heaven to reign for our peace. Peace is rooted in the gospel. **16:29** *His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech!"*³⁰ *Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you [i.e., 'you don't need us to ask questions for you to know what we're thinking]; this is why we believe that you came from God"*

Jesus in v. 28 isn't talking in figures of speech (ex: vine, branches in Jn 15). They understood His clear straightforward words in 1st part of v. 28, '*came from God*' meant Jesus had a divine origin and nature, He knew all things as only God could. But the 2nd half of v. 28, what Jesus said about leaving in death and going to heaven they never got it till after the resurrection. They were believers, but their shallow faith had no room for a suffering Messiah. In v. 31 Jesus asks "*Do you now believe?*" I don't think He's questioning if they're true believers or calling the character of their faith into question, but the content of their faith was limited and premature confidence in their faith was unwarranted.³² *Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone.*

That night as they went out from the upper room, when Jesus was betrayed and arrested, the disciples scattered and left Jesus. At the start of Jn 20 Peter and John are in their own places in Jerusalem and at the start of Jn 21 they'd packed it up and gone home to Galilee, back to what they're at home with, the old life of fishing instead of ministry. To say 'I'm going home' is to say 'I'm done.' The scattering sheep as the shepherd is struck fulfills Zech 13:7.

James Boice wrote: 'each would be scattered to his own little world ... each would be isolated in it. With the center gone, there would no longer be any cohesion...We are scattered...sometimes by schism ... sometimes merely by our suspicion of other Christians...confused...Circumstances, sickness, and other troubles rattle us. We are isolated, for Christians are often terribly alone...notice that in all of these respects - scattered, confused, isolated - Jesus is the exact opposite of the disciples. They scattered at the time of his arrest, but Jesus stood firm...They were confused, but he was strong ... as a result of which they recovered faith from him. They were isolated. But he, even though he was abandoned by them, could say [at the end of v. 32] '*But I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*' They emerged from their isolation when he came to them again following the resurrection ... Our strength is not in our faith but in him who is the object of it. It is in Jesus.'⁵

That's some of what v. 28-32 means, what are some means of peace in v. 33

³³ *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace ...*

So what are some of the means for peace, or ways we can apply peace in the Lord? Jesus said 'these things' He said so you may have peace, so how do 'these things' He said in the upper room give us peace? Let's work our way back through what He just said at the end of v. 32: God doesn't leave alone.

v. 32 said they would leave the Lord alone but look back at Jn 14:18 where He used the same word leave to promise the Lord won't leave them alone: **14:18** *"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."* The disciples would leave Jesus that night, but He would not leave them. Jesus wouldn't scatter from them, He would come to gather them not as orphans but as the children of God. They would not be left alone like orphans, fatherless and comfortless. Jesus would come to them to adopt them as His own brothers. On the day of His resurrection He called them '*my brothers*' for the 1st time (20:17), because His work of redemption was done, the adoption was paid for, and as sons of God, He will never leave them alone. That's our peace.

The Lord promised peace His people in the OT as they prepared to enter the promised land, through tribulation: *"The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged"* (Dt 31:8 NIV). Sounds a lot like Jesus in Jn 16, He says God is with Him, God won't leave Him alone, so Jesus tells them to take courage despite the tribulation, have peace in the Lord who's with you. Jesus will never leave us as orphans and never forsakes us from His family!

Jesus did leave when He left earth, but I take v. 18 as a promise of his Spirit coming to adopt us. Jesus comes to believers as the Spirit of Christ indwells them permanently and relationally, moving them to pray to God as 'Abba!':
²⁵ *"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.* There's the 'these things I have spoken' again, that's a phrase He uses for the things He said in the upper room, and they include in the next verse the Holy Spirit who the Father would send after Jesus went back to the Father. It's after He introduces the Holy Spirit in v. 26 that He introduces our peace in v. 27: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*

That's the same word *leave* as v. 18. He promises not to leave them orphans but He will leave them peace. It's His peace He gives, not the world's peace that's based on circumstances or cease fires or anything superficial. This is a supernatural peace, an out-of-this-world peace that transcends our earthly understanding and guards our hearts and minds in Christ to not be troubled. This peace is a gift, but it's also a responsibility in the 2nd half of v. 27: *Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.* Jesus gives us peace but we need to live in light of it, we need to not let our hearts be fearful. It's not a passive thing, we have to actively apply this and appropriate the peace we've been given, remembering the words He said that we may have peace.

How do we not let our hearts be troubled? v. 1 *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.”* We have to trust God, trust Christ, that He's sovereign, that what He's spoken in His Word is sufficient.

So let's go back to Jn 16 and study some of the means of peace to apply this

Power of the Gospel - where it starts in v. 28, the facts of salvation in Jesus

- In the gospel Jesus commands a storm *‘peace be still’* and then the next chapter He tells a trembling lady *‘your faith has saved you, go in peace’* (Mk 4:39, 5:34). Christ's power in the gospel that brought troubled wind and waves to be still also brought peace to that woman's trembling heart
- Jesus in the gospel is the ‘name that charms our fears that bids our sorrows cease. It's music in a sinner's ears of life and health and *peace*’⁶
- Eph 1 begins with grace to you and peace from God, then it summarizes the gospel in chapter 2, saying Jesus *‘himself is our peace...and he came and preached peace to you were far off and peace to you who were near [then after 3 chapters of gospel, in 4:3 it calls us to]...maintain...peace’*
- Eph 6 says we must stand firm, our feet in *‘the preparation of the gospel of peace’* (NASB). We need to prepare daily for battle in gospel peace
- Living in light of the gospel in our relationships gives peace: 2 Cor 13:2 *‘Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace and the God of...peace will be with you.’* If peace isn't with us and in us, we may need to ask if we're living out the gospel, restoring relationships with others by forgiveness and aiming for unity and peace?

Promise of the Spirit - when end of v. 28 mentions Jesus leaving back to the Father, He just promised them in v. 7-14 that's when the Spirit comes. In v. 27 He talks about love, in v. 24 He talks about joy, and now in v. 33 He talks about peace. What's the fruit of the Spirit? Love, joy, and peace, these are fruit the Spirit produces. These aren't natural graces we produce in our fallen hearts, these are gifts the Spirit grows in us like fruit that we're to cultivate; the love of the Lord, the joy of the Lord, the peace of the Lord.

- If peace is the fruit of the Spirit, how do we cultivate the fruit of peace?
- Rom 8:6 says *‘to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.’* He prays in 15:13 that God would *‘fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.’* We need to set our mind on God's Spirit and ask His help for peace in believing

Presence of the Father - v. 32b *...I am not alone, for the Father is with me.*

- Knowing the Father is with you, you're never alone, should bring peace
- There's no greater source or peace than God never leaving or forsaking

Pardon for sin and a **peace** that endureth, **Thy own dear presence** to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright **hope for tomorrow**, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!⁷
 Great is the Thy faithfulness, O God my Father ... even if everyone else is unfaithful!

Another hymn says of God the Father: 'He sendeth more strength when the burdens increase
 To added affliction He addeth His mercy, To multiplied trials, He **multiplies peace**⁸
 His love has no limit, His grace has no measure, His power no boundary known unto man,
 For our of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

Peace in Jesus through His Word

³³ *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.*

Jesus promised earlier to give them His peace, here it's through His Word. 'These things' in the immediate context would include what these disciples knew from His words. Like v. 30 we need to trust His words, Jesus knows all things, knows things better than we do, knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows what He's doing in this world. He's sovereign over the world. The end of v. 33 says He overcomes the world. He's the conqueror of the world, the flesh, and the devil, we'll study that more next week, this should help us to take heart and take courage as we take by faith these truths

Jesus said these words in the upper room that in Him believers would have peace. In the world we won't find peace, in our feelings we can be anxious, in our life we find conflict instead of peace, but in our Lord there is peace, a peace the world can't give and a peace the world can't take away. Notice in v. 33 this peace comes through what Jesus has said here, it's not just in Him it's through His Word, these things He said so we'll have peace. It includes the things He had just spoken in Jn 15 minutes earlier: '*Abide in me, and I in you...If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you... Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*' (15:4, 7, 5)

The fruit of the Spirit is peace, and we can have much peace as we abide in Christ, meaning rely on Christ, as we remain in the Word of Christ letting it have its abiding work in us. As we do that, Jesus says, if we wish for peace and ask for peace, it will be done for us. Apart from Christ I can do nothing to produce or preserve peace of mind, but Christ and His Word gives peace.

In Jesus for peace I abide, And as I keep close to His side,
 There's nothing but peace doth betide, Sweet peace, the gift of God's love.
 Peace, perfect peace, In this dark world of sin? The blood of Jesus whispers "Peace" within.
 Peace, perfect peace, With sorrows surging 'round? In Jesus resting ... calm is found.
 Peace, perfect peace, Our future all unknown? Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.⁹

Let's close in Phil 4 where Paul puts this altogether. He begins Philippians talking about how God works '*through your prayers and the help of the Holy Spirit*' in chapter 1 (v. 19), then talks about the power of the gospel in chapter 2 (first 2 keys to peace in our study) then he applies the last 2 keys in chapter 4. At the end of v. 5 He says God is near (that's the 3rd key of our study, remembering we're never alone, God is always near, He's at hand).

Phil 4:6 *do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*⁷ *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*⁸ *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*⁹ *What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you...¹⁹ And my God will supply every need...*

It's through prayer with thanksgiving that God supplies our needs, including peace. How do we practice these things and know this peace in prayer when we have anxieties and difficulties? Come back tonight because that's what I want to teach on, how we can use the Scriptures like the Psalms to pray like Paul calls us to so we can have the peace he had even in prison with his life on the line. If you want to apply this further, if you want a stronger prayer life, come back tonight for part 2 on this point (unless you have it mastered)

The truth is we can all grow in prayer and there's a real practical way I've found. A Puritan wrote prayer is like a 'dove which, when sent out, returns again, bringing with it the olive-leave, namely peace of heart ... Moses' rod, which brings forth the water of consolation out of the rock of salvation ... David's harp, before which the evil spirit flies. Prayer is the key to heaven's treasures' [and J.C. Ryle adds to that based on John 16] He that prays little and coldly must not expect to know much of "joy and peace in believing."¹⁰

Paul talks about joy in v. 4 in the Lord and peace in the Lord in v. 7 through prayer, not as the world gives, a peace that doesn't make sense to the world. It comes through thanksgiving and thinking about certain things, the power of the gospel, the promise of the Spirit, the presence of the Father, the peace in Christ through His Word. Don't dwell on other things, set your mind here and apply this message, practice these things, and not only will the peace of God be with you, the God of peace will be with you. Let's pray to apply this

¹ William Hendriksen, *John* (Baker, NTC), p. 338-39.

² Horatio Spafford, "It is Well."

³ Frances Havergal, "Like a River Glorious."

⁴ Alexander MacLaren, as cited by James Boice, *John 13-17*, p. 1238.

⁵ Boice, 1240-41.

⁶ Charles Wesley, "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing."

⁷ Thomas Chisholm, "Great is Thy Faithfulness."

⁸ Annie Johnson Flint, "He Giveth More Grace."

⁹ Edward Bickersteth, "Peace, Perfect Peace."

¹⁰ J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on John*, notes on 16.24, citing John Gerhard.