

I Have Overcome, Pt. 1 (John 16:25–33)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (8/7/2022)

Introduction

1. The last section of Christ's final discourse (16:25–33) finishes what the disciples needed to hear before He left them. The main theme of His farewell counsel was *joy* in tribulation. In Jesus' leaving there would be a day in which the believers would be better off than if He remained. That day would be the *day of the Spirit*, and in that day, they would understand what God was doing.
2. The main theme of the text is the coming *day*—“*that day*,” the age of the Spirit, when believers will function in a way that will glorify God, advance His kingdom, and honor His Son. In the last verse, the Lord emphasized that *in Him*, believers would have peace, but in the world, they would have tribulation. Their peace in tribulation would be because the saints share in Christ's victory. Understanding this, the believers would have a proper balance in the midst of persecution. In that day, like Christ, the saints would also be *overcomers* in the world.
3. Jesus came into the world to secure His own. Now He was about to leave them in the world for their benefit as well. These verses review this purpose, gaining a people for Himself who would continue His work in His absence. What a privilege—the people of God, His agents to multiply sons and daughters in Christ.

In today's text, Jesus warned the disciples that they needed far more than they thought they had to live out God's purpose in the faith they embraced. Their self-confidence made them rock-sure they would stand for Jesus, no matter what. Their true character proved otherwise. However, God's plan was to change them for good.

I. Assessment and Remedy (vv. 25–28)

1. Jesus spoke in “*figures of speech*” in verse 25. Jesus used this word to explain that the disciples could not until then understand what God was doing in Christ's coming to earth. The Greek word refers to obscure utterances, something that when spoken is not readily understood and needs considerable explanation.
 - a. Speakers may fail in their words and may not convey the thought intended. That is one of the great problems of communication. However, when Bible speakers use obscure utterances, one wonders if the translators perhaps are at fault for obscuring what was spoken, but not here; Jesus deliberately obscured His meaning.
 - b. The Greek word used here has a bit different emphasis. It is a saying out of the usual course or deviating from the usual manner of speaking—a *dark* saying, for example, 1 Corinthians 2:14.
2. The disciples had not yet been able to understand either Jesus or his purpose in coming. Although they were truly believers, they lacked the spiritual resources to understand spiritual truth.

II. The Hour and That Day

1. Jesus' dark sayings related to the Father and to *Christ's hour*, which was now upon them. He explained to them, in effect, “I've been able to speak to you in what seems to you to be only obscure language.” Maybe they were just plain utterances, but what He said went over the disciples' heads. It was now imperative that they understand. Jesus stressed three things the disciples needed to understand.

- a. They needed to understand what *His hour* signified. He had previously argued that His hour had not yet come (John 2:4; 7:30). However, in Chapter 12, He declared that His hour had come (12:23). In this text, His hour was imminent. He, then, promised the Holy Spirit so that His people would have His presence to enable them in their time—“*in that day.*” When that would occur, the disciples and, subsequently, their converts and all followers of Jesus would have their *day*.
 - b. In that day, they would understand what Jesus wanted to convey to them about the Father. That is what Jesus meant when He said, “*I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech, but will tell you plainly about the Father.*” The disciples would have an interpreter “*in that day*” (v. 26).
 - c. “*In that day*” also involves an understanding of *prayer*. What Jesus taught here is essential, which is asking in Jesus’ name. The heart of prayer is *asking*. “When I’m gone, you will have needs. All you must do is ask the Father in my name, and He will give what you need.”
2. Jesus brings two things together here to show what is involved in proper praying. Until now they had asked nothing in His name, so He commands them, “*Ask,*” and then promises, “*You will receive.*” God is glorified by our asking, and our joy is increased in the receiving.
 3. What did Jesus mean in the last part of verse 20, where He said, “*I do not say to you that I will ask the father on your behalf*”? Here is a very precious truth. Jesus declared to the disciples that “*in my name*” did not mean that He was needed as a go-between. They would have *direct access* to God the Father.
 4. They would enjoy this access to the Father because the Father Himself loved them. The love relationship here expressed is based on *obedience* (John 15:9, 10). Our love relationship with the Father depends on a response of obedience. Jesus said this was how it worked with Him, and that is how it would work with the disciples as well. Further note that His joy would be theirs and their joy would be full. This is directly connected to the issue of the prayer life. So, praying is an integral part of this loving relationship of obedience that believers have with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3; John 15:12–17). Our love for the Father is evidenced in our obedience.

In John 15, Jesus used the *agape* (love), but in John 16, when Jesus said the Father Himself loved them, He used the word *phileo*. The difference is only in that there is in *phileo* a request or requirement for reciprocal relationship, which is not inherent in *agape*.

The disciples needed to understand their failure had grave consequences. Just so, our failures may have grave consequences. Obedience, while necessary, is not about effort on the believer’s part to earn his way into something. It is that which the Spirit of God provides for us in our walk with Christ. However, it had better be there because if there is no obedience one cannot claim saving faith.

Lesson

1. Observe the clear connection between our love for the Lord and our prayer life. Paul Miller stated that a shocking 90% of Christians do not have a functioning prayer life. How is your prayer life and life in the Word of God?