

## I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD

- A. Introduction: A few months ago, we began a series of lessons about the peace that God gives. We opened these lessons with a statement that Jesus made in John 16:33.
1. We focused on the first part of the verse—these things I have spoken unto you that in Me you might have peace. We’ve talked much about the peace that Jesus gives, including both peace between God and man and peace of mind.
  2. However, we never went into detail about the second part of the verse where Jesus assured His followers that we can have peace because He has overcome the world. Over the next several weeks, we’re going to revisit this verse and address what Jesus meant by His statement.
- B. We begin with context. Context is critical to proper understanding of any Bible passage. Everything in the Bible was spoken or written by real people to other real people to impart information. Therefore, individual verses cannot mean something to us that they would not have meant to the original hearers and readers.
1. Jesus was born into the Jewish people group (also known as Abraham’s descendants, Hebrews and Israel). Understanding of their culture and history is vital to understanding the context of Jesus’ words.
    - a. Jesus spoke the words in John 16:33 at the end of what we call the Last Supper, celebrated with His twelve apostles the night before He was crucified.
      1. The meal was actually a Passover meal, an annual celebration instituted by God a little over 1400 years earlier.
      2. The feast of Passover was meant to remind the Hebrew people of their deliverance from Egyptian slavery by God’s power. Ex 12:14; Ex 13:8-9
    - b. Let’s get the back story. About 1700 BC, the ancestors of the men with whom Jesus celebrated the Passover that year went to Egypt as invited guests. Several generations passed and the Israelites grew from 75 in number to several million. Eventually, a Pharaoh (king) came to power who enslaved and oppressed the Israelites.
      1. God raised up a man named Moses to lead Israel out of bondage and back to their ancestral home, the land of Canaan (modern day Israel). Pharaoh refused to let Israel go.
      2. Over a nine month period, through a series of power demonstrations by God (often referred to as plagues), Pharaoh was persuaded to let the Hebrew people return to their homeland.
    - c. The night before the tenth and final plague (the death of the firstborn or chief male of every family) God gave Israel specific instructions about what they were to do in preparation for this last plague,
      1. They were to sacrifice a lamb and put its blood on the top and sides of the door of their homes, then roast the lamb and eat it, along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.
      2. That night the Egyptians were judged for idol worship and for not acknowledging Almighty God as the Only, True God. However, judgment passed over every house that had the blood of the lamb over the door, and Israel left Egypt bondage that night, with instructions to celebrate this feast every year as a reminder of God’s deliverance. Ex 12:1-13:10
    - d. This was a real event, but it also pictured what Jesus would do. This event was called redemption (Ex 6:6; Ex 15:13). Jesus came to earth to redeem or deliver all who put faith in Him from bondage to sin, corruption, and death (I Pet 1:18-19).
  2. The night before Jesus was crucified, this particular Passover meal (the Last Supper) was normal. It was like all the other Passover meals that Jesus and His disciples celebrated every year of their lives as faithful Jews. But when the supper was ending, the evening took an extraordinary turn.
    - a. Matt 26:26-28—Jesus applied the two main elements of the Passover meal (unleavened bread and wine) to Himself. He took bread and wine and offered it to the twelve telling them: This is my body and blood. Eat and drink.

1. By the time Jesus came into the world, many laws, rituals, and customs regarding the Passover meal had developed and been passed down through the centuries.
  2. Four cups of wine were offered with a blessing over the course of the meal, corresponding to four promises God made to Israel (Ex 6:6-7) before He delivered them from Egypt. The third cup immediately following the meal corresponded to the third promise: I will redeem you.
  - b. There's a lot in Jesus' words that we aren't going to address now. But note one point. Jesus referred to the cup of wine as His blood, the blood of the New Testament (covenant) which is shed for the remission of sin. This would have stunned the twelve men reclining at the Passover table.
    1. Right after God delivered Israel from Egypt He made a covenant (a solemn, binding contract) with these people that has become known as the Old Covenant. God's part of the covenant was that He would protect and provide for the Israelites. Their part was to worship Him (Jehovah) only (many lessons for another day).
    2. Throughout their history (up until 400 years before Jesus came into this world) Israel repeatedly broke their part of the covenant by abandoning Almighty God to worship other gods and idols.
      - A. At various times in this dark history the prophets foretold of the coming of a new covenant between God and man, one in which men's hearts would be changed. Jer 31:31-34
      - B. The prophet Daniel wrote about the time when God will make an end to and make reconciliation for sin and bring in everlasting righteousness through the Messiah (Hebrew means Anointed. *Christos* is the Greek word for anointed). Dan 9:24-25
    3. Jesus' apostles had been with Him for over three years and they had come to believe that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Anointed One sent by God. Matt 16:16; John 6:69
  3. Covenants were ratified or confirmed with blood. At this last Passover meal Jesus was telling these men that He was about to ratify the foretold New Covenant and that His blood would ratify it. His blood would be shed for the remission (wiping out) of sin to bring righteousness to men.
- C. Luke's gospel account of the Last Supper gives us an additional and important detail. At the outset of the meal Jesus told His apostles: I have earnestly and intensely desired to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer (Luke 22:15, Amp).
1. Jesus had already told His men that He was going to Jerusalem to suffer, die, and be raised from the dead (Matt 16:21). His apostles didn't understand what was about to happen to Him. After the resurrection, He would explain it all to them (Luke 24:44-48).
    - a. Jesus knew that the Cross and all the intense suffering that went with it lay just ahead of Him. Yet He earnestly and intensely desired the unfolding of these events.
    - b. You may wonder how that statement is consistent with Jesus' later agony in the Garden of Gethsemane where He prayed: If possible, let this cup of suffering pass from Me. Matt 26:36-39
      1. One, as a man (Jesus in His humanity) recognized the suffering ahead and His flesh recoiled from it. Jesus needed God's grace to strengthen Him to taste death for every man. Heb 2:9
      2. As a man He had to face the temptation to turn away from God's will for Him. He triumphed over the temptation and endured the Cross because He saw the end result. Heb 4:15; Heb 12:2
  2. Jesus knew what lay ahead of Him, both good and bad. But this is why He came to earth—to seek and save the lost. The men who joined Jesus at the Passover meal the night before His crucifixion would have been present when Jesus uttered those words. Let's get the context.
    - a. Luke 19:1-10—Jesus went to the city of Jericho and, as He was passing through town, a man of short stature name Zacchaeus climbed a tree to get a better look.
      1. Zacchaeus was a publican, a Jew who collected taxes from his own people on behalf of the hated Roman government. In fact, he was a chief publican (he had other tax collectors working for him), and he was rich.

2. Jesus saw him and directed him to come down because I am going to be a guest at your house today. He (Zacchaeus) “received and welcomed Him (Jesus) joyfully” (v6, Amp).
- b. When the crowd saw and heard this interchange, they murmured because Zacchaeus was a sinner. Publicans were despised by their fellow countrymen and considered as bad as non-Jews (Gentile).
  1. That day Zacchaeus repented of his sin: I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have overcharged people or their taxes, I will give them back four times as much (v8, NLT).
  2. Repentance is a change of mind and purpose that is expressed through actions. And Jesus declared to him: Salvation has come to this house.
- c. That is that context of Jesus’ statement (Luke 19:10): The Son of Man has come to search for those who are lost and to save them (20<sup>th</sup> Cent); to seek out and to give life to those who are lost (TPT).
3. Luke 15:1-32—Last week we looked at three parables Jesus told about lost items (a sheep, a coin, and a son) in response to criticism from the scribes and Pharisees (Jewish religious leaders) over the fact that He regularly associated with these outcasts of Jewish society.
  - a. Jesus described how the owners of the sheep and coin searched diligently for their sheep and coin and rejoiced when they found it. Then Jesus described in detail how the father of the lost son not only rejoiced over his son’s return, but cleansed and restored him to his place as a son because he loved him.
    1. Jesus made it clear to His critics that lost men have value to God and that He rejoices when one of them comes back to Him through repentance and faith.
    2. Jesus came into this world to seek and save lost men and women so that they (we) can be delivered from the guilt and power of sin and restored to their (our) created positions as holy, righteous sons and daughters of God who are fully pleasing to Him in every thought, word, attitude and action.
  - b. Jesus was eager to make it possible for men and women to be restored to their created purpose by paying the price for our sin because, in doing so, He opened the way for God to indwell us and make us His sons and daughters by birth. Jesus opened the way for us to be restored to our position as sons and daughters who glorify our Father as we live in loving relationship with Him.
4. The word lost is translated from a Greek word that means to destroy or lose utterly, to ruin wholly or fully. This same word is translated perish in John 3:16. Jesus died so that men and women would not perish but have eternal life. In other words, perish means loss of eternal life.
  - a. Luke 15:24—The father of the lost son described what it meant that his son had come back home in these terms: He was dead, now he is alive; he was lost, now he is found. To be lost is to be dead. To be found is to be alive
  - b. Death is present in creation because of Adam’s sin (Gen 2:17; Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12). There is more to death than death of the body. There is an ultimate death (not ceasing to exist), but spiritual death or separation from God who is life.
    1. No one ceases to exist when their body ceases to live. They (the man or woman on the inside) pass into another dimension (Heaven or Hell).
    2. Paul described men who are physically alive, but cut off from God because of sin, as dead: You were dead through your trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1, ASV); estranged from (Conybeare), cut off from (20<sup>th</sup> Cent); excluded from (NASB); the life God gives (Beck, Eph 4:18).
  - c. Jesus went to the Cross to remedy both spiritual and physical death. By dying paying the price for sin on the Cross, He opened the way for dead men to receive life.
    1. Spiritual life (the life in God Himself)—through new birth and union with Christ and the life in Him. John 1:12-13; I John 5:1; etc.
    2. Physical life (restoration of the body)—through resurrection of the physical body (made immortal and incorruptible) in connection with Jesus’ second coming.

- D. Conclusion: We have established the context of Jesus' statement about overcoming the world (John 16:33). Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world. He spoke these words to men who believed that He was the Christ, the Messiah. Now, they've been informed that He is about to establish the promised New Covenant.
1. Although Jesus made a number of statements at the Last Supper aimed at preparing His apostles for the fact that He was going to leave them soon, they must have had a sense of expectancy and excitement about what they thought was soon going to happen.
    - a. Little did they know that Jesus would shortly be arrested, tried, and sentenced to death. By this time tomorrow, He would be dead and they would be scattered, fearful, and hopeless.
    - b. Jesus knew all this as He spoke to them that night. His statement: Be of good cheer (be encouraged) for I have overcome the world was meant to give them peace of mind.
      1. The events that will occur over the next three days (from Thursday night to Sunday morning) are a vivid illustration of what it means that Jesus has overcome the world.
      2. A quick side note. Three days did not necessarily mean 72 hours. At that time, in that culture, any part of a day was considered a day. It was a Hebrew figure of speech. Three days and nights refers to any part of three days and nights.
  2. The events surrounding Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection will show (among many other things) how God uses the harsh realities of life in a sin cursed, sin damaged world and causes them to serve His ultimate purpose for a family.
    - a. Luke 22:3; Acts 2:23; I Cor 2:7-8—Wicked men inspired by Satan crucified the Lord. However, Almighty God knew before He created this world what would happen on that day in the city of Jerusalem and saw a way to work it into His plan for a family and bring tremendous good out of it.
    - b. Jesus took our sin on Himself at the Cross and, through His death, satisfied Divine Justice on our behalf. He opened the way for all who put faith in Him to be declared not guilty of sin and transformed from sinners into holy, righteous sons and daughters of God.
    - c. Through His death Jesus broke the power of death over humanity. Heb 2:14-15—Jesus also became flesh and blood...For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he deliver those who have lived all their lives as slaves to the fear of dying (NLT).
      1. Death is the final, irreversible enemy common to all men and women. We fear it because it is inevitable and irreversible. It is the fate of humanity since the fall of man.
      2. The prophet Hosea spoke these words in a message to Samaria (northern tribes of Israel when they had abandoned God for idols). His words are a message for those people, but like many Old Testament passages, it looked into the future.
        - A. Hosea 13:14—I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction (NIV)
        - B. Paul, in the context of resurrection of the dead (available to all who put faith in Christ) quotes this passage. I Cor 15:55
  3. These men were going to see Jesus die and then come out of death through resurrection. Once He is risen He will use the Scriptures to explain to them what had happened over the previous three days and what He accomplished. Luke 24:44-46
    - a. And, as they went forth to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus to the world they would have a vivid illustration that nothing can come against us that is bigger than God. Therefore we can have peace of mind as we face this broken world without fear because He has overcome the world.
    - b. We have much more to say next week!