
Title: Living In-Between

Text: John 16:33

Thesis: My main point is How Jesus' followers should respond to and live with suffering.

Series: The problem of evil

Date: 7 /25 /2021

Introduction

1. Last week I attempted to explain the place of evil in our current world. I biblically concluded that evil would remain until the final return of Jesus, at which time He will destroy evil in all its forms, and all of His followers will live evil free forever. Of course, this does not exclude the eternal judgment of evil in the "lake of fire" (Revelation 20:11-15). By destroy, Jesus will forever segregate evil from anything good.
2. Today, I spend more time in what I titled "living in-between." Unfortunately, everyone is living with the presence of evil and cannot escape its harmful assaults while we wait for King Jesus to destroy evil. It is crucial that Jesus' followers, however, do not live with a defeated mindset. As evil (by evil, I mean Satan and his forces) battles against us, Jesus informs us to "take heart" because rather than viewing ourselves as victims, we are to live as overcomers.
3. Even as followers of Jesus, we are not immune to the "feelism" so prevalent in cultural Christianity that focuses strongly on "how I feel" instead of what Jesus says. He calls His followers to the action of "taking heart." We must move beyond how we feel and live out the truth of what Jesus said.
4. Today, I want to develop how to live as overcomers while waiting for Jesus to destroy evil.

Discussion

1. John 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."
 - 1.1. εἰρήνη, peace, "is ova state of concord, peace, harmony between governments and in personal relationships." So the idea is a lack of conflict and instead harmony. This idea develops further to mean a lack of conflict and harmony within the soul of a person.
 - 1.2. θλίψις, tribulation, is a "sense of trouble that inflicts distress, oppression, affliction, tribulation."
 - 1.2.1. The distress caused by war, difficult circumstances 2 Corinthians 8:13; James 1:27; and an inward experience of distress, affliction, trouble (Genesis 35:3; 42:21). (William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 457.)
 - 1.3. Θαρσέω, take heart is "to have confidence, be of good courage, take heart. (Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 418–419.)
 - 1.4. νικάω, overcome, "to win in the face of obstacles, be victor, conquer, overcome, prevail." (William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 673.) This word means to win a victory over. Jesus means

that by his death, he has rendered the world's opposition pointless. He promises them that evil will not prevail in the end for believers. (Ronald L. Trail, *An Exegetical Summary of John 10–21*, Exegetical Summaries (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2018), 306.)

2. The overcomer is to have peace despite the constant assaults of evil.

2.1. Jesus says this peace is not derived from within you.

2.2. Jesus says this peace is not located in a counselor, a drug, or anything in the culture.

2.3. Jesus says this peace is located in Him.

2.4. Like fruit finds life from the vine, so Jesus' followers find peace from Him.



2.5. You should develop a relationship with Jesus like you would any relationship to grow in peace.

2.6. I regularly pray these verses: "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

3. The overcomer is not surprised when bad things happen to godly people. Repeatedly the New Testament talks about godly people suffering as followers of Jesus.

3.1. Acts 14:22, "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

3.2. Romans 5:3, "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance."

3.3. Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

3.4. Romans 12:12, "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."

3.5. 2 Corinthians 1:5, "For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too."

3.6. 2 Corinthians 1:6, "If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer."

- 3.7. 2 Corinthians 1:7, "Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort."
- 3.8. Ephesians 3:13, "So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory."
- 3.9. Philippians 3:10. "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death."
- 3.10. Colossians 1:24, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church."
- 3.11. 2 Thessalonians 1:5, "This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering."
- 3.12. 2 Timothy 1:8, "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God."
- 3.13. 2 Timothy 2:3, "Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."
- 3.14. 2 Timothy 2:9, "for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound!"
- 3.15. 2 Timothy 3:11, "my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me."
- 3.16. 2 Timothy 4:5, "As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."
- 3.17. Hebrews 2:10, "For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering."
- 3.18. Hebrews 10:32, "But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings."
- 3.19. Hebrews 11:35-38, "Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."
- 3.20. Hebrews 12:3-4, "Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood."
- 3.21. James 5:10, "As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord."

3.22. 1 Peter 2:19, "For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly."

3.23. 1 Peter 4:13, "But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed."

3.24. 1 Peter 5:9, "Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world."

3.25. 2 Peter 2:13, "suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing."

3.26. Revelation 2:10, "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."

4. Some would contest suffering and say, tell us positive things and avoid difficult things like suffering.

4.1. Imagine a pilot who has clear information about turbulence ahead and still says, "it is important that you enjoy your flight with us, so please walk about the cabin, drink your beverage, and sit back and relax because I have taken off the seat belt sign." About five minutes later, people and beverages are bouncing all around the cabin. What would you think or say?

5. The overcomer is courageous by focusing not on the natural but on who they are as a child of God and His supernatural work.

5.1. In Jesus is peace; in the world is trouble. What you focus on and invest in eventually will define your identity.

5.2. In Jesus, you overcome by knowing this challenging time will not last. Therefore, in Jesus, you will prevail over every evil strategy.

5.3. In Jesus, evil does not determine the current outcome or final destiny, but Jesus does.

6. We sing this truth with the song "Resurrecting."

6.1. "The fear that held us now gives way; To Him Who is our peace; His final breath upon the cross; Is now alive in me."

6.2. "By Your Spirit, I will rise; From the ashes of defeat; The resurrected King is resurrecting me; In Your Name I come alive; To declare Your victory; The resurrected King is resurrecting me."