

XIX. The Holy Spirit in Biblical Perspective

Led by the Spirit

“War and Peace”

John 16:25–33

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III

August 14, 2016 – Morning sermon

This is our concluding study of Jesus’ last sermon, the Upper Room Discourse in John 16. John 16:25–33 says [25] *“I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. [26] In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; [27] for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. [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.”

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

Periodically I have the privilege to speak with young pastors, not only those in our congregation that are moving toward their ordination and calling, but also at conferences I attend. Almost always I am asked about preaching – the challenges of it, the elements of it – and I tell them the biggest weight of a preacher is to be faithful to the text, that it is treated right in its context and content and being faithful to God. It takes me 20 to 22 hours a week to work on and develop a sermon for Sunday morning and Sunday nights. In terms of the sermon itself and its elements, what is the toughest part?

The second toughest part is the concluding element of the sermon. How can you set a nail? This is the Olympic season so how can you finish strong? How can you come to the conclusion and nail it? So, what is the toughest element? That is the introduction. In a football game the two-minute warning is at the end but in a sermon the two-minute warning is at the beginning. I have about two minutes to convince you to listen to the sermon before you start to color in the zeroes in your bulletin. Those are the two toughest elements of a sermon.

So Jesus has come to the conclusion of His Upper Room Discourse. This is the last sermon that Jesus preaches. There are six of His sermons recorded and five are in the Gospel of Matthew. Many don’t call this a sermon but the Upper Room Discourse and the reason why is because it’s not like the other sermons Jesus preached. This is one where the Apostles enter into a discussion with Him at times and interrupt Him even a couple of more times before He finishes His conclusion. People tend to call it a discourse because it’s more of a dialogue than it is a proclamation but it clearly something that is being taught.

So why does Jesus preach this sermon? The conclusion is going to give it away but He has preached this sermon for two primary objectives. His immediate objective is to prepare the Disciples for the hour that is coming for His crucifixion. He is trying to prepare them for something that will confront them, overwhelm them and cause them to falter in their faith. They

will become fearful and flee. Faith will be replaced by fear and that is about to happen but He is preparing them for it for Judas is away right now striking the deal.

Secondly, ultimately Jesus is preparing them for what will happen after His death and He ascends triumphant to glory. When He ascends enthroned He will then send the promise of the Father. He will have with His victory secured the promise of the Father which is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Him. The same Spirit who had been with Christ from the womb, to the tomb and all the way back to glory, will be sent from Christ to be with His people from being born again all the way to glory. That Spirit of Christ is about to be poured out and He wants the Disciples to know who the Holy Spirit is.

That is why we took a lot of time earlier in this study from two key texts, Romans 8 and John 16, about the present ministry of the Holy Spirit in this New Covenant. He says ‘the other Helper I will send to you and that is why it is best for you that I go away so don’t be discouraged in what you are about to see’ yet they will be but He is preparing them for what they are about to see in His arrest, crucifixion and burial. He is also about to prepare them for the benefits of His resurrection and ascension with the out pouring of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ upon them. And He sticks the sermon and finishes strong.

I have tried to sum it up for you in the title of this study – War and Peace. The Christian life secured by the victory of Christ, secured by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is war and peace. I didn’t say war or peace because this is not a menu to select from. It is war AND peace. To get there I want to take you through a couple of things where the Savior will speak, the Apostles will respond, and then the Savior will make an announcement in this concluding paragraph of His closing sermon of His life ministry. Let’s go back to the text in John 16.

John 16:25 says [25] *“I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father.”* He acknowledges something. In His public ministry of preaching and teaching for three years He has made a lavish use of figures of speech. He has spoken in parables, allegories, similes, metaphors, symbols and multiple figures of speech in this anticipation of His fulfilling work. In other words, that foreshadowing, promises and prophecies of symbols and types in the Old Testament has been carried forth in Jesus’ ministry where He has relied on figures of speech but now He says an hour is coming where He will talk plainly.

I think our founding pastor, Dr. Barker who went to Columbia Seminary and there were a couple of excellent professors, along with a lot of bad ones too. One of the good ones was a man named Manford Gutzke who did a series of commentaries that he drew from this text called ‘plain talk.’ There is an hour coming where there will no longer be figures of speech but plain talk, speaking of the resurrection and afterwards and that hour is coming because of the hour that is now. He is about to go to the cross. Now there will be plain talk of His victory, achievement and the clarity He has brought to the solution to our sin and how we might live to God’s glory by His God’s grace. Plain talk is coming.

The second thing He does is for the fourth time in His sermon He talks about the priority of effective prayer. The prayers of God’s people are effective and here He says two things about them. John 16:26–27 says [26] *In that day (that day of plain talk) you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; [27] for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.*

In that day of His resurrection and victory, of your conversion, your life in Christ, you will have an effective prayer life and you will ask in My Name. A new way of praying has now been given – in My Name. We come in the authority of Christ. We come to Christ, relying on Christ and we come with our prayer life framed by Christ – in His Name. How can I pray in my

prayer life over any issue framing it the way Christ would pray? One you have to know His Word and there are two pieces of His Word that can be very helpful.

Number one is the Lord's Prayer which in reality is the Disciples prayer. Jesus teaches us to pray this way from Matthew 6:9–13;

[9] Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

[10] Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

[11] Give us this day our daily bread,

[12] and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

[13] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever, Amen.

There is an introduction, six petitions (manward and Godward petitions) and the conclusion give us a pattern for prayer but the real Lord's Prayer is found in John 17. This is Jesus' prayer on behalf of His people for Jesus ever lives to prayer for us.

Jesus just said in John 16 that He wasn't going to ask on our behalf but what someone might think this means is not it. He will intercede for you but He will not ask the Father to love you. Why? It is because the Father already loves you. Jesus wouldn't be here for you if the Father had not loved you. The Father has loved you in Christ. Our prayer life is not an attempt to get God to love us. Our prayer life is effective because God has loved us in Christ. Christ has come for us and is now enthroned on High and interceding for us. Five bleeding wounds He bears and they plead for us. Why is that sacrifice there for us? It is because God has loved us with an unmerited, relentless love. He sent His Son who won the victory and His Son need not pray for God's love to you but He only needs to pray for your love to God to grow in Him and for Him because the Father has loved you. Now you have the authority of Jesus' Name when you pray to the Father for you come in the full authority of Jesus.

Then He makes another statement in John 16:28 which says *[28] I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.* In this one small verse Jesus has made four statements that sum up His entire 33 year ministry. He came on this mission to save His people from their sins and sums it all up in this one verse. Pay close attention to the verb tenses in this verse as well.

His first statement is 'I came from the Father.' Here He is affirming His deity, His pre-existence, His eternity. He is the Son of God who has come from the Father and Jesus is here because the Father has chosen to love you, even though you haven't loved Him. To love you He has sent His Son on the mission to redeem you. He has come from the Father, on mission, on message, for His glory to save you.

His second statement is 'I have come into the world.' Here He affirms His incarnation that the Son of God is also the Son of Man. He has come into this world and taken on a human body. I Corinthians 15:21 says *[21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.* So He is affirming to His Disciples in this Upper Room His full incarnation. Now see the move in the verb tense.

His third statement is 'I am leaving this world.' His is anticipating His victory (His resurrection, His ascension and His intercession) at the cross. He also told them that is would be best for you when He goes, because He goes in victory to intercede for you based upon that victory shouted in the resurrection, affirmed in His ascension and now enthroned on High to intercede for us.

His fourth statement is 'I am going to the Father.' When He goes back to the Father He will send the promise of the Father which is the Holy Spirit upon you. In this one verse He sums

up His 33 year Messianic ministry for His people and when He finishes this the Apostles then respond to Him in the next two verses.

John 16:29–30 says [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.”* So the Disciples basically say, ‘now we know, now we believe.’ How does Jesus respond to this spontaneous interruption and declaration of His present plain talk? He says in John 16:31, [31] *Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe?”*

There are sometimes in my life that when I’m trying to study God’s Word I would give anything to not only know what Jesus said inerrantly but I would have loved to have heard His voice. I would love to know how He said ‘do you now believe.’ He is about to tell them that this faith that they just announced, in a couple of hours, will falter. Here is what the faltering faith will do. Jesus is about to be arrested, beaten, put on trial, put on a cross and put in a tomb, so what are they going to do then? That faith will turn to fear.

John 16:31–32 says [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.”* He says the Father is with Him even though they won’t be. When He drinks the cup of judgment of all the sins of all of His people for all eternity, His Disciples will flee. Their faith will falter and give way to fear.

I John 5:4 says [4] *For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.* I don’t about you but there have been some times in my life that faith doesn’t feel very overcoming. I falter under the onslaught of peer pressure, perplexity, difficulties, challenges and we’re about to find something out here. The reason that you overcome by faith is not because of the reliability of your faith but because of the object of your faith that has been given to us by God’s grace – Christ the Overcomer. That is what makes us overcomers. This is what will happen to the Disciples but He will renew them and gather them back together yet He is informing them right now that they will falter. Then, the sermons over and it’s time to stick it, to finish strong. How does He do it? He finishes with two promises and one takeaway.

Jesus says in John 16:33, [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.* Promise number one is that in Me you may have peace. Promise number two is in the world you will have tribulation. So here is the Christian life – war and peace. The Gospel is the Gospel of peace. The Spirit of peace brings us by the Gospel of peace to Christ, the Prince of Peace. What kind of peace do we have? There is a peace we don’t get that the world’s promises are peace, peace when there is no peace. There is a peace that Christ gives and promises. What is it if you are in Him and He is in you? It has two sides of one coin and we see this in Romans 5.

Romans 5:1 says [1] *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Christ is the object of our faith and Christ declares us justified, innocent. If today we are apart from Christ we don’t have peace with God but we’re enemies of God under His judgment but when you come to Christ who He sent to save sinners, then by faith in Christ you have peace with God. That is an objective legal peace and you’re no longer an enemy for sins guilt and shame has been removed. You are now right with God and God is right within you.

That is not the only peace. Let’s look at Philippians 4:4–7 which says [4] *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. [5] Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; [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.*

So in Christ you have two kinds of peace. You have an objective legal peace with God because the blood of Jesus has cleansed you from its sin, guilt and shame. Secondly, you have the peace of God which means in the midst of life's brokenness, challenges, adversity, tribulation and the war you are in He is with you. You may falter just like His Disciples did, but He won't and it even says that He will stand guard over your heart as a sentry. The peace of God will reign or stand sentry over your heart, therefore anxiety can be dismissed. That doesn't mean we don't have concerns about the issues of life but fear does not control us for its banished. Anxiety is dismissed. Why? Our God is at work in us, through us, for us and stands sentry over our hearts.

I want to say something here that is absolutely crucial. There are moments in this life with all the challenges, difficulties, perplexities and chaos of a broken world that living in a broken body brings to us and we don't feel like we have that peace. We forget that we have peace with God. We begin to wonder if we really have peace with God when all these things are happening. We don't sense the peace of God and here's why.

There are two reasons why we don't sense that peace with God. One is because we have neglected God's Word and His preaching. Jesus said 'I have said these things to you that you may have peace.' God brings His Word preached and studied, that personal time with the Lord, family worship, that small group and gathered worship preaching, and He uses that to keep you reminded of your peace with God and the peace of God that so easily gets lost in the chaos of a broken world.

The second reason we don't sense are peace with God and peace of God because we don't make use of prayer in Jesus' Name. Remember Philippians 4. If you are anxious then make anything and everything known to God in prayer with thanksgiving and the peace of God will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. I love the hymn 'What A Friend We have in Jesus' when it says;

What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

There is some pain and suffering that God has given us in this world but there is a lot of pain that we needlessly bear because we don't take it to the Lord in prayer. We neglect His Word personally, in our family, in our small group, in preaching and we do it only if it fits into our world-defined schedule. Jesus tells us we can have His peace through the preaching of His Word for He says 'I am saying these things to you that you may have peace.' To have that peace, take His Word and everything on your heart and go back to the throne of God in the Name of Jesus. Call upon Him who loves you. He doesn't have to be talked into loving you. He loves you in and through His Son, Jesus Christ.

If Jesus hasn't stuck it yet then He just stuck the landing. Look at the last phrase in John 16:33, *I have overcome the world*. When did Jesus overcome the world? He did it on the cross and through His resurrection. Where is He in John 16? He is in the Upper Room and He is about to go to the cross but He is already telling us this is a done deal. This isn't any High Priest or any day of atonement or any offering. This is the Son of God who brings Himself to that cross. He has overcome the world, sin, death, hell and the grave. That is why you have peace and that is why the world will bring tribulation.

So His two promises are one, in Me you have peace and two, in the world you will have tribulation. One might think they will avoid the tribulation by getting out of the world but

He doesn't allow that. He says He wants us in the world but not of the world. You see what they did to Jesus when He was in the world so what do you think they will do to you when you are in Me? I want to try and further explain this tribulation/peace to you with this illustration about the wheat and chaff from the Bible.

If you had lived 2000 years ago a man would have gathered in all of his harvest of wheat and put it on this big sheet. Then he would take something like a pitch fork, stick it into the wheat, throw it up in the air and the heavy nature of the seed and wheat would fall onto another sheet while the wind blew away the chaff. That is the way he would harvest the wheat from the chaff. Before he threw the wheat up into the air he made sure the chaff was loosened from the wheat. The way he loosened it was he took a specially designed instrument and he would beat that wheat like crazy with all of his might. He would flail away at it and the instrument was called a flail. This would loosen the chaff from the wheat. He was then ready to throw the wheat into the air once this was loosened.

So if Jesus has won the victory why didn't He get rid of the tribulation? He is not through with you. That tribulation under the sovereign hand of God is flailing away. It is refining you. It is purifying you. It is what every test does. It shows you what you don't know and what you need to know. It shows you what you think you know but don't really know. The adversity is when you are growing. So the world that hated Jesus will hate you even more and when they come through mockery, marginalization, persecution, martyrdom and with all of those things, we don't rage against them. We rage against sin. We don't pick a fight with the world but the world will bring the fight to us. The world will put false preachers in pulpits and all kinds of things that will be part of its tribulation. Don't be amazed when all this tribulation comes. That is part of your life in Christ.

That is promise He gave us in John 16:33b in which He says, [33b] "*In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*" He is using this in our life. You need to remember that in Me you have peace. You have peace because He has overcome the world. He has won the victory for you. That is our takeaway from Jesus and now I will give you mine own takeaway from this.

The takeaway is the victory of Christ as Lord and Savior assures every Christian of both war and peace in the world as we live for Christ and as Christ lives in us by His Spirit. The hour has come where He talks plainly to us. We call upon Him in prayer, in the preaching of the Word and the study of the Word. He is reminding us that in Him we have peace. We have the peace of God and the peace with God. Because we have that peace then the tribulation that comes to us is simply one more step. He is refining us. In tribulation He is providing a platform for us to point men and women to Christ.

I'd like to use the Olympics here as an illustration. Paul uses Olympic events five times as illustrations in his writings. I rejoice when I see all these Olympians who are competing who know the Lord and honor Him when they win. It is not the inane statement of Jesus gave me the victory but they say something like Jesus gave me a heart to do my best for Him who has saved me and I appreciate the way they do that. I love the ones who lose and they are still faithful to Christ.

I rejoice when people go through the brokenness of this life through difficulties but they stay fixed on Jesus. They don't trust their faith but they trust the Object of their faith. It is Christ that is their Victor. It is this Christ who will go to the cross on no ordinary day of atonement. He is no ordinary High Priest or sent offering. This is the Son of God who is the Intercessor for God's people. He is not a sacrifice that will have to be repeated year after year but He brings the sacrifice once and for all. Now in Him we have peace.

So we will not retreat from the battle. We will put the armor of God on, including our feet shod with the Gospel of peace. We will take every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ Jesus our Lord. We will do so not because our faith is so reliable but because our Savior has won the victory. He has overcome the world. With our eyes fixed on Him, embracing Him, knowing Him, following Him and honoring Him, we go into the battle. We don't pick fights but when the fight comes we stand firm. When we falter, not if, we go back not to looking at ourselves, but we go back to Christ and look unto Him.

Romans 8:31–39 says [31] *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? [33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. [35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written,*

*“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

[37] *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

This Savior has overcome the world! Let's pray.

Prayer:

Take a few moments and let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart. By God's grace and appointment you are reading this today and you have heard that there is a Savior who loves you. He loves sinners. He came to save sinners. You have heard about Christianity. It is not a man-made religion to get right with God but a God-made religion whereby God makes us right with Him through Jesus by grace. Even though our faith is faltering, when Jesus is the Object of our faith we are in Him, the One who has overcome the world, sin, death, hell, the grave and Satan. You can have life in Him. If you would like to pray or talk with someone contact me here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 and you will be pointed to Christ. We are overcomers through Him who has overcome the world and He does not need to be entreated to love us but who loves us. Father, I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

THE SERMON CONCLUSION

THE SAVIOR SPEAKS

THE APOSTLES RESPOND

THE SAVIOR ANNOUNCES

I. Two Promises

II. One Takeaway

LIFE TAKEAWAY

The victory of Christ as Lord and Savior assures every Christian of both war and peace in the world as we live for Christ and Christ lives in us by His Spirit.