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Series: Power of Moments  
Title: The Anchor of Peace  
Text: John 16:31-33

I want you to think about this question: What has been the darkest moment of your life? A moment in time when it seemed like your world was crashing around you and there was no way out. A moment when all the air seemed to leave your lungs in just a second.

Regardless of where we are this morning, there is one thing that is certain – on this side of heaven, we will experience really hard things in this life. In fact, in John 16:33, Jesus promises that this is the case. He writes, *“In the world you will have tribulation.”* This word tribulation means trials, troubles, or severe affliction.

Sometimes, these trials are caused from being associated with Jesus. He tells His disciples in John 15:18-19 that the world will hate them because of their association with Him. He goes so far as to say in John 16:1–4, that because of their relationship with Him they will be kicked out of the synagogues and will even be killed. I know, super encouraging.

Sometimes, these trials are because we live in a broken world. In Romans 8:19, Paul wrote that, because of sin, all creation was subjected to futility and is captive to bondage and corruption. Because of sin, we all are touched by it – whether that be general pain, natural disasters, disease, aging, or even death.

Sometimes, these trials are because of our sin. In Genesis 3, just after Adam and Eve disobeyed God, He comes to them and issues the consequences of their sin. Hard work, pain, and suffering, even in the greatest blessings of life, like the birth of a child. Sin is always accompanied by consequences to you and others, which is why some of our trials in life are the result of someone else’s sin. Just keep reading in Genesis 4 about Cain and Abel.

Nevertheless, whatever it may be, trials are not something that may happen; they are inevitable. So, how do we get through these difficult moments in our lives?

Jesus answers this question for us in 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.”*

Notice how Jesus begins – a statement of preparation. This is the final time that Jesus tells of His departure, and He tells them their future is filled with trials – because of their association with Him, they will be hated, kicked out of synagogues, and ultimately be killed. Geez!

Now, why do you think He tells them all these things? So, they will be afraid? No, so they will be PREPARED.

Jesus prepares His followers for their darkest hour, and He does it by setting their EXPECTATIONS. Remember, He has already established the fact that, on this side of heaven, they will experience really hard things.

Therefore, instead of being shocked or overwhelmed when trials and tribulations come, they should expect them. Some have said, *“We prepare for life by expecting the worst and hoping for the best.”* When we expect the worst, we are not shocked, but prepared, for when that hour shows up at our doorstep.

But this is difficult for us, isn't it? We tend to expect the best and grumble about the rest. Our culture teaches us that we should expect the “good life.” By “good life,” I mean a life free from stress, failure, trials, and hardship. From the books we read to the sports we play to the way we parent our kids, we expect the good life and teach our kids to do the same to the point that, if we are honest, we become entitled to this ideal and cannot withstand hardship and difficulty; which is really interesting, because all data says life today is easier than it has ever been, yet we are the most anxious people in history. I think this is largely due to our current reality being divorced from most of history.

Let's just think about life in Bell County 200 years ago, which is not that long ago. Did you know that 46 percent of babies in the early 1800s didn't make it to their fifth birthday? In the early 1800s, it took approximately nine hours to travel 45 miles by horse and carriage - that is, if you made it that long. Due to Comanche raids, most people were killed if they travelled and left the security of their town. Not that living in town was all that safe either. In fact, during this time, it was very difficult to settle here because it was so dangerous due to these raids, in addition to frequent flooding from Nolan Creek.

For most of history and the rest of the world, struggle was a way of life. It was expected.

We experience peace under trial when we are prepared and expect that hard things will come. We also experience peace when we TRUST that we never have to walk through them alone.

Let's run it back for just a second. I want to remind us of what we talked about a couple of weeks ago. When Jesus told His disciples He would be leaving them, He also told them that He would be sending a helper. But not just any kind of helper; that He and the Father would come and make their home within them. The reality for followers of Jesus is that Jesus is not just beside us, He lives within us.

What that means is that while we prepare for trials and tribulations, we do so trusting that we will never have to go through them all alone. While Jesus tells the disciples in v. 32 that they will abandon Him in His darkest hour, He will never abandon them. Because He has made His home in us, though we are unfaithful, He remains faithful still.

We also prepare for trials and tribulations, knowing that the One who is by our side has overcome the world. Look at the latter half of v. 33, "*But take heart;*" why? "*I have overcome the world.*" JD Grear, pastor and author, puts it like this: "*The Spirit living inside of us is greater than Jesus beside us.*" No matter what we face, He commands us to be encouraged. Why? Because His faithful hand will see us through our darkest moments in this life and into the next. Because Jesus overcame sin, death, and grave, so, too, will we as His followers.

Can I ask you a question? Do you believe that to be true? You might say, "Of course I do!"

But do you? Do you really believe that He is going to see you through no matter what you face?

In v. 31, the disciples are confronted with this same question. Jesus asks them, "*Do you now believe?*" In other words, "Has it taken you all this time to trust me?" Of course, they all say yes! Nevertheless, as Jesus tells them of His darkest hour, Peter, the one who told Jesus he would die for Him, is the same Peter who, after being taken, denied his association with Jesus. When push comes to shove and life squeezes in, do you believe He has you and will see you through?

The ground of true peace is preparing for the unexpected and trusting that He will see us through no matter how dark the storm.

In April 1912, 2240 people boarded the most luxurious ship of their time traveling from Southampton, England, to New York City. Those on board the ship were businessmen and women, tourists, philosophers, politicians, media personnel, families on vacation, and immigrants migrating to the U.S. in hopes of a better life.

Describing the ship, news articles published the words "unsinkable luxury."

I doubt very seriously anyone who boarded that ship on April 10, 1912, expected that, just two days later, the ship would go down. There was a belief and confidence that the ship was unsinkable. In fact, that was the expectation. However, as the ship, moving full speed, struck an iceberg, the hull of the ship was punctured and began filling with water. Because they believed the ship to be unsinkable, they weren't prepared for a catastrophe. As the ship was going down, they realized they hadn't equipped the ship with enough lifeboats for all the passengers. As a result, 1500 people lost their lives in one of the most catastrophic events in history.

Sometimes, expectations can cloud our preparation and cause us to sink under the weight of our circumstances. But not so with God!

In our case, we expect the unexpected, and we place our faith in a Ship who truly is unsinkable. He is our ship in the storm that will never take on water. He will never sink, and because He has overcome the world, so, too, will those who put their faith and trust in Him.

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