

Ascension Lutheran Church

Pastor Godkin's Sermon for the week of May 9, 2010

Take Heart, Christ Has Overcome (John 16:23-33)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Our text is from the 16th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John:

“³²Behold, 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. 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.” 33 |

This is the text.

Dear friends in Christ, What's the world coming to that lately? As you watch the news or open your new news site, it oftenseems liketheworldisfalling apart. The economy is taking a nose dive, there are governments in turmoil and massive civil unrest in places like Greece and Thailand and there is a real likelihood of these things spreading to other industrialized countries of the E. U. and the United States and others around the world as the economy worsens; Meanwhile we see corruption at the highest levels of business, as international banking cartels like the Federal Reserve make record profits and CEOs of companies like Goldman Sachs get record bonuses.

We see a perceived threat of terrorism spreading through the media that has led people to new heights of paranoia while the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan show no signs of letting up; there's even talk of a possible war with Iran on the horizon, which could very possibly lead to a third world war—perish the thought!

What's the world coming to? And not just the world, but our own country. The price of gas and food continues to climb while people struggle to make ends meet in this deep recession/depression. Meanwhile the general public seems mostly preoccupied with trivial things like Dancing with the Stars, whom their favourite Hollywood celebrity is currently dating and the sports playoffs. We celebrate Mother's Day to honour the great gift of mothers and their sacrifice and love for their children. And yet we see children these days losing respect for their parents, teachers, and people in positions of authority in general.

As Christians what are we supposed to do? We are scattered throughout a pagan world that seems to thrive on hatred and violence and oppression. What are Christians to do when we feel we are a minority, out of place, out of step, out of time? With the world falling apart all around us, what are scattered Christians supposed to do? Friends, we are supposed to pray!

The events around us are shaking our confidence in this world, but we can have ultimate confidence in God, in Christ who has overcome this troubled world. In our text, Jesus was speaking to the disciples in the calm before the storm, hours before He would be betrayed and eventually crucified. He was building them up so that they might endure the future, the opposition from those around them and the eventual persecutions.

may or may not come in the form we expect but through Christ, who is our Mediator we can be certain that God's goodwill will be done.

Now I think that all of us at one time or another have some problem or concern in our life; at times like with worries and about things it's almost impossible to try those trying times we need especially to remember Jesus' words of encouragement, "Take heart, I have overcome the world." Peter, when he was a young man whose faith had been tried and tested through experience. He said, "Cast all your anxiety on Christ; He will sustain you." He said, "Cast all your anxiety on Christ; He will sustain you." He said, "Cast all your anxiety on Christ; He will sustain you."

If I take this glass of water, for example and try to hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my arm. If I hold it for a day, I'll have a headache. In each case the longer I hold it, the heavier the load becomes. Our Lord Jesus Christ invites us to unload our burdens on Him. He can carry anything. He encourages us to simply leave it with Him and go to sleep in peace.

And so, as Christians, we really have no need to ask for anything. Instead, we ask whatever we need—in the name of Christ. The peace of God that surpasses all understanding is ours. Christ Jesus. Amen.

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