

## SUNDAY MORNING 15 AUGUST 2021

### Take heart! - I have overcome the world

#### John 14: 31b

The meal in the upper room somewhere in Jerusalem was over. So, the rest of the conversation recorded by John in John 15-16 takes place somewhere between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. It's about a two km walk. It must have been very close to midnight, and Jesus is now really speaking his last words to His disciples. After this He will pray and then Judas will betray Him and He will be arrested and crucified. After that, after His resurrection, He will only speak to them a few more times for short periods of time.

Maybe He saw the flickering lights of the soldiers on the way, so let's hear what He says.

#### John 16: 25-33

I want to start with a question.

#### What if it does not change?

What is "it" that needs to change? You can put anything in "it." It can:

- Be your health.
- Your situation at work or at home.
- Be your friends, your neighbours.
- Be your finances.
- What if Covid 19 never goes away, and we may never be able to physically see our loved ones in South Africa or "over East" again.
- What if your children grow up with Zoom grandparents and other family.

We are certainly living in some of the most difficult times in a very long time. Apart from struggling with your own troubles, the news we watch and read does not help either. We get bombarded with other people's bad news too. We read more and more of people who have apparently achieved everything in life, or gold medals at the Olympics, or wealthy, struggles to make it mentally .

I have said many times that I love Jesus very much, but I also like Him very much. For He is the Son of God, coming from the Father, and returning to the Father, but who is flat on the earth and understands our world of life.

So what if things don't change? Hear Jesus' answer.

### **John 16:33**

In such a realistically simple way, Jesus' last words to His disciples sum up their world situation and my and your world situation. And He outlines two possibilities for us.

#### **In the world you will have troubles;**

I think it's fantastic that Jesus knows this and wants to do something about it. He gives us the reality. In the world it is difficult.

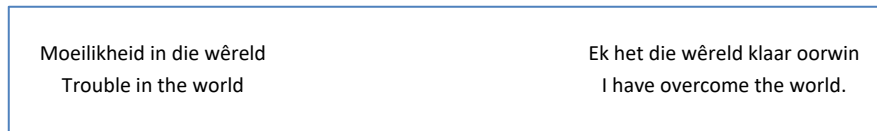
Moeilikheid in die wêreld  
Trouble in the world

And as I said just now, you can now fill in what type of trouble there is. Yours is going to be different from mine, but both of us are going to get discouraged from time to time and feel that life is not worth living. Sometimes I experience and surely you too certain things in your life make you happy and at the same time there is something else that just does not want to go away or change, that makes your life difficult every day. I say again it can range from pain and illness to sin and a deep emotional burden and sadness. Everyone is there, most of the time. Sometimes I wish I could upgrade my life like my phone.

Now Jesus says, *"I understand, I was there, I saw how helpless the people are, like sheep without a shepherd."* *"I experienced it myself and I know I will experience even more."* But the wonder of Jesus' coming is that He did not come and leave the world that way. His last word is this.

**I have overcome the world.**

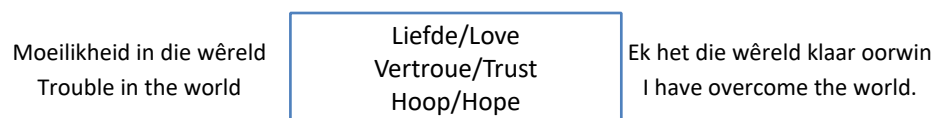
So He sketches for us the scenario. On one side is the world and the trouble, and it's not going to go away. It is no different for Christians than for non-Christians, except that if you are on a journey with Jesus and you commit your life to Him, you will surely have more joy than the world, and certainly less trouble. Because I think most of the troubles we have are self-inflicted. If we just obey Jesus we are going to have much less problems. But those are the two worlds. The world with trouble and Jesus' world of victory.



Now if that is the reality, the question is what do you do to cross-over from this world into Jesus' world.



How do you fill in the box? Do you know the three things that every human being in the world needs? – Love, trust and hope.



Paul also refers to it, if he sums up life in this way.

### 1 Corinthians 13:13

And somehow all of us try to overcome the difficulty with one or more of those three things. It's our primary needs, it's how God made us.

- Every human being wants to feel loved and wants to love something, even if he loves doing nothing. Every human being desires a deeper love, that love of someone who loves you in spite of your mistakes. It's everyone's deepest need.
- The second deep need of every human being is to know someone you can trust. They are looking for someone you can believe in, or something you can believe in. And it can range from religion, to self-love, money, ambition, etc. That's why people are so rattled in these

uncertain times we are in now. Our certainties have been taken away from us. We do not know when we will go into lockdown again, and for how long, and as I said in the beginning, what if it will never go away. The same goes for any other uncertainty you experience from time to time.

- The third primary need of every human being is they are looking for something to look forward to. Even if it's just to have a beer or Coke or whatever after a long hard day, or a weekend away, or just something delicious. All people seek hope. Hope, knowing somewhere in the future it is going to get better. Somewhere something good is going to happen, bigger than any of the bad experiences we are having right now.

The world knows this, therefore the whole world is focused on satisfying these needs of yours. Most ads promise you a better life if you use their product. Your floors are going to be cleaner, your laundry is going to be whiter, your wrinkles and pimples are going to be gone and your old car is not going to get close to your new big 4x4.

That's why most songs and movies, and books are about love. And promise you "the world" and moonshine and roses and we so easily fall for it.

And who can you trust? Your bank and your super and your policies and your medical and Medicare, oh man life is great.

Now if the world knows it, then God knows it too and that is exactly what Jesus share with His disciples in the last moments they were together. You have Someone who loves you. You have Someone you can trust with your life here and for your eternity. And you have Someone who will be able to give you hope now and forever. Faith, hope and love, it is our God. That's the Good News of Jesus' coming. Because God is love.

## **Love**

### **John 16: 25b-27**

Jesus tells His disciples now I speak straight. I no longer speak figuratively or in parables, the truth is: *"If you know me, you know the Father. You as Jews will never have to speak to God again through the priest or any other person. "* Jesus' Name, gives us free access to our Father. We do not need another person or intermediary to talk to Father. Why do we have this privilege? Because Father himself loves us.

Someone who confesses that he or she loves Jesus and believes in Him, - trusts Him, is a child of God and such a person can know that the Father loves him or her. God fulfills our primary need to feel loved and to feel special.

God loves us and therefore when there is trouble in the world and when we feel our situation will never change again, we have a Father, a Heavenly Father, Abba-Daddy-Father who loves us. Loved in spite of your past and your actions today and the future, He loved us so much, that He sent us His Son to die as a sacrifice in our place so that we might enjoy His love .

### **Romans 5: 8**

Wow! What a God, what a Father? All of Father's grace and peace and the riches of heaven's are at our disposal. Every good thing God wants to give us because of His love for us.

Now it is so that God is love and He therefore loves us 100% of the time, 100%, and this we read in John 3:16 when God said that He loves the world so much that He will give His Son. To describe this love, John uses the Greek word, **agape**, which means "*divine, sacrificial love, respect.*" But that's not the love John is talking about here. The Greek word he uses to describe the Father's love for us, His own, His children is the word **phileo**. And it can be translated as:

*to have love or affection for someone*

*to be fond of*

It's friendship love, it's family love, it's deep love. When Jesus speaks here of the love of the Father, it is not the kind of love for all, it is a personal love. You could say, "*It's nice to know that God loves me, but it's much more wonderful to know that He really likes me.*" Father's heart is drawn to those who love Jesus. Father wants to overwhelm you with His goodness and grace and blessings. 100% of the time, 100% general love, is already great, but there is more, for those who love Jesus, He loves 100% of the time, affectionately.

So if you are wondering what it will be like when trouble, pain and heartache come and come to stay, "*I have Someone who loves me deeply and tenderly, in spite of my actions, sins and past.*" If I grasp it, it's easier to overcome the world.

And here's the good news: He loves us so much, even though He knows everything about us. You soon find out when you start telling people your deep secrets how your friends circle is shrinking. *"I do not want to associate with such a guy."* God loves you even if you are unfaithful, or even if you have a critical spirit, with all your bitterness and all your sin. And He still loves you. And He says, *"therefore you may call me Abba-Daddy-Father."*

Maybe you also say, as people have said to me, *"no one loves me,"* If God loves you, and we know He loves you, you're okay. I'm okay. For the Word says, nothing can separate me from the love of Christ.

And hear what Jesus says in verse 27, you get it if you love Jesus. *"How do I get God to love me so much? How do I get God to pour out His love on me, even though I'm not at all what I should be? How do I do that?"* Confess your love for Jesus. If you love the Son who loves God, then God loves you.

Our second primary need is to trust, and the world system and the sinful world want to offer it to us readily. We all need someone or something to trust. You walked in here this morning and in the first place you trusted everyone who was here in before you and put the chairs in it's place. You do not know if I put a bomb under your chair and I might just push a button and you would be blown straight out through the ceiling. Or that the chair might be broken, or there is something that is going to sting or bite you. Our being is like that, we trust easily. I trust Western Power will make sure the power is on, and our cell phone provider will make sure I can call, etc, etc.

Now Jesus comes and says that in order to overcome the world and all its troubles, you need to trust God and believe in Him.

## **Faith / trust**

### **John 16: 27-31**

It is as if Jesus says "actually now you understand, here at the last second," because they say *"We now believe that You came from God."* I feel like saying, *"duh, guys, what have you been up to for the last 3 years, haven't you see and hear enough. Now at last you believe that Jesus came from the Father and will return to Him."* But I will not dare to criticize them, because I often find myself in the category of an "unbelieving Thomas."

## **What do you believe?**

Was Jesus just a good teacher, a God-fearing man, who came to teach good moral principles to the world? Or do you believe from your heart and with your whole being that Jesus came down from the Father, died on the cross in your place, that He rose physically and went back to the Father and that He pleads for us there and prepare a place for us and that He will come back again one day? Do you believe that what He came to do was enough and that your sins of the present and past and future have been settled and paid in full and that you are and will remain His child now and forever? And do you believe that He gave us His Holy Spirit to dwell in us and to lead us in the truth?

That's what it means to place all your trust in God. If you believe this then your second primary need to trust someone, is satisfied and then you can know if the trouble comes that God's love and grace will remain.

And then Jesus' response to their testimony is so real.

### **John 16:32**

He proves to them that He knows everything and simply predicts what will happen within the next few hours. He is going to be arrested and then all of those who are now so brave and say they in God and in Jesus are going to run away, each in his own direction and earlier He told Peter that Peter was going to deny Him.

Despite the fact that He knows it all, He proves His love for them and for us and will die on the cross for them and for us. And He saved them and us from sin and death.

And then Jesus touches man's third primary need, and that is hope.

### **Hope**

All of us wish and hope it will get better at some point. Sometimes we all just want peace and tranquillity. That's one of our basic, primary needs. Therefore, if someone is dead, we wish for him or her:

**RIV**

And that is exactly what Jesus promised them and us.

### **John 16: 33a**

I want to read it like this, "*so that you may find peace in ME!*" No other thing or person will be able to give you more hope and peace than Jesus, and therefore you can deal with and overcome the difficulties and traumas of this life. For your hope is in Someone, Someone greater than the world, Someone who has overcome the world. Someone who knows you, and who knows the Father. Someone who loves you, with a soft, tender, deep, affectionate, love.

So what brings me peace in times of trouble? The fact that I know Jesus' last words before His crucifixion to His followers was, "*You will find peace in Me.*"

Because Jesus came to fulfil our primary needs of love, trust and hope, He says and can say:

### **John 16: 33b**

It's hope, because it was John who wrote it down here is past tense.

### **I have overcome the world.**

In the world you will have trouble, but the victory is already achieved. Even if the world and the diseases of this world will kill you, the soul is safe in God's hands. Jesus overcame this world system. He overcame sin. He defeated the devil. He is the conqueror !! And it also makes us winners

### **1 John 5: 4-5**

What is the difference between the news channels and the history channel? Essentially nothing, both report news. The difference is that the news channels, report the news of the day. Floods, fires, disasters, accidents, murders, rapes, wars, pandemics. And the history channel reports the same thing, just 30, 40 years, 100 years later. I'm not at all tense when I watch the history channel because it can no longer affect me. I survived it as it were. If you



and your children might be watching a documentary about Covid -19 in 30 years from now, you will be much less stressed than now. *"Dad, mom, grandma / grandpa 'serious' you could not fly anywhere, did you have to run for toilet paper and buy sandpaper out of necessity?" "Yes really, but it's over now."*

That's what Jesus meant. He shows us the history channel. The world is full of trouble, today's news, but TAKE HEART, "I have already conquered the world – history.

Moeilikheid in die wêreld  
Trouble in the world

Hou moed!  
Take heart!

Ek het die wêreld klaar oorwin  
I have overcome the world.

Take heart, God loves you and wants to make you feel loved, 100% of the time, 100%. You can trust God, 100% of the time, 100%. And your hope, your peace, lies in the fact that Jesus has already overcome and that your current crisis is already in His book - history.

Wow! What a final message from Jesus. What a God!