

Good News About Living in Troubled Times

2018 Mark Beaird

Text: John 16:33

Jesus said, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Introduction

“Several years ago, Woody Allen began a commencement address with this observation: “More than any other time in history, mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness, the other to total extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose correctly.” Although said with his typical humor, Allen's observation captures the despair that many today feel. Whether through personal tragedies or global warning, the end, many feel, is right around the corner. Fears of the future loom large while hope wanes.

Enter the American optimist—the particular variety of human being who is awash in positive thoughts about life, the future, health, money, relationships, and supremely themselves. To such an upbeat, look on the bright side kind of person, every day is full of possibilities, and the crucial factor they would say, between a knowing cynicism of hopelessness and a glowing confidence of the Norman Vincent Peale, Robert Schuller, Joel Osteen type is simply you. You are the crucial factor. It is your characteristics. It is your faith, your courage, your daring, your willingness to risk, to stand firm, to be faithful to your religion or your own personal dreams. You make all the difference. Where would they turn in the Bible to find evidence for such fate-shaping faith?” - Mark Dever

The scriptures are where tragedies turn to triumph, integrity is kept, courage is shown, risk is accepted, death is mocked through fire-resistant faith. To people who want examples of how to live in the world, without being of the world, and yet do pretty well by the world, what book more regularly provides encouragement than the Word of God?

In the midst of all the philosophies and opinions that focus on what man can do, consider the *truths* of God's Word that tell us what God can do and gives us good news we can trust.

I. God Is Still on The Throne.

A. Others have made it through this life successfully before we came along.

Hebrews 12:1-4 (NIV) 12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of

God.³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

B. God's power is our assurance we can make it too!

II. God Makes Our Hope Reliable and Assured.

A. God's ability to see us through this life is as reliable as ever.

Hebrews 6:16-20, ¹⁶People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. ¹⁷Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. ¹⁸God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. ¹⁹We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, ²⁰where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

B. God's promise to save is our anchor that always holds.

III. Struggles Come and Go, But God Remains Faithful

A. God's faithfulness does not depend on human goodness, but God's holiness.

Romans 3:3-4 (NIV) ³What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness?⁴Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar."

B. God's faithfulness is not limited by our weakness.

1 Corinthians 10:12-14 (NIV)

¹²So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹⁸No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Conclusion

One New Year's Day, Pastor Daniel Schreiner from Portland, Oregon received the following marketing piece from a local fitness gym. It was called "*The Year of You*":

The New Year is right around the corner and you're either going to own the year OR the year is going to own you. It's 100% your choice. It's in your hands. That's the first thing. Simply by taking all of the responsibility and putting it on your shoulders you become empowered.

Next, you take that feeling of empowerment. Of invincibility. The feeling you can run through a wall ... and you take action. You take action like you've never taken action before. You become prolific. You become consistent. And you let no obstacle stand in your way ... no matter what. No more pity parties. No more whining about anything. YOU are in control. YOU.

His response: Really? Are we in "control"? I would say: We are not and cannot be in complete control of our lives. There is only One who is truly in control. This is a time we need to surrender control and live in dependency on Jesus. We need to recognize our need for God to have control as we steer through life with all it's ups and downs.

Note:

Adapted from: <https://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/sermons/2018/april/how-to-survive-in-fallen-world.html>