

Peace in Times like These
John 16:33

April 21, 2013

Dr. Steve Horn

Video Introduction

Text Introduction: How do we find peace in time like these? It's what we want isn't it? It's what we long for? But, it's Boston, North Korea, Afghanistan, Al Qaeda, or the economy. And that doesn't even include what might be going on just in your individual life. So, where can we find peace in times like these? I point us to John 16:33 today.

Text: I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."

Introduction: Monday, I came into the office with some question about what I was going to preach today. That is really unusual for me in my normal pattern of preparation. But, having just ended a major series, I am kind of in between some things that I have sensed as direction for the rest of the year. So, I needed to make a decision before 10 a.m. Monday morning so that I could give direction in a worship planning meeting that we have most Monday mornings. I settled on this text in John 16. We began to plan the worship.

A few hours later we would all learn how much we would need this reminder this morning. Peace! That was Jesus' concern for His disciples as He prepared them for His coming death, burial, resurrection, and eventual departure from earth.

How do I have peace in times like these? In times like these...

1. **I need not be surprised.** Don't be surprised at these things.

I don't have to be surprised because of the...

Prophecy of Jesus-Jesus told us that we would have trouble in this world. "You will have suffering in this world!" Not maybe, but you will. Why?

Presence of Evil

John 16:1-4 says, "I have told you these things to keep you from stumbling. ²They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God. ³They will do these things because they haven't known the Father or Me. ⁴But I have told you these things so that when their time comes you may remember I told them to you. I didn't tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you.

It bothers me when Christians panic. Of all persons, we should be people of peace.

I find comfort and confidence in knowing that He knows. In the Old Testament, the people of God were crying and groaning about their treatment in Egypt. The Bible says, "God saw the Israelites, and He took notice." (Exodus 2:25) When God met Moses at the burning bush, He said, "I have observed the misery of My people in Egypt, and have heard them crying out because of their oppressors, and I know about their suffering." (Exodus 3:7) And, I want you to be reminded today that God knows. He knows about Boston, and North Korea, and West, Texas, Oklahoma City, and 9/11, and Columbine, and Virginia Tech, and Newtown, and Katrina, and Rita, and your bank account, and your family, and your folder at your chart at your Doctor's office. He knows. And He is not in a panic. There is no panic button in Heaven.

2. I need to hold on to what is sure.

Jesus said, "I have told you these things so that in Me, you may have peace." I want to know what these things are. I believe it is the whole of what He has been saying since the beginning of at least John 14. What are these things?

- Place called Heaven (14:1-3) This place is real and it is the place where Jesus is. I can know that I'm not home yet.
- Plan of Salvation (14:6) I can know for certain that I can go to Heaven. In fact, I don't know how you have real peace until you know this.
- Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18) I can know that I'm not by myself. We are promised by these verses what the Christian musical group, Avalon, sings, "There are no orphans of God."
- Personal Relationship with God (John 15:1-11) Remember, He is the vine. We can be...we must be connected. This reminds me that I'm not in this by myself.
- Peace with others (John 15:12) We will not have peace with God, until we have peace with one another. The reason that some of you cannot get peace is that you are not at peace with someone else. The Bible tells us that, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." (Romans 12:18) Again in Hebrews, the Bible tells us to "pursue peace with all people." (Hebrews 12:14)
- Prayer (John 16:23-24) I can know that I can talk to God. I've heard a lot of people say about someone who is not here anymore, "I just wish that I could talk to them." With Jesus, we can. Jesus was telling the disciples that there would be a time when they could take their concerns to Him in prayer. But, there was one qualification. This needs to be our qualification. The request must be made "in His name."

In 1555, Nicholas Ridley was burned at the stake because of his witness for Christ. On the night before Ridley's execution, his brother offered to remain with him in the prison chamber to be of assistance and comfort. Nicholas declined the offer and replied that he meant to go to bed and sleep as quietly as ever he did in his life. Ridley was able to hold to that which he knew to be sure. Because he knew the peace of God, he could rest in the strength of the everlasting arms of his Lord to meet his need. So can we!

3. I need a Savior.

Not just any Savior, but a conquering Savior! And because He is a conquering Savior, He tells us to have courage. In Jesus, we have that Savior that looked this same foe in the eye and won! All of these things are secured because of the cross and resurrection.

So, what are we to do? We are to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. (Colossians 3:15)

At 8:17 on the evening of March 3, 1943, bomb-raid sirens went off in London, England. Workers and shoppers stopped and looked to the skies. Buses came to an immediate halt. People raced for cover. One of the places that they sought protection was the Bethnal Green Underground Station. Reportedly, in the rush to enter the underground protection area, someone slipped causing mass chaos. The end result was 173 people were crushed to their death. Such is the destruction when a lack of peace is evident in our lives. The irony of the story about the air raid in London is that no bombs were dropped that day. Further irony to that story is that the largest single number of casualties due to an air raid in London was 68.¹ More people died as a result of the panic than of any actual bombing. The lesson from these events is that panic can cause worse destruction than actual difficult events. That's why we must let the peace of God rule in our hearts!

¹ Max Lucado, *Fearless*, 175 and 176 and Wikipedia.