

## A Cheerful Message in the Darkest Hour

Text: John 16:1-6, 33

The date was June 18, 1940. These words are taken from the speech spoken by Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill delivered to Parliament at Westminster, "What General Weygand has called the Battle of France is over-- the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization. Upon it depends our own British life, and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be freed and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands.

"But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new dark age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves, that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'"

The darkest moment for Great Britain is usually considered to have been May 10, 1941, when over 1,500 civilians died in Luftwaffe bombing raids on London alone. By December of 1941, America joined ranks and freedom prevailed! And now that darkest hour is indeed looked back upon as one of the most encouraging and inspiring times.

The time of our text is Thursday night before the day of the crucifixion of our Lord. In this darkest of all hours, the Lord Jesus says in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Jesus says, "Be of good cheer!" In the Greek language it is one word: *tharseite*. It's a verb form, and it's in the imperative. Every time that word is used in the New Testament, it is in the imperative. It is a command. It means to cheer up, take courage, to be daring! The phrase "be of good cheer" is found 7 times in the New Testament. Twice it is used by Paul, but when Paul uses it, he uses a different Greek word, *euthumeo*, which means to be merry, to act cheerfully. On the other hand, every time *tharseite* is used in the New Testament, it is spoken by Jesus. No one else ever says that in the New Testament. It is very hard to be cheerful as Paul commands if we have no strength. It is hard to be courageous if we don't feel brave. Christ alone is the One who gives the imperative command to be brave and courageous. Therefore, we realize He is placing His omnipotence behind the command. It is encouraging to know that behind this command the Lord gives us is the overcompensating ability to obey and accomplish what He has ordered.

### I. THE DIVINE EXCHANGE

John 16:7-11

## A. The Change

John 16:7

John 14:16, 17: “ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

## B. The Work

John 16:8-15

John 4:23: “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”

John 17:17: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

II Timothy 3:16: “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

The Holy Spirit will take the Scripture and explain the “doctrine” (showing us what is right), and He will minister “reproof” (showing us what is not right), and then He will apply “correction” (showing us how to get right), and He will follow up with “instruction in righteousness” (showing us how to stay right).

## II. THE DIVINE PARADOX

John 16:16-22

Christ explains that soon His disciples would experience sorrow, but the sorrow will be turned to joy.

A. The Temporary State of the World--rejoicing (John 16:20b).

B. The Temporary State of the Christian (John 16:20c).

C. The Transforming Experience (John 16:21).

D. The Timeless Permanence (John 16:22).

## III. THE DIVINE PRIVILEGE

John 16:23-33

Through the Gospel (death, burial and resurrection of Christ), we will have the privilege of coming directly into the presence of God, the Father. Hebrews 4:16: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Our Lord is encouraging the disciples to look beyond the sorrow that they are soon to experience, even as He does the same as revealed in Hebrews 12:2: “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

A. The Privilege of Unrestricted Prayer

John 16:23, 24b

B. The Privilege of Unrestrained Joy

John 16:24b

C. The Privilege of Uninhibited Understanding

John 16:25

#### D. The Privilege of Undisturbed Intercession

John 16:26-28

Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

#### IV. THE DIVINE PRONOUNCEMENT

John 16:29-33

##### A. The Disciples Proclaim Their Belief

John 16:29,30

##### B. The Lord Probes the Disciples' Hearts

John 16:31

##### C. The Lord Pronounces His Power

John 16:32, 33

###### 1. The Power of Christ's Unconditional Love

"...scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone..."

###### 2. The Power of the Unified Trinity

"...and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me..."

###### 3. The Power of Ubiquitous Peace

"...in Me ye might have peace..."

###### 4. The Power of Undefeated Victory

"...be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

John 14:30: "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

When our Lord said these words, He was heading down the final leg of His journey to the cross. He was acknowledging that the Devil would now be pushing his evil agenda to destroy Christ and His influence. But Jesus is declaring His Lordship by saying, in essence, that the Devil has no part in His kingdom and the Devil has no hold on Him. There is no power that will pull the Lord away from His plan and His purpose in redeeming all who will believe on Him.

-Pastor Pope-