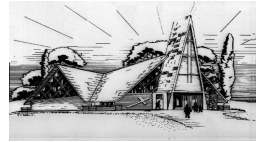




Free Evangelical Lutheran
Synod in South Africa

Sermon- Sunday Rogate

"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."



St. John's Lutheran Parish Shelly Beach

The Word of God for this Sermon is written in John 16, 23-33:

- **23** In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.
- **24** Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.
- **25** "I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father.
- **26** In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf;
- **27** for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.
- **28** I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father."
- **29** His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech!
- **30** Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God."
- **31** Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe?"
- **32** Behold, 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.
- **33** 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."

• Let us pray: *Come Holy Spirit, open our ears, and our minds so that we will be placed on the foundation of the apostles of the Lamb and pray so that our joy may be full! Amen.*

• **Dear Beloved of the Father in Christ!**

- **"In the world you will have tribulation,"** says Jesus! He couldn't have been more spot on, and that was spoken roughly 2000 years ago. It is true. Jesus knows what is going on in your world. It is amazing that a word recorded some 2000 years ago addresses us in our times. Since the first Pentecost in Jerusalem we live in the latter times, in the last days of this world.
- This statement does not say, in the world you will have tribulation if there is no democracy, or no equality. Jesus' statement is completely non-sensitive to any political idea or movements.

- *“In the world you will have tribulation,”* irrespective of how the world attempts to save humankind or to bring peace to the world! In fact Jesus proclaims as Good News that *He has overcome the world!* The world is far too enthusiastic about its abilities! Our old Adam is far too enthusiastic about its own abilities! The world is under siege by a massive deception and one of the main symptoms of this deception is, that it believes in itself, that it believes in humankind, that it clings to certain political ideologies and then hopes for the best. The world is blind for the truth. It does not want to hear the truth that it stands on the wrong foundation altogether. What does it help to build on the wrong foundation, on shifting sands instead of on the Rock.

- Not that the world is not religious. Even atheists believe in a god, in themselves. Spiritualities are thriving even in western countries. ISIS has become a threat. These are movements which go against one another. So there is enough tribulation in the world because of the opposing world-views and mindsets competing for supremacy to warrant Jesus' prophecy.

- But in His word Jesus is speaking about you, His disciples. You will have tribulation! Why? Because you believe that only Jesus is the Way to the Father in Heaven! As Jesus is the only Way, the only Truth, and the only One giving true eternal Life through His means of Grace, in His church, all others ways and means and methods and new measures, fads and experiences are NOT the way, are simply all false! They are minor or major deceptions based on the one foundational principle that there is something good still to be found in the human desires and minds, in their hearts. This basic idea is the root sin. This is the deep rebellion of humankind against its Creator. It still thinks it can. It enthusiastically assumes that it is not that bad! It just needs a bit of help, maybe some guidelines to follow, some “how to” manuals and motivational speeches!

- Contrary to all of this, the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus, convicts the world concerning their sin-fulness. Whoever does not believe in the person, word and work of Jesus rejects God's Mega mission of Salvation, the only ministry by which any human being of any time can be united with the heavenly Father! To the world the Gospel is offensive!

- Therefore Jesus is right when He says, in the world you will have tribulation. The whole world will eventually turn against you as it turned against Jesus and nailed Him to the Cross! But, we know, that Jesus overcame the world by dying and being resurrected again. The world cannot do anything to Him any more.

• That is why Jesus says, take heart, I have overcome the world. This is tremendously comforting news for all those who are in Christ Jesus! Who are those? Those who have been baptised into Christ's Body, like Lydia and her household and like many of you! Those who have received a new name spoken unto them, the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Those who have a new attitude towards God and what He accomplished through Jesus, the Spirit of God, don't need to be afraid: Jesus has overcome the world. No Roman Empire, no satan or Sanhedrin nor any atheist could keep Him in the grave. They couldn't even silence the witness of His resurrection. The Scriptures still shout and give witness, more than anyone needs, both historically and theologically and nobody can truly silence it! Jesus has risen indeed!

• As disciples of Christ we have received something very formidable. I think we don't always realise what Jesus has given us when He has given us His Name. He gave us His Name so that we can call upon the Father Himself! Jesus opened the way between us and the heavenly Father whom nobody has ever seen. Whatever you ask of the Father in Jesus' Name He will give to you! That is His promise!

• Asking in His Name means that you will ask what Jesus promised in His word. Only what Jesus promised is good for you. Prayer is receiving what Jesus has promised through His Word! Therefore Jesus said, whoever asks will receive! So, praying in the Name of Jesus means praying from within His Body, praying in His Spirit, according to Jesus Word. The Name of Jesus is not to be used like a magic wand. Praying in the Name of Jesus is praying in faith, trusting that He will give to you what He promised.

• That is why the Lord's own Prayer is so effective and such a blessing for us, for if we pray it we know that Jesus prays along with us. And if Jesus prays along with us, well, then we are certain that God the Father hears the prayer and will respond to it in His time! You see, whoever loves the Lord wants only what He wants for him/her. It is not important what I want any more. That is why receiving the Word of God first and then praying what God addresses in my life is the right way of structuring our prayer life.

• And we may use prayer books, we may use prayers written out for us, Jesus did the same. He used the Psalms extensively. But He also formulated His own prayers. We may also make use of both. It is not true that only prayers that come from our own mind are heard by God. We can pray a well formulated prayer by someone else just as much from the heart as when we say our own prayer. On the other hand, we should not shy away from simply saying what we want from God in whatever broken language or sighs it may come out.

- A prayer like the Lord's Prayer is very valuable when we are shocked out of our wits, or sometimes simply don't know what to say, then we can use this well-known prayer and have others pray with us if they are around.
- Realise again today, dear congregation what the Lord is willing to share with you. We spoke about His Name and the Name of the Father. He promised to share that with us. Then He promised to share His Kingdom, God's Israel with us. Isn't this truly amazing! The best things of heaven, heaven itself He promised to share with us, with us who really don't deserve it. He invites us to walk with Him in the newness of life! That is new! That is Life, asking all good things from Him, depending on God completely! If you do that, you honour God, you praise Him by asking Him, because then you acknowledge that He is the Giver of all good! That is who God is, the Father of all good gifts!
- You are Holy Spirit driven if you say "Abba, Father" or "our Father" in faith! Praying the Lord's Prayer in faith is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Those who don't have the Holy Spirit will not pray the Lord's Prayer from the heart.
- Jesus has placed us upon the foundation of His Twelve Apostles (Rev 21,14). We have His Word written and explained to us in the NT Scriptures. This is a firm foundation. A foundation is something which never changes. That is what we have in the "Confessional writings" of the Apostles of the Lamb!
- By clinging to and standing firm on these teachings the tribulations of the world are overcome. However, we are not standing firm only for our own sakes, we also remain on this foundation so that others who are flung around by the wind of change may find shelter and rest and peace on the true foundation where the Grace of God reigns and is actually handed out.
- For these others we should also make use of the great gift of prayer. Pray for those who are searching for the truth. Pray for those who are in despair and feed them with the one and only true Gospel, that the Glory of God is the Lamb. His sacrifice shines like a bright light towards all burdened sinners. Forgiveness of sins, Life and Salvation are freely available in His Body, the church. In the Name of Jesus. **Amen.**
- *"The Grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all." Amen. [John 22,21]*