

"How in this World to Take Heart"

Sermon outline/slides are available [HERE](#).

[John 16:29-33](#)

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."

Sermon Transcript:

Pastor Thom Rittichier

This morning, I want to let you know that this will induce an emotional response, what I am going to tell you will, with a very high probability, stir you up. It probably will do that and it has done that with others that I have communicated with as of this very week. And I want you to know, I am not alone in recognizing this. So, as a note of preface before I tell you, I want to let you know that I am telling you this because of Jesus final words, on his walk through Jerusalem, to the garden of Gethsemane and his arrest. His final words were these, John16:33, "These things I have said to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble." The word that he uses here for trouble is a word that means pressure that comes on you due to opposition. It is translated trouble, tribulation, anguish, affliction, in this world you will have a pressure of opposition that will bring affliction. "But take heart", his final remarks, in his last message, "I have overcome the world." Take heart, I have conquered the world. I have been victorious over the world. Now, let me start with what I have to share with you by way of a quote. The quote comes from a man who has been a pastor for 36 years at Moody Church in Chicago. His name is Erwin Lutzer. He had the longest tenure, that I know of, at Moody Church. And what he has to say has been endorsed and even referenced by some people who I think you'll recognize. So Erwin Lutzer says this, "The secular left does not believe that America can be fixed. They say it must be destroyed. On the rubble of America's Judeo-Christian past a new America will emerge, which they say will be free of poverty, racism, and white supremacy. The secular left's goal is a future in which everyone will be equal on their terms and the disparities of the past will be read about only in history books. Those who resist this utopian vision are to be vilified, bullied and shamed until they admit to the mistake of the past and embrace the secular left's great hope for the future. Take a moment to reflect on what has happened in America in the last 20 years. Consider the increasingly sexually explicit curriculum in the public schools; listen to the racial rhetoric of the self-appointed social justice warriors who are committed to enflaming racial division; and look at the new laws facing Christian colleges to compromise their biblical stance about marriage and surrender to the LGBTQ agenda. Who would have believed the day would come when men would say, they too can bear children and menstrate and thus must fight for period equality. It is difficult to even have a real conversation on the many social issues of our day, such as policies advocating unrestricted immigration and sweeping proposals to combat climate

change, or issues regarding racism. To merely question the viewpoints of secular left radicals on social issues is denounce as hateful, bigoted, and racist. We, who are Christians, are told that if we want to be known as good citizens, we should keep our antiquated views to ourselves. We are made to feel embarrassed about defending traditional marriage and a sane understanding of gender. Like a deer caught in the headlights, we don't quite know what to do and whether we are willing to pay the price of fidelity to Scripture. We are shamed into silence. To summarize, the late Dr. Haddon Robinson, In the past, we, as American Christians, always had home field advantage. We knew that in the crowd, there were those from other teams who were opposed to us. But the larger stadium crowd was either on our side or indifferent to our witness as Christians. All of that has changed. Now we play all our games on the enemy turf. A minority is on our side, while the wider culture sits in the stands, shouting hateful epithets at us, rejoicing at our losses, and the elitists in the sky box, cheer them on." That is in recently published book by Dr. Lutzer, *We Will Not Be Silenced*.

David Jeremiah, who wrote the foreword to this book said this, "If I could, I would put *We Will Not Be Silenced* into the hands of every Christian in America. ...This book examines every cultural issue we are facing. Nothing is left out. It addresses diversity issues, racial issues, gender issues, social justice issues, media issues, issues of free speech and issues rooted in socialism and Marxism. Most importantly, it covers issues related to the church and how it is responding to all of this.Recently we watched as criminal mobs ravaged our cities, burned down buildings, and declared war on the police. What has been most troubling has been the attempt of these organized rioters to tear down moral and spiritual values as well." He endorses the book strongly, as you've heard. As does Dr. Tony Evans, as does Crawford Loritts, as does Jack Graham, as does Heath Lambert, who has been the Executive Director for Biblical counseling.

Dr Lutzer is not alone, as I've mentioned, from those who have endorsed his statements. He's not alone in putting out this idea to the church to consider. Dr. Al Mohler, current president of Southern Baptist Seminary, a conservative Bible teaching seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, said this, "We are living in the midst of a revolution. The Christian church in the West now faces a set of challenges that exceeds anything it has experienced in the past.This new revolution presents a particular challenge to Christianity, for a commitment to the authority of Scripture and to the revealed truths runs into direct conflict with the central thrust of this revolution. Christians are not facing an isolated set of issues that cause us to be merely perplexed and, at times, at odds with the larger culture. We are instead facing a redefinition of marriage and transformation of the family. We are facing a complete transformation of the way human beings relate to one another in the most intimate context of life. We are facing nothing less than a comprehensive redefinition of life, love, liberty, and the very meaning of right and wrong. This massive revolution is taking place across the entire cultural landscape...." From Dr Mohler's book, *We Cannot Be Silent*, endorsed by John MacArthur, D. A. Carson, Mark Dever, and a few others.

"In the world you will have trouble." You will have and feel a pressure of opposition that's widespread. They will say, It's got to be destroyed, this culture of the Judeo-Christian past, has got to be destroyed, Lutzer's book says. It is a revolution across the entire culture, Al Mohler says in his book. From these are

older guys, who've been around awhile. Yet I've noticed, in interaction with younger people, are saying things like, We are on the verge of a civil war. Matt Chandler, in his book *Take Heart, Christian Courage in the Age of Unbelief* says, "From terrorist attacks to racial injustice to political chaos to an increasingly secular world that seems to have lost its moral center, we find ourselves in some unique and challenging times. Fear runs rampant across our cultural landscape, and especially and increasingly, fear sits in the pews of our churches. Talk to most Christians or read most Christian blogs and social media streams, and it's clear that the church isn't where it was. What do I mean?" He quotes an incident that took place when a man named Russell Vought was being confirmed by the Senate and the Vermont senators interacting with him. It became evident that Mr. Vought held to an Orthodox Christian belief of salvation and that therefore he believed that Muslims, those of Islamic faith, were lost, condemned. Sanders, in the confirmation hearing, then said this, "It is hateful, it is Islamophobic, and it is an insult to over a billion Muslims throughout the world ... This country, since its inception, has struggled, sometimes with great pain, to overcome discrimination of all forms ... we must not go backwards." So what is he saying? He's saying that to live in a pluralistic society isn't good enough. Matt Chandler goes on to say, "We're currently experiencing the intolerance of intolerance. Christians with traditional convictions and understanding of sexuality and marriage are seen as bigots. Churches are being viewed as hate groups. Our beliefs are, Bernie Sanders says and millions of others think, hateful. Our positions are, Bernie says and millions of others think, backwards. Welcome to the age of unbelief." The book is endorsed, recommended by Tim Keller, Russell Moore and others.

Now I've used those quotes. And I've used the people that have been involved in giving endorsement to these things, for a very specific purpose. I've done it because I wanted you to see that this is widespread and widely recognized. That in this world, like it is right now, it's such a time as this, there is this trouble, this pressure of opposition. It has not taken Jesus by surprise. And this morning, we are going to look at how, in this world, to take heart. And it's not something that I have concocted, it is listening to the One, who is the Lord of the church, as he was headed to the cross, as he was giving his final words, in his final remarks, indeed, his very last statement. Jesus tells us how to take heart in John 16:29-33. Number one, how in this world to take heart, by what we know "now" about Jesus Christ. And I stated it that way, because the scriptures are stating it that way, by what we know "now" about Jesus Christ, what we know about him "now". And number two, how in this world to take heart, by what we have "now" through Jesus Christ. Folks, I need to let you know that as I related this, talking to the deacon, talking to the elder, talking about it this week, I want you to know that this can induce elicit emotion. And I felt that and then I had to recognize where Jesus goes here. Because where he goes, we need to follow. We do and we can. And he shows us how.

So if you're with me in John 16, let's take a look at verse number 29. Jesus is, as we've been following him, giving his farewell discourse. He has told them already about his leaving and that this leaving is causing sorrow, John 16:6, sadness, emotional response in heart. He goes on to tell them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice, but your sorrow will be turned to joy, verse 20. The very thing that is causing sorrow will become joy to you. That sorrow is not going to disappear, it's going to turn to joy. The emotional response will turn to joy, verse 22. He goes on to acknowledge, in verse 25, that he's been speaking to them in veiled speech, and not plainly, he's been

speaking to them by bringing an image alongside. That's what the term literally means. He's been presenting the image and sometimes, they're being able to see the connection, was not possible but they will. He's teaching them because they will see it and understand it as the Spirit leads them into all truth, and lets them know of things to come. So he says, he acknowledges to them that he's been speaking plainly, but all that is going to change. "The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you, verse 25, in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father". And he goes on and starts to do that, verses 26 through 28, and the disciples respond.

And here's where we pick up, verse 29, "His disciples said, 'Ah,'" because what they're expressing here is an interjection of surprise. And at this point, it's a pleasant surprise, "now you are speaking plainly and not using veiled speech." You're not using figures of speech, and they're appreciating this. He started on that course, "now". And I want you to notice, immediately, immediately after that expression of appreciative surprise, what they say to him concerning what they're getting from this, "now". They say, verse 30a, "Now we know that you know all things". Isn't that a curious and interesting statement? Right after them saying, "you're speaking plainly", "now we know that you know all things". The picture has become clear to them. They see clearly now, they grasp that. Lord, you know, as in seeing all things and are sure of it. And we know that you were there. We see clearly now, and you're sure that you see clearly and are sure of everything. Did you get what they're doing? What they're doing is they're now looking at Jesus, they don't fully get the picture. But what he is presenting to them as God's plan and God's work, is that he knows what's going on here. He is completely aware and indeed, involved. We know that you see clearly and that you are sure of all things. They had just been discussing among themselves, in scuttlebutt with growing attitudes, that we don't understand what you're saying, what you mean by this, and now?...At this point, he by his ministry to them, of their sorrow being turned into joy, and this joy, nobody being able to take from you, their sadness of heart being turned to happiness of heart, and no one being able to take that from you. When you see me again, no one will be able to take it from you.... And they say to him, we're sure and see clearly now that you are sure and see clearly.

And they continue, verse 30b, "you do not need anyone to question you." And there is no need for interrogation. Have you ever gone through something and it makes you say, Sure. Yeah. Right now? This would have to happen right now. What this? Really? Why this? Why now, Lord, why? Why this! Ever been there? Lord, what is this about? Why me, going through this now? It's interesting. Because we do that. They've just been doing it with Jesus. They've just been doing this with him. And as he tells them that, their emotional response is sorrow, sad heart, even distress of heart, troubled, your agitated in heart is going to be turned by the very same thing that you're sorrowful about that you're troubled, distressed in heart, that very same thing will be turned to joy, happiness of heart in you, and they say to him, we see clearly now and are sure you know everything and you don't need any interrogation concerning what you're doing, concerning what you see, what you know.

Look at this next step that they take verse 30c, "This is why we trust you". This is why we transfer our trust from what we see and think and concoct in our hearts, what we evaluate and draw from our culture, we transfer our trust from us to you, when troubled in heart and sad in heart, in sorrow and

fear. Folks, I'm not concocting this. This is exactly what they're saying. That it's all about trusting. It's all about trusting Yahweh, whose very name means, I am sufficient, I am always and forever what you need. I trust you. This is why you see clearly because you're sure and you don't need us to question you. Job found this out in the experience he was going through. And he was raising questions. And then he said, Oh my, I've heard about you with a hearing of the ear, now my eye sees you. And I changed my mind. I changed my direction. I do. It's about trusting. This is why we trust you. You're from God. You're this plan. You see. We're sure. How is this world to take heart? It's by what we know "now" about Christ. It's the only way, is by what we know "now" about Christ.

And Jesus responds to this. He responds in what we have "now" through Christ. And I want you to know that these "now"s are put there intentionally, because this is the way the scripture presents it. "Now" we know that you know, that's a very curious statement. We know that you know, that you're sure, that you see "now" what we have through Christ. His recognition of their trust, verse 31, "Jesus answered them, Do you now believe?" Are you now trusting? "Now", this is put into question in some translations, it's a statement in others because it's not clear which it is. Whichever it is, it doesn't make any difference, what Jesus is doing is recognizing their trust. Is this where you're at "now?" Are you trusting me "now"? Are you taking what I'm telling you and putting your trust in that, your reliance, your confidence, you're entrusting yourself to me "now"?

As he asked them that, he also raises that he does know all things and he has an unsurprising grasp of their course. This is what's going to come down here. You trusting me "now". Verse 32, "Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each of you to your own house, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me." They're moving from the upper room. They're headed through Jerusalem to the garden of Gethsemane. He is making these statements to them as they're traveling, they're expressing that they get it "now". It's a matter of trusting you, in our circumstances, what this is. And we're sure and we do. He says, it's going to come down this way. You're trusting me "now". But pretty soon, you're all going to go to your private spaces. The apostles were going to be up in the upper room, which they had just left, and they're going to be there until after his resurrection. And they're going to be there hiding out until after his resurrection, when he comes into the midst of them, and show them, and has Thomas put his finger in his side, a bit later. And for us, too, He has no surprise in grasping our course. He has no surprise in our apprehensions and in our intimidation. And in our fear, he has no surprise. It was the same thing for Peter. When Peter, talking to the servant girl, denies Christ three times. And Jesus has no surprise, because he's already told Peter this is going to happen. He is not surprised in grasping where we're at. This is what we have "now" through Christ. His recognition of their trust and our trust, his grasp of the course that we have and where we're at here. But that's not the end, we haven't got to his final statement. It's coming.

He says this, on the heels of him saying they will leave him alone, he says this, verse 33, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace." That the distress and agitation of their soul, by who he is and what he does, turns to happiness of heart, the sadness and sorrow is turned to happiness of a heart, by what he's accomplishing. In me, you have a settled calm in heart. "In the world you will

have trouble." What we have through Christ is his overcoming, his conquering. When he uses the word overcoming, conquering, victorious, it's the word Nike, which means he's the champion, he wins. He's won. This is won. I want you to know that this is won, where our culture goes, turns into a victory for Christ's cause. This is won, this is won. But some may say...We may not be as free. We may not be supported. We may not be accepted.... No, in all probability, we will be more marginalized, that means pushed to the edge of society and culture. But I want you to know that Christianity has thrived when it's marginalized! When it gets pushed to the edge, then it shines! It shines! Not like when it's all clouded and foggy by being normally accepted as where we're at now. It shines, it always has. The Bible demonstrates it all through the New Testament. And the Old Testament demonstrates it over and over and over, where God rescues his people. Every time! This is where we thrive, this is where we shine. When it's darker, the light shines brighter, and that is where we are, for such a time as this. Jesus Christ won and gives us the victory! That's the truth. That is the truth. And our Lords inducement here is clear. His incentive, his motivation to us is this, take heart, be of good courage and be of good cheer. That's what that word communicates, take heart and be of good courage and be of good cheer. Because I win, you win, we win!

Folks, guess what, when I was writing this, my wife text me a note that said Blackford High School has just won the regionals. Who knew? I didn't know. They won, 59-68! First time in history. Can I tell you what history tells us? Jesus wins. Prophecy tells us, Jesus wins. The Scriptures tell us, with him we are more than conquerors. We win. He wins. This wins. And as we get pushed to the margin then we shine. "Now" the challenge is, this can make us angry. When I talked with our deacon and our elder, I felt this inside, surging up. And I had to think of the Scripture. That dissension and contention and strife and outburst of anger are what, coming from where? It's the flesh, that is self, that is me! But this is the spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self control, Galatians 5. When I get pushed to the margin, oh, yeah, the flesh is what shines at times. It's easier, like Peter, who denied him three times, to pull out a sword and want to chop off the ear, it's easier. It's our flesh, it's our bend, I will!

But this is the Spirit, in 2 Timothy 2:24-26, if you're going to serve the Lord here, if we're going to serve the Lord here, "the servant of the Lord must not strive, must not be quarrelsome, but be patient unto all men, apt to teach, patient with meekness, offering God's instruction to those who oppose themselves." This stuff is opposing people. They're opposing themselves, "that opposed themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him to do his will." Are you a servant? If you want to serve the Lord here, it's not striving. It's not being silent. It's being courageous in this age and speaking. You know, you're free to choose that if you want and you surely have that opportunity. But you know, God has a direction that makes it so that when you shine, it's when you shine, that people will ask, What's the reason for the hope that's within you? "Now" we are sure, we know that you see clearly and that you sure and you know all things. Lord Jesus, on his way to the cross. Folks, at such a time as this, we have the opportunity of proclaiming by our actions, that we follow Jesus. He got the victory here.

You, Christ Jesus, are my savior or not because I've earned it but because you have offered, by my faith in you, a free forgiveness. And we trust you. We trust you for salvation. But do we trust him for our situation? Lord, we do. As our deacon and our elder to come forward, 1 Corinthians 11:23 states, "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread," I'm going to have our elder and deacon distribute to you the bread in the cup. It's in a very convenient, but more COVID sound container. As they are doing this, I want to read to you Psalm 22 which is quoted by Jesus on the night he was betrayed. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? Oh my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted, they trusted and you delivered them. To you they cried and you rescued them, in you they trusted and were not put to shame. But I am worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me, they make mouths at me, they wag their heads. He trusts in God, let him deliver him. Let him rescue him, for he delights in him. You are he who took me from my mother's womb. You made me trust you at my mother's breast. On you was I cast from my birth and from my mother's womb you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near. And there is none to help." Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took the bread. And he said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this to remember me.", 1 Corinthians 11:24. Christ bore our sins, on his own body, on the tree, our sin, there, paid for, all of it on his body, not one sin, he did not bear on his body. "This is my body, which is broken for you." Take it, in like manner. After the supper, he took the cup. And this is the cup of the new and everlasting covenant, it is shed for you and for many, that sin may be forgiven. Do this to remember me, verse 25. And he concludes this by saying, "as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

How does this leave you this morning? This world, this trouble? Our opportunity to not be silent, to have it show more brightly than it has before. This is the Father's love for us. It's deep.