

June 25th, 2017  
 YOUR ONLY COMFORT IN LIFE AND  
 DEATH  
 John 16:25-33

The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 1 asks the question

**Q.** What is thy only comfort in life and death?

**A.** That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

This sums up Jesus' message as He finishes this farewell discourse. The disciples desperately needed comfort. Consider the wounding words<sup>1</sup> that Jesus has spoken: the world will hate you (15:18); the world will persecute you (15:20); you will be tempted to fall away (16:1); you will be excommunicated (16:2); you will be killed (16:2).

Not every threat that Jesus gives here comes true for every single Christian. But if you are being faithful to Jesus Christ in your life, certainly some of these things will happen to you. Paul has said "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (**2 Timothy 3:12**)

And so as Jesus piles bad news on top of bad news, I can imagine the disciples growing in fear. The secret looks at one another said everything: "Are we following the right guy?" The fantasies about going back to the simple life of a fisherman, or the government secure job of a tax collector. If you have not yet thought about abandoning the faith yet, you have not been a Christian long enough. Jesus said the hardest things about following Him. **Luke 9:23** "If

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry's description in the Kindle Edition of his unabridged commentary of the whole Bible, location 249650

anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” What does Jesus mean here? “Many people interpret “cross” as some burden they must carry in their lives: a strained relationship, a thankless job, a physical illness. They [wrongly conclude], “That’s my cross I have to carry.”<sup>2</sup> That’s not what Jesus meant. Jesus meant that following him looks like death. Death to self. Death to worldly ambitions. Death to self-exaltation. Death to reputation. Following Jesus means saying “Lord I belong to you in life and and death, I am your property, do with me as you will.”

I think the disciples truly felt that sentiment. At least on one level. Peter himself told Jesus “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” (**John 13:37**) That’s how so many of us start out isn’t? We often have a romanticized view of taking up our cross. Especially in the West, where suffering is often reduced to a slow internet connection. But when real suffering comes—when the darkness does not lift—you will question your allegiance to Jesus.

That’s what Jesus predicts will happen to the disciples. At the very hour when Jesus is taken by the authorities, their allegiance to Him vanishes. They thought they got finally it. In fact they say in v.30 “Now...we believe that you came from God.” But then Jesus says to them in v.31 “Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone.”

This farewell discourse ends with the most incredible contrast. Jesus predicts the absolute failure of the disciples, but promises the absolute victory of His cross. Jesus is teaching us that our only comfort in life and in death is not something in us. Not something we can obtain on our own. Not some new spiritual level just ahead of us. Not the right income, or family life, or church community, or resume, or relationship. Our only comfort in life and death is that Jesus has overcome the world by the blood of His cross.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/take-up-your-cross.html>

## *The Big Idea...*

Your only comfort in life and death is that Jesus has overcome the world

I see 4 precious promises in this passage that Jesus provides for all His disciples. 4 promises that you need for your comfort both in life and in death.

- ☆ Promise 1: I will show you the Father
- ☆ Promise 2: The Father Himself loves you
- ☆ Promise 3: You will fail Me
- ☆ Promise 4: I have overcome the world

### **Promise 1: I will show you the Father**

**v. 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.”

The disciples failed to understand much of Jesus’ teachings. On some occasions it was because they had hard hearts. In Mark 6, the disciples were clueless to what the feeding of the five thousand meant. In says in **v.52** “They did not understand about the loaves, [because] their hearts were hardened.” Sometimes Jesus spoke in parables to hide the truth from those on the outside. He said in **Mark 4:11** “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables,” But even in these instances, the disciples needed Jesus to explain what he meant. These *figures of speech* were hidden from them.

Jesus says in **v.25** that “the hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech.” After Jesus died and rose from the dead a greater measure of the Holy Spirit was given. This was chiefly seen at Pentecost, when

the apostles were empowered to understand and proclaim the mystery of the gospel. That is *the hour* that Jesus is referring to.<sup>3</sup>

And the point for us, is that you are helpless to understand any truth apart from the Holy Spirit. Understanding the things of God is a supernatural event. Paul says “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” (2 **Corinthians 2:14**) Jesus wants you to feel your spiritual poverty. The greatest enemy you face is your own high opinion about yourself. You are blind. You are unable to even think one right thought about God on your own.

What Jesus **promises** here is that He will do this for us. He says at the end of **v.25** “I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech *but* will tell you plainly about the Father.” This is the design of all of Jesus’ preaching.<sup>4</sup> His one great end in coming to planet earth is to lead us to the Father, in whom all true happiness exists.<sup>5</sup> Heaven is seeing God. Happiness is having our hearts taught to understand and love who God is.<sup>6</sup> **That’s the first promise Jesus gives:** to tell us plainly about the Father.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> “The Holy Spirit, certainly, did not teach the apostles anything else than what they had heard from the mouth of Christ himself, but, by enlightening their hearts, he drove away their darkness, so that they heard Christ speak, as is were, in a new and different manner, and thus they easily understood his meaning.” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 156

<sup>4</sup> Shorter Catechism Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet? A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

<sup>5</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 156

<sup>6</sup> As one Puritan asked “For what is the happiness of heaven, but to immediately and everlastingly to see God?” Matthew Henry, Unabridged Commentary On The Whole Bible, Kindle edition, location 249650

<sup>7</sup> **Matthew 11:27** “no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

## Promise 2: The Father Himself loves you

v. 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;”

Jesus is not denying that He will intercede for believers. That’s one of the precious realities of Him being our High Priest. Paul says that “Christ Jesus...is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.” (**Romans 8:34**)<sup>8</sup> Jesus continually intercedes for all His elect. So then what is He getting at?<sup>9</sup> Jesus opened the way for us to go to the *Father* directly! This would have been completely alien to the disciple’s ears. R.C. Sproul notes that

“...in the entire history of Judaism—in all existing books of the Old Testament...there is not a single reference of a Jewish person addressing God directly in the first person as Father...the first Jewish rabbi to call God “Father” directly was Jesus of Nazareth.”<sup>10</sup>

Let that soak in. Calling God our Father is a privilege Jesus purchased in the gospel. Paul says it like this in **Romans 8:11** “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you...(then v.15) you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” This doesn’t mean that we pray to the Father *independently* of Jesus, but rather that we can go directly to the Father *because* of Jesus.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> **Hebrews 7:25** “Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost, those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”

<sup>9</sup> “Suppose I should not tell you that I will intercede for you, should not undertake to solicit every particular cause you have depending there, yet it may be a general ground of comfort that I have settled a correspondence between you and God, have erected a throne of grace, and consecrated for you a new and living way into the holiest.” Matthew Henry, Unabridged Commentary On The Whole Bible, Kindle edition, location 250142

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/qas/what-does-it-mean-us-call-god-our-father/>

<sup>11</sup> Calvin says here “This is a remarkable passage, by which we are taught that we have the heart of the Heavenly Father, as soon as we have placed before Him the name of his Son.” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 158

Why? **v.27** “for the Father himself *loves* you” Jesus uses the Greek word φιλέω *phileō* for love instead of agape. Perhaps you’ve heard that *agape* is this sort of unconditional love of the will, whereas *phileō* is a brotherly love. And you might conclude that *phileō* is a weaker type of love. But it’s not weaker, *phileō* includes *agape*, but it’s emphasizing a deep caring affection. *Phileō*, as MacArthur says “describes the love of parents for their children and children for their parents (Matthew 10:37) and of friends for each other (John 11:3, 36). God loves (agapaō) sinners (John 3:16), but expresses a special, fatherly affection (*phileō*) for His children.”<sup>12</sup> Oh how powerful this truth is! The Father doesn’t just love you, He likes you. He has the deepest affections for you. He cares for you more than anyone else in the universe. David said “Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.” (**Psalm 27:10**)<sup>13</sup> What a comfort to your soul. “The Father Himself loves *me*...He has affections for *me*... He cares for *me*.” You can’t live without that love.

The rest of the **v.27** might throw us off at first. Jesus says “for the Father himself loves you, **because** you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.” It almost sounds as if Jesus is saying that our love of Christ, and our belief in Christ *caused* the Father to love us. But Jesus is not saying that. He’s saying that our love towards Christ, and our belief in Him is *evidence* that we are His disciples. Love towards God cannot start on our side. **1 John 4:19** says “We love because he first loved us.”<sup>14</sup>

The Father’s Love is the prime, ultimate, efficient, original, cause of all other loves. There have been many wrong theories of the atonement taught within Christendom. Why did Jesus die? One such theory is that Jesus had to die in order for the Father to *love* His people. Jesus’ death, in this view,

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<sup>12</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, John 12-21* (Chicago, IL.,: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 227

<sup>13</sup> NIV

<sup>14</sup> Augustine has said "To love God is the gift of God. He it was that gave the grace to love Him, who loved while still unloved." *The Church Fathers—Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 7, Ed. Philip Schaff, (Peabody, MA.,: Hendrickson Publishers, 5th Printing 2012), pg. 391*

purchased the *love* of the Father. Nothing could be further from the truth. That's the point of **v.28**, Jesus says "I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father." Who sent Jesus? The Father. Why? Because "God so loved the world" (**John 3:16**) Dear believer, Jesus was sent into the world to die, because the Father loved you. When you pray, you are not approaching a God who had to be convinced by Jesus to love you. He crushed His Son because He loves you.<sup>15</sup> **That's the second promise Jesus gives:** that the Father Himself loves you.

### **Promise 3: You will fail Me**

**v.29-30** "His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! 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."

What the disciples say here is a bit of a mixed bag. Previous to this their hearts were filled with sorrow (**16:6**). Peter, James, and John and the other disciples, no doubt were frightened by all the bad news that Jesus said was coming. And in that sorrow and fear, it would be very natural for them to question God's love for them.

This happens to believers all the time. The trials you face can reach such a severe point— that you begin to question whether God truly loves you. I think that's where the disciples were at. So when Jesus said "the Father himself loves you", they respond with immediate joy! This is joy. "Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech!" But then they make this somewhat strange confession in **v.30** "Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you." What were they saying? Jesus read their hearts. He's knew their thoughts without them even having to speak them. Jesus didn't need them to verbalize their question. He could see it in their hearts. Jesus told

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<sup>15</sup> **1 John 3:1** "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are."

the disciples the one truth their hearts needed: “the Father himself loves you.” And they instantly their sorrow turned to joy because Jesus spoke to their heart.

Surely if you are a believer, you have experienced this before. Jesus speaks to your troubled heart before you can even express it. I was reading my Bible yesterday, feeling a bit despondent. And Jesus read my heart. During family worship the other night, we read about Jeremiah, when he was cast into the cistern by his enemies. Left to die, he sank down in the mud. But an Ethiopian eunuch named Ebed<sup>16</sup> who was a servant to the king, convinced Zedekiah to let him rescue him so that he didn’t starve to death. So Ebed rescued Jeremiah. In the narrative, several months go pass, and Nebuchadnezzar conquers Judah. Imagine the confusion. The city is on fire, Babylonian soldiers are molesting and pillaging the Jews. Absolute chaos and confusion. And in the midst of it, a word comes to Jeremiah “Go and say to Ebed the Ethiopian...I will deliver you...and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you are afraid. For I will surely save you...because you have put your trust in me, declares the LORD.” (**Jeremiah 39:16-18**) Now who remembers a enslaved, Ethiopian eunuch in the middle of absolute chaos? God does. I had forgotten about him in the story, but God never forgets. And my eyes welled with tears. God won’t forget about me. Jesus read my heart. Only God can do that. And like the disciples I rejoiced in Jesus.

When this happened to the disciples, they said “this is why we believe that you came from God.” ‘Jesus we believe you came from God. Jesus we believe you are God.’ But this is why I said there is a mixed bag, because of the way that Jesus responds. He says in **v.31-32** “Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone.” In perhaps just a couple of hours, in the Garden of Gethsemane, these men who say they believe in Jesus will abandon Him. **Zechariah 13:7** prophesied this fateful night. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered;” When the time came, when their love for Christ would truly be tested. They failed. **Matthew 26:56** says “Then all the disciples left him

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<sup>16</sup> Ebed-melech

and fled.” So when Jesus asks “Do you now believe?” I think Calvin is right. He says “The question put by Christ is...ironical; as if he had said, “Do you boast as if you were full of faith? But the trial is at hand, which will disclose your emptiness.”<sup>17</sup> They had a faith.<sup>18</sup> But their faith was so weak (**Matthew 8:26**) so full of ego (**Mark 10:35ff**) so full of earthly ambition (**Matthew 16:23**) that when they were put to the test, they shrunk back.<sup>19</sup> Just like you often do. Dear congregation, this was one of the most delightful parts of this week’s passage. Jesus knew of their desertion and their failure, yet He was so kind to them. **2 Timothy 2:13** “[Even] if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.”

This farewell discourse began in **John 13:1**, where we read “Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, *he loved them to the end.*” Jesus saw all of his disciples’ failures. And He sees all of yours. And He tells His disciples “You will abandon me” but I will never abandon you. “I will love you to the end!” What a precious Savior! If you have clung to Christ by faith, and you have been born again, He will love you to the end! He sees every failure that you will ever commit—every lustful thought, every self-righteous attitude, every backstabbing slanderous word, every act of betrayal, every malicious look, and yet He will

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<sup>17</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 161

<sup>18</sup> “They therefore give themselves up to joy before the time, just as if a person should think himself rich with a single gold piece. They conclude, from certain signs, that Christ came out from God, and they glory in it, as if nothing more were needed. Yet still they were far from that knowledge, so long as they did not understand what Christ would be to them in the future.” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 160

<sup>19</sup> “On the occasion of His apprehension, not only did they outwardly abandon His bodily presence, but they mentally abandoned their faith...as if He had said, ‘You will then be so confounded as to leave behind you even what you now believe.’ For they fell into such despair and such a death, so to speak, of their old faith, as was apparent in the case of Cleophas, who, after His resurrection, unaware that he was speaking with Himself, and narrating what had befallen Him, said, “We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel.” (Luke 24:21) *The Church Fathers—Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 7*, Ed. Philip Schaff, (Peabody, MA.,: Hendrickson Publishers, 5th Printing 2012), pg. 393

hold you fast. Dear congregation, trials show us how weak our faith is<sup>20</sup>, but how good Jesus is. **That's the third promise Jesus gives:** You will fail me. But I will love you to the end.

### **Promise 4: I have overcome the world**

v. 33 “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.”

What things has Jesus said to you for your peace?

**First**, that He will show you the Father. You will reach the great end for which you were created. **Second**, that the Father Himself loves you. Father was not coerced into loving you by Christ, He sent Christ because He loves you. **Third**, you will fail Jesus, but He will love you to the end.

And now the final thing that He says for our peace. “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” You have more trials coming. Jesus calls them tribulations. John who wrote this gospel also wrote Revelation and he said in **Revelation 1:9** “I, John, your brother and partner in the *tribulation* and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus,” Peter says “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.” (**1 Peter 4:12**) You are not getting out of this world without trouble. Jesus wants us to know this. These are His last words before He prays, and goes off to His crucifixion. “In the world you will have tribulation” Expect it. Embrace it.

Jesus says “But take heart; I have overcome the *world*.” What does He mean by *world* here? John uses this word in several different ways throughout this gospel. Sometimes by *world* He means all classes of people—both Jew and Gentile (**John 1:29**); sometimes He means the whole created cosmos (**John 1:10**); sometimes He means the reprobate (**John 17:9**). Here, what He means

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<sup>20</sup> “Now, we never are fully aware of what we want, and of our great distance from the fullness of faith, till we come to some serious trial; for then the fact shows how weak our faith was, which we imagined to be full.” John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 160-161

by *world* is anything and everything that would prevent believers from going home to glory.<sup>21</sup> The entire rebellious system.

*This means that Jesus has overcome Satan.* **John 12:31** “Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.”

*This means that Jesus has overcome our sin.* When Jesus went to Calvary, what He accomplished was nothing short of the complete eradication of all our sin. **Psalm 103:12** “As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.” **Hebrews 8:12** “I will remember their sins no more.” **Micah 7:19** He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.”

*This means that Jesus has overcome death itself.* “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (**1 Corinthians 15:54-56**)

Jesus has overcome everything in the world that would send us to hell.<sup>22</sup> He was overcome not for His own sake, but for our sake.<sup>23</sup> And because He overcame, we also will overcome. As Calvin said “We are beyond all danger,

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<sup>21</sup> “Under the term World, Christ here includes all that is opposed to the salvation of believers, and especially all the corruptions with Satan abuses for the purpose of laying snares for us.” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 162

<sup>22</sup> He did not overcome the world if the world can overcome us

<sup>23</sup> “He has obtained a victory over the world, not for himself individually, but for our sake.” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 162  
 “Christ’s victory is the Christian’s victory” Matthew Henry, Unabridged Commentary On The Whole Bible, Kindle edition, location 250290 “For He had not overcome the world, were it still to overcome His members.” The Church Fathers—Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 7, Ed. Philip Schaff, (Peabody, MA.,: Hendrickson Publishers, 5th Printing 2012), pg. 393

even in the midst of combat.”<sup>24</sup> **1 John 5:4-5** “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” Believers don’t overcome the world because they are strong. The disciples failed. You will fail in this life. Believers overcome the world because they have been united to Christ by faith. That’s why John says that *our faith* is the victory that overcomes the world. Our faith is not a mystical spiritual force. It’s not an inner strength, or irrational leap in the dark. Faith, is, as one author put it, “...is falling helplessly into the arms of the Savior.”<sup>25</sup> Faith is trusting that Jesus is trustworthy. Not that we are able, but that He is able. Not that we are sufficient, but that He is all-sufficient.

That’s how Jesus finishes His farewell discourse. He promised His disciples and us four things. **First**, He promised that He will show us the Father. That’s why He came into the world, to reveal who the Father is. **John 1:18** “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” **Second**, He promised the Father Himself loves us. As we will see in chapter seventeen, the Father loves every believer even as He loves Jesus (**17:23**) **Thirdly**, He promised the disciples that they would fail. On the eve when the final event of the gospel was to take place—Jesus own death—His disciples abandoned Jesus. They failed. They could not redeem themselves by their own performance. And neither can you. And **lastly**, Jesus promised that He will overcome the world. Our failure is the reason Jesus Christ went to the cross. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Failures. Losers. Rebels. Outcasts. And every loser and failure that hopes in Him, will overcome because of Him.

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<sup>24</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 162

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, pg. 66

# Application

## Our Doctrine: Spiritual steadiness comes from gospel readiness

As you look at the farewell discourse as a whole, ask yourself, how is Jesus preparing His disciples for their greatest hardships? It's not by commands *primarily*. There are few commands in the farewell discourse. He primarily prepares them by preaching the gospel to them. Listen to Milton Vincent in his little book "A Gospel Primer":

"More than anything else I could ever do, the gospel enables me to embrace my tribulations...For the gospel is the one great permanent circumstance in which I live and move; and every hardship in my life is allowed by God only because it serves His gospel purposes in me...the gospel is not just one peace of good news that fits into my life somewhere among all the bad...the gospel makes genuinely good news out of every other aspect of my life, including my severest trials."<sup>26</sup>

Is Milton overstating the case? Every hardship is for gospel purposes? Milton critiques contemporary church culture, but saying the problem is that many "Christians...view the gospel as something that has fully served out its purpose the moment they have believed in Jesus for salvation. Not knowing what to do with the gospel once they are saved, they lay it aside soon after conversion so they can move on to "bigger and better" things."<sup>27</sup>

Dear congregation, there's nothing "bigger and better" than Jesus Christ. Just take one thing from our passage today about His gospel: Jesus predicted His disciples would fail. And they did. Massively. How is it that their failure could

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<sup>26</sup> Milton Vincent, *A Gospel Primer For Christians: Learning to See the Glories of God's Love*, (Focus Publishing, 2008), pg. 31-32

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, pg. 5

encourage us? Because it magnifies the grace of Jesus Christ “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Mark 2:17)

If you don't know how to preach the gospel to yourself, I would commend Milton Vincent's book “A Gospel Primer” to you as a way to get started.

That's our **doctrine**: spiritual steadiness comes from gospel readiness. Therefore our...

## Our Delight: Jesus is your only comfort in life and death

The Heidelberg catechism asks

**Q.** What is thy only comfort in life and death?

**A.** That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

Catechisms were designed to be memorized. Not only in pre-literate days, but also in our days. Dear congregation, you are regularly inundated with an overload of information. 24 hour news cycles, smart phones, Netflix, iPads, Facebook, twitter, etc. Remember Huxley's dark prophecy in Brave New World? He wrote that “no Big Brother [was] required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity and history. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think.”<sup>28</sup> The gospel can very quickly become irrelevant in a sea of information. Hide it in your heart. Memorize Heidelberg Day 1. It will delight your soul.

That's our **delight**: Jesus is our only comfort in life and death. Therefore...

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2337731-amusing-ourselves-to-death-public-discourse-in-the-age-of-show-business>

## Our Duty: "Take heart"

There is one command in our passage today, found in v.33. Jesus says "But *take heart*; I have overcome the world." Take heart means "Be of good courage" or "Be of good cheer."<sup>29</sup> We are not called to a battlefield in which victory is uncertain. Jesus arms us with certain victory. Believer you will not fail *ultimately* in life. It's impossible. Jesus has overcome the world. Even when you blow it like the disciples did, you can take heart knowing that Jesus has already overcome, so that Paul can say "we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." (**Romans 8:37**). Paul uses the same word for conqueror (noun form) as Jesus used for overcome (verb form). We are conquerors because Jesus conqueror. Only Paul added the modifier "more than"—we are more than conquerors. In the Greek, it's where we get the word "hyper." We are hyper-conquerors through Christ who loved us. When Jesus died on the cross for your sins, and was raised from the dead for your justification, your everlasting destiny was made invincible.

If you take heart in that truth, you will be so free. You be free to share the gospel with your neighbors without fear. You will be free to love and forgive others though they have wronged you. You will be free to pray with a new boldness, knowing that whatever you pray according Jesus' name, God will answer your prayers. You will be free to boldly look for new opportunities to bring Jesus to this city. Jesus' "I have overcome the world" He doesn't merely bring comfort to suffering saints. He brings power and boldness and courage to the church. If you are in Christ, you have overcome.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2293&t=KJV>

## Misc Notes:

TRUTH: If Jesus has the Father, He has everything He needs