

In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. [Congregation: Amen.]

Alleluia! Christ is risen! [*Congregation: He is risen indeed!*] [*All: Alleluia!*]

Dearly beloved by the Lord:

“In the world you will have tribulation.”

Jesus doesn't soften it. He doesn't promise you a life in which tribulation doesn't come. He says **you will have** it. Not “you might,” nor “some of you.” No, He says, **“you will.”** You, all of you. He says so directly, without qualification and without apology.

“In the world you will have tribulation.”

Look around. Every person here came through that door carrying something. You know what you're carrying. And because you know that about yourself, you know it about them, perhaps not what it is, only that it is there, as surely as yours is.

For some of you, the tribulation in this room this morning has a face and a name. Someone you love is dying, and you know it. And not in the far-off future; no, now. You are watching it, or waiting through it, or carrying the weight of it from a distance, unable to be where you wish you were. Then, there are others: the diagnosis that came back wrong, the treatment that isn't working, the body that's failing faster than anyone said it would.

You know what you were carrying before this morning. What's more, the day the world has made of this Sunday doesn't lift it; for some of you, it bears down on what you're already carrying. Perhaps your mother is gone, and today, of all days, you feel that absence with a particular sharpness. Or maybe she is living, and yet the relationship between you is broken or bruised in ways that no card or flowers can fix. And then, there are those who wanted to be mothers and are not, for whom today arrives each year as a painful reminder of what was hoped for and did not come. Whatever it is you were carrying: for most of you, today adds to the weight, not lessens it.

Tribulation is not trivial. Nor is it a word for other people. It carries a specific weight on a specific life. You know yours. And Jesus knows it as well; indeed, He knew it before you arrived.

Yet He doesn't say, “It'll pass soon,” or “It's not as bad as you think,” or “I won't give you more than you can bear.” No, Beloved, He doesn't spare you the word. He speaks it plainly, as a man who means it, on His way to the Cross, as One who is about to take all of it into His own flesh.

“In the world you will have tribulation.”

“But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.”

The Disciples are gathered with Him in the Upper Room. The Garden is ahead, as is His betrayal, trials, and the Cross. He knows what the next hours hold. He knows the world is about to bring its full weight against Him: its sin, its death, and the apparent victory of the grave over the Son of God. He knows all of this. And still, He says, **“Be of good cheer.”**

He says it because the outcome is not in question. He goes to the Cross freely. No one takes His life from Him; He lays it down.¹ He goes into death as the One who cannot be held by it. For on the Third Day, the tomb is empty, and everything He said in that Upper Room is confirmed. He has overcome the world. Not around it, nor above it; no, through it, in His own flesh, at the cost of His own life, with His hands and His side bearing the marks of what the overcoming required.²

The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.³ St. Paul says that, not as a consolation offered to make the present easier to bear, nor as the word of someone standing at a safe distance from death; rather, He says it as one who knows what His Lord has done: who entered death, who was held by the tomb for three days, and who came out the other side with the marks still in His hands and His side. Because of this, Paul can say that: not minimized, not explained away, outweighed. The glory that's coming outweighs what's happening now, because Christ has already secured it, at the cost of everything it cost Him. And so He says, **“Be of good cheer.”**

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.”

In Him, Beloved. Not in your own love, which falters and fails. Not in your faithfulness, which wavers. No, in Him. In Him is the peace that the world can neither give nor take away. He has walked through the valley that you, or someone you love, is walking through now. He has been where that body is going. He knows the weight you carried through that door, because He carried it first, in His own flesh, to the Cross and through the tomb and out the other side. He gives you Himself: not comfort about Himself, not information about what He has done; no, Himself, here, now, in this Bread and this Cup. For you. And this peace, this gift of Himself, He gives to you through His Church, who is your Mother.

For indeed, She birthed you in the waters of Holy Baptism, where you were named with God's Name and claimed as His own dear child, and what your Holy Mother began there She hasn't abandoned. She has taught you what to say, to pray, and to confess. When you couldn't find the words to believe you were forgiven, She found them for you and spoke them into your ear; and She's speaking them now, in this place, through this Ministry. Here, She sets before Her children the finest meal that there is: the Body and the Blood of Her Lord, given and shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins. All of this She has done in every age, and She's not diminished by the giving, for what She gives isn't Hers; it is His.⁴

Behold, She gives it to you now. He comes to you now, in this Bread and this Cup, as the One who has already overcome the world you carried through that door this morning. You leave this place with His Body and Blood within you, with His peace, with His overcoming.

“Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.”

Beloved, He has overcome yours.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! [*Congregation: He is risen indeed!*] [*All: Alleluia!*] [*Congregation: Amen.*]

In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. [*Congregation: Amen.*]

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠

¹ See John 10:18a-b.

² See John 20:20.

³ Romans 8:18

⁴ See Luther, Martin. “The Large Catechism, Apostles' Creed, Third Article.” *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*. McCain, Paul Timothy, ed. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2005. par. 42, pp. 403-404.