

Lent
Series
2025



Glory to the
Living
GOD!



April 20, 2025

“IN THE WORLD YOU FACE TRIBULATION, BUT BE OF GOOD CHEER; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD.” NKJ

John 16.33b: *“In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world.”* NRSV

These words, spoken on the Thursday of Holy Week, proclaim the message of Easter. It is the night of the Last Supper, and Jesus knows he is about to be betrayed. We might expect him to say the victory will be won on Friday or on Sunday. But no, the victory is already won because he is committed to seeing to the end the path God has set for him: the Cross and beyond to the Resurrection. The other Gospels place this moment of final commitment in the Garden of Gethsemane. His decision has been made, and therefore the outcome is sure: “I have conquered the world.”

Jesus calls his disciples to have the same commitment---to see through to the end the narrow way that is the way of the cross. We could hope that his victory might mean that we would have an easy time of it---if he has conquered the world then it should not be a problem for us! But that is not exactly what he says. He tells the disciples that they will face suffering just as he has.

What then does his victory mean for us, here and now? Some of the translations say we will face persecution. But that gives the impression of a fairly formal sort of opposition, perhaps with legal repercussions. The Greek word is not quite that strong. It means times of trouble, suffering, tribulation, distress. And yet, his victory means that we too are assured of victory, and that changes the experience of trouble when we are in its midst. It makes it possible to take heart, to be encouraged, to be of good cheer.

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Catherine Gunsalus Gonzalez is a Presbyterian minister and retired professor of church history from Columbia Theological Seminary. She is a native of New York and currently lives with her husband, Justo, in Decatur, Georgia.



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We will have times of trouble. They may rise to the level of persecution, but they may simply be the burden of living in a world with disease, poverty, disasters, and sinful people. But we can be of good cheer. We can be hopeful. We can experience peace and joy in the midst of all that the world can throw at us, especially when we are in the company of faithful Christians. This is not because of our own strength but because of the victory that Christ has won, and in which we can participate even in this world—a foretaste of the world to come. That is part of the good news of Easter

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