

Take Heart

Charlie Lehardy

"A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." – John 16:32-33 (NIV)

Hours before he was arrested, as Jesus prepared his disciples for things they couldn't yet understand, he told them their little band would soon be broken up and scattered "each to your own home."

The cause of that scattering wasn't an infectious disease, but the coming purge by the authorities who would try to stamp out this new teaching that Jesus and his followers were spreading – like a virus – across Israel and beyond its borders.

Fortunately for us, that particular quarantine failed, and the faith we call Christianity spread across the entire world. We are fortunate because in Christ we have now been adopted into God's very household. The sin we were once infected with has been washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ.

But Jesus goes on to warn his disciples that despite the fact that God loves them, they live in a world full of trouble. We all live in that same troubled world today.

The world's troubles haven't changed, despite all our efforts. Wars, famine, disease, poverty, and now, fighting each other over toilet paper! The world hasn't changed. And fortunately for us, God hasn't changed, either.

"Take heart! I have overcome the world," is a very bold claim. What did Jesus mean?

Shortly after saying that, he was arrested, beaten, and crucified. But three days later, he walked out of his tomb and began meeting again with his disciples.

What I hear when I hear those words is that whatever trouble this world throws at me, whatever storms come, the most important things will not be moved. What things? God is good. God loves me. God has redeemed my pitiful life in Jesus and given me an eternal future with him. And right now, this very instant, God is present, God is speaking, God is listening, God is standing with me, and with you, as we live in these troubled times.

My hope is in the reality of the living God who loves me, his son Jesus who saved me, and his Holy Spirit who is in me no matter what comes. In a world full of trouble, these are realities that you can anchor your hope in. So, take heart!