

John 16:33 - "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."

You may be thinking, "Why is she using a scripture that we usually hear at Easter? This is Advent!" I assure you that I haven't misplaced either my calendar or my marbles. Stay with me.

Jesus is speaking to His disciples in the Upper Room as they commemorate the Passover meal, preparing them for His imminent departure. They are finally beginning to comprehend who He is and what He is saying. They are convinced that their Teacher came from God and is speaking the truth to them.

But then Jesus assures them of something they would rather not hear. "In this world you will have trouble." He verbally guarantees that as dwellers in an unbelieving world, they will experience sorrow and all kinds of difficulty. Yet He admonishes them to be courageous - to take heart - because He has conquered the world.

Biblically, in both the Old and New Testament, the word "heart" is used to represent the innermost being, not just human emotions. The heart in Hebrew is the full realm of the soul - the mind, will and emotions. The Hebrew word *lebab* means heart, breast, being, courage, mind, understanding.

When Jesus tells His disciples to take heart, He is encouraging them to engage their mind, will and emotions in believing that He has conquered the world. Jesus assures them that everything He has taught them is so that the same peace that is in Him will be in them and give them great confidence as they rest in Him.

Today, that same assurance is available to each of us. The great Christmas hymn, *Joy to the World* by Isaac Watts, begins with these words: "*Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing.*"

The King of heaven HAS come to earth; now we have the opportunity to fully open our hearts - that is, mind, will and emotions - and give Him room to abundantly manifest Himself as the Prince of Peace.

We recently had a dear woman come for healing prayer who has dealt with two types of metastatic cancer for several years. Her medical prognosis has been labeled "terminal," but she wrote to tell me that the day after she came for prayer, her oncologist told her that she looked the best he had ever seen her, that her countenance seemed so peaceful and joyful. That can only be the Prince of Peace finding room in her heart.

Today, regardless of your circumstances, will you “take heart”? Will you offer your mind, will and emotions into His care, creating a resting place for Him in your innermost being? “Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” That is a promise from the Prince of Peace.