



Links Players

TAKE HEART

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. John 16:33 ESV

Florida failed in hospitality during the recent Players Championship. The major championship that is not a major championship weathered all of nature's torment: rain, wind, and cold. The "draw," a mostly random computer-generated Thursday and Friday pairings, is typically viewed as it is what it is. At The Players, it became a significant determinate of who survived the cut.

Each week half of the tour field tees off for a Thursday morning first round and Friday afternoon for round two. The other half tees up Thursday afternoon and then sprints to a Friday morning tee time.

The wild convergence of rain and cold that descended on TPC Sawgrass without a doubt favored the morning/afternoon wave. Seven top-ranked players in the other wave couldn't overcome the blustery winds and cold. I was entertained as the famous par-3 17th devoured the pros and I felt the dread tingle throughout my body as I remembered some disastrous rounds of my own.

Inclement weather and wind generate tribulation for any professional golfer. The difficulty of the course combined with horrid conditions leaves no peace at any point in time.

Our world seems to be experiencing inclement conditions of tribulation daily. The difficulties of COVID, politics, and racial tensions persist. Unrest around the world leaves us crying out, Why God, Why? We pack stress and anxiety into our briefcases and backpacks. Our present-day experiences are not unique. Generations throughout the life of God's people have felt and lived through tribulation.

According to John's Gospel, the time between the last supper and Jesus' arrest included a long discourse where Jesus foretells of Peter's denial, declares he is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, promises the Holy Spirit, establishes himself as the True Vine, speaks of the hatred of the world, affirms their sorrow will turn into joy, and ends with: "Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone (John 16:31)."

As I write, my spirit feels punched. Why God, Why? Why do we have to experience tribulation? Where are you God? Why do we turn away from you when circumstances feel impossible? Help my unbelief.

And yet, Jesus promises peace, a peace our souls inhabit only as we remain in him, not because the wind of our circumstances ceases. I don't fully understand this reality that Jesus is the one who has overcome the world. But I do want to be steadfast in growing my intimate union with Jesus through the scriptures, along with my oneness of heart with his heart, mind, and purpose. The only way I know how to do this is to believe I am a branch of the True Vine, and it is his presence through the Holy Spirit's work that will help me through tribulation.

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The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.