

Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled

John 14:1-14 | Pastor Jason Van Bommel

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

¹² “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. – John 14:1-14, ESV

Troubled World, Troubled Hearts

We live in a troubled world, and in a troubled world, the most natural thing is to have a troubled heart. At times, it seems if your heart is not troubled by this world, you either have no conscience or no pulse. But sometimes the general troubled state of the world hits us closer to home: Someone we love dies. We lose our job. We hit a financial crisis. Our kids go astray. Our marriage is filled with conflict. Our marriage is devoid of affection or it ends altogether. Our health takes a sudden and dramatic turn for the worse. I don't know all of your stories, but I know enough to look around and see that we have all had to face the reality of a troubled heart in our lives.

On this final night Jesus had with His disciples, their hearts were troubled. They had been fighting earlier in the evening about who was the best among them and which of them should sit at Jesus' right hand and left hand in His kingdom. Now He said, “I am going away, and where I am going, you cannot come.” Not only had He told them of His coming departure, but He had told them that one of them was going to betray Him. How was this possible? They had left all to follow Him. Their families and friends were far away in Galilee, and they had been following Jesus, pinning all their hopes and expectations on Him for some time now. Perhaps most devastatingly, they had all heard Him rebuke Peter and tell him that he would deny His Lord three times this very night. If even bold, committed Peter was going to deny Jesus, who would stand? What was going to happen?

The disciples were troubled, as they saw their world crashing down around them. Do you know what that feels like, that sense of disorientation and confusion as things you had leaned on for support suddenly prove unstable, unreliable, unpredictable. To this group of men on this critical night, Jesus gives a comforting but confusing command: “*Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.*”

Jesus is telling them: Do not let your hearts be agitated and in turmoil. It may look like things are falling apart, but they are actually unfolding according to plan. You can't see it now, but trust God and trust Me. Do not be unsettled, anxious, angry, sad, disoriented. Keep on trusting in God and keep on trusting in Me.

But how could they? How can we persevere in faith when our lives are upside down? Well, Jesus doesn't just give us a command and then expect us to figure out how to obey it. He doesn't just ask the impossible of His disciples and then leave them to figure out how to get their hearts under control and how to persevere in faith in the midst of their distress. He equips His disciples with truth, with comfort, with powerful resources for calming their hearts. We're going to focus on these verses clustered around three things Jesus gives His disciples:

1. **An eternal perspective.** He tells them immediately of His going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house, which has plenty of room for all.
2. **Himself as a wonderful Savior:** He anchors their faith in who He is as the way, the truth and the life and the One who is the fullness of God in human form.
3. **A promise of inexhaustible resources:** They had seen Jesus do some amazing things, but He tells them they will do even greater things, and tells them they will be able to ask Him for anything in prayer and He will do it.

A. “I go to prepare a place for you.”

An eternal perspective

The first thing Jesus gives His disciples so their hearts will not be troubled and they will persevere in faith is an eternal perspective. The right perspective is so vital. Imagine a Marine recruit waking up during his third week at Parris Island and packing his bags for home. When a fellow recruit asks him what he's doing, he says, “I'm going home, man. This is the worst vacation I have ever taken!”

So often, Christians get into trouble because they think of this life as their only and true life, and this world as their only and true home. We are not home yet, and we are not on vacation either. We are on a pilgrimage toward our final home, and we're being trained and prepared for it, even as it has already been prepared for us.

Jesus' disciples thought Jerusalem was going to be their new home, as He took the throne and they took their places as His royal counselors, His court. Or perhaps they were hoping for luxurious villas overseeing towns in Jesus' kingdom. Whatever their expectations were, they were not in line with the reality Jesus was securing for them, and their expectations were far too short-sighted and limited to be able to grasp the greatness of Jesus' plan and preparations for them.

Yes, Jesus was going away, but He was going away to prepare a place for them, in His Father's house. His Father's house is large – It's a big, big house, with lots and lots of room. This would be their true and final home, at home with God the Father Himself.

Now, we should not misunderstand what Jesus says when He says, "*I go to prepare a place for you.*" It's not that Jesus is in heaven now, busily doing a home expansion every time another person comes to faith in Him – "Oh, look, another believer! Well, let's add on that new wing we've been talking about. Better stop by Home Depot and get some more lumber, drywall and paint." No, rather, in going to the cross to suffer and die for His own, and in rising again to live forever for us, He has prepared a place for us. He tells His disciples He is going away, going to the cross and the grave, and in so doing will prepare the place for them, by being the pioneer of our salvation, blazing a trail through death into eternal life for us.

Just as surely as Jesus has prepared the place for us, He will come again and take us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. This is the whole reason why he came and lived and died and rose again – that we can have our home with Him and the Father forever. He certainly will not fail to bring to completion the salvation He paid such a dear price to secure for us. Jesus assured His disciples that what He is telling them is true and that they know the way to the Father's house.

B. "I am the way, the truth & the life"

A wonderful Savior

All of this wonderful encouragement seemed to have gone right over Thomas' head, as *Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"* Thomas is a man of concrete realities – hard facts and solid evidence. He doesn't understand this abstract metaphorical language of Jesus. Jesus has been talking about going somewhere and has told the disciples they cannot go where He is going, and now He said they know the way to the place where He's going, so Thomas is just confused.

Jesus answers with crystal clarity: *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* The disciples know the way because they know Jesus, and Jesus is the way. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the way because He is the truth and the life. He is our access to God because He is the Word of God incarnate and the life of God made flesh. In

Jesus, we have been granted the one true way to eternal life in the house of God, a way that is true and a way that is life and leads to life eternal.

I love Matthew Henry's commentary on Jesus' declaration "I am the way, the truth & the life":

First, Let us consider these distinctly.

1. Christ is the way. *Christ was his own way, for by his own blood he entered into the holy place, and he is our way, for we enter by him. By his doctrine and example he teaches us our duty, by his merit and intercession he procures our happiness, and so he is the way. In him God and man meet, and are brought together. We could not get to the tree of life in the way of innocency; but Christ is another way to it. By Christ, as the way an intercourse is settled and kept up between heaven and earth; the angels of God ascend and descend; our prayers go to God, and his blessings come to us by him; this is the way that leads to rest, the good old way. The disciples followed him, and Christ tells them that they followed the road, and, while they continued following him, they would never be out of their way.*

2. He is the truth.

(1.) As truth is opposed to figure and shadow. Christ is the substance of all the Old-Testament types, which are therefore said to be figures of the true. Christ is the true manna, the true tabernacle.

(2.) As truth is opposed to falsehood and error; the doctrine of Christ is true doctrine. When we enquire for truth, we need learn no more than the truth as it is in Jesus.

(3.) As truth is opposed to fallacy and deceit; he is true to all that trust in him, as true as truth itself.

3. He is the life; *for we are alive unto God only in and through Jesus Christ. Christ formed in us is to our souls which our souls are to our bodies. Christ is the resurrection and the life.*

Secondly, Let us consider these jointly, and with reference to each other. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; that is,

1. He is the beginning, the middle, and the end. In him we must set out, go on, and finish. As the truth, he is the guide of our way; as the life, he is the end of it.

2. He is the true and living way; there are truth and life in the way, as well as at the end of it.

3. He is the true way to life, the only true way; other ways may seem right, but the end of them is the way of death.

Jesus also declares quite clearly: "No one comes to the Father but through me." We cannot approach God on any other basis but through Jesus. We cannot hope to enter heaven through any other way. All other ways are false and lead only to death, all other so-called mediators are but sinners themselves in need of a mediator and unable to represent us before God. We are not being intolerant or arrogant when we say that Jesus is the only way, but we are simply doing what Jesus does here: We are telling

the truth. Central to the reality that Jesus is the only way of salvation is the uniqueness of His person, which He goes on here to further explain.

First, He tells His disciples that if they don't know the way to the Father's house, perhaps it is because they have not truly known Him after all. He says: *"If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."*

They had been listening to Jesus, following Jesus, eating with Jesus, asking Him questions and seeing Him perform great miracles, and they still seemed to miss the full truth of who this Man really was and is. No more! From now on, they know.

Phillip is next to be confused and to express His confusion to Jesus:

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

It seems like Philip is wanting a manifestation of God's glory, like the pillar of cloud and fire in the Exodus. His request seems to echo the request Moses made of God: "Show me Your glory!" Yet the Israelites who saw the pillar of cloud and fire did not believe, and Philip has actually seen a much clearer manifestation of the glory of God: Jesus Himself.

⁹ *Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"* ¹⁰ *Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.* ¹¹ *Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.*

Jesus urges Philip to believe and points him again back to His works as proof to sustain and strengthen his immature, developing faith. Jesus is saying, *"I am telling you the truth, but I am not asking you to believe just because I say so. Look at the things I have done so clearly, openly and unmistakably."*

As believers, we have everything we need to have peace and to quiet our troubled hearts, because we have Jesus Himself. Jesus is the manifestation of God. He is in the Father and the Father is in Him, and so in Him, we have the fullness of God given to us as our Savior. This is what makes Jesus uniquely qualified to save us and to keep us, to bring us peace with God and to give us peace in Himself. Having Him, we lack nothing we need. Lacking Him, we would have nothing we need.

C. "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do."

Inexhaustible resources

But Jesus tells His disciples of more than just their eternal home waiting for them and of who He is in Himself as their Savior and Lord. He also tells them some astounding things about themselves, about what they will do in His name and what they will be able to ask Him to do for them in His name:

¹² “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

Jesus did some amazing miracles: Feeding 5,000, healing a man born blind, healing a man who had been lame for 38 years, casting out demons, calming a storm, raising the dead. Now He was leaving. Amazingly, He tells His disciples they will do the works that He does and even greater works. We know the apostles were empowered by God to do miraculous things: Peter and John healed a lame man begging at the Temple, Peter raised Tabitha to life in Joppa. The Apostles even did greater works: They preached and saw thousands converted, lives changed forever. Peter’s shadow falling on the sick would be sufficient to heal them.

Yet Jesus’ words are not just for the Apostles. He says “whoever believes” and that means you and me. So, how do we do the works Jesus did, and even greater works? Well, we are the Body of Christ, His ambassadors and the manifestation of His kingdom here on earth. We are called to feed the hungry and heal the sick, and the church has set up homeless shelters, feeding programs, hospitals and orphanages around the world, showing the love of Jesus and touching others in His name in such a widespread and powerful way, it shows the same love Jesus showed in His works, and it does so in a much larger, broader way that He ever could alone as one man in the world.

In fact, in the name of Jesus, the world has been changed for the better: human rights and dignity, education and health care, the abolition of slavery, and much more has been done by His people in His name. And yet, the greatest miracle of all is the miracle of a heart and life changed by the Gospel, redeemed and reconciled to God through Jesus. Jesus reached out and touched many people in His life, but as His people, we have the ability to reach far more people with His heart-changing, life-redeeming, miraculous saving love through the Gospel we proclaim in word and deed.

To empower us to do these greater works in His name, Jesus gives a promise in prayer: “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do.” People have abused this promise and distorted this powerful truth to be focused on materialism and self-centered kingdom-building, but Jesus is clearly talking about doing those things which bring glory to God, advance His kingdom, and exalt the name of Jesus.

To ask for something in someone’s name, you need to be asking for something that person would want. It’s definitely not a carte blanche to ask for new cars, bigger houses, fancier clothes or more widespread fame. Yet it is a powerful promise that Jesus will do what we ask when we are seeking to spread the Gospel, advance His kingdom, glorify the Father and exalt the name of Jesus. If we are indeed seeking to do the things Jesus has asked us to do, He will be with us and He will hear us when we ask Him, and He will answer powerfully.

Life is Short, Hard and Good

We do indeed live in a troubled world. Our hearts can easily be discouraged and dismayed in this world. When Jesus says, "Let not your hearts be troubled," He isn't saying it's sinful to ever be distressed. Jesus Himself has said in John 12: "Now my soul is troubled." Earlier in chapter 13, John told us that Jesus was "troubled in spirit." So it's not sinful to have a troubled heart. Yet, thankfully, because Jesus took our troubles upon Himself on the cross, we don't need to be troubled. He bore our sorrows and carried our griefs.

Life in this world is short, shockingly short, really. Some of our members have lost loved ones recently, and they have felt the fleeting nature of life in this world. And life is hard. Relationships are thorny. People disappoint us. We disappoint ourselves. Circumstances take us by surprise and cause us distress. Life is short and, very often, life is hard.

And yet, because of Jesus, life is also very good. We can know a peace that nothing in this world can shake. We can trust in God and we can keep trusting in Jesus, and we do not need to have troubled hearts. Jesus has opened the door to the Father's house for us. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He brings us to God and brings God to us. He gives us power and invites us to pray so that our short stay in the world can be empowered by Him to accomplish great things for His glory. He blesses and keeps us in a thousand ways we never even see every day. Life is good because Jesus is good and Jesus is the life. So, let not your hearts be troubled!