

# Let not your heart be troubled

John 14:1-14

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2020 has been a year like no one ever expected, and we still have 4 months left. So, here is my question: When your heart is troubled how do you respond? Some people shout and scream. Some sit and cry. Some silo themselves with a bag of chips, a bowl of ice cream and endless episodes of a Netflix series. Others sleep, and sleep and sleep. Others bury themselves in a good book or meditative music. Others become workaholics or even alcoholics. Others turn to Facebook, zoom, whatsapp, pornography or video games. Some plan vacations, go shopping, or spend their time on Instagram coveting the life of others as they grow angrier at the world, God, and even themselves. All of these are superficial efforts to hide the pain. They are short-lived solutions to a deeper problem. They are like putting on a Band-Aid when heart surgery is needed. We will always long for joy and peace and certainty, but we must realize that the long-term solution will not be found by anything that we do or experience in the outside world. The solution must be found on the inside at the level of the heart, and only God can bring change on the heart level. Today we will turn to John 14 and see the solution that Jesus gives for those whose hearts are troubled.

As we seek to understand John 14, we must make note of the chapters and verses that led up to this conversation between Jesus and His disciples. The week had started with Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. To Jesus' disciples it must have seemed that Jesus was finally about to take His place as the promised Jewish Messiah. But as the week continued Jesus talked more of his departure and death. The disciples seemed not to understand. Something dark was approaching, but they did not have ears to hear what Jesus was saying.

It was now Thursday night, hours before Jesus would be arrested. In the previous verses, Jesus had just washed the feet of the disciples, sent Judas Iscariot out to betray Jesus, and confronted Peter with the fact that before the night is over he will deny Jesus 3 times.

What was supposed to be a meaningful Passover meal together in the upper room now had everyone on edge, confused and frightened. Jesus, knowing their hearts and what lie ahead, then spoke the words of John 14:

***“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.”***

In this time of need Jesus drives His followers towards the one solution for worry: Belief. Agreeing with the words of Isaiah, written centuries before, ***“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you”*** (Isaiah 26:3).

Jesus exhorts them to believe in God. To trust in God. Worry comes when we dwell on an uncertain future. Peace comes when we put our trust in our certain God. Jesus doesn't stop with belief in God, He calls His disciples to believe in Him.

The life and death of Jesus is the ultimate proof of God's unconditional love and care for us, His children. What greater sign could there be than God giving His own Son that we might be saved! Jesus is the proof that God will give us everything that we need. As the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:32, ***“He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, will He not also give us all things with Him?”*** It is in our belief in Jesus that we experience the tangible love of God.

Jesus then gives them an example to help them understand the benefit of faith:

***“<sup>2</sup> 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? <sup>3</sup> 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.”***

Jesus is reassuring them that He is their forerunner. He goes first and will eventually come back for them so they can follow. The word for forerunner in Greek is *prodromos*. There are two meanings of this word that help us better understand the meaning. In the Roman Army the *prodromoi* were the reconnaissance troops who would lead the way, confirming the trail before the army would follow. The word *prodromoi* also was used for the small boats that guided the larger ships through the treacherous waters of the harbor of Alexandria. In this same way, Jesus is our confidence and the one who had gone ahead to certify the path that awaits all who trust in Him. He is the one who has passed through death and experienced resurrection. He is already living the eternal life and is coming back for us to show us the way.

These same words in verses 2 and 3 would have also taken the disciples' minds to the process of a Jewish engagement. Jewish marriages were arranged. This normally began by a conversation between fathers. The first part of the marriage ceremony was the betrothal or engagement period. This is when the groom gave his future bride something of value: a ring, money, dowry or a document stating his intentions. After this commitment was made, the bride would remain in her father's home preparing herself for the wedding. During this time she would keep herself pure. She would make her wedding gown, and prepare herself for leaving her old family and relying on a sharing life with her new husband. She would forever set aside her interests or possible allegiances to all other men and set her heart on

loving her future husband. During this time, the bride is referred to as “consecrated”, “sanctified” or set apart.

The groom would return to his father’s house to prepare a place for her to live. That was normally done by building an additional room to his Father’s house. The groom would return to get his bride once preparations were finished and his father gave his approval. The groom’s return would be unexpected. The bride never knew when he would return. It could be next year, next month or in the next five minutes. Her responsibility was merely to be ready at all times for his coming.

As we hear this description of a Jewish engagement process, we see its spiritual meaning in multiple places. The future groom invites the young woman to be his forever love, as Christ invites us to be His. The future groom gives a “deposit” as proof of his return, as Christ gives us the Holy Spirit as proof of His. The groom goes to prepare a place for us, just as Christ has returned to heaven and prepares a place for us. While the future groom is gone, the bride grows in her allegiance to Him and sets herself apart from all other suitors who sought to win her heart. In the same way, a follower of Christ is to turn their heart away from sin and all other idols while they wait for His return. In the end the groom returns for His bride, just like at the end of the age Christ will return for His church.

It was with the same conviction and compassion that Jesus said these words. It was as if a bridegroom was looking into the eyes of his future bride saying, “Don’t worry. Trust in Me. I will surely come back for you.”

Jesus then continued:

***“<sup>4</sup> And you know the way to where I am going.”<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”***

With these words Jesus was connecting Himself to three important ideas of Judaism: The Way, Truth and Life.

In scripture we see this idea of **“the Way”** in various places. In Deuteronomy 5:32-33, God said to Moses, **“You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you.”** In Deuteronomy 31:29, Moses said to the children of Israel, **“I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you.”**

In Isaiah 35:8, we read, **“And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way.”** In Psalms 27:11, the Psalmist prays, **“Teach me thy way, O Lord.”**

This idea of “the way” later became so connected to Jesus and His followers that the early church was known as the people belonging to “the way”, even before they were called Christians (Acts 11:26).

In Acts 9:1-2, we read this account: *“But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest<sup>2</sup> and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any “belonging to the Way”, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”*

Jesus is this Way. On our own we cannot get to God, heaven or eternal life, but with Christ we can. He is our ticket. He is our *abono*. He is our transport. He is our GPS. He is our map. He is our traveling companion who knows all. As we believe and walk with Him as our guide, we are freed to enjoy the journey, no longer worried about how to get there.

Many of you have had friends or family come visit you from outside of Spain. They do not know anything about Madrid, but you do. You know which restaurant, which metro, which area of the city needs to be seen. Yes, they could use the tourism map, or a gps, but the best option is you just showing them around yourself. When they arrive, you could say that you are their “way”. If they stay near you, everything else will be taken care of.

When Jesus is saying He is the Way, He is not giving them directions, He is calling them to a relationship. He is calling them to stay near Him. He is their confidence and their peace. Jesus is saying if you want to know God, I am the Way. Only through the death and resurrection of Christ has reconciliation with God been made possible, and only through repentance and faith in Jesus can someone know the Way to God.

The second idea that the Jews would have been very familiar with is that of **Truth**.

**Psalm 145:18** says, *“The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.”* In Psalm 25:5 the Psalmist writes, *“Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.”* In Psalm 86:11 we read, *“Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.”*

As John 18:37b states so clearly, *“For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”*

This search for truth in scripture finally found its culmination, not in true information, but in a relationship with the Truth, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ did not only teach the truth, He is the origin of ultimate truth. He is the standard against which all falsehood is measured. He is the Immanuel, God with Us, in whom there is nothing false.

1 John 5:20 declares, *“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.”*

In this same way, the Holy Spirit is called *“the Spirit of Truth”* (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13).

The third term that the Jews were familiar with was that of **Life**.

We know that at creation God breathed life into man. Genesis 2:7 says, *“Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”* Colossians 1:16 talks of Christ, *“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.”*

God is the source of life. We know that without Christ we are dead in sin, but in Christ we are given new life, spiritual life, eternal life.

*“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20). It is in Christ that we finally have found life.

In Christ, who knows all and is in all, we are guaranteed the way to God and eternity. Because of the cross, Christ has made the way for us, and He and He alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life. For there is no other infinite One who was worthy to pay the price for our sins against a just, infinite God. *“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

Only Jesus was chosen by God to be the Savior (1 Peter 2:4). Jesus is the only One who has lived a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15). Only Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17). Jesus is the only One to descend from heaven and then to return to heaven (John 3:13). He is our only sacrifice for sin (1 John 2:2; Hebrews 10:26). Christ alone has conquered death (Hebrews 2:14-15). He is the only One whom God has exalted . . . to the highest place and given a name above all names (Philippians 2:9).

Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Him.

Jesus then continues:

*“<sup>7</sup> If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” <sup>8</sup> Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” <sup>9</sup> 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’? <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.”*

To a Jew this was unimaginable. It was believed that no one could see God and survive the encounter. Their belief was based on verses like Exodus 33:19-20 that God spoke to Moses, *“I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence . . . But . . . you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”*

But this is what Jesus is saying to Philip and the others: “If you have seen me you have seen the Father.” For God to become visible and to take on the form of a man must have been a mind-blowing idea for them.

Do you want to know what God is like? Look at Jesus. Colossians 1:15 says of Jesus, *“He is the image of the invisible God.”* Hebrew 1:3 says it this way: *“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature.”* Matthew 1:23 tells us that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us.

The disciples had been watching the character of God in action every day, as they had walked with Jesus for the last three years. They saw the compassion of God, as they watched Jesus touch the leper and heal him. They watched the gentleness of God, when Jesus made time to bless the children. They saw the grace of God, when they saw Jesus give mercy to the woman caught in adultery. They saw the power of God over nature, when they watched Jesus walk on the water, calm the sea, multiply the fish and the loaves and feed 5,000 people. They saw the power of God over death, when they saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. Even when Jesus accepted the thief on the cross who was about to breathe his last breath and who had nothing to contribute to the kingdom of God, even in Jesus’ final moments they got a glimpse of the unconditional love of God.

In the words of Jesus, *“Whoever has seen Me, has seen the Father.”* Do you want to know God? Study Jesus. Draw near to Jesus. Believe in Jesus.

We started today with the words of Jesus, *“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Believe . . .”* So how do we believe? If we lack belief, how do we get more?

- **Receive it.** Belief always starts with God. Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus is the Author and Perfecter of our faith. Ephesians 2:8 tells us that faith is not our doing, but it is a gift of God. In Matthew 16:15-17, we read a story that clearly shows that faith does not come from the ideas of man but from the revelation of God. If you would like belief, realize it is a gift of God and be willing to receive it.
- **Seek it.** Faith is a gift of God that comes through the Word of God. As Romans 10:17 states, *“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”* In light of this, we open our Bibles and we seek as mentioned in Luke 11:9-12. Trust the promise that all who seek will find. Through God’s Word one learns about who Jesus is and what He has done. The Holy Spirit then comes and convinces her of the truth of scripture’s claims about Jesus Christ. She then puts her faith in Him. If you want to believe, seek and God promises that you will find.
- **Ask for it.** To grow in faith we ask. In Luke 17:5, the apostles said to the Lord, *“Increase our faith!”* In Mark 9:24, a father cried out to Jesus, *“I believe, help my unbelief!”* Pray to God for faith, that you may believe.
- **Experience it.** At times we are similar to the disciples. Words just aren’t enough. We have heard the claims and promises of Christ. We know them in our minds, but it is not until we encounter life with Christ that we put our trust in Him. For so many in scripture this was their road to faith. God brought them through trials, one at a time, and every time they stepped out in faith and

found God to be trustworthy, their faith grew. As life presented challenges, they stepped out in faith and lived as if Jesus' claims and promises were really true. In the face of financial difficulties, they believed in Christ's promise of provision by seeking Him first (Matthew 6:33). As they had no idea what to do they cried to God for wisdom, knowing that He had promised to give if they would only ask (James 1:5). When overcome by guilt they confessed sin, knowing that God is faithful and just to forgive their sins and cleanse them from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

In those moments of worry and anxiety it is a crisis of belief. We know the truth in our minds but we struggle to believe with our hearts. In those moments of worry and anxiety, join the father from Matthew 9:24 who was mentioned earlier: *"I believe, help my unbelief."* As you sincerely seek and ask He will grant the belief to obey. And in obedience we will find His faithfulness, time and time again.

*"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in Me."*

As we close, I would like to share this story with you:

It was the time of the year for the Jewish Passover. It was the custom that most Jews would make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to observe these holy days. Even though it was the custom for many, not everyone was able to make the trip to Jerusalem. Those who could not go to Jerusalem would line the streets of their city to cheer and bless those who were passing through as they traveled to Jerusalem.

This was the case in Jericho. Jesus and his followers were passing through Jericho, going to Jerusalem. The crowds were likely huge and the noise was probably almost unbearable. Scripture tells us of a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, who was sitting by the side of the busy street. Blind beggars in that day would have been looked down upon and seen as cursed by God.

Mark 10:47 says, *"And when he (Bartimaeus) heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out."* This word used for "cry out" was also used in the New Testament for an insane, demon possessed man, and a mother giving birth. This was not a gentle, measured calling out to Jesus. It was a desperate, out of control shouting or even screaming to get Jesus' attention.

The people near the blind beggar rebuked him, telling him to be quiet, but he cried out even more. In response Jesus said, *"Call him."* Scripture then records that the man threw off his cloak and jumped up and came to Jesus, and Jesus rewarded the man's passionate plea by granting him his sight. Oh, that we would desperately call out to Jesus in this manner as we seek to believe.

In the words of Jeremiah 29:13, *"You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart."*

### Discussion questions:

1. What did you find most meaningful from this sermon?
2. Can you share any time(s) in your life that your heart was troubled?

3. When your heart is troubled how do you usually respond?
4. Can you summarize the Jewish engagement process? How is it like Christ's relationship with His followers?
5. How would you explain "Jesus is The Way" in your own words?
6. "If we have seen Jesus, we have seen the Father." "Jesus is the image of the invisible God." How can we use these truths to help us better know what God is like?
7. What next steps can you take to grow in your belief of God and Jesus?
8. What do you think you need to remember from this sermon?
9. How can we pray for you about this?