

## John 14:1-12

“Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that you may also be where I am. <sup>4</sup>You know where I am going, and you know the way.”

<sup>5</sup>“Lord, we don’t know where you are going,” Thomas replied, “so 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. <sup>7</sup>If you know me, you would also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup>“Lord,” said Philip, “show us the Father, and that is enough for us.”

<sup>9</sup>“Have I been with you so long,” Jesus answered, “and you still do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup>Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I am telling you I am not speaking on my own, but the Father who remains in me is doing his works. <sup>11</sup>Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. Or else believe because of the works themselves.

## Do Not Let Your Heart Be Troubled

### I.

In a way, perhaps, that evening was like their confirmation day. They had studied under him for a long time. They had learned lots. They could even give the right answers—some of the time, at least—other times they were woefully off.

The class was a little bigger than this year’s group of confirmands. There had been 12. All twelve had received the Lord’s Supper for the very first time together, but shortly after that one of them had left—was it in a huff, or with a dejected attitude?

It was after he left and some of the traditional Passover hymns had been sung that Jesus began to speak to the rest of the class what have often been called “The Farewell Discourses.” That’s where today’s Gospel begins.

Note Jesus’ very first words to them: “Do not let your heart be troubled” (John 14:1, EHV).

It probably sounded a little odd to their ears. What was there to be troubled about? Passover was always a special celebration for people of Jewish descent. Passover was a time to remember how God brought his people out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses. While listing and speaking about the ten plagues might have been somewhat solemn, the fact that God had done these things to liberate his people brought them great joy. This was a happy festival, not one that the typical Jewish believer would have any reason to be troubled about.

So why “Do not let your heart be troubled”? Maybe the departure of Judas? While they all heard Jesus say: “Amen, Amen, I tell you: One of you will betray me” (John 13:21, EHV), most of them weren’t in on the conversation when Peter had John find out from Jesus who it would be. When Judas left, many of them assumed Jesus had asked him to take care of some detail for the rest of them. After Judas had left, Jesus told the rest: “Dear children, I am going to be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come” (John 13:33, EHV).

Confirmation classes were finished for the Eleven, but the learning had only just begun. They didn’t really understand what was coming. That’s why he told each one: “Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me” (John 14:1, EHV). In just a few short hours they would witness things that would challenge their belief in Jesus—and their belief in God.

At the moment, they were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah—that he was invincible. Hours later, when he stood in the courtrooms of Annas and Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate, bruised and bloodied and silent, their beliefs would be challenged. As they watched the nails pounded in to his hands and feet and watched the cross rise up and be fastened into place, their beliefs would falter. As they heard the taunts of the soldiers that if Jesus really *were* the Son of God he ought to come down from the cross and prove it to the world, their beliefs would crumble.

No, Jesus knew each one of his close disciples would have a troubled heart in the hours and days to come. Each one would face even more challenges to their faith to believe in God and believe also in him in the weeks that lay ahead when they would be confronted by the very religious leaders they had watched condemn Jesus to death.

Trouble. That's what lay ahead. But Jesus didn't want their hearts to be troubled.

## II.

Today is Confirmation Day. You confirmands will shortly make your vows to be faithful to your Lord Jesus, even to the point of death. You will receive the Lord's Supper for the first time.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. There are plenty of days that lie ahead for you in which you find your faith in Jesus and your faith in God challenged. The world wants you to abandon your vows to your Savior.

Peter had been warned that he was about to deny his Savior and claim to have never known him. He was warned that it would happen three times before dawn the following day. Peter scoffed at the notion. He was strong in his faith in Jesus. Until everyone he was around was obviously against Jesus; then he caved to the pressure to blend in with all of them and gave his three-fold denial.

You will find pressure to deny Jesus, too. Whether being a Christian is popular among the group of friends you have now or not, at some time your faith in Jesus will get you strange looks from others, or outright laughing and scoffing at you because of your faith. How could you believe all the ludicrous things the Bible says? How could you believe that one man could die for everyone? For that matter, how can you believe in a heaven or a hell in the first place?

Troubling times. Troubling questions. Troubling accusations. Do not let your heart be troubled.

## III.

“In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that you may also be where I am” (John 14:2-3, EHV). Many translations use “rooms” rather than “mansions.” There's nothing wrong with that, but the original word is talking about permanent dwelling places.

Sometimes “room” makes a person think of a hotel room or a dorm room. Those are temporary. Your mansion is forever. Jesus is going ahead into heaven to get your permanent home ready for you.

*This* is why he could say before, “Do not let your heart be troubled.” No matter what comes your way in the days and weeks and years to come, Jesus is coming back here for you to take you to heaven to be with him forever.

These disciples wouldn't understand completely in the next 24 hours as they watched Jesus' trial and crucifixion. They wouldn't even fully understand on Easter Sunday. But eventually they would remember these words. What he was about to do on the cross was part of the preparation to eventually take them to heaven. Sin had to be paid for. The sin of their troubled hearts and yours had to be done away with on the cross.

40 days after Jesus rose from the dead, he officially ascended into heaven. Maybe then they began to understand that he was preparing their permanent home for them. There he is still, preparing *your* permanent home, too.

“‘You know where I am going, and you know the way.’<sup>5</sup> Lord, we don’t know where you are going,’ Thomas replied, ‘so how can we know the way?’” (John 14:4-5, EHV).

You confirmands have had me as your teacher for two years now. At times you seem to know exactly what I’m trying to get through to you when we talk in class; other times I get blank looks. This class had been with Jesus himself for three years! They didn’t just have an hour or two of confirmation instructions per week, but they were with him continuously for those three years. Did they not understand? They had no idea where he was going?

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through me. <sup>7</sup>If you know me, you would also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him’” (John 14:6-7, EHV). Jesus never gets exasperated with his students, even though they don’t understand. He explains again.

Jesus is Truth. He doesn’t just *tell* the truth, he *is* the truth. Because he is Truth, you can count on the fact that everything he says is true. Sometimes what he says is difficult to comprehend, but you know Jesus does not and will not lie to you.

As Truth itself, Jesus tells you he is the Way—the only Way. Trying to *imitate* Jesus will not get you to heaven. You cannot be perfect, as he was perfect. Instead, you believe in him as the Way because he has taken care of all of it. He paid the high price for all your sins; in place of all those sins he has given you *his* perfection to wear as your own. That’s the symbolic meaning of that white robe at confirmation. God sees his sinless Son when he looks at you, because you wear the robe of Jesus’ righteousness.

Jesus is the Life. *Real* life is in heaven. The present here and now is filled with things that threaten to trouble our hearts. Keep all those troubling things in perspective. The Bible says that God will work everything for the good. Even when bad things happen, God promises that somehow, someday, he will make the bad serve his good purposes. Eventually, you will be in heaven, and there, all trouble is removed.

Earlier Jesus said: “Believe in God, believe also in me.” Believe in him as the Way and the Truth and the Life.

#### IV.

“‘Lord,’ said Philip, ‘show us the Father, and that is enough for us’” (John 14:8, EHV). Does Philip have earplugs in? Is Jesus not enough?

The Bible identifies believers as both sinners and saints. A saint, you will remember, is a holy one; that means, a believer. You are a saint because you believe in Jesus. But you still live in this world. That means you are still a sinner, too. From time to time you might do what Philip did: you might look right at Jesus and listen to his words and wonder whether there is anything more.

“‘Have I been with you so long,’ Jesus answered, ‘and you still do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup>Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I am telling you I am not speaking on my own, but the Father who remains in me is doing his works’” (John 14:9-10, EHV).

When you lose focus, as Philip did, pull your eyes back to Jesus. Focus on him yet again as the Way and the Truth and the Life. Remember your Savior and what he has done for you. Remember the place he is preparing for you.

As you continue your walk of faith, always look back to the words of Jesus. Always remember: Do not let your heart be troubled. Amen.