

John 14:1-14

Please open your Bible at John 14. We come today to some of the best known and best loved words of Jesus. They are words that all of us need to hear today:

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. – John 14:1

My prayer for this morning is that you will feel as if you were able to pull up a chair, sit down with these words of Jesus, and let them soak into your heart and mind so that your faith may be nourished and your wounds may be healed.

The Context: Broken Trust

These words of Jesus were spoken in a context of broken trust.

This was the night of the Last Supper. Jesus had gathered with His disciples, and it was a dinner in which everything seemed to go wrong.

An argument had blown up among the disciples about “which of them was to be regarded as the greatest (Luke 22:24). ‘Am I getting the respect I deserve?’

Where people sat at a formal occasion like the Passover was a big deal. I suspect the argument blew up over who should sit closest to Jesus at this supper. So, there was tension in the air.

John tells us that Jesus got up, took a towel and a basin, and went ‘round the room washing the disciples’ feet.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from the supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. – John 13:3-4

Here is the person who is seated in the position of highest honor. He leaves that position in order to wash the feet of the disciples.

This is the story of Jesus. The Son of God was at the right hand of the Father. He was in the position of supreme honor and glory. What did He do? He laid it aside. He humbled Himself. He took the form of a servant and was born in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:7)

Why did He do this? He came to minister to us!

*For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many – **Mark 10:45***

Jesus did not come into the world to lay a list of demands on you. He did not come to take things from you. He came to serve, and he came to give. He came to bring infinite and eternal good to you.

Notice what we read next in the story in John.

*When he had washed the feet of His disciples, he put on his outer garments and **resumed his place...** – **John 13:12***

What we have here is a beautiful picture of the whole story of Jesus: He leaves the position of honor. He takes the form of a servant. He humbles himself to the point of death on a cross.

But God highly exalts Him. Jesus has ‘resumed His place’ at the right hand of the Father in heaven. The Father has bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow (Philippians 2:9-10).

Then after Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, John tells us:

*After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly I say to you, one of you will betray me.” – **John 13:21***

Mark records that, one by one, the disciples asked Jesus, “Lord is it I?” (Mark 14:19). They all felt that they had it in them to let the Lord down.

Very significantly, no one said, ‘Lord, is it Judas?’ When Judas abandoned the faith, he had professed in Jesus, and everyone was taken by surprise. No one, apart from Jesus, saw this coming.

It is always devastating when a known and trusted leader denies the faith they once proclaimed. This is what the disciples were dealing with at the Last Supper. They did not yet know who it was. But they knew that one of their own number would betray the Lord.

If someone you trusted and respected abandons the faith they once professed, you will know how devastating that can be. Here is someone I loved, respected and trusted. If I cannot trust him, who else can I trust? And, if someone who seemed to be so strong in faith can walk away from Jesus, how do I know that the same thing will not happen to me?

This is a night when everything seemed to be going wrong. Then there was more bad news. Jesus announced His departure:

*“Little children, yet a little while I am with you...so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come,’” - **John 13:33***

*Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now...” - **John 13:36***

But Peter insists:

*Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you,” - **John 13:37***

That’s heroic. Peter says, “Nothing will ever stop me from following you, Jesus. Someone else in this room may betray you but me? Never! I will lay down my life for you.”

Peter is the hero of his own story. Isn’t it amazing how we often become the heroes in our own story? He believes in himself. ‘I am not a quitter. I am not a fake. I am the real deal. And whatever comes my way, I can rise to it.’

“There may be others in this room you can’t rely on, but Jesus, you can trust in me.” That’s what Peter is saying.

Sometimes the failures of others can bring out an ugly self righteousness. A Christian leader falls into sin, and your heart says like the Pharisee in Jesus story, “God, I thank you that I am not like other men,” (Luke 18:11). That’s where Peter was, but:

*Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times - **John 13:38***

A few hours later, Jesus was arrested. And when a servant girl suggested to Peter that he was a follower of Jesus, Peter denied that he had ever known the Lord. And when he heard the rooster, he went out and wept bitterly. (John 18:15-18, Luke 22:54-62).

What are you to do when your trust is broken? What are you to do when someone you trusted and respected turns out to be very different from the person you thought they were? What are you to do when you discover that despite all your best intentions, your own flesh fails you, and you cannot even trust yourself?

That is where we need these well-known verses in John 14.

1. There is a Savior you can trust

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. – John 14:1

When you discover the hidden sins of others and when you discover the hidden sins of your own heart, the greatest danger is that you will worry your way into unbelief. Jesus says, ‘Don’t do that. Don’t go down that road.’

Here’s what you must do instead: Believe in God; believe also in me (John 14:1).

Notice that the word ‘believe’ is repeated six times in John 14:1-14. Believe in God (v. 1). Believe also in me (v. 1). Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? (v. 10). Believe me that I am in the Father and the father is in me (v. 11) Or else believe on account of the works themselves (v. 11). Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do (v. 12).

Remember that Jesus is speaking to the disciples as a group [hearts plural]. Judas has left the room, and eleven of them remained. Jesus has told them that one of their number will betray Him. But at this point, they don’t know it’s Judas.

John 13:29 suggests that when Judas left the room, the other disciples assumed that Jesus had sent him on some errand. So, for all they knew, the betrayer might still be in the room.

Imagine yourself sitting in that circle: ‘What are we to do if, in this inner circle, we can’t even trust each other?’ When someone breaks the trust that others have put in him or her, people say, ‘if we can’t trust him or her, how can we trust anyone?’ How can there be any trust in this group? That’s the problem for the eleven disciples right now.

Notice that Jesus does not say, ‘Well now Judas is gone—he was the bad apple—I want the rest of you to trust in each other.’

And Jesus certainly does not say, ‘Well Judas is gone, but you are the chosen ones, so I want you to believe in yourselves.’

Jesus looks at every person in the circle of broken trust. There is only one way forward for this group: ‘Every single one of you must trust in me,’ Jesus says, “And you must do this together.’ “Believe in God, believe also in me,” (John 14:1).

The answer to broken trust is not that you give up trusting. The answer to broken trust is not that you trust in yourself. The answer to broken trust is that we trust in Jesus.

The response of wise Christian leaders, when someone who was trusted fails is not to say, ‘Well you couldn’t trust him, but don’t worry you can trust us.’ The response of wise Christian leaders is to say, ‘All of us must trust in Jesus.’ We, together, must look to Him.

The Christian church must never be a community gathered around the personality or the ministry of a leader. The church is a community of people who trust in Jesus. When others disappoint us, we trust in Jesus. When we disappoint ourselves, we trust in Jesus.

You have discovered that you cannot rely on each other. You have discovered that you cannot rely on yourselves. Here's what you all must do. Believe in Me.

There is, when trust is broken, a savior on whom you can rely.

2. There is a promise you can believe

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? – John 14:2

Notice that the place Christ has prepared is the Father's house. Jesus does not say. 'Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in me, and I will make this world a better place for you.'

Jesus never suggests that over the process of centuries that the world will somehow become a place where storms will cease, and violence will dissipate, and greed will be a thing of the past. That's not the promise he makes. Nor does he say that the church will be so pure in the world that there will never be a disappointment or setback or sin to be dealt with.

What he does promise is that our hope is in the Father's house. The hope for the troubled heart is not that the world will get better. The hope for the trouble heart is not to find the perfect church. The hope for the troubled heart lies in the Father's house. That is the promise you can believe.

What does Jesus mean when he says, 'in my Father's house'? Jesus is speaking of heaven, which is beyond our ability to imagine. So, God uses various analogies to help us.

In the Bible, heaven is described as a city, or as a country, giving us the sense of its vastness. God's redeemed people will be a vast number, more than anyone can number (Revelation 7:9). Heaven is described as Paradise, reminding us that it is a world full of joy, pleasure and delight.

But here heaven is described as a home: My Father's house.

A.W. Pink says this: "Today, the average 'home' is little more than a boarding house – a place to eat and sleep in. But 'home' used to mean, and still means to a few, the place where we are loved for our own sakes; the place where we are always welcome; the place we can... enjoy rest and peace, the place where loved ones are together."¹

¹ Pink, Arthur W. *Exposition of the Gospel of John*. Zondervan, 1945. P. 758

Isn't that beautiful? That's home. You may say, 'Well, that's a bit of an idealistic picture of home.' Well, that's the picture that Jesus is painting when he speaks of the Father's house. It is the place where you will be loved for your own sake; where you are always welcome; where you can enjoy rest and peace; and where loved ones are gathered together.

The Father's house will be better than any home on earth. You will feel more at home in heaven than you have ever felt on earth. When you are in the Father's house, you will say, "This is where I belong." This is what I was made for. This is what I was redeemed for.

Jesus says, "in my Father's house are many rooms." When Jesus came to our home there was no room for him at the inn. Bethlehem had only a few rooms and all of them were full. And Jesus is saying, 'When you come to my home, it won't be as it was when I came to you home. In my Father's house are many rooms.'

Then, Jesus asks a question:

...If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? – John 14:2

Jesus will never mislead you. When he says that he is going to prepare a place in his Father's house for you that means there is a place in the Father's house for you!

When Jesus says, I go to prepare a place for you, we are not to imagine Him working round the clock to get heaven ready for our arrival. Christ created the cosmos out of nothing with a word, he can get heaven ready for believers with a single command.

When Christ says he is going to prepare a place, it means that through his going, the place will be prepared. Christ is going to the cross to make atonement for our sins. He is going to die and rise and ascend to heaven. It's through his death and resurrection, he opens the way for all who believe to enter the glory of the Father's house.

Aren't you thankful today that your eternal destiny rests on Jesus laying down his life for you and not on you laying down your life for Jesus?

Peter made a promise to Jesus: 'I will lay down my life for you.' But it was a promise he could not keep. That's what he hoped he would do but it was more than he was able to deliver. His Christian life wasn't at the level he wanted it to be.

If heaven depended on what you do for Jesus, your heart would always be troubled. But let not your heart be troubled, because Jesus has gone to prepare a place for you. Your place in heaven depends not on what you do for Jesus but on what Jesus has done for you!

3. There is a future you can anticipate

*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 – **John 14:3***

Notice the words ‘for you.’ “I go and prepare a place for you,” (John 14:3). Christian believer, Jesus went to the cross for you! The fact that Jesus went to the cross for you is your guarantee that he will come again and take you to himself, that where he is you also will be.

He went to the cross to prepare a place for you! All that Jesus endured was for this ultimate purpose that you should be with him in the joy of the Father’s house forever! Only when all who believe are safely home will the purpose for which Jesus came into the world and gave himself on the cross be fulfilled.

Here’s why you can joyfully anticipate an eternal future in heaven. Since Jesus went to the cross to prepare a place for you, you can be certain of this he will come again and will take you to himself that where he is you may be also (John 14:3).

Conclusion

So, Jesus says to you, “Let not your hearts be troubled...”

Do you see where the mind of Jesus settled when his own soul was troubled (John 13:21). One of the twelve was about to betray him, another would deny him, the rest will forsake him. Jesus was about to suffer unspeakable agony.

How did Jesus get through all of that? When He was troubled in spirit, he looked forward to the day of victory. Hebrews tells us that he endured the cross “for the joy that was set before him (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus fixed his mind to the day of ultimate victory.

Jesus got through the betrayal of Judas and the denial of Peter, and he endured all that he suffered, by anticipating the day when, with all his people gathered safely home, he would say with joy to the Father. ‘Here am I and the children you have given me,’ (Hebrews 2:13).

So how are you to get through broken trust? You fix your eyes not on the failures of others who have let you down and certainly not on yourself being better.

When our Lord’s own heart was troubled, he fixed his eyes on the day of victory. And he tells us to do the same.

*...I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also – **John 14:3***

C.H. Spurgeon says this: “Do not worry yourselves into unbelief though this man may have turned traitor, or the other may have become a backslider, for the wheels of time are hurrying on to the day of the glorious appearing [manifestation] of the Lord from heaven.”²

I know these are days when the faith of some is shaken. The trust of some is broken. The hearts of some are wounded. Here is where healing is found: There is a Savior you can trust. So, what must we do?

1. Trust the Savior

As long as you are looking at the failures of others, and as long as you are trusting in your own resolve to be better, your heart will be troubled.

Jesus says, “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me,” (John 14:1).

2. Believe the promise

There is a promise you can believe. Jesus says, “I go to prepare a place for you.” And he has done it! All that is needed to prepare us for heaven and heaven for us has been accomplished through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Live with joyful hope

The place he has prepared is for you, there is a glorious future you can anticipate. Ahead of you lies an eternity of life and joy in the presence of Jesus.

© Colin S. Smith

Permissions: You have permission and are encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format you choose, as long as you do not alter or change the wording in any way and do not charge a fee (beyond the cost of reproducing these materials). For posting on the web, a link to this document on our website (www.UnlockingtheBible.org) is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Unlocking the Bible, 1-866-865-6253.

Please include this statement on every copy distributed:

By Colin S. Smith. © Colin S. Smith. Website: UnlockingtheBible.org

² Spurgeon, Charles H. “Do Not Let Your Heart Be Troubled.” No. 1741-29:517. 23 Sept. 1883, Newington, The Metropolitan Tabernacle.