

July 26, 2015  
Sunday Morning Service  
Series: John  
Community Baptist Church  
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Greer, SC 29650  
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*To Ponder . . .*

Questions to ponder as you prepare to hear from John 14:1-7.

1. What causes your heart to be troubled?
2. How should you respond to that agitation?
3. How did English Bibles end up teaching that Jesus promised His followers mansions?
4. Why is Jesus' statement that He is the way, the truth, and the life important?

**STOP BEING AGITATED, YOU'VE GOT A MANSION**  
**John 14:1-7**

The next four chapters of John's account of Jesus' ministry contain some of the best illustrations of Jesus' compassion. These words from Jesus reveal His deep love and concern especially for His followers. It is no wonder that many of the words we will study in the next few weeks in this section are among the favorite verses of the Bible.

Here we see the heart of our Savior exposed to unknowing, confused, and overly confident disciples just moments before the chaos of the crucifixion cut loose. But, rather than be consumed with His own dread and concerns for the pending trial, Jesus patiently unfolded promise after promise for His followers. If only they could have grasped every word Jesus taught, how blessed they would have been. That comprehension would come later as the disciples

continued the work of the Master and faced the onslaught of Satan who despises Jesus and His work.

The teaching of the next four chapters will sustain us and drive us on in the Lord's work for the Lord's glory. That is what Jesus intended the teaching to accomplish in the lives of all who trust Him, follow Him, and serve Him. This is what love looks like. Jesus' example of concern for others, while He Himself was on the cusp of Satan's full attack and even the Father's temporary abandoning of Him, is what it means to sacrifice for others so that they might have the best. In this text, we find some of the greatest news for people who love Christ and follow Him.

**A Great Promise (vv.1-3).**

Don't be agitated. Just trust God. More specifically when Jesus told the disciples and us, "*Let not your hearts be troubled*" (v. 1a) He meant, "Stop letting your heart be stirred up." In the Greek New Testament, a present tense verb with a negative generally means stop what you are doing. It is important that Jesus acknowledged that the disciples had troubled hearts. This is the same anxiety that Jesus admitted He sensed in His human nature. It meant that His spirit, His inner being was in upheaval, stirred up, shaken.

Jesus' troubled heart was in response to the sign posts as they were, the indications that reminded Jesus He was heading to the suffering, torture, and death. That happened when the Greeks came to see Him at the Passover Feast. Jesus said at that time, "*Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour*" (John 12:27). Then again His heart was troubled when He was about to expose Judas. *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).

Now the same kind of spirit troubled the disciples. We would expect the disciples to have troubled hearts at this point. They have heard twice in a couple of days that Jesus' heart was troubled. They had heard repeatedly that Jesus was going to suffer and die which

didn't fit with their plans for Messiah. They had just learned about one of their own betraying the Master. They had just heard that Peter was going to deny the Master. Why wouldn't their hearts be troubled?

We can sympathize with the agitation they felt in their spirits. It is how we feel when we learn that we are having serious health issues. It is the agitation in our souls that jumps up when our job is in jeopardy, or when we have bills we can't meet, or when our family falls apart, or when we are attacked by an opponent through gossip and rumors. Many of us live with agitated spirits daily as we observe our nation, our culture, being swallowed up by foolhardy wickedness. We know what an agitated spirit feels like, but do we know how to respond? Jesus said, "Stop it."

Oh sure, that's easy to say. Wait. Here is the right response. Just trust God. Jesus told us, "*Believe in God; believe also in me*" (v.1b). Here are two direct, clear commands. According to Greek syntax, it is possible that Jesus said, "*You believe in God; also believe in Me.*" At the same time, the syntax of the statement allows for this to be two parallel commands. That interpretation fits the context better.

First, instead of having troubled hearts, we are to keep on believing in God. There are certain basic truths necessary if a person is going to believe in God. First, we must trust that He exists. Then we must trust that He is who He has revealed Himself to be, knowing that most of that revelation is in the Bible. We must trust that He will keep what He has promised. Of course, it is hard to trust what you don't know. Therefore, we must know what God has promised, and we must live like we believe what God promises. That is the point Jesus is making here. Instead of getting all stirred up about that which we cannot control, we must depend wholly on what God has already said.

Second, to keep from having a troubled heart, we need to keep believing Jesus. Again in this statement, Jesus has just revealed that He is equal with God. Therefore, because God the Son and God the Father are equal, if you cannot believe Jesus, you really cannot believe God. Jesus perfectly manifested expressed the character of God. In the process of revealing God, the Son revealed a great amount of the future to us, especially in the Revelation. John understood that the Revelation was the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon

take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw (Revelation 1:1-2).

Jesus meant that in light of the coming trial, the disciples needed to believe some of the simple truths Jesus spoke to them like, "*But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee*" (Mark 14:28). Did they believe Jesus? He spoke these words in the context of telling the disciples that they were going to scatter and telling Peter that he would deny. The disciples taught us well that if we can remember what Jesus said, and believe it, we will respond better to trials.

That is especially the case if we remember that our new home is being prepared. Oh that's right! I've got a mansion just over the hilltop. Is that what Jesus meant when He said, *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* (v.2)? Many Christians are familiar with the old song *Mansion Over the Hilltop* that is a favorite for the older "baby boomers." Sadly the song is based on a misunderstanding of Jesus' promise. The first verse of the song goes like this:

"I'm satisfied with just a cottage below,  
A little silver and a little gold.  
But in that city where the ransomed will shine,  
I want a gold one that's silver lined."

As we can readily see, this song is based on coveting of earthly, passing stuff, which will not be found in heaven. This is not what Jesus taught.

The problem is with the word translated "mansion" in the older English versions of the Bible. The Greek word is *monai* which means rooms. It comes from the common Greek word *meno* which means to remain. Therefore, *monai* refers to a dwelling place, a place where someone stays or remains. This word is used only one other place in the New Testament. It is in this same chapter, verse twenty-three where Jesus promised that we, His followers, are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. He said, "*If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him*" (John 14:23). In our text, Jesus promised that there are dwelling places for His followers in the Father's House.

One would expect to find rooms for dwelling in the *Father's house* right?

So how did rooms become mansions? We ended up with “mansion” in this promise because the Latin Vulgate used the word *mansiones*. William Tyndale simply adopted the word to his English translation and the KJV picked it up from there. The interesting thing is that *mansion* in the old English also simply referred to a dwelling place. From it came the words manse (parsonage) and manor. Again we have an example of the fallacy of reading Western civilization back into the text that gives us a heretical promise.

The promise is that in our Heavenly Father's house, where He lives, which is heaven, are many rooms or dwelling places where we will live with Him. The promise expands in that one day Jesus will take us home to live with the Father in one of the rooms. He promised, *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* (v.3).

Notice that according to this promise, the place—the Father's house where the rooms are—already exists. Jesus is not now busy creating heaven but is in heaven preparing our rooms. Picture the conscientious host preparing the room for a coming guest. The obvious conclusion is that since Jesus is preparing a place for us to live, will He not come and take us to that place? We clearly cannot go to that unknown place through our own strength. Therefore, we live in this life trusting Jesus' promise every day. One day He will return, and on that day He will take us to live with Him forever.

Do you have any idea how out of touch with your world you are for believing this promise? The thinkers of your world put people who believe this stuff in the same category as people who believe in Santa, the Easter Bunny, and ancient Greek gods. So will you believe the Lord's promise but not tell anyone that you believe it? God said that we should comfort each other with promises like this (1 Thess. 4:18) not be ashamed of the promise because unbelievers don't believe it.

George Bernard Shaw is perhaps most renowned as a free thinker and liberal philosopher. He was the Richard Dawkins or Christopher Hitchens (who has been suffering the pains of hell for almost 4 years) of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his last writings we read, “The science to which I pinned my faith is bankrupt. Its counsels,

which should have established the millennium, led, instead, directly to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once. In their name I helped to destroy the faith of millions of worshipers in the temples of a thousand creeds. And now they look at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost his faith.” Time and people continue to prove the wisdom of hoping in the promises that Jesus gave us.

### **A Great Reality (vv.4-7).**

Do we really know where Jesus went (vv.4-5)? Jesus assured the disciples that they knew. *“And you know the way to where I am going”* (v.4). Jesus had already told the disciples that He was returning to the Heavenly Father (7:3; 13:1). He had already taught that He had come from heaven (3:13; 6:38). So where did the disciples think Jesus was going? Though they were ancient people (the kind the world perceives to be backward and uneducated), they still had Scripture teaching about heaven. There are over 313 references to heaven in the Old Testament Scriptures. But with thoughts of Jesus' arrest, torture, death, returning to God, leaving, and such clashing in their minds, the disciples probably were not thinking very clearly.

Thomas, like many people, wasn't so sure he knew where Jesus was going. He might be called a doubter, but he often expressed exactly what we think or wonder. *Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”* (v.5). The disciples had to be convinced that Jesus was going to go to His death. That much was probably known. But what came after the grave? None of the disciples had been on the other side and come back. They really didn't know about life after death, so how could they know how to go to Jesus?

And we really don't know where Jesus went in this sense. Paul is the only person who has been on the other side of death and returned that I trust. And he wouldn't tell us anything other than, “It's so great I can't tell you.” So where do we get the necessary confidence to stand in the face of attack or at least marginalization?

We should know the great truth. Jesus reminded Thomas that He, Jesus, is the way to God the Father. *Jesus said to him, “I am the*

way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (v.6). Jesus returned to the Father. We can go to Him and also be with the Father if we know and trust the only way. Jesus left no doubt about this. He taught that He alone is the way. The incarnate God the Son is the only way to God the Father. He came to earth to reveal this fact. He is the only door that leads to the sheep fold (10:7-9).

Second, He taught that He is the truth. The world searched for truth and cannot find it apart from Christ. Great philosophers like Plato approached the idea that truth was absolute and beyond ourselves but could not comprehend it. Pilate wished he could have grasped truth. Jesus is the perfect absolute truth because He is the perfect expression of God. That is why His teaching astounded people. It is only possible to reach God by going through the one truth. There are not multiple paths to God. Jesus told the truth and the people did not believe Him (8:45), and nothing has changed today. That is why Jesus prays for us followers, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). Therefore, Jesus who is the truth is unfolded and described all through the Bible.

Third, Jesus taught that He alone is the way to God because He is the life. John introduced Jesus as the source of life eternal by writing, *In him was life, and the life was the light of men* (John 1:4). If we do not go to the source of life, how can we have life? The disciples actually understood this. When Jesus asked if they like the other disciples were going to leave Him, *Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”* (John 6:68).

This wonderful triad of truth was the basis for these words from Thomas a Kempis. “Follow thou me. I am the way and the truth and the life. Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living. I am the way which thou must follow; the truth which thou must believe; the life for which thou must hope. I am the inviolable way; the infallible truth, the never-ending life. I am the straightest way; the sovereign truth; life true, life blessed, life uncreated.” (Thomas a Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*.)

It is vitally important for the disciple to know Jesus because to know Jesus is to know God. This lesson came with a bit of upbraiding

from Jesus. He told the disciples, “If you had known me, you would have known my Father also” (v.7a). More precisely the Greek text should be translated, “If you had come to know Me in the past. . .” Again this is like the accusation of “little faiths.” The disciples truly did believe some great things about Jesus. All of them no doubt agreed with Peter who concluded, “You are the Christ the Son of the living God.” But they all had a foggy view of who Jesus was. Okay, He was the Son of God, but was He equal with God? He was Messiah, but whose view of Messiah? Now this talk about going to heaven opened the can of worms revealing the limited knowledge on the disciples’ part.

It was a big issue because knowledge of the Son is knowledge of the Father. True knowledge of God the Son reveals that He is God. Not that He was a manifestation of God, but that He is God manifested perfectly. This was the main focus of Jesus’ ministry according to John’s account. Jesus had to show the world starting with the disciples that God paid the penalty for sin because only God is qualified to do so. This is the line of demarcation regarding Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus’ statement is also a bold and clear declaration of equality with God. Many religions claim that Jesus was a good man, a compassionate man, a great teacher who had unique powers, but He was not God. But Jesus claimed, as in this statement that He was God. Therefore, if Jesus claimed to be God but was not, He was a liar. Or if Jesus claimed to be God but was not, He was insane. A man who a liar or insane is not a good faithful teacher of truth.

After the correction for the disciples, Jesus offered a wonderful promise: “From now on you do know him and have seen him” (v.7b). The words, “From now on” probably refers to the work of God in the disciples lives from after the resurrection on. After the resurrection, things began to jell for the disciples. Then they understood that their responsibility was to take the truth about who Jesus is and what He has accomplished to all the world. Still they wondered about the restoration of Israel (Acts 1:6). But after they were filled and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, every truth about Jesus became crystal clear. They knew God because they knew Christ.

Then how important is Jesus? Jesus perfectly revealed God. Jesus taught regarding Himself, *No one has ever seen God; the only*

*God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known (John 1:18). 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'?" (John 14:9).* Therefore, no one can reject Jesus and still know God. To reject the truth Jesus declared about Himself is to reject Him as the only way to God. To reject the only way to God is to cut off any relation to God and be left to face the eternal penalty of your sin. No one can get to heaven by being sincere, or busy in religious works, or dedicated to a creed or seriously hoping to make it. Only Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life—the only way to get to the Father who is in heaven. We trust what He said about Himself or we doubt and fail to be saved.