

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 7-8-12 AM NOTES
"TRANQUIL WORDS FOR DISCIPLES' TROUBLED HEARTS"
JOHN 14:1-3
#53 in Series, "Verse-by-Verse Through John"

John 12:27a (NKJV) "Now My soul is troubled..."

John 14:1-3 is "the best and most comforting sermon that the Lord delivered on earth, a treasure and a jewel not to be purchased with the world's goods."

—Martin Luther

I. Jesus Gives Troubled Hearts a Prohibition (v. 1)

Philippians 4:6a (NKJV) "Be anxious for nothing..."

John 13:1b (NKJV) "...having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."

Matthew 28:20b (NKJV) "...I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age."

Hebrews 13:5b (NKJV) "*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*"

1 Peter 1:8 (NKJV) "whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory."

Philippians 3:10 (NKJV) "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."

II. Jesus Tells Troubled Hearts About a Place (v. 2)

Heaven is called "a country" (Hebrews 11:16) which speaks of its vastness; it is called a "city" (Hebrews 11:10) which speaks of its large number of inhabitants. It is called a "kingdom" (2 Peter 1:11) which speaks of its order and structure. Heaven is called paradise (Luke 23:43) which spotlights its many delights.

"Heaven is 'a Father's house,'—the house of that God of whom Jesus says, 'I go to My Father, and your Father.' It is, in a word, home: the home of Christ and Christians. This is a sweet and touching expression. Home, as we all know, is a place where we are generally loved for our own sakes, and not for our gifts or possessions; the place where we are loved to the end, never forgotten, and always welcome. This is one idea of Heaven. Believers are in a strange land and at school in this life. In the life to come, they are at home."

—J. C. Ryle

Revelation 21:3 (NKJV) "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.'"

John 14:23 (NKJV) “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.”

Revelation 21:16 (HCSB) “The city is laid out in a square; its length and width are the same. He measured the city with the rod at 12,000 *stadia*. Its length, width, and height are equal.”

Revelation 21:4 (NKJV) “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

“Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people: a place which we shall find Christ Himself has made ready for true Christians. He has prepared it by procuring a right for every sinner who believes to enter in. None can stop us, and say we have no business there. He has prepared it by going before us as our Head and Representative, and taking possession of it for all the members of His mystical body. As our forerunner He has marched in, leading captivity captive, and has planted His banner in the land of glory. He has prepared it by carrying our names with Him as our High Priest into the holy of holies, and making angels ready to receive us. They that enter Heaven will find they are neither unknown nor unexpected.”

—J. C. Ryle

John 17:24 (NKJV) “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”

*Someday my earthly house will fall—
I cannot tell how soon 'twill be;
But this I know—my All in All
Has now a place in Heaven for me.
—Fanny Crosby*

III. Jesus Makes Troubled Hearts a Promise (v. 3)

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NKJV) “¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

Acts 7:56 (NKJV) “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

2 Corinthians 5:8b (NKJV) “...to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”

Matthew 28:20 (NKJV) “...I am with you always”

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Let’s review the context for John 14. It was the night before Jesus was crucified. Judas has just been exposed as a traitor and has left the room to go make arrangements for the temple guard to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. With Judas gone, Jesus begins to prepare His disciples for His departure and the coming of the Holy Spirit. This time of preparing His disciples goes through chapter 16 of John’s Gospel.

The disciples of Jesus were confused and hurting. They were convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah. They had left all and risked their lives to follow Him. However, their concept of the Messiah was about the same as the false view that the Jewish religious leaders had. They saw the Messiah as a conquering king who would defeat their enemies and set up His earthly kingdom. The disciples’ hopes for Jesus being that kind of Messiah had been raised a few days earlier when He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey to the accolades of the people shouting “Hosanna!” Instead of Jesus making plans to wipe out their enemies, He spoke of dying in John 12:32-33. They just couldn’t put it all together. Now, He has told them that one of their group would betray Him to His enemies. In the last part of chapter 13, Jesus dropped another bombshell on them. The leader among the disciples was Peter. He was the outwardly strong one, and yet Jesus told him that before the rooster crowed to welcome the morning Peter would deny Him three times. It must have seemed to these eleven disciples that everything was unraveling and falling apart.

The word that the Holy Spirit chose for John to describe what the disciples were going through was that they were “troubled”. That word means to be inwardly agitated, shaken or stirred. We might say, “This has shaken me to the core”. To be troubled is not necessarily a sin. It can become a sin, but it is sometimes simply the involuntary response to painful heartbreaking circumstances or anticipation of such circumstances. I know it is not a sin to be troubled because this is the same Greek word that Jesus used in **John 12:27a (NKJV)** “Now My soul is troubled...” It is impossible to go through this life in a fallen world without finding yourself in circumstances or anticipating circumstances that trouble you, shake you up, or cause inner turmoil. Between the new birth and glory, we will all go through times that trouble our hearts.

If your heart is troubled today, God has made a divine appointment for you to hear this message. The reformer, Martin Luther called this passage “the best and most comforting sermon that the Lord delivered on earth, a treasure and a jewel not to be purchased with the world’s goods” [Martin Luther, Quoted in John MacArthur, *How to Survive in a World of Unbelievers*, Page 48].

I. Jesus Gives Troubled Hearts a Prohibition (V1)

To these disciples who were shaken in their heart and stirred up and agitated in their mind, Jesus gives them a prohibition. The sense of verse 1 is, “Stop letting your heart be troubled.” As I said earlier, to be shaken by some circumstance or impending woe is not a sin; however to continue in that state is a sin. Being troubled can easily be turned into anxiety or worry. **Philippians 4:6a (NKJV)** “Be anxious for nothing...” The Greek word translated “anxious” is a different word than the one translated “troubled” in our text. The word translated “anxious” means to be pulled in different directions. Did you ever hear someone say, “This thing is tearing me apart”? The opposite of anxiety is peace. Peace and anxiety are mutually exclusive. If you have one you don’t have the other. You can, however, be troubled and still have a peace that God is sovereign and He knows what is best. When Jesus was troubled in the Garden of Gethsemane, He had a peace that this was the will of the Father and He submitted to that will when He said, “Nevertheless not My will but Your will be done.”

Let me point out something revealing about our Savior's love. Jesus knew that in a few hours He was going to experience unimaginable suffering. He also knew that all of these disciples would forsake Him and scatter. Yet, He is totally selfless and sets about ministering to them. **John 13:1b (NKJV)** "...having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."

Jesus didn't just tell them to stop being troubled; He also informed them how to stop being troubled. He told them to focus on Him and His continuing spiritual presence even after He was physically gone. He told them to believe in Him. Faith in the Lord Jesus is the only cure for troubled hearts. The sense of verse 1 is "You already believe in God; I and the Father are one – believe also in Me". Some people have misinterpreted what Jesus was saying. He was not speaking here of saving faith. He uses the present continuous tense. He was saying "Keep on trusting me; even when I am no longer visible, I will still be with you". That is the message he will give them in much more detail in John 16 when He explains the coming of the Holy Spirit who is often called "the Spirit of Christ". He is saying, "I know that you are troubled because you don't understand what is happening; keep trusting me. This is the Father's plan; this is the reason that I came. Before I come as the conquering King, I must come as the suffering servant". Here is the solution for a troubled heart. The sovereign Lord has a plan. Even when we feel that He is far away, we must trust Him. Jesus said in **Matthew 28:20b (NKJV)** "...I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." We read in **Hebrews 13:5b (NKJV)** "*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*" Peter finally got it. The reason I know is because of what he wrote in **1 Peter 1:8 (NKJV)** "whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory". The remedy for a troubled heart is to keep believing on Him that He is with us and He is in control. I have never seen the Lord Jesus, but I know Him; I sense His presence; the deepest desire of my heart is to know Him more deeply and intimately. **Philippians 3:10 (NKJV)** "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death"

II. Jesus Tells Troubled Hearts about a Place (V2)

Into their troubled hearts He injects a future hope. He was not leaving them just to get away from them; He was leaving them to prepare a place for them. Their separation was not permanent. The glories and delights of Heaven are presented to us by using a variety of representations. Heaven is called "a country" (Hebrews 11:16) which speaks of its vastness; it is called a "city" (Hebrews 11:10) which speaks of its large number of inhabitants. It is called a "kingdom" (2 Peter 1:11) which speaks of its order and structure. Heaven is called paradise (Luke 23:43) which spotlights its many delights. Jesus uses my favorite representation of Heaven when He calls it "My Father's house". Why did Jesus use the phrase "My Father's house" to describe Heaven? It is because "the Father's house" speaks of Home. I love the way Dr. J. C. Ryle describes it: "Heaven is 'a Father's house,' – the house of that God of whom Jesus says, 'I go to My Father, and your Father.' It is, in a word, home: the home of Christ and Christians. This is a sweet and touching expression. Home, as we all know, is a place where we are generally loved for our own sakes, and not for our gifts or possessions; the place where we are loved to the end, never forgotten, and always welcome. This is one idea of Heaven. Believers are in a strange land and at school in this life. In the life to come, they are at home" [J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel, Volume IV*, Page 51]. Going to Heaven will not be like going to a giant strange place; it will be going home. It is in Heaven that we have our citizenship. It is in Heaven where many we love are living. It is in Heaven that our Father and our Savior and Lord live. Heaven is home! Oh the delight of the fact that the One who when He came to earth was a carpenter is now building His church on earth and a place for us in the Father's house.

What I am about to share will anger some, but if you stick with me, it may have you saying a hearty "AMEN". I don't think that "mansions" is the best translation in verse 2. I know that messes up a lot of Southern Gospel songs. I didn't say that it is a bad translation; I said that it is not the best translation. The concept of a mansion gives most Americans the wrong idea. We think of a scene much like a Hollywood tour. When we get to Heaven, we can take a tour down the streets of gold and see that the closer we get the throne of God, the nicer the mansions are. The tour guide will point out the mansions of the apostles

and everybody will “ohhhhh” and “ahhhhh”. Then the great saints of church history will have mansions that are really beautiful. Ours will probably be “a little cabin in the corner of glory land”. The Bible tells us that we will dwell with God. **Revelation 21:3 (NKJV)** “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.’” Remember that Jesus’ description was to Jews. How would a first century Jew have interpreted what Jesus said? The word translated “mansions” is better translated “dwelling places”. It is the same word used in John 14:23 where it is translated “home”. **John 14:23 (NKJV)** “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘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.’” Here is how the first century Jew would have interpreted what Jesus said in John 14:2. When a son got married, the father would simply add a wing to the existing structure. If a father had more than one son, he would simply attach a new wing to his house. The new wings would enclose a central patio with all the family living around it. What these original hearers would have pictured was not a mansion close or far away from the Father’s dwelling; they would have pictured a dwelling place that included the whole family of God. We will dwell with God, not down the street or in the same neighborhood with Him. We will share the same patio. Some of you who have had bad experiences with family or neighbors or have lived in a cramped up apartment might not find that too appealing, but remember that Jesus is talking about Heaven where the saints won’t have that power of sin, the programming of the old adamic nature, the world system or the devil. The picture is that we will dwell in fellowship with the Father and the Son with no barriers. We will also dwell with one another and we’ll know one another and know those we never knew here. There will be plenty of room. The measurements of Heaven are given in **Revelation 21:16 (HCSB)** “The city is laid out in a square; its length and width are the same. He measured the city with the rod at 12,000 *stadia*. Its length, width, and height are equal.” That’s about 2.25 million square miles. London by comparison is about 140 square miles. If just the ground floor of Heaven had the same population density as London it could house 100 billion people! In addition, Heaven is 1,500 miles high. Think of all the stories the dwelling places could have! The point is that there will not be any “No Vacancy” signs in Heaven. Even though Heaven is huge, there will be intimate fellowship with our God. We are told in **Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)** “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Do you know what all those things that He takes away are? They (the death sorrow, crying, and pain) are the things that trouble our hearts!

I think that one of the most heartwarming things I have ever read about Heaven was written over 100 years ago by the English Bishop, Dr. J. C. Ryle expounding on Jesus’ words, “I go to prepare a place for you”. Listen and be blessed as I was. “Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people: a place which we shall find Christ Himself has made ready for true Christians. He has prepared it by procuring a right for every sinner who believes to enter in. None can stop us, and say we have no business there. He has prepared it by going before us as our Head and Representative, and taking possession of it for all the members of His mystical body. As our forerunner He has marched in, leading captivity captive, and has planted His banner in the land of glory. He has prepared it by carrying our names with Him as our High Priest into the holy of holies, and making angels ready to receive us. They that enter Heaven will find they are neither unknown nor unexpected” [J. C. Ryle, Page 52]. As if that is not glorious enough, think on this. He is preparing this “place” FOR US! Our Lord is not just OK with us coming to the Father’s house that He is preparing for us; He desires for us to be there. **John 17:24 (NKJV)** “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”

Fanny Crosby wrote this that expresses my heart:

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III. Jesus Makes Troubled Hearts a Promise (V3)

Our Lord does not wait for us to come to Him; He will come for us. Notice that He doesn't send for us; He comes Himself! I believe that verse 3 has a two fold application. Primarily this promise refers to the second coming of Christ for His bride – the catching up of the church. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NKJV)** “¹⁶For **the Lord Himself** will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus **we shall always be with the Lord.**” A second application of this promise is the death of a child of God before the return of Christ. At the death of those who have savingly believed in Christ, they are met by Christ Himself. We are told in Hebrews 1:3 that Jesus is in Heaven seated at the right hand of the Father, but when the first martyr Stephen was being stoned to death, he saw a vision of Heaven and we read in **Acts 7:56b (NKJV)** "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" Jesus, having completed His sacrificial work on the cross was seated at the right hand of the Father, but when one of His is dying we see Him standing to receive us unto Himself. At death that bearing of the soul and spirit into His presence is immediate. **2 Corinthians 5:8b (NKJV)** “...to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”

CONCLUSION

When your heart is troubled, you desperately need an eternal focus. To focus on Heaven, on the place that He has prepared for us, is not escapism; it is realism. It is simply the way to put everything into focus. Our time here is so short, even if we live to be 100! Eternity lasts forever – that's the meaning of eternity. To your troubled heart, Jesus says “believe in Me”. He assures us of His presence with us, whatever we go through here. He said in **Matthew 28:20 (NKJV)** “...I am with you always...” He will draw near through whatever dark valley you have to walk through, and He will strengthen you and give you grace to walk triumphantly through whatever your “troubled heart causer” may be. Though the pain may be great and the load heavy, it will only be for a little while and then He calls us home to the Father's house – HOME! There we see the amazing place He has prepared for us. He created the whole world in 6 days and He has been preparing a dwelling place for you for almost 2,000 years! Even greater than seeing the place He has prepared for us is seeing Him! Here is what an eternal focus does: it shifts our focus from our uncertain present circumstances to our certain future.

The famous evangelist of the late 1800's, Dwight L. Moody told the story of a very wealthy man who was gravely ill. The doctor told him that his time was very short and he would soon die. He had a little four year old girl who didn't yet understand the concept of death. Her mother simply told her that her father was going away. When she came to his bedside, the little girl simply said, “Papa, have you got a home in that place you are going to?” That question sunk deep into his soul because he realized that he had given his whole life to accumulating great earthly wealth and now he was leaving it behind. Let me ask you, do you have a home where you're eventually going? Heaven is home.