

# Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled

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**Bible Text:** John 14:1  
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Good morning, my fellow worry warts. Please open your Bibles to John 14:1. If you are prone to worry, being anxious, if you this morning doubt God's love for you, we are going to feast on one Bible verse that will change that attitude forever. But in order to appreciate that, we need to set the table of this banquet by going all the way back before eternity began and understanding what God is all about on this planet, what God is doing in the world and, therefore, by extension in your life and mine.

You see, God has two types of attributes. God has attributes that he can demonstrate to himself: his power, his might, his wisdom. Why? Because our God is a Trinitarian God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and God can show off, if you will, his power to himself. He can show off his love to himself. But God has a separate set of attributes that are more relative, they are relational attributes and those are the attributes of mercy and grace and lovingkindness. Can God show mercy to himself? Can he show grace to himself? Can he show lovingkindness, forgiveness to himself? No, he can't. What does God need to put those attributes on display? God needs sinners and so God created a world perfectly and he put two people as your representative and mine into that garden, knowing full well in advance that they would disobey his one command, that they would fall into sin, that he would curse the planet. Why? Because immediately in the garden, what do we see? A promise that there is going to be one who is going to crush the head of the serpent, but his heel is going to be bruised. We have the promise of a Messiah, one who can stand in our place to receive the wrath of God upon himself for our sins so that we can be forgiven, so that for all of eternity, Ephesians 2:7, God can point to us as a demonstration of his mercy and his grace and his lovingkindness. That is the purpose of the planet. Period. God is doing one thing, he is bringing glory to himself through the redemptive work of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, let's go back to the garden. This was the plan, this is what God was going to carry out and when you read your Old Testament, we need to remember that's precisely what we are seeing there. We see that God gave a promise to a man named Abraham. He said to this man, "I'm promising you a land, a nation and a singular seed. The land is Israel. The nation are the Jews. And the seed is singular." He wasn't going to give that seed yet. Why? Because he was going to gather for himself that special, holy, set apart people, the Jewish people, that he would deliver out of Egypt to be peculiar; out of that group of people would come that Messiah who would rescue us and bring great glory to God.

Now let's think for a moment. Let's consider what God had to do in order to accomplish that plan. Well, he had to create a universe. He had to be in control of every single molecule always. He had to make sure that the right people were born at the right time. He needed to make sure that those people were brought into captivity so that they could be taken out of Egypt. He had to perform miracles to get them through the Red Sea, wander through a desert, live in a nation, have them disobey his Mosaic covenant, have an outside nation take those people away but because he was faithful to his Abrahamic promise, he was going to return those people to the land of Israel where they would then be peculiar and holy and set apart. That's the history of the Old Testament. Every single detail. Not just what we read in our Bible, but every single detail to pull that off so that at the right time, a virgin could conceive and bring forth a son. And that family, consider this detail, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world would be taxed, and so this family who was located in one town had to go to another town. Why? Because that Messiah had to be born in the city of David and so they had to get down to Bethlehem. So what did God orchestrate? A decree would go out from Caesar Augustus in Rome that all the world should be taxed so that this couple who was pregnant with the Messiah, the seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, would be in Bethlehem at the right time to bring forth a son who would live under the law every single day of his life so that he would fulfill all righteousness for you and for me. And we see, then, his life doing that very thing in the Gospels and now in John 13, we see Jesus Christ gathered in the upper room. The entire culmination of human history is now coming to a climax. This is it. This is the pinnacle of history when the seed, the Messiah, would be hung on a cross to die for sinners so that God's attributes of mercy and of grace and of lovingkindness can be put on display as he saves millions, dare I estimate, billions of people would be forgiven by God. This is it. This is the moment.

Take a look at John 14:1. Jesus Christ with eternity on his shoulders, the commands of God to march to the cross, knowing that in hours he was going to be beaten, bruised, crushed and hung on a cross, he says this to the disciples and by extension you and me, "Do not let your heart be troubled." Whose heart should have been troubled in the moment? Who should have been stressed out? Who should have been shaking and quaking and concerned and consumed with self? Jesus should have been. This is it and what does he do instead? He turns his attention to the disciples and to you and to me and he says, "Don't let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me." Do you doubt God's tender loving care for you? Do you think that God is not concerned about what is going on in your life? This text alone should remind you that your God loves you and that your God is involved in your mess.

Consider: if he has been orchestrating every single detail prior to the cross, if he was involved in every single detail after the cross through the book of Revelation, is he not involved in your life too? So many preachers these days, they make God a cosmic bellhop and they turn God into, "You just gotta," sorry, Joel Osteen impression, "You've just gotta be thinking good thoughts about yourself because you're so wonderful and God is going to make your life better." Can I tell you, God wants something better for you than stuff? That God is so loving that he desires to do more for us than just simply relieve

us of the stressors of our lives and until we get reorientated to see what God is doing for us as we struggle through this accursed planet, we're going to be pretty miserable people. We are, indeed, going to be stressed out.

So what does Jesus do for us in John 14? This is staggering. He begins a three chapter lecture on how to not be troubled. It starts with John 14:1, "Don't let your heart be troubled," and then throughout John 14, about five times he tells the disciples, "Have peace. Be at peace. Don't be troubled. Don't be anxious." He does it in John 15 and then at the very end of John 16:33, he says the same thing, "So don't let your heart be troubled." So what do we see? Three chapters book ended with advice about how to not be troubled, how to not be anxious, how to not be worried. Then in John 17, he launches into his high priestly prayer a little bit for himself, then for the disciples, and then for you and me, and what does he pray? That we would have joy. That is what God wants for his people and he is willing to use hard things, difficult things in our life so that we love him more, we become more conformed to the image and likeness of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, so that we can be a testimony that no matter what happens, no matter how bad the storm is, God is good and he is in control and he holds me in his hands and he is not going to let anybody or anything snatch me away from him. That is what we see in our text, John 14:1, and that is why this verse alone should cause you to have great joy.

Is your life reeling out of control? Do you just feel like, "When is it going to end? When is it going to stop?" Jesus has some words for you today. But maybe you're thinking, "I'm not so sure this applies to me. After all, that was 2,000 years ago, wasn't it? We're more sophisticated. We've got bigger issues than the disciples did." Well, let's just think for a moment about what would the disciples be troubled, agitated, stirred up about? Well, first of all, they knew that their Rabbi, their Messiah, had been under a death threat for a long time. He has been telling them, "I am going to be murdered." Now, once he is taken out of the way, who is left? They are. Do you think they might have been worried about their life? Do you think they might have been worried about their health? Wait a second, with their Rabbi gone, what were they going to have to do? Make a living. Get a day job. They were going to have to perhaps go back to the boats that they had left behind and maybe their business, all of their contacts, all of their leads, gone and they are going to have to start over again. They will be worried about employment issues. They were worried about money issues. But wait a second, you don't suppose that when they left to follow that Rabbi, there was anybody in their family who went, "Are you crazy? What are you doing following that man?" But they went to become fishers of men. Now they are thinking, "I have to go back to my Jewish family. Oh, Thanksgiving is going to be a beating this year." Sound familiar?

The disciples' worries are your worries and they are my worries. The question is: will we let Jesus help us with our anxiety? And perhaps you think that's kind of an odd question to ask but consider John 5. There was a man who had been ill for 38 years, almost 40 years, and Jesus said something very peculiar to him, "Do you want to be healed?" "Well, of course I want to be healed. I've been sick for 38 years." Not so fast. Not everybody wants to be healed. I thought of four reasons maybe why this man didn't want to be healed. Some people, they don't think that they are sick. Some are comfortable being ill.

Some like the attention illness brings. Some don't want to do the hard work to be healed. So I would ask you this morning if you happen to be a worry wart, if you happen to be somebody who is anxious a lot, do you want to be healed? Have you become comfortable becoming a crabbing person? It gets you attention. You have just kind of fallen into the pattern, "I don't want to do the hard work. I've got to bridle my tongue. I've got to work on issues."

So if you happen to be prone toward worry, may I ask you the question that Jesus asked this man, "Do you want to be well?" because if you answer that question yes, here's what your God would say to you today, "Bring it on." Our Great Physician is well skilled in curing you of your anxiety and your worry but you need to know the regimen, it can be a little bit disciplined and it might cause some painful soul-searching, but the benefits are staggering if you are willing to apply Jesus' admonition to not let your heart be troubled. So do you want to be well? Do you want to be healed? Do you want something better than, "Well, your life is just going to be great and, you know, you're so wonderful. If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it and everything is just going to be happy and ducky." God wants to do something so much more profound.

You see, God isn't desiring to make lemonade out of your lemons. He wants to do something more for you. In fact, Lamentations 3, did you hear what Jeremiah was lamenting? That God had really pummeled him and the nation of Israel. If you read Lamentations 3, all of the bad things were not out of God's purview. It wasn't like, "Oh, wow, Israel is in trouble. The Assyrians and the Babylonians, they are coming down to bear on my child. I've got to figure out a way to make lemonade." No, God sent them. God sent them and dare I be so bold to say that if you have a hard thing in your life right now, God sent it.

Now that brings up a challenge because right away some of you in your context are going, "Wait a second, sinful things have happened to me in my life," and that's a distinction that we need to keep clear on this. If it's weather, if it is something to do with your well-being, it is not a sin for God to send a storm. He is the weatherman of the universe and so when we see floods, when we see famine, it is because God has simply caused it because he can do whatever he wants at any time he wants and it is not a sin for him to do so. But you say, "What about sinful things, wicked things? Does God cause those?" Absolutely not. But does God permit those? Clearly he does or they wouldn't happen.

So what do we do with those things? We recognize that in God's sovereignty he ordains them and he uses sin sinlessly. When people sin against you, God was fully aware of it. Does he like it? No, he does not. Does he like to see his children hurt? He's not masochistic by any measurement, but he ordains it. Why? Because he wants to do something more for us than just have an ease free life and lots of money in the bank and perfect health. God is willing to cause or to permit something hard in the lives of his children so that we can love him more, trust him more. Psalm 119, we heard Jess read it, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray but now I love your word." That's what's going on in Psalm 119. Read it. It's long. The psalmist, we don't know for sure but it looks like

somebody is after him. They want this guy. They are going to cause him trouble and what does he do throughout this Psalm? He uses eight different words to describe your law. "I love your law. I love your testimony. I love your promises. I love your statutes." What was it that got him through whatever was causing him stress and anxiety? He realized, "God afflicted me to drive me to him so that I would love him more by remembering his word and what he has done for me." And that's what he wants to do for you.

Now let's just think this through for a moment. We've all got our own things, our own lives and our own dealings, and we have a tendency to think, "I hope today is a good day." Can I just tell you something? This is the day the Lord has made and it is good. Why? Because it was custom made for you. You say, "It is so hard." Right, because your God loves you so much. Have we not seen that already? He loves you so much he is willing to cause or permit hard things to rub you, to polish you, to sand you down, so that you can have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Are those things not better than more square footage? And your God will do what needs to be done to snatch an idol out of your hand even if it means chopping you down at the knees so that he can be the centerpiece of your life because that's the best thing. What's the best thing, what's the best present? Our God became flesh and died for us and he is not detached. He didn't just, "Okay, I got that job done, now I'm on to other projects." Intimately involved in the details of your life.

Do you want to be made well? Do you want better things? Do you want loftier things for yourself? God wants to grow you and you have a choice, you can spend your days fretting or we can learn what God wants to do in your struggles. So let's jump into our text and see what God wants to do, shall we? John 14:1,

1 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

In the text we see our anxiety defined, we see our anxiety diagnosed, and while this one kills me, but we see our text directing us to a cure. I had to do the alliteration. I'm sorry. I couldn't figure out anything better. Our anxiety is defined, it is diagnosed, and it is directed all in John 14:1.

Let's define the anxiety that Jesus is talking about because we need to be careful. Emotions are tricky things so let's make sure that we understand what Jesus is indeed commanding us to not do because if it's a command, that means if we fail at it, it's a sin. So Jesus says don't be troubled. Now, what exactly does that mean? Is there nothing worth being troubled about? What exactly is he talking about? Well, let me just say this because I think we need to get this off the table. We're not talking about clinical depression here. However the DSM-5 defines it, let me tell you what I think depression is: it's something that could be potentially organic or physiological, because we banty about these terms, don't we, "I'm so depressed. I've got depression. I'm feeling melancholy." Well, let's make sure we understand what Jesus is saying when he says don't let your heart be troubled. He's not saying don't be depressed. We know that great men of God have had depression where something just happens to your body and it just consumes you. We think it's Winston Churchill, was it Churchill maybe who said it was

the black dog that howls? It's sometimes ascribed to Winston Churchill. It's like you are laying in bed and there is a black dog on your chest and he is just in your face and you can't move. You are just immobilized. Your body aches. You can't get out of bed. You feel heavy. I think that we could call depression.

We need to be careful about this too because, and Jess I think you'll affirm this, when it comes to biblical counseling, maybe in response to the psychological community, we shun anything that the psychologists have to say and, frankly, rightly so, and we have kind of thrown medicine into that compartment. Dr. Charles Hodge, he says that about 5-10% of people who say they have depression and take some sort of psychotropic medication actually do. There could be something. We don't know what it is, that's why we need to be so careful with medication, there is no test for this type of depression but it could be that your body needs medication. Now we need to be so careful because the world just dispenses it. You go to the doctor, "I feel kind of blue." "Well, here, here's your prescription." We have responded to that and perhaps we have said never a prescription. I don't think that's balanced and biblical either but we need to recognize there is no testing for this type of depression. We don't have an organic blood test, a physiological blood test. We can do some brain scans. We can do hair, blood and urinalysis but it doesn't get us anywhere close to finding out a physiological reason you're depressed.

Now having said that, if that describes you, you with the consultation first of your pastors and elders and then with your doctor can make a godly decision if that is needed for you to get your brain under control. And you should know this, you should not feel shame if you need it. Nobody has ever announced in church, you've got the flu, "What medications were you taking, Jess?" Echinacea. Oh, he had to take Echinacea. Oh, wow! I can't believe he needed Echinacea. You didn't use essential oils, though, did you? Oh, please tell me. Okay. We hear about somebody, they've got some sort of a physical malady and you take a pill for it. Well, it could be that your brain has that physical malady. Be cautious. Be careful. Go slow. Be biblical. Understand the risk to all of it but should you need it, recognize there is no shame for a Christian to feel that way and we shouldn't shame anybody who needs that.

Now having said that, even if you do require, you are one of the very few single digit percentage people who need that type of medication, you still need to deal with our text because we all have this type of troubling and what is Jesus talking about? Maybe it's words like anxious; I'm concerned; you say I'm uneasy; I'm fretful; nervous; on edge; tense; gloomy; sad; frustrated. That's what Jesus is talking about here.

He's talking about you having anxiety and we need to recognize carefully that some anxiety is sinful. How do we know? Because Jesus just said so. Some anxiety, however, is not sinful. How do we figure this out? How do we know if anxiety is sinful? And already I saw your face, Robin, you went, "Wait a second, how can it be sinful and not sinful all at the same time?" I'm glad you asked that question.

Would you turn in your Bible, please, to John 11. You know the set up for this. Jesus arrives at a funeral and he hears wailing, he hears people mourning, he sees death, and what do we see in John 11:33? "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled." Uh-oh, that's what John 14:1 says that we're not supposed to do and yet in John 11:33, Jesus was troubled. Now this is when Greek helps us out a lot. It is the aorist tense and basically it is Jesus troubled himself. He saw sin, the consequences, sadness, a lack of hope for the future, not understanding theology correctly, and he with his emotions under control, he troubled himself. So here's what we learn straightaway: there is a troubling that can happen that isn't sinful. Why? Because Jesus did it but it's under control. So a troubling can exist as long as you aren't freefalling and freaking out.

Let's keep moving forward in John 12. In John 11, we saw Jesus troubled by death and sin, now John 12:27. Jesus is marching to the cross in Jerusalem. John 12:27, death is imminent and listen to what he says in John 27, "My soul has become troubled." Uh-oh, that's our same word again. Don't do that and he was that, so what's going on? We need to make a distinction over what sort of troubling is sinful and what sort of troubling is not sinful. So what sort of non-sinful troubling did Jesus have? How's about he was on his way to be murdered. How's about that he was going to suffer like no man has ever suffered on the planet before or since by receiving the wrath of God. We couldn't see that part, we see the whipping and the beating but we couldn't see the invisible wrath of God being poured out as he crushed his only Son. So what do we learn from this text? You can be troubled when big scary things are coming at you. We aren't robots. We've got to be really careful with the doctrine of impassibility. The doctrine of impassibility says that God doesn't have emotions the way that we do, and in a sense that is very true, but God all throughout Scripture is shown to have emotions. He loves. He grieves. Jesus wept. So he has emotions but what are they? They are preordained, they are under control and they are for the right things, and we can have those things too. Being troubled sometimes is entirely appropriate.

Let's keep going. John 13:21. Jesus is now in the upper room. John 13:21, "When Jesus had said this," he had been teaching them in the upper room, this is the night he is going to be betrayed, "He became troubled in spirit," the same word, "and testified and said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.'" What was causing Jesus to be troubled? A friend in whom he had invested his life three years with this Judas, is going to betray him and he is troubled and we know it's not sinful because he's the Son of God.

So what do we glean from all of this? What is the right kind of troubling that we can have because our emotions are like that? You can have a right kind of joy and a wrong kind of joy. I can have joy joy joy joy down in my heart. I'm saved. Jesus bought me. But I can also have joy that tonight I have got some sin plans. Oh man, am I going to have a good time. The same joy but one is wrong, one is right. What about jealousy? Jealousy can be right. How do I know? Because God was jealous for his people. Are you not jealous for your spouse? That's right, but when you're jealous of your neighbor because they just bought a Tesla, that's the wrong kind of jealousy. We've got right emotions, we've got

wrong emotions. We've got good emotions, we've got sinful emotions all wrapped up underneath the same umbrella.

So we really need to understand what it is that we are dealing with an Jesus has just helped us to understand here's the right kind of troubling you can have. Do you have a bad diagnosis? Do you have a voicemail that is lingering, "The doctor said you need to call to get your diagnosis"? Can you be troubled about that? Yeah. We're human beings made in the image of God. You've been betrayed, somebody has been gossiping about you, they have been slandering you, they have been hacking at your reputation and you can't get it fixed. It's like the feather pillow that gets flown out and you can't get everything back. Can that bother you? Sure it can. What about the death of a loved one? The DSM-5, I think these days it says you've got two weeks to mourn. Two weeks to mourn and if you mourn longer than two weeks, you've got depression and we'll give you medication. The Bible is clearly smarter than that. There is a time to weep and it doesn't give us a deadline.

Now, is it possible that mourning which is good and right, can it become sinful? Of course it can. You're not relying on the sovereignty of God, understanding that he's in this horrible thing, this loss that has been ordained by God, because I believe Psalm 139. So there is a good mourning and there is a bad mourning and we need to be careful that we're never telling somebody, "You need to just get over it. Make it quick." Because mourning is good and it is right. Now, if it becomes self-absorbed and self-centered, then it becomes sin and loving Christian brothers and sisters should lovingly, patiently, walk alongside to walk us out of our mourning so that we can have what? The joy that Jesus prayed that we would have.

So we see in our anxiety, there is some anxiety, it is good. It is right to be sad sometimes. Your child is a prodigal, "Buck up, Christian. God's sovereign." Well, that's true and that's right and that's a word in due season but there's also a season for weeping and being sad and don't let it trouble you that you are sometimes troubled. However, we still haven't dealt with what Jesus is after, have we? So let's see if our text can help us define what we're talking about and it does, all wrapped up in this one verse.

"Don't let your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in Me." There it is right there. Do you see it? Don't do this, do this, which means if I'm doing this, I won't be doing that. What is this? Believing in God. When you are believing in God, you won't be troubled. So what kind of anxiety is he defining for us? Faithless worrying. "Oh, what's going to happen? If I don't get the turkey out of the oven, it's going to get cold and then the dressing and the stuffing. Everything is going to be ruined! Woe is me! My life is undone!" Now that is something trite but it can be something bigger too. It can be something about the car that isn't working; the job situation that you have. Is it okay to be troubled that you've got a rotten boss? Is it okay to be troubled that you're not getting the number of hours that you want to make ends meet? You bet. You bet. But it shouldn't be a nailbiting, "I don't know that I can get through this. I have no hope." That's what he is describing, a faithless worrying.



Now does that mean that we become Doris Day Christians, que sera, whatever, just let it fly? No, it doesn't, it means that when something difficult happens, you put your skills to work, you think it through, you plan for the future but while you're doing it, you're not biting your nails. That's what Jesus is after. Faithless worrying, this type of troubling says, "I got this." God says, "No, you don't. I do. Believe in me and you will not be troubled." The type of worrying is a faithless worrying.

So let's be practical. Can you be worried, you're late for the airport and you could miss your flight? "No, we believe in the sovereignty of God and if I'm going to miss my airplane, it was ordained by God," and that is certainly true but that's the very piece of information that should cause you to go, "If I'm going to miss my airplane, it's because God ordained it." Furthermore and I'll sneak this in as an aside, if you worry about dying in the airplane, I've got news for you, if you're going to die in an airplane, you're going to die in an airplane. And if you think, "Well, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to drive to the airport but right before I get to 75, I'm going to cut over and get to the Greyhound bus and I'm going to take a Greyhound bus to Missouri and then I can't die in the airplane that God had planned to kill me in." That means God ordained that you were going to think up a knuckleheaded scheme to go to the Greyhound bus and he's going to take your life in a Greyhound. He's going to do it because your death date is fixed and it is the best death date for you. Why? Because God picked it. Knowing that God is in control of everything, believing that God is in control of everything, that's the very thing that causes us to go, "Okay, it is well with my soul. I'm good with this because I know that what God does is for me." Will he who gave his only Son to you not do all things for you? Your God is for you. Your God isn't simmering at 211, "One more degree, one more thing and I am going to boil over and pounce." God is not looking to crush you. He's not this furious God who just loves to natter his children. Make no mistake about it, God gets angry at sin, there is a day of judgment. Don't lose sight of that but that's his peculiar work. God is a God of love, especially toward his children who are in Christ Jesus and what he has planned for you is good. If God is for us, who can be against us? So whatever is going on in your life, it's for your good and if today is the day that you are going to miss your flight, then it is for your good.

Do you see how this alters everything? Do you see how this just changes everything? We're going to go to Zaxby's after church. "Oh, what if the line is like really long and we can't get a seat? Then God wanted us to eat at another restaurant and not at Zaxby's," which I find hard to imagine but nevertheless. Do you see how this changes everything? Your child doesn't get accepted at the university. Is it the end of the world? No, God ordained it. "Oh, my child now needs to go to that lesser university." That's right because it's good for your child and it's good for you and it's good for the people that you're both going to bump into. Why? Because he's doing all things for you.

And then as I'm dealing with life's issues, I use my faculties to deal with them relying, trusting God, his sovereignty, knowing that he loves me, he is for me, is doing all things for my good and for his glory, and that means all of my emotions are now operating rightly. I respond. I can be, "Oh, wow, this is a big deal. If that check doesn't arrive, this is going to be a struggle but I know that God has got this under control and it's going to

arrive exactly when it needs to arrive. Now how can I deal with this wisely and well while trusting my God? Because however this turns out, it's going to be for me." And it's your job to figure out what that "for" is. What is he doing for me in this? What does he want me to learn from this? Am I doubting God? Am I doubting his promises? Do I really not believe Psalm 139 which says your birth date, your death date are fixed? I guess God wants to change that for me. Am I not relying on his promises? That he has good things in store for me? That he's going to prepare a place for me? The next Bible verse, by the way. Am I so terrified of death and God is bringing this to my attention, he's giving me a health scare so that I can remember, "Wait, he promised he's going to prepare a place for me. All right, it's going to be hard, it's going to be a little bit painful, it's maybe not what I would have planned but it must be good because God ordained it for you and he is going to prepare a place for me." We can be troubled but not faithlessly troubled. Emotions can be under our control and we need to know that God is doing something for me.

Now, that leads us to our diagnosis. Why do you and I worry? Our text tells us that. "Don't be troubled, believe in God because when you are believing in me, you won't be troubled." In other words, contrary to what Oprah and secular psychology says, your anxiety, your stress, your emotions are not a thinking problem, they are a believing problem. When you are troubled the way that Jesus says to find it, it is because you are not believing God rightly. It is a faith issue. That's the diagnosis for your problem. When you are troubled, "Oh, I've got to apply my skills, my personality, my connections. I know some people. I've got a bank account. I can get this handled. I got it." You're having a faith problem, not a thinking problem. Secular psychology would say your life is like a train and the engine is your thinking and then it is followed maybe by your emotions and your actions. The Bible comes in and squashes that. "No, no, no, here is the engine of your life: believing, because when you are believing right, your thinking is right. When you are believing wrong, your thinking is wrong." If I believe that Oprah has the answer to life's problems, I'm going to start studying her, what she teaches, and I'm going to start thinking like Oprah. It's because I believe her. If I didn't believe Oprah, I wouldn't do it. If I told you I've got \$1 million in my car, what's going to cause you to go, "Let's go get it"? If you believe me or not. It's not whether, "Yes, I think it could be in there," you're going to act based on your faith.

So if you are acting in a faithless troubled kind of way, it is because you are not believing and this is not the first time that Jesus has addressed this issue. Go back to Matthew 6 in your mind. You don't need to go there, you know the story. Matthew 6, what did we sing about? Sparrows. God takes care of them. If he has got them, he's got you, and then what does Jesus say? "Oh, you of little faith." Oh, there he is, he's telling us that when we are nervous about, "What am I going to wear? How am I going to get through this day?" In other words, the type of anxiety that he's warning against, it's because I am having a faith problem. I am having a little faith.

Then Jesus goes on to really give them an object lesson. Matthew 8, there is a storm. "Save us! Save!" What kind of panic were they having? A John 14:1 panic. What does Jesus say? "Oh, you of little faith," because if they were actually believing that he is

sovereign and he's got this under control, they would be napping too. They would be at peace.

Hold on. Matthew 14, Jesus feeds 5,000 people, puts the disciples in a boat, a storm comes, Jesus walks on the water, Peter walks out and sinks. Matthew 14:31, Jesus says to Peter, the one with sinking faith, "Oh, you of little faith."

Hold on. Please turn your Bible to Matthew 16 for this one. Matthew 16. In Matthew 14, we saw Jesus feed 5,000. In Matthew 15, he feeds 4,000 people. And now we have this scene in Matthew 16, verse 5, "And the disciples came to the other side of the sea," they had just seen the miracle, "but they had forgotten to bring any bread. And Jesus said to them, 'Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.' They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, 'He said that because we did not bring any bread.' But Jesus, aware of this, said, 'You men of little faith.'" Why were they worried about the day's meal? They were not believing that the Jesus who had just made a banquet for thousands of people could take care of a dinner for 13. Now the text continues and it's very instructive for us. "'You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up?'"

Do you have anxiety? You have little faith. I'm not saying you're not saved. I'm not saying that. I'm saying you have little faith and there is one of two ways that you could have a little faith, either one of them is destructive. How do you and I have a little faith? Well, first of all, we can have a little faith because we are believing in a little object, and you know who that object typically is when we are being anxious? "I'll get this done. I got this figured out. I know who to call. I'll send an email. I've done this before. I've got things in reserve. I will take care of this." You've got a little faith because you're believing in a very puny object and, frankly, you should be worried. But there's a second way that you can have a little faith: you're having a little faith in a big God. You're doing what the disciples did. They are forgetting. They are not remembering what God has done, what he is doing and what he promises to do.

So that brings us, then, to point number 3: the direction to the cure. How do we get over this? How do we figure this out? The answer, again, is in our text but we just saw it really set up on a tee for us. We need to remember. We need to be thinking about what God has done. "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Don't keep biting your nails. Don't be in a panic. Don't be freaking out. Don't be a faithless worrier. Believe in God. Have more faith." How do we get more faith because that's the cure, isn't it? If I've got more faith, if I stop believing in a puny object, start really believing in a big God, my anxiety is going to go away so how do I get more faith? Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the word of God. If you continue in my word, then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path. Psalm 119, read the entire Psalm. The word, it's like honey, it calms me down. I could really be freaking out about this but it's the word, it's the word, it's the word. If we want to be a less anxious people, here's what we need to do: we need to be burying our nose in this book and in particular 2 Corinthians 3:18. We need to be staring at Jesus, looking at everything that he has done

for us with unveiled faith. So in other words, we get to see who God really is. When we look at Jesus, we see God manifest to us, stare at him and you're going to become more like him. That's what we need to do to not have anxiety anymore, stare at the Christ. Look at this God. Where do we see him revealed? We see him revealed in this book and so when you and I are not reading, when we are not thinking about. I'm not talking about putting in your daily reading time, "Okay, I've got my two chapters done. I'm good to go for the day." Staring at Jesus, thinking about who he is and what he has done.

How can we read our Bibles more like that? This is going to be a little bit dicey here and a little bit risky so let's watch our balance on this one. I would like to suggest to you, especially for this conservative body of which I am a part, that we need to remember two things in a right priority level when we read our Bible. We need to remember that God created the universe to bring glory to himself. That's the cosmic play. That's the performance that he is putting on. Where do you and I fit into that? Are we a prop? Are we a light? Or are we a string in the drape? No, we are a player. Now, does that mean that you and I can alter destinies? No. Does that mean that you and I are God? No. But does that mean that you and I are insignificant? Absolutely not. In an era where we've got far too many preachers, and I'm not going to mention Joel Osteen's name again, "You're so wonderful. You're so incredible. You're so amazing." That's a ditch. Unfortunately, I think sometimes we hear that kind of wonky preaching and we go back into the other ditch, "Oh, hold on with God loves me. Kids, we are not singing Jesus loves us, Jesus elected us." You've got to be careful of that ditch.

So might I suggest if we want to not have anxiety, we look at this Jesus with unveiled face recognizing he has actually done these things for me, let's be careful, primarily for his glory. But that doesn't mean that when we see a Red Sea parting we don't go, "Wow, God orchestrated that so that I could have a seed come out of that... For me? You mean he was actually thinking about me too?" Predominantly himself but that doesn't mean we're not on the scene. Let's not forget that, my conservative Christian friend. God loves you, God designed you, knit you together in your mother's womb. He knows every thought you're thinking, every word that's going to come flying out of your mouth. Oh, you of little faith. God loves you. Look at this Jesus with unveiled face and know that he has done this for his glory but for us. He has done this for us. This is not a detached faith that we have. This is a real thing that we're talking about. God knows every molecule and its activity in your body right now and he, believe it or not, even though he knows every thought that is running through your brain as has already been expressed, he loves you anyway. Let's read our Bibles remembering that. This is not a theological storehouse that we are tapping into. Oh, it's that but theology should do something for us and if it's not doing something for us, we're not doing it right. And I'm very guilty of this. Wow, do I have knowledge and let me just tell you, you just send an Arminian my way and, "You give me that evolutionary atheist and I'm gonna...." Yeah, that's good to have that knowledge and a storehouse of apologetics, but if it is not affecting my heart, it is dead letter.

What's the cure for my anxiety? Read the word so that you can believe in the God who loves you enough to send his Son to die for you. That's our cure for anxiety so let's do

that right now, shall we? Let's do that. Jesus is in the upper room. He's teaching the disciples, "Don't be anxious. Don't be freaked out about the events that are about to take place. I'm going to help you through this and I'm going to send a Comforter for you and I'm going to pray that you will have joy in all of this." And then what happens? He leaves that upper room at the end of John 14, but the discourse continues about you not having anxiety in John 15 all the way through 16. He leaves the upper room, keeps talking about, "Peace, peace, don't worry. Peace, just be calm. Don't be anxious. Don't sin in this." Walking all the way to the garden and what happens there? Do you remember that one who was promised that was going to crush the head of the serpent? It begins. His humiliation began in the cradle but now his paying for the sins of his people begins. He sweats drops of blood knowing what is coming his way. He is indeed troubled rightly about what is to come. Does he run? No. Why? Because he was going to save you. Just remember, he saves the body but that doesn't mean we're just this amorphous blob. He marched into Jerusalem letting them arrest him so that you could have your sins forgiven. And what did he do there besides being put on a mock trial? Can you imagine the Son of God standing before his creation who is putting him on trial, accusing him falsely, and he endures it? And then he is found sort of guilty and he is sent down to the soldiers who do what to the Messiah? They strip him naked and taunt him and mock him and spit on him and beat him with fists, and then they smash a rod onto his head that is crowned with thorns. That allusion back to Exodus 17 when the staff hit the rock and the rock is Christ and those thorns smashed into his head. Why thorns? Well, do you remember what the curse result was? Thorns. So Jesus had thorns put on his head. What was the result of the curse? Sweat. What did he do in the garden? He sweat drops of blood. All of this so that you could have your sins forgiven because he was the fulfillment of everything that God had been doing. Then what happens to our Messiah? He gets his heel bruised when he is put on a cross and he hung, gasping for breath, without ever going, "I'm done. Enough. I know these people. I know the sinners of 2017. I'm not going to do this for them." He never did it. He never even thought it and he gasped his last for you.

Do you want to have a trouble-free 2018? I can't promise you that because in this world you will have troubles, but can God promise that you will not be troubled? You bet. Stare at your Jesus with unveiled face. Look at what he did for you. Never grow weary of seeing what he has done for you on the cross, and then when the smaller problems of your life arise, and they most surely will, you can say, "My biggest problem has been solved. This is peanuts. I was facing the wrath of God, more than a freight train bearing down on me. I was going to have to stand before him naked and try to stammer a defense for myself and for my wicked thoughts, and my eyes filled with pornography, and my feet that have taken me to dirty places, and my hands which have done dirty things, and my heart which has been so filled with hate. I was going to have to face him. But Jesus faced him for me. My biggest problem has been solved." Consider that and you will not let your heart be troubled. Oh, you of, what kind of faith?

Let's pray.

*Our Father, you are not a cosmic bellhop. You want more for us than that. Unfortunately, we want those things for ourselves and so we come before you to repent of*

*being faithless, disobedient, anxious. We repent that we have not trusted you and that we have trusted ourselves. So this morning, having seen Jesus with unveiled face, we bow and we surrender to your will. We surrender to your sovereignty. We don't want a little faith anymore, we want a huge faith in our omnipotent King. Grant us that grace as we study your word. Grant us peace as we study your word. Change us as we study your word. You have promised that if we stare at Jesus, you'll conform us into his image so we ask for your help to stare at him starting today. We humbly ask you to fulfill that promise to your faithless, sinful, hurting and needy servants. Grant us perseverance. Rescue those who are here who are suicidal. Rescue those who have a black dog howling. Rescue those who have never seen your goodness, that you died while we were yet sinning and grant them repentance and faith so that they too can be your servants and Jesus can be our King because he is worthy. And it is in his name we pray. Amen.*