

“The Way, The Truth, and The Life”
John 14:1-6

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"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions [rooms]; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."

5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Have you ever really been troubled by something? Perhaps you are troubled at this very moment. To be troubled is to be overcome by some great concern. The dictionary defines being “troubled” as mental distress.

What causes us to be troubled?

Some personal loss, some impending event that you dread; the untimely death of someone dear to you, or, the doctor says you have cancer.

We can all make a list of the things that would trouble us.

The context of this passage finds Jesus telling His true disciples [Judas Iscariot has gone to betray Him] that He is going to die and His disciples are troubled.

Jesus Himself is troubled.

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 ESV

There is a transition from chapter 13 where Jesus is addressing Peter [you is singular], to chapter 14, where Jesus is speaking to all of His disciples [your is plural].

In verse 31 of chapter 13, one meaning of “glorified” has to do with our “opinion”. Our opinion of the nature and character of God determines how much glory we see in God.

John 13:31-32

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. ESV

And Jesus means in 13:31, that the Son of Man and God the Father is glorified in the crucifixion of Jesus, who is the Son of Man.

Jesus and His disciples are “troubled” at the prospect of the death of the Son of Man. The disciples are troubled because they do not understand why Jesus must go the cross and die.

Jesus is troubled at the prospect of having sin imputed to Him: the Holy and sinless Son of God is taking on Himself the sin of His people.

So what does the Lord Jesus Christ instruct His disciples to do when they are troubled? The passage before us is the Lord’s instruction on what to do when we are troubled and it tells us how to form a correct opinion of exactly who is Jesus of Nazareth.

These words of Jesus are spoken the night before He died. The disciples all believe that He is the Messiah but they could not grasp why He must die; therefore they are troubled.

Jesus knows that in a few hours He will be dead and that their faith will suffer a severe trial. They want to believe Jesus, but why must He die? So they are troubled.

But Jesus says that they must not be troubled and He gives them five reasons why they should not be troubled. [This line of thought comes from J. M. Boice.]

When we are troubled [deeply distressed] we can remember what Jesus says here to His disciples.

First, and without going into all the possible interpretations of 14:1, my conclusion is that Jesus is giving them and us a command.

Continue to believe [trust] in God the Father and also believe [trust] in Me.

As Christians we know the only True God and we know that Jesus is God because here and in other places, that is who Jesus claims to be.

Therefore, we know that as God the Son, Jesus knows everything there is to know about us. Jesus knows what you are troubled by and He is in complete control of the circumstances that you are suffering from.

Second, Jesus has a place for us in heaven.

Jesus says if this were not so that He would know it and that He would have told us. Heaven is a real place.

Third, Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven. This may sound the same as the second reason, but do you see what He is saying?

The place in heaven is not just a place, but a place suited just for you.

If I could make an earthly example, we each have a place that we like to be.

Cora has a sewing room and a sunroom. I have my study with my books and computer. Cora rarely spends much time in “my place.” And I have no business in Cora’s sewing room. You see these are places that are individually suited for Cora and me.

When my mother moved into my sister’s house my brother-in-law and I built an apartment just for her. Brother Jim Gables had a special place in his home made especially for his mother.

And Jesus is preparing a place in heaven just for you.

Four and Five can be taken together. Jesus is coming back and at that point we will be with Him forever.

In verse 3 Jesus says that He will receive us “face-to-face” in order that “where I am, there you may be also.”

1 John 3:1-3

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Paul reminds us of that very promise.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 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.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Do you need more than these five reasons to stop being troubled?

So when we are troubled what are we commanded by Jesus to do?

As hard as this may sound, this is what we are commanded to do.

Deliberately take yourself in hand and by an exercise of the mind and will remember these words of Jesus. Slowly meditate on each thought.

You trust God and you trust Jesus.

Notice that Jesus Christ does not say: Dwell on your problems. Jesus doesn't even say, “Tell Me all about them.” It is certainly Scriptural to follow Peter's command to the church, by, “... casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

What we usually do after we “cast our cares on Him” is we take them back and continue to be troubled.

But what Jesus means is to give your troubles to Him and trust Him to deal with them and provide you with the outcome that best honors Him.

Let’s talk about heaven. What does heaven mean to you?

We can think of heaven in at least three ways.

1. The atmosphere where the birds fly and the clouds float.
2. The expanse or firmament that is seemingly infinite where there are planets and stars.
3. The house of God. “In My Father’s house...”

In heaven there may be streets paved with gold and gates studded with pearls and crowns and harps and I am not in any way making light of those things. But I believe they are mostly symbolic of purity and beauty and peace. Heaven is a real place that never corrodes or rusts or decays.

The Bible says that heaven is the Father’s House.

Psalm 33:13-15

**13 The LORD looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men.**

**14 From the place of His dwelling He looks
On all the inhabitants of the earth;**

**15 He fashions their hearts individually;
He considers all their works.**

Isaiah 63:15a

**Look down from heaven,
And see from Your habitation, holy and glorious.**

Yes, heaven is a real place.

God is Spirit and has no visible form. But Jesus does have a body and He is in heaven right now praying for His people. And angels can be seen and so will our resurrection bodies be visible.

Critics say that even if Jesus moved at the speed of light that from 30 A.D. He would not even be as far as a very distant star.

Just for fun I calculated that in 2000 years traveling at the speed of light you will have gone 117×10 raised to 14th power miles, or a distance of 2000 light years. A light year is the distance that light travels in a year's time.

We know that some stars are billions of light years from earth. But all of that is moot. Why limit God, who created light, to the speed of light?

What about the **speed of thought**?

Think of some place far away and you are there in thoughts right now.

Did not Jesus' resurrection body seem to materialize in a room and then disappear? Aren't you excited and anxious to experiment with your new resurrection body?

AN ASIDE QUESTION: Will we recognize one another in heaven?

The question suggests an interest in whether or not we will recognize a spouse or a child assuming all of the relations remain the same in heaven. I believe the answer is yes; we will recognize everyone and be recognized in heaven. I make my case on the inferences we can draw from the following passages.

Genesis 25:7-9

This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. 8 Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. 9 And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah,

Genesis 35:28-29

28 Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. 29 So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Genesis 49:33

And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

Numbers 27:12-13

Now the LORD said to Moses: "Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. 13 And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered.

David, upon the death of the son of his adultery and murder, said he would see the child in heaven {2 Samuel 12:23}.

On the mountain, when He was transfigured {Matthew 17:1-13}, Jesus spoke to Elijah and Moses. Peter, who had never seen them on this earth, recognized them.

When He permitted them, the two on the road to Emmaus {Luke 24:31}, recognized Jesus after His resurrection. Now He was on earth, but He was in His resurrection body in which He ascended into heaven.

Perhaps there are other indications that there will be recognition in heaven, but this is enough to satisfy my curiosity.

Except in the case of those who die very young, what "age" will we be in heaven? Heaven is timeless, so somehow God will let us be known by those we knew us as teenagers, whom we have not seen for 50 or 60 years.

Here is another aspect to consider.

Matthew 22:23-33

²³ The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, ²⁴ saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.' ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ So too the second and third, down to the seventh. ²⁷ After them all, the woman died. ²⁸ In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her."

29 But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 31 And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God:

32 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." 33 And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

When the Sadducees tried to trick Jesus {Matthew 22:23-33}, they posed a question about life after death {which the Sadducees denied} and Jesus answered by telling them that relationships in heaven are different from those on earth.

We will not be married to another in heaven because the church is the Bride of Christ.

C. S. Lewis writes that when he was a boy he could not imagine anything better than chocolate. But when he was married that he could not now imagine anything better than the relationship he had with his wife. His point was that we cannot imagine what it will be like in heaven but it will be better than anything we have ever experienced.

What Jesus is saying is intended to comfort the person who trusts in Jesus.

Do you have a home in heaven?
Is Jesus preparing a place for you in heaven?

Do you have the assurance that if you died today that you would be in heaven with Jesus?

In verse 4, Jesus tells them that they know where He is going and they know the way. But then they did not know that they knew and Jesus is going to explain to them that because they **know Him** they do know where He is going and the way.

In verse 5, Thomas argues with Jesus, “How can we be expected to know the way when we do not even know where You are going?”

Thomas makes two errors:

a) Whether Thomas thought Jesus meant His death or another place on earth, he was thinking of “the way” as a road (Cf. 7:35);

Or,

b) Thomas thought the Lord meant the way Jesus would take; when Jesus meant the way the disciples must take (Cf. 6b).

So how does Jesus answer Thomas? Jesus answers with the most offensive words that a lost person will ever hear!

The Gospel offends lost people!

The Gospel offends those who are lost at two points:

1. It offends lost people to hear that they are not the determining factor as to whether or not they will be saved, or go to heaven. The popular message is that God really wants to save you but He can't unless you give Him permission. That proposition puts prideful man in control of his eternal destiny.

Jesus said:

John 6:43-45

43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. 44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

And sure enough, many people were offended when they heard Jesus say that they did not have the **ability** to come to God for salvation unless God first took the initiative.

John 6:60-65

Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"

61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? **62** What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? **63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. **64** But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. **65** And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

2. And the second thing that upsets and offends lost people is to hear that there is only one way to God and that One way is Jesus Christ!

Jesus here makes the most exclusive claim ever made by anyone!

Yes, He said He is the Light and the Bread of Life and the Sent One of God.

And Jesus said that it was absolutely essential to believe in Him or you remain lost in hell forever.

John 8:23-24

23 And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. **24** Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

Those claims correctly understood say essentially what verse 6 says.

Peter says the same thing after the Holy Spirit taught him.

Acts 4:8-12

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Jesus makes exclusive claims that allow for no other "way to God."

Our western culture has become so pluralistic that one religion is considered to be as valid as any other.

When you have Islam claiming to be the only true religion, and the Jews denying that Jesus of Nazareth is Messiah, and the slaphappy world not being able to see that they cannot all be valid and thinking that they are you can see why the absolute claims of Jesus would offend them.

And what distresses [troubles] me is that many Baptists do not believe that the claims of Jesus really do matter.

Take a case in point. A few years ago a Baptist Church on the Southside of Birmingham let a Jewish synagogue use their building for worship while the synagogue was being remodeled. Not only did the Baptist pastor not see the insult to Jesus in what he allowed but he was quoted in the Birmingham News as saying that the Jews who denied that Jesus is Messiah were just as saved as the Baptists.

The truth is that the Jews are just as lost as those Baptists.

If you do not think that calling Jesus' integrity into question and denying His claim to be the only way to God is not serious then you are in a desperate condition! You see little or no "glory" in the death of Christ.

In the context of this passage the disciples ask Jesus **four questions** and the answers Jesus gives are all related to verse 6. [J. M. Boice]

The answers to these four questions all focus on Jesus.

1. Peter's question:

John 13:36

Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?"

2. Thomas' question:

John 14:5

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

To Peter and Thomas, Jesus is the WAY.

3. Philip's question:

John 14:8

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

To Philip, Jesus is the TRUTH.

4. Jude's question:

John 14:22

Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"

To Jude, Jesus is the LIFE.

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Those who are alienated from God must have the Way to God.

Those who are in spiritual ignorance must have the Truth.

Those who are dead in their spirit must have Life.

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So I ask you tenderly, are you offended by what I am preaching? If so, why?

Has God the Holy Spirit convicted you of sin?

Are you alienated from God?

Then you need a Way to God: **Jesus is the Way!**

Does the Truth matter to you?

In a world full of lies and deception wouldn't you like to know the Truth? **Jesus is the Truth!**

Do you have the power to keep death from taking you?

We all will die physically unless we are alive when Jesus comes back, but I am referring to you eternal soul that cannot die.

Jesus is the Life!

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Jim Gunn

February 19, 2014