

John 13:36-14:14 – Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled

Intro (partially adapted from *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*)

- Over the events of the last chapter (and parallel passages), Jesus has been telling his disciples what is going on and what is about to happen...there are hard times ahead.
 - o One of the 12 is a traitor (John 13:21)
 - o Jesus is going away (John 13:33)
 - o Satan is at work among them (Luke 22:31)
 - o All the disciples will fall away (Matthew 26:31)

- John 13:36-38 – When Peter tries to understand what it means that Jesus is going away & professes his absolute loyalty, he is told that he will deny Jesus three times this very night.
 - o We'll talk about this quite a bit more in a few chapters when it actually happens.
 - o For now, I think it's safe to say that Peter and the other disciples are feeling discouraged, upset, and/or worried.
 - o Jesus takes the time to encourage his disciples – to help them deal with distress and anxiety regarding the future.
 - And we get to listen in because this is relevant to us as well.
 - We too will face uncertainty and distressing circumstances as we live in a world broken by sin (including our own sin) and influenced by Satan.
 - The four words of comfort & encouragement that Jesus gives the 11 faithful disciples continue to comfort & encourage his faithful disciples today.
 - I think that these are much needed today as we see our nation and world full of divisions, oppression, and violence.

(1) God Is Trustworthy

- They/we do not need to be troubled because we can trust God – the Father & the Son.
 - o *Believe* isn't being used just in the sense of *believe that he exists*.
 - It's not just knowing things *about* God.
 - Even Satan & his demons believe in the sense of acknowledging the existence of the One True God, and it produces only terror (James 2:19).
 - o As used here by Jesus, this is about trust.
 - Believe: to consider something to be true and therefore worth of trust. (BDAG Greek Lexicon)
 - i.e. What I know about God allows me to have confidence and be at peace as I rely on him.

- The primary way to combat anxiety/fear of the future is remembering that you are on God's side and trusting him to take care of you.
 - o Romans 8:31-34 – If you belong to Jesus, Almighty God is for you:

- (31-32) The Father has already sent his beloved Son to rescue us...if God has already given us himself, how can we doubt that he will give us anything else we need to make us the joyful and blessed people he created us to be?
- (33-34) God has declared us righteous and when Satan accuses us before the Father, the Son who has already suffered for those sins & defeated death speaks with divine authority on our behalf.
- God has secured our eternal glory at great personal cost – we can trust him with the day-to-day stuff too.
- Philippians 4:6-9 – The way we nurture this trust is by prayer, focusing our thoughts on what is good, and living according to the principles of his Word.
 - If the only time we think about God is at church or mumbling a prayer before a meal, we will be ill-equipped to handle a world broken by sin.
 - (6-7) Talk to God about whatever is causing you anxiety, ask for his help, & thank him for the good and joyful things.
 - (8) Think about things that are good and pleasing rather than constantly fretting over what is evil and outrageous.
 - This does not mean we stick our heads in the sand and ignore opportunities to show compassion and speak the truth in love.
 - It does mean that subjecting ourselves to a constant barrage of all the filth that is going on in the world is not spiritually healthy.
 - Anti-Philippians 4:8 – Finally, brothers, whatever false, whatever is dishonorable, whatever is unjust, whatever is filthy, whatever causes outrage, whatever is shameful, if there is any villainy, if there is something worthy of condemnation...
 - These things should not be what occupies the majority of your thought-life if you want to experience the peace of God
 - Beware of doomscrolling on social media or constantly listening to media personalities who thrive on bashing “the other side.”
 - (9) As we deliberately live out our faith, trusting God enough to follow his Word, our fellowship with God brings that peace that is not dependent on circumstances.
- The other encouragements build on this one: Why can we trust God? What can we trust him to do?

(2-7) Heaven Is Our Home

- (2-3) Jesus’ visible/physical absence is temporary as he prepares a better future for his followers.
 - Because of Jesus’ death, resurrection, & return to heaven, we now have a true home.
 - He describes it as the Father having a house that includes rooms/dwellings for all of his children.

- *Mansions* that occurs in some Bible versions & songs is not a very accurate translation – the original word simply means *dwelling* and is the same word used later in v. 23 to describe God making his home with/in believers.
 - Don't picture a big lonely mansion where you live all by yourself.
 - Jesus' word picture is more of a big, interconnected living space with a place in it designed just for you.
 - Picture a place to live custom-built for you by the one who loves you with a perfect love and knows you better than you know yourself.
 - Picture a place where friends you have made here on earth can drop in for a visit and relaxing fellowship (see Luke 16:1-15, especially verse 9).
 - Picture a place where you have direct face-to-face access to God and there is no sin or any of the brokenness that sin brought into the world: no temptation, sickness, pain, sorrow, or death (Revelation 21:3-4).
- Jesus promises to come and takes us to be there with him forever in our true home.
 - "If I find in myself a desire which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world." – C. S. Lewis
 - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 – We must keep this future true home in mind.
 - When we remember that faithfulness in temporary difficulties here is gloriously rewarded forever there...
 - ...it motivates us to carry on rather than going into panic, discouragement, or rebellion.
- (4-5) Jesus says that his followers know the way to where he is going, but Thomas is completely baffled.
 - Maybe he's thinking too literally in terms of a literal road to an earthly location.
 - Jesus' opponents made similar wrong assumptions when he talked about going away...thinking that he was leaving Israel to go to other parts of the Roman Empire.
 - I think there were times in Jesus' interaction with people that the most natural reaction would have been a facepalm.
 - But Jesus is patient and kind.
 - We can be thankful for the disciples' frequent lack of understanding that results in explanations that help *us* understand more.
- (6-7) Jesus clarifies: he is going to where the Father is, and he is the only way there.
 - The idea that "all paths lead to God" might sound pretty, but it just isn't true.
 - To know the God the Son (Jesus Christ), is to know the Father; there is no other way (1 John 5:10-13).
 - True eternal life in that home Jesus has prepared for his own comes only through believing in Jesus:
 - Believing that he is God the Son who died for our sins and rose again.
 - Trusting him to forgive your sins & give you this new life.

(8-11) God Has Revealed His Character

- (8) Jesus has just talked about knowing and seeing the Father, so Philip expects some kind of spectacular vision.
 - o Maybe he's expecting something like Moses or one of the other prophets saw in the Old Testament.
 - o (9a) I think Jesus is having another "facepalm" moment – once again the disciples seem to have missed an important point they should have picked up by now.
- (9b-11) Jesus perfectly reveals the Father.
 - o Jesus is the perfect revelation of God the Father because he is God the Son in perfect relationship and perfect unity of being and will with God the Father.
 - In becoming a human, he laid aside the full appearance of his glory and independent use of his divine power so that humans could get to know him without being blown away.
 - According to the Father's will he sometimes made use of his divine power, which alone should be enough to convince them of who he is even if they don't grasp what he is saying.
 - Very soon, he will reassume his glory and yet remain human as well.
 - o Jesus is God's perfect self-revelation – if you want to know what the Father is like, look at the Son (Hebrews 1:1-3). He is:
 - The one who has absolute control over nature, so he can calm the sea or make food seemingly out of thin air.
 - The one who has compassion on the suffering, healing diseases and lifelong physical defects with a touch or a word.
 - The one who has absolute control over the spiritual world where demons flee at his rebuke and at his command the dead come back to life.
 - The one who spends time with the social outcasts rather than shunning them like "proper religious people" do.
 - The one who makes time to hold children on his lap and hug them rather than considering them to be messy, noisy nuisances.
 - The one who when someone comes to him in faith pronounces their sins to be forgiven and urges them to live a holy life.
 - The one who suffered unimaginable physical and spiritual agony in our place.
 - o We serve a loving, compassionate, gracious God who we can trust.

(12-14) We Have Purpose & Power

- Until Jesus returns, his followers have the privilege/responsibility of carrying on Jesus' work:
 - o Inviting others into a right relationship with God through faith in him and helping each other grow closer to him ("Make disciples of all nations" – Matthew 28:19-20).
 - o Your life has the potential of making an eternal impact.

- This is both an encouragement and a solemn responsibility.
 - “...remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations...There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal....But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.” – C. S. Lewis (*The Weight of Glory*)
- In some ways, Jesus’ followers see greater results than he did when he was on earth as he reassumes his glory and continues to work through us.
 - We now have the whole story of why Jesus came the first time, eliminating some of the confusion that the disciples experienced.
 - We now have the Holy Spirit working in the world in new ways (more on that in coming weeks).
 - Followers of Jesus now number in hundreds of millions around the world.
 - We are able to do the work he called us to do as we rely on him in prayer.
 - We get to address our prayers in Jesus’ name.
 - “In Jesus’ name...” is not just a traditional way to end a prayer.
 - We pray as if he were making the request. How presumptuous would that be if Jesus himself hadn’t told us to do it?!
 - This is not a blank check or a token that makes God the Cosmic Vending Machine.
 - This is the assurance that whatever we ask according to the will of God (after all we are addressing the prayer in the name of God the Son), he will do.
 - There are requests that are denied because it is not what Jesus would ask,
 - Hebrews 4:16 – Even then, because we know we can trust our great and loving God, we have the confidence of receiving grace and help (even if it doesn’t take the exact form we were expecting).

Application: Do not let your hearts be troubled.

- God is trustworthy: Deliberately keep your focus on him through prayer, meditating on his truth, and following his commands.
- Heaven is our home: Don’t allow discouragement or hardship stop you from faithful living – faithfulness in the temporary troubles of this life brings eternal glory in the next.
- God has revealed his loving character: All the compassion, mercy, and self-sacrificing love of Jesus Christ is a perfect reflection of our Heavenly Father – trust him.

- We have purpose & power: your life is not pointless – it has eternal impact through prayer in Jesus' name and the indwelling Holy Spirit (who we will talk about next week).