

INTRO:

So we're continuing to move through the *Gospel of John*, and as you see have come to a passage that, I have to say, is SO incredibly relevant. And if you look there in *v.1* you see why: Jesus is speaking directly to those of us...with "*troubled hearts*"/troubled hearts... Ya know, it's hard to imagine a society living with "*troubled hearts*" MORE than ours. Perhaps you saw this week: The US Surgeon General's Office released a report stating that people lacking social connections/experiencing loneliness, "*are at risk of premature death at levels comparable to daily smoking.*" Loneliness, they said, increases your risk of death by 30% and in the meantime elevates your risk of stroke, heart disease, depression, anxiety, and dementia. ALL of which are actually doubled, for people who use social media for 2 or more hours a day.¹ And that's just loneliness, not to mention things like fear, anxiety, anger, which're all elevated in our radically-expressive, post-pandemic, politically-divided, technological age. We are a people with "*troubled hearts.*"...And even if YOU don't find YOU "*heart troubled*" this morning - for which, praise God - you're nevertheless surrounded by people - in our city, neighborhood, maybe your table right now - who do...Jesus is speaking directly to that this morning BECAUSE the same was true for His disciples on the eve of His crucifixion. Their anxiety and fear were at an all-time high here in *John 14*. And Jesus, who's mere moments away from Himself being betrayed, beaten, and crucified - instead of pressing into HIS "*troubled heart,*" spends some time comforting and continuing to instruct theirs...SO, let's pray and then see what Jesus has to say about **2 Things: Why The Disciples/And WE Become Troubled**, and then **What Ultimately Brings Peace TO Our Troubled Hearts**. *Let's Pray:* "Father God, thank you for your word/this passage FULL of comfort if only we'll take you AT its word. And so we ask that you would enable us to understand what it is you've said, and IN understanding it, believe it - both for our peace and the peace of those around us. We pray this in Jesus' name...Amen!"

TEXT:²

So 2 things we're looking at: **Why The Disciples/And WE Become Troubled**, and then **What Ultimately Brings Peace To Our Troubled Hearts**. And that's BECAUSE, you see, everything Jesus says here - and He says a lot with respect to things like, heaven there in *vv.2-4*; knowledge of God there in *vv.6-7* and *8-14*; even the Holy Spirit in *vv.15-26* - everything He says about these really foundational topics is in response to the perceptible anxiety of His disciples, who can't wrap their minds around WHY He's leaving. After all and as we've seen for months now, these guys' whole world has been wrapped up with Jesus for years now, such that the thought of Him leaving, ya gotta think, that had to've been devastating. You see there in *v.18*, Jesus uses the term "*orphan*"/says He's not gonna leave em as "*orphans.*" Which tells you, they're contemplating the loss of Him like a child would contemplate the loss of their parents... Which is WHY you've got Thomas, Philip and Judas - all pushing on Jesus' assertion that He has to leave. Thomas, there in *v.5*, wondering where He's going and what's gonna happen in the future... Philip, there in *v.8*, concerned about how to see and know God IN Jesus' absence. In other words,

¹ https://www.denisonforum.org/daily-article/loneliness-dangerous-smoking/?utm_source=feedly&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=loneliness-dangerous-smoking

² Works Consulted:

- Bruce Milne, *The Message of John: Here Is Your King! With Study Guide*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 208-218
- "A Place for You - Gospel of John, Part 1 - October 13, 1991 - John 14:1-5" // "Knowing the Father - Gospel of John, Part 1 - October 27, 1991 - John 14:5-15" // "Who Is the Spirit? - The Holy Spirit - July 4, 2010 - John 14:16-26" - *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

without Jesus by our side, how are we gonna find meaning and direction for life...And then Judas, there in **v.22**, fearing - like so many of us do - being ill-equipped/under-resourced for life. So just these really fundamental concerns, which frame all of Jesus' teaching here...**But notice:** Notice, that while Jesus does speak directly to the concerns of His disciples/WANTS to enter into YOUR specific areas of doubt, confusion and pain...He does so, you see, with a singular application...namely, belief in Him. Says in **v.1**/off the top, *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me"*; **v.11**, *"Believe me. I'm in the Father and the Father's in me..."*; **v.12**, *"I say to you, whoever BELIEVES in me will also do the works that I do"*; and then **v.29**, *"I've told you before it takes place, so that when it does you may - **what?** - believe."*

So **First**, what does this tell us about **Why The Disciples/And WE Become Troubled:** And the answer is: The disciples are troubled/YOU and I get troubled, whenever we feel the need to have answers - certainly to the big questions in life - but don't get em. Or at least don't get em in the way we think we should. **Isn't that how we all are?** Cuz Jesus has just said, *"guys I'm leaving/ even more, one of you is gonna betray me."* And immediately, the disciples are like, *"Uh, We got questions."* **Thomas** says, *"Lord, we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way?"* meaning, "how are we supposed to navigate the future without you?"...**Philip** says, *"Lord, (if you gotta leave, then just) show us the Father, (that'll be) enough for us,"* meaning if you're not gonna be by our side, then you gotta at least show us God, and meaning, and direction for our lives...Even Judas says, *"Lord, how (are) you (gonna) manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?"* meaning, "we can't be the ones who show you off to the world. We're not equipped for that"...So see, just like us, they're obsessed with not just getting answers to their intellectual questions, but obsessed with their perceived needs, problems, with knowing themselves, and discovering their passions, and protecting their futures, and all manner of things the Bible would consider...secondary! Important, but secondary.

Cuz look at how Jesus responds: To Thomas, Philip AND Judas, He assuages their fears, you see, by pointing to Himself! For example, He gives Thomas that great memory verse in **v.6 right?** *"I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* In other words, *"Thomas, you don't have to know everything about your future. You just have to know... that I know. Cuz I'm the way, the truth, and the life."* Meaning, Jesus is the way to God so you don't have to FIND another way. He's the truth, so in an age of spin, fake news, and AI generated content, you can hang your hat on Him. And He's the life/no "A life," but "THE life," such that you don't have to keep searching for happiness. It's IN Jesus...In other words, to Thomas' question; Jesus gives the answer...of Himself.

And ya notice, He does the same thing with Philip. Philip's worried about knowing God and finding meaning and direction in Jesus' absence **right? So what does Jesus say?** He says, *"Philip, have I been with you for so long and you still don't know me?"* In other words, *"Philip, it's not about FINDING meaning and direction FOR your life. It's about knowing ME IN your life. THAT'S what's most central."*...Even with Judas and promising to send the Holy Spirit there in **vv.23-26**, He does the same thing. Cuz when He says that - by the Spirit *"He and His Father'll come make a home with us,"* and that the Spirit is *"a Helper sent to teach...and bring to your*

memory the things Jesus's said and done" - that word "helper" literally means counselor. And not in the marriage or camp counselor sense, but in the legal sense. Someone who comes alongside and advocates for you. So Jesus is saying, "*Judas you don't have to worry about being ill-equipped for life, because though my followers won't have me BESIDE them, they will now have me INSIDE them.*" And friend, Jesus inside of you is way better than Jesus BESIDE you.

So see? At every step, as the disciples are wanting answers, Jesus simply directs them...to Himself. Not even, "*I'll give you a way, or I'll give some truth, or here's an option for life.*" No! "*I AM the way, AM truth...AM life.*" In other words, He's saying, HE'S the answer to every question you have; the solution to every problem you're experiencing. Because HE'S the strand that unlocks every knot... You ever been trying to untie a knot, and it's like the more you pull on it, the tighter it gets... UNTIL ya pull on one of the strands/usually by accident, and it's like everything immediately loosens up **right?** That's BECAUSE that one strand was the focus of the entire problem. Pull on IT and it unlocks everything else. THAT'S what Jesus is saying here: Personal knowledge of God, through understanding what HE'S really like, is the strand that unlocks all the knots in your life... This is why, incidentally, if you look at the great prayers in Scripture, they're shocking. Cuz they're rarely for things like, ya know: joy, power, blessing, health, success, finding the right job, right spouse... In other words, they're not AT ALL like our prayers. Rather, they're almost always centered on... knowing God! In **Ephesians 1** for example, the Apostle Paul prays for the church in Ephesus to, quote, "*have the eyes of their hearts enlightened that they may KNOW the hope of their calling.*" In **Ephesians 3** he says: "*I pray that you might KNOW the love of God.*" Jesus Himself, in His "high priestly prayer" of **John 17** which we'll get to in a couple weeks, prays that you and I might KNOW eternal life, and THEN defines eternal life as, "*KNOWING the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.*"... THAT'S what Jesus is trying to get His disciples and YOU to see here: That the reason your heart is ever troubled is because you've elevated "second things" over "first things." Elevated, for example, your needs and intellectual questions OVER seeing and knowing Jesus!... Cuz of course, as C.S. Lewis said, "*when you make first things first and second things second, you GET both first and second things. BUT when you make second things first and first things second, you LOSE both first and second things.*"... It's like a jar of rocks. Let's say you have 100 rocks of different sizes that you gotta fit into a jar. The only way to do it is to put the biggest rocks in first and then pour the little ones in second. Because of course, the little rocks fill in all the cracks **right?** But if you put the little rocks/or "second things" in first, then what happens is the big rocks/the "first things," won't fit... The same is true in your life. Whenever you prioritize the "little rocks" of your circumstances, needs, having to have answers to all your questions, OVER the "big rock" of knowing and enjoying Jesus... your heart is gonna be troubled. Because again you're putting second things first! **THAT'S why we become troubled.**

So **Then, What Brings Peace To Our Troubled Hearts?** And no the answer's not winning the Powerball. As that late great theologian Biggie said, "*Mo money, mo problems.*" No! The answer is what Jesus leads with and then says on repeat throughout this passage, which is you see in **v.1**: "*Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.*" In other words, the answer

to trouble...is trust!"³ The answer for a troubled heart...is trust in a loving Savior! Cuz look at the kind of saving-love Jesus has for you: For example, in **v.2**, He says, *"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it weren't so, would I've told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"* He's saying, "if there's no glorious dwelling for you beyond the limits of this life, then I would've warned you. But I haven't. So there is!" And look at what kind of place it is: On the one hand, it's a *"place!"* You ever wondered why we as human beings are so connected to places? Why, for example, long time locals here in our neighborhood are being offered millions of dollars for their dilapidated single-family, but won't sell? Why foreign-born Americans spend over a billion dollars a year to travel back to where they were born? Or just why there's really nothing more destructive to people than something like being homeless or unhoused? It's BECAUSE a "place" is where you feel connected and at home. Where when you walk in, the sights, sounds, and smells invoke something warm and comforting/make ya feel welcome and accepted. Where the people IN that place greet you...Friend, THAT'S what Jesus is preparing for His followers. And it IS Jesus preparing it. As He says, *"I go to prepare a place for you?"* So He's not sub-contracting this out. Imagine what kind of place Jesus, who was able to create the world with a word, could design for you? That's like the greatest HGTV show ever!...But too notice: It's not just a "place," or even *"a place prepared by Jesus"*; it's the place in which HE'LL be WITH you. As He says, *"if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL come again and take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."* Why is it that spouses often go back to the place where they had their first date? Or why, after people get married, they go on honeymoons? Or why we revisit places we went with our parents? It's because those places are representative of the PEOPLE we were with **right?** Cuz think about it, a lot of those places, in and of themselves, aren't that great. What makes em great is the love we enjoyed IN them...IMAGINE that experience...to perfection...for eternity...precisely because...the One who's known you to the depths and loved you to the heights...is always with you. This is Jesus with a kind of saving-love saying, *"you don't have to be troubled because you can trust me with your future."*

But not JUST your future/your present too! Cuz notice in **vv.9-14**, Jesus gives a kind of extended teaching to Philip about how He and the Father are one. Goes so far as to say, *"Whoever's seen ME, has seen the Father,"* and *"I'm in the Father and the Father is in me,"* and *"I don't speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works."* I mean, those are tremendously exclusive claims **right?**, that not only, put to bed the notion of there being a "your truth" and a "my truth," BUT show you that in a world of: invisible pandemics, deep-fakes, just uncontrollable circumstances, as I said earlier, you really can hang your hat on Jesus. Jesus is telling Philip/telling YOU, *"AS God, I don't just have your future; I've got your present too! You can trust me."*...And see, we understand how important trust like that is: This week I saw a friend of mine posted a quote on instagram about *"trusting that when things don't work out, they'll still work out for good."* Kinda positive-thinking vibes. And I thought, ya know, ok. the Scriptures do command us to *"be transformed by the renewal of our minds,"* as **Romans 12:1** says, which is to say, we're commanded to TRUST rightly. But, you understand, the only way you can trust rightly, and therefore TRULY think positively, is if your trust/your belief has

³ Bruce Milne, *The Message of John: Here Is Your King!: With Study Guide*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 208

adequate grounding. Cuz I mean you can believe as passionately as anybody that say, something like trees are able to sprout money. The problem is: that belief isn't rooted in "adequate grounding," so you'll be living in fantasy land... The only way to experience true serenity and overcome a "troubled heart" is to make yourself subject-to/dependent-upon... real truth, which is to say, BELIEVE Jesus, who as He says, "*is the way, the TRUTH, and the life.*"

So see? It's all about belief in Jesus... **TO THE POINT THAT** when Jesus talks about sending the Holy Spirit there in **vv.15-27**, what He's essentially saying is, "*because of this saving-love that I have for you, I'm gonna even send you a Helper!*" Who He calls, "*the Spirit of...truth.*" So not someone who doesn't do crazy things, but simply "*dwells with and in you*" as **v.17** says, in order to, "*teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that (Jesus) said.*"... Like this week/ maybe you've had this experience. But this week, on one particular night, I went to bed really discouraged. And I know, given my effervescent personality, that's hard to believe. But I did... However, when I woke up in the morning/ I have this routine of trying to get up before the girls so I can sit on the couch with a cup of coffee/my Bible and pray and read. Before I **EVER** opened my Bible/ really before I'd prayed anything at all, this thought came to me: "*Last night I was really discouraged! HOWEVER 'the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning.'*" **You know what that is?** That's not just positive thinking/"oh today's a new day." No, that's a direct quote from **Lamentations 3**... brought to my mind... by the Holy Spirit... **BECAUSE** that's what the Spirit does. He teaches and brings to memory the truths and promises of Jesus, so that in believing them, trouble begins to get dispelled from your heart... He's like an industrial bolt that anchors you to belief in Jesus. **BECAUSE that's what ultimately brings peace to our troubled hearts!** Simply trusting Him!

And you say, "*Hold on! It can't be JUST that. What about Jesus saying there in vv.12-14 that, 'if we believe in Him, we'll do even greater works THAN Him.' And that we can 'ask anything in His name and He'll do it.' Isn't that more than just mere belief? Or what about there in vv.15,21,23 where He talks about 'loving Him by keeping His commands and His Word.' That's definitely more than belief right?'*"... And the answer is, actually it's not! Cuz what He's talking about aren't things in **ADDITION TO** belief in Him, but rather results **FROM** believing Him. For example, when He speaks about doing greater works, that can't be talking about you and I being able to possess more power, or do better miracles, or teach with more authority than Jesus. I mean we're talking about the Son of God here! No! What He means is that: a bunch of people/a mass movement of people all filled with the Holy Spirit, because they've believed-on Jesus, and are testifying **TO** Jesus is actually way greater than simply Jesus testifying to Himself. **THAT**, as He says in **v.13**, is what's gonna lead the "*the Father to be glorified in the Son.*"... Likewise, when He talks about obeying His commands/keeping His word, you shouldn't read that as things to do in order to **GET** God to love you, but rather things you do in **RESPONSE** to God **HAVING** loved you. In other words, "*obeying Jesus' commands*" is what people who **BELIEVE** Jesus loves em... naturally do! "*Keeping His word*" is just another way of saying, "*Trust me. Hold onto what I've said. Cling to it.*"... Because again Friend: **What'll bring peace to your troubled heart is simply putting first things first, which is to say: taking Jesus at His word and giving yourself to believing Him for every area of your life!**... After all, this Jesus **IN WHOM**

we're to believe, is as you see there in **v.27**: someone uniquely qualified for "*giving you a kind of peace that the world can never give you.*" **Why?** Because His peace doesn't come from anything you can, should, or need to DO, but from simply believing what He has...**DONE!** Which is live the life you should've lived; die the death you deserved to die; and risen from the grave to prove it's all true...***Do you have that peace today? ...Let's Pray***