

“Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that you may also be where I am. ⁴You know where I am going, and you know the way.”

⁵“Lord, we don’t know where you are going,” Thomas replied, “so how can we know the way?”

⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through me. ⁷If you know me, you would also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸“Lord,” said Philip, “show us the Father, and that is enough for us.”

⁹“Have I been with you so long,” Jesus answered, “and you still do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I am telling you I am not speaking on my own, but the Father who remains in me is doing his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. Or else believe because of the works themselves.

¹²“Amen, Amen, I tell you: The one who believes in me will do the works that I am doing. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. (The Holy Bible, Evangelical Heritage Version™ (EHV™) copyright © 2016 The Wartburg Project. All rights reserved.)

DO NOT LET YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED A Gentle Savior Calms the Disciples A Gentle Savior Calms You and Me

“Don’t worry about it.” That’s not usually the advice we want to hear when faced with problems. **“Don’t worry about it”** doesn’t quite cut it when you’re already thinking about how difficult high school sounds like it’s going to be or how tough you’re afraid college will be. We’re just not listening if a loved one dies and someone says, **“Don’t worry about it.”** We are actually bothered by the odd antics of our neighbor and the cheap shot inflicted on our child in the game. We are distressed about the state of things in our world and the bickering of our politicians and government leaders. We are deeply concerned about the sin that has infected and affected our family. **“Don’t worry about it?”** No, sorry, we’re not listening to that!

The disciples were in a difficult situation when Jesus told them the equivalent of **“Don’t worry about it.”** Let me explain the situation so it makes more sense.

Think back to Holy Week...to Maundy Thursday...in the Upper Room as Jesus and the disciples were celebrating the Passover. That’s where this conversation between Jesus and the disciples took place. But to truly understand what Jesus is saying, you also have to know at what point in that evening it took place. These are several things that Jesus said just before the words of the lesson before us, just before Jesus told his followers, **“Do not let your heart be troubled.”** He said...

“A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” (John 13:10)

But this is to fulfill the scripture: ‘He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.’ “I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He...After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.”

His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. (John 13:18b-19, 21-22)

“My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come... Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?”

Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times! (John 13:33, 36-38)

Not every one of you is clean...one of you is going to betray me...you cannot follow me now...you will disown me. This was all quite sobering for Jesus’ friends. His words had churned up swirling thoughts, dizzying questions, confusion, fear. Imagine them looking at each other...then back at Jesus...then back at each other, trying to sort through all this bad news!

It is then that Jesus starts his farewell address to his disciples in which he provides all kinds of comfort and reasons for joy and hope. The lesson before us is the beginning of that. How calmly their Savior talked to them and how gentle he was in an effort to rid their hearts of worry and bring them peace. **“Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that you may also be where I am. You know where I am going, and you know the way.”**

Our Savior had been through all this with them before, but notice his patience and encouragement: *Don’t be troubled”...keep on believing in God and me...I will come again to take you to heaven.* His pep talk was intended to lift them up: **“You know where I am going; you know the way.”**

Even though Jesus had said, **“Do not let your heart be troubled,”** Thomas wasn’t having it. He was troubled. He was troubled and not taking *“Don’t worry”* for an answer, mostly because he wasn’t remembering. In the face of emotional distress, he did not recall the things Jesus had consistently taught him.

But a gentle Savior didn't rebuke Thomas, who always seemed to make gloomy, Eeyore-type statements. Thomas is anxious and bewildered: **"Lord, we don't know where you are going so how can we know the way?"** Jesus simply reassures him, **"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through me. If you know me, you would also know my Father."**

Doesn't your heart go out to our compassionate Savior at this point? What should have been reassuring to them all—the reminder that he is the way to the Father, that he is the Truth, and that he is the Life—only revealed more sin-tinged misunderstanding!

Philip's idea was to forget about all of this troubling news of Jesus going away from them, forget about all the wonderful reassurance that Jesus truly was the way to heaven and that the Father had mansions in store for them there. Filled with confusion and fears, Philip just stopped listening.

"Don't worry; instead be comforted by all these good things," is what Jesus said. Philip disregarded it all. After Jesus had JUST said that if they knew him, they knew the Father, Philip's idea was that Jesus should just show them the Father! *"That's all I need, Jesus! Just show us the Father"* Wow. I'm pretty certain I know how I would have responded to Philip. Let's just say that Jesus' response was much better!

In keeping with the rest of Jesus' tone here and after this—through 4 chapters of encouragement, I have to hear compassion in Jesus' voice as he responds to Philip: **"Have I been with you so long...and you still do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I am telling you I am not speaking on my own, but the Father who remains in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. Or else believe because of the works themselves."**

Goodness, they had followed Jesus for years. They had seen the miracles that showed him to be God. They had heard the words of the Father through Jesus' mouth and those words moved their hearts like nothing else. Instead of anger or reprimand, Jesus words seem touched with hurt and a longing, a desire, to have Philip feel confident about who Jesus was. *"Don't you know me by now, Philip? Believe in me."* How gently Jesus dealt with him too.

It is truly remarkable that as Jesus prepared for the last hours of his life, which would be filled with betrayal, denial, rejection, torture, and suffering, he was so concerned for his disciples and so gentle with them in the face of their sinful fears and forgetfulness and not listening. They were disregarding the comfort and hope Jesus was sharing with them in that moment. And yet, our Savior's heart went out to them.

When it comes to faith, you and I are not immune to sinful worry, forgetting what God tells us in his Word, or simply not listening to it and wanting something else. Those things can actually come as easily for us as they did for Jesus' closest followers.

How quickly the joy and confidence that comes from an amazing Easter message and morning can fade! The declaration that because Jesus lives, we too will live in heaven gives such comfort and happiness and conviction! But outside that Easter Sunday moment—when faced again with life’s troubles—worry can overwhelm. Like the disciples, we can focus on how life is now changing and we don’t know how we’ll carry on. Our attention is easily drawn away from the promise of heavenly mansions prepared for us as the immediate problems overwhelm us and we’re not even thinking of the eternal rest and comfort which *will* be ours.

Jesus speaks to you as you read your Bible, as you wrestle with texts and topics in Bible study, and as you sit in these pews and hear the Word. But are you listening? The honest answer is, “*Not always.*” There are times when we disregard what Jesus just said—just like Philip! Times when our answer seems better than what Jesus has offered.

These all are reasons we end up confused and troubled, which is a faith problem. There is sin—damning sin—behind them all! How grateful we ought to be that we have a Savior who deals gently with our troubled hearts! What we see Jesus do with his disciples in the Upper Room, he does with us. He does not treat us as our sins deserve. He dispenses his undeserved love to us and forgives these and all our sins, just as he did for the Twelve.

And he will patiently remind us to not worry. “**Do not let your heart be troubled,**” he says to you and me. “**Believe in God; believe also in me.**” Do not be consumed by the bad news and difficulties of life that come your way, but instead, know that Jesus is always with you. Know that he has an eternal home prepared for you and trust that he will return for you. There should be no uncertainty about that because Jesus is the Way to heaven—the only way—and you *know* that.

There are things that are going to cause emotional turbulence for you. Learn from the example of the disciples what NOT to do, how NOT to think! And learn from Jesus that he is trustworthy and his Word is true. He is the only Savior who can and will rescue us from all our uncertainty and difficulty. That is not to say that you will have no trouble as you await his return—the disciples lived for Jesus and spread the gospel and it cost all but one of them their lives! We are sinful people in a sinful world, but Jesus forgives our sins and deals with us gently so that we will be prepared to see him on the Last Day and move into our mansion in heaven! Amen.

Now the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.