

One Certain Remedy for Anxiety

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[0 : 00] I would like you to turn your Bibles this morning to John chapter 14.

! And I would like to ask that you follow in your own copy of the Scriptures as I open the Bible. We're going to rely upon this morning to challenge our hearts and help us see the Lord Jesus more clearly. John chapter 14, beginning there in verse 1.

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, wouldn't I not have told you that? I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also. Most of us have probably at one time or another heard that passage read in the context of a funeral. How many of you have been there? And it's almost, it kind of ranks right up there with the 23rd Psalm. Most funerals somehow or another get to that passage. I shouldn't say most, but many. And this morning, I don't want to put you in kind of a funeral mindset and think, well, here we go. A pastor's going to do a funeral sermon. Not at all.

Not at all. I want you to think very carefully about this passage and its application to all of our lives and particularly to the fact that we live in a broken world where we, on a daily basis, struggle with all kinds of challenges. I do want you to understand that John chapter 13 verse 1 in some way serves as an introduction for all that you're going to find in John 13 through 17. So let's go back just for a moment and look at John chapter 13 verse 1 to frame what we're going to discover in our lesson in part today. Now, before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. There is a sense in which John, as a good author, gives us right from the outset an overview of what is going to follow. And if we were to break down the passage that this section is part of, the larger context is Christ's ministry to His disciples in the shadow of the cross.

[3 : 05] And as you think about what was it that drove the Lord Jesus in His relationship with the disciples, yes, it was the glory of the Father, but it was also without question an unwavering love for them.

And we're going to see that over and over again. You remember that in the context of what had taken place, they had come together to celebrate ostensibly the Passover. And in that context, Jesus went about instituting the Lord's Supper, the bread and the cup. And following that, we have the foot washing, we have Jesus teaching the matter of loving one another. And in that context, also revealing that Judas was going to betray Him. On the heels of that, He'd spoken to Peter who was full of Himself and, hey, the rest of these dudes, they're walking out on you, but not me.

And we find that Jesus let Peter know that He was going to drop the ball and He was going to fail. After that, Jesus, sensing the heart of His disciples, steps in and encourages them with very, very practical words.

And I cannot help but stop and recognize here this morning just how poignant and how precious the heart of the Lord Jesus is in this passage. We find here that He is tender to the twelve and to what was going to take place. He understood their heartaches and their anxieties, and He was very, very interested in their well-being. There probably isn't a single one of you here this morning that didn't pick up on Monday that something very significant happened at OSU. Am I right or wrong?

How many of you know that at OSU, there was an individual who took it upon himself to drive a car and try to harm a number of different individuals, ultimately was shot. And it occupied the news for hours on end. How many of you have picked up on the fact that it was all over? I remember, truth of the matter is, I was driving back from deer hunting, turned on the radio, and what did I hear?

[5 : 16] I heard something that happened at OSU, and it was like, whoa! My first thought after I heard that it happened at OSU was, guess what? I thought about Emma. Emma, where are you? Are you out here today?

Children's Church. I thought about Emma, and I thought, well, is she okay? That was the first thought I had. And the second thought I had was, I wonder how Tim and Meredith are doing. That was my second thought. I thought, oh, you know, and just natural. You know, you think about people you care about, and you, oh, man, I hope she's okay. And I shot up one of those bullet prayers as you're driving. You know, I'm not one of those guys who has to pull over to the side of the road and close my eyes when I'm praying. It was all right. We could cover it. And we think about things, and we react.

And here, when we think about the challenges of life, illustrations such as Monday kind of reminds us that we live in a difficult world, and there are things that are constantly bombarding us and challenging us and causing us to take our eyes off of the unvarying, unwavering certainty we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. There are some of you sitting here this morning that have been in a doctor's office and heard the most heartbreak news. There are some of you here that have come home to an empty house and found out that your spouse has left. There are some of you that have had that phone call late at night, and you find that the child that you have invested your heart and your prayers and your life and energy in has done something that is profoundly grievous and breaking your heart.

And in the midst of all of that, you find that the anxieties and the challenges of life are almost overwhelming. What I want you to do this morning is listen very carefully as we see in this passage an undeniable and sufficient remedy for the anxiety and the depression and the challenges that all of us have in the daily life that we live in this broken world. I think it's important for us, first of all, to recognize the context. And so Christ's context counts. What do you think about that?

It'd be wrong for us to actually just dive into John chapter 14 and say, all right, this is all about you guys feeling better about yourselves. I want you to think about where Jesus was because it's important.

[7 : 40] Jesus was just moments away from the cross. He was about four, five, six hours. And Jesus knew exactly what was coming. Isn't that right? He knew that he was going to suffer an incredibly hard and difficult death.

He knew he was going to take the sins of the whole world. And for us, dealing with our sin is bad enough. But just imagine being absolutely sinless and having to deal with the sins of other people.

Furthermore, he also knew that his father was going to turn his face away and that that communion and that intimacy that he had enjoyed from all eternity past was going to handle this momentary breach and it was going to break his heart. And yet here we find the Lord Jesus in the midst of what he was going to go through, stopping to think very carefully about those that he loved.

Here he was thinking about the emotional insecurity, the spiritual need of his 12.

And instead of pondering and focusing on himself, his primary concern was for those that he had loved that had been given to him by the Father. And in the face of all that was going to take place, his counsel and his encouragement to them was for their good, not for his own.

[9 : 19] I think that's significant. Because the truth of the matter is, is that most of us, when we find ourselves in difficult circumstances, we do not think the least bit about anybody else but ourselves. And one of the things that should characterize those who sit under the teaching of the Word of God, and I want to say this carefully so it resonates in your heart, one of the things that should characterize those who sit under the teaching of the Word of God is that their lives should be conformed, transformed by the power of the Word of God and the illustration of the character of Christ.

By virtue of enjoying the ministry of the Spirit of God and the Word of God in your life, you ought to consistently think less of yourself and more about others by virtue of thinking often about Jesus. Is that right?

Do you get that point? Don't lose it. Can I tell you a little sidebar? This is not in my notes, but just something to hold on to. People who think a lot about themselves are never happy. Can I say that slowly so you don't miss it?

Let me say it slowly because it's important. People, people who think a lot about themselves are never happy.

Okay, that's enough of that. Stop, Tim, while you're ahead. I just want to drive the point home. Being like Jesus means being others-focused rather than self-focused. That's what we find here in Jesus.

[11 : 03] In the face of what was in front of Him, His thoughts were about others. I am struck, very frankly, and convicted by what Christ's love really looks like.

I'm struck by just how complete and how blessed it was and is. And I'm convicted about how shallow my own love often is. It's okay to think about other people periodically, but how about thinking about other people when you're really deep in the troubles of your own life?

Instead of pouting and descending into that swamp of self-pity in the face of His betrayal, His abandonment, His crucifixion, His Father turning His face away, here we see Jesus in His unwavering love for frail, disobedient, broken disciples that He was willing to invest His energy and life for.

So here's a point to hold on to. Commit yourself this morning to learning more about the love of Christ because here's a very interesting truth. I want you to get this.

Learning about the love of Christ invariably transforms you to love like Christ. Can I say that carefully? Learning about the love of Christ transforms you to love like Christ.

[12 : 26] I want you to notice, secondly, in the face of this circumstance, here, Jesus gives a command. And Christ's counsel here is pretty critical.

Let me break this down into three parts for you and kind of work our way through the passage actually. First of all, Jesus gives His command to obey. He says here, let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God.

Believe also in me. For one thing, a troubled and persistently traumatized heart is a choice.

Again, because this is important, I'm going to say it slowly. A troubled and persistently traumatized heart is a choice. Jesus made it clear to His disciples that they could choose to be troubled or choose not to be troubled.

That's what He meant when He said, let not your hearts be troubled. How many of you recognize that when God says something, He says it and He means it and it's valuable.

[13:28] It's to be held on to. So when He says, hey, don't do this, don't choose to let your heart be troubled. Some of you are thinking to yourself, well, I can't help it.

And I understand that. But the fact of the matter is that when Jesus said this, He was speaking gospel truth and He was speaking something for our value and our sake.

And it's actually a novel idea today that we should actually be able to control our thought life to a certain degree. It's lost its popularity in some realms, the idea that, hey, we're actually responsible for the way we think.

So let me kind of work your way into this with me. It says, we have some control over where we let our minds take us. Some. How many of you understand what I mean by some? How many of you, don't raise your hands and wave at me because I know, how many of you recognize there are times when your little pea brain thinks the most despicable, absolutely offensive, unbelievably wicked things?

Nod your head if you've had a problem with that. Okay, there are a couple of you that I think have reached the point of entire sanctification or are brain dead this morning. Okay?

[14:44] I can't remember who it was. Martin Luther? He said that our hearts are idol factories. We're just full of wickedness. Jeremiah says, the heart is deceitful, desperately wicked.

Who can know it? And so here's the fact. We do have some control over where our minds take us. We've all had our minds bring up thoughts that were absolutely despicable and the first time it comes up, it's like, oh, can't be doing that.

Right? We have complete control over how long we stay there. We have complete control we have complete control over how long we stay there.

One of the problems with our contemporary culture is we have failed to recognize that thoughts produce actions and actions produce consequences.

Do you follow that? Thoughts produce actions and actions produce consequences. And while we cannot to a certain degree control everything that our mind thinks about, we are in complete control over how long we let our mind be occupied and consumed by some of the most destructive and wicked and despicable thoughts you can imagine.

[16:07] So let me put it a different way or just kind of add on to this. While having a persistently troubled mind is absolutely natural for the sinful soul, it is not to be the normal state of the believer.

We'll continue to deal with our thought life until Jesus takes us home or Jesus comes back but the fact of the matter is that those who are in Christ Jesus are different than those who aren't.

We know the passage it says this if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a what? You don't have to stay the way you were. I love telling people that. I love it.

One of the sweet privileges of the gospel is to say to people you know what you have good reason to be absolutely sorry and sick of the consequences of your sin and I have good news for you you don't have to stay there.

Christ Jesus died on the cross to deliver you from that sin and to help you grow and change and so we in our ongoing struggle with those sinful thoughts of our past and the old habits and attitudes that we have we may continue to struggle with it we will but we're not enslaved by it and why would I say we're not enslaved by it for one I am reminded in principle of what it says in Galatians chapter 5 verse 16 just a question how many of you know Galatians chapter 5 verse 16 and it's a go to verse how many of you know what a go to verse is let me introduce you to a thought a go to verse is one to hang on to that you need on a short it kind of comes up pretty regularly in your life okay I'll give you a couple for Tim Kenoyer Tim Kenoyer has verses that are memorized about anger you don't have any idea why I would memorize those verses you know Tim Kenoyer has verses about his tongue no idea why

[18:08] I would memorize those Tim Kenoyer has verses that are memorized about lust and passion you know idea why I would you know it's like and here's the deal Galatians chapter 5 verse 16 how many of you know it raise your hands if you do come on raise your entertain me you'll stay here till one o'clock here we go here's the deal walk by the spirit and you will what you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh how many of you are sick and tired of what goes on in that fleshly little despicable heart you have well you don't have to be a slave rely upon the Holy Spirit to help you but I really like hitting myself in the head with a hammer no it hurts I want you to understand in this passage when Jesus says let not your hearts be troubled he is calling us to recognize that we've got a responsibility here I want you to understand as Jesus gave this command he then followed it up with some solid reasons and so I want you to think about these solid reasons for not being troubled and that's important

I was listening to a song this morning that was very very popular back in 1988 1988 John's laughing at me 1988 some of you weren't even born back then okay and I debated actually pulling it up on my phone and holding it to the microphone so you could hear this and say but John help me out here you know it's like don't worry be happy I wrote the words to this song sing it forget it there's a reason why I don't do these things more often it's because it's such an abysmal failure but it was a very very popular song in 1988 about not worrying being happy you know it's like don't worry be happy by the way Billy where are you thank you for doing that rap good theology great just slow down I can't read that fast but other than that it was good okay a lot of good thoughts in that one but here's the deal the world gives us very very shallow reasons for not being anxious that's not the way

Jesus is here he is saying to his disciples hey listen don't let your heart be troubled why not well number one believe in him personally look at the passage believe in God believe also in me and here we are Jesus is speaking to the disciples and you can imagine that when Jesus says believe in God the disciples would have said yeah duh I mean what were they they were good Jewish boys did good Jewish boys believe in God I mean what's the deal yes he says believe in God now you can either take this as an imperative he's saying believe in God believe in me or you could take it that he's giving an indicative hey you believe in God duh believe in me why who is Jesus he's God the son and when we are believing in

God and we're believing in Jesus what happens to all the things that we are unjustly anxious and worried about what happens to them well how many of you have a little twilight paris tune every now and then in your head you know it's like how's it go you know God is in control that's that's my traffic song you know it's like God is okay in case you didn't know it I hate H-A-T-E capitals and kind of take it up to 24 points and bold that I hate being late if I have an appointment with you and you look out you'll probably see me drive by about 10 minutes early I'm embarrassed to show up that early so I take an extra circle around the block that's me Jesus says I want you to believe in me personally believe in me and so I want you to recognize this morning that on a practical level when you find yourself flooded with anxiety when you find yourself overwhelmed by the circumstances and the troubles that you are in you can either choose to go ahead and circle the drain yet another time or you can consciously and deliberately fix your heart upon the absolute certainty of the

Lord Jesus Christ and the fact that when he hung on the cross and he died he said precious words he said it is finished and beloved when Jesus looked at his disciples who he knew were going to abandon him and he knew were going to be overwhelmed by the anxiety of the moment he said to them you believe in the father you believe in God believe in me second thing that I want you to look at here in this passage is that Jesus also says believe in his promises I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am you may be also we don't sing it very often anymore but there was a song when I was growing up that people liked I've got a mansion just over the hilltop right how many of you remember that good old song it's like

[24:20] I've got a mansion you know it's a little southern sound and it's really nice song yeah walk those streets of what gold and yeah the idea of having a mansion pretty appealing but that's really not what Jesus was talking about the fact of the matter is is that here he was in the shadow of the cross telling his disciples that what was going to take place was for their good and outcome that's favorable he says listen in my father's house are many rooms if it were not so would I have told you that I go to prepare what was he going to prepare for them he was going to prepare a way for them to spend eternity with him that where I am you may be also it's understandable that his disciples were troubled at the prospect of his leaving they'd spent three years with him they had laid aside their careers they'd walked away from their families they had found themselves as things progressed and got closer and closer to the cross they found themselves to be in some senses kind of ostracized by society they were hated by the religious elite they knew it they were afraid for their lives and Jesus says hey listen by the way I'm leaving

I'm leaving but the good news that Jesus has he says I am leaving I'm going to heaven and I will return so you can be with me I wonder how often you actually find yourself thinking about what it's going to be like to be with Jesus think about that actually thinking about what it's going to be like to be with Jesus you know a lot of times when we think about getting to heaven we're thinking about our physiological issues you know it's like when I get to heaven I won't have osteoporosis or you know I won't be a diabetic and I can have all the cake I want and you know we're thinking about all these kind of superficial things the greatest joy of heaven is not going to be our menu it's going to be Jesus I love that passage you've heard me cite it so many times whom having not seen you love do you know who it's talking about talking about

Jesus the fact of the matter is is that here is Jesus and he's saying to his disciples I'm going to go prepare a place for you I will come again I will come again how often do you think about that fact Jesus is coming back and he is going to take you home very very interesting that the New Testament church lived with this sense of imminency it's like hey Jesus today how many of you remember Waleed Bittar who's our missionary up there in Canada anytime you call Waleed you know what he says on the phone when you call him and he picks up the phone I've recited it before he didn't come he's got that accent he didn't come he's always disappointed that Jesus didn't come but there's tomorrow there's time could come tomorrow and here Jesus is saying to his disciples listen I'm going to go away but hang on

I'm coming back I'm coming back and so here's the thing I want you to focus on a sure cure for a troubled soul is knowing how the story ends do you understand that a sure cure for a troubled soul is knowing how the story ends!

I remember I remember actually speaking with individuals who'd had the surgery and were sad that they'd done the surgery as a grumble well here I am I'm lying on the gurney okay and I'm thinking so how's this story going to end and I thought to myself it really doesn't make a difference because sooner or later I am going to be in heaven and it won't be a problem and here is Jesus talking to his disciples and he says listen I'm going to come again I'm going to take you to myself that where I am you can be also so when you find yourself caught up in the troubles of this life and there are troubles don't ever kid yourself you are going to have troubles until the day you slip into eternity I remember thinking to myself when I was a teenager you know what this is before I could drive when I start driving life's going to be better does anybody remember being that airheaded to think that when you could start driving it would be better

[29 : 59] Kevin you remember that when I started driving or when I graduate from high school there was some doubt about that but you know when I graduate from high school it's going to be better! When I graduate from it's going to be better when I see Jesus that's the end of the story and so if you find yourself being absolutely overwhelmed by the challenges of your life I want to tell you something number one believe in him personally believe in his promises and third believe in his path there in the passage Jesus made the statement you know verse four you know the way to where I'm going and then there's good old Thomas verse five Lord we do not know where you are going how can we know the way how many of you like literalists I mean people who read the fine print and really want to get into the minutia how many of you have ever signed papers to buy a house raise your hand if you have do you know that they put almost a full tree on the table in front of you I mean it's like and you know I've actually been in the presence of someone who thought they needed to read some of that stuff now

I what does this mean on page 14 stop I want you to recognize! that here is Jesus dealing with Thomas and Thomas was a he wanted to know the fine print Jesus said hey you know the way where I'm going and Thomas said no no no just a minute really where help me out here Jesus what are the details and what does Jesus say to him Jesus said to him I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me I love that Thomas wanted to know all the particulars of his journey isn't that right it's like hey so you go down 150 feet and then you turn right and then you you know Jesus says hey trust me I'll get you home believe in me

I am the way the truth and the life and so here we find Jesus making it undeniably clear relax don't fret the details I am the way the truth and the life and no one comes to the father but through me here's the point apart from the Lord Jesus Christ you have no confidence of where your journey is taking you and the end is going to be brutal but in the Lord Jesus Christ you have absolute confidence of where you're going to spend eternity and you can have complete confidence in not only the day by day path that he takes you on but how the outcome is I do like this passage for another reason because there's a mistaken idea that Jesus ultimately that his value to modern culture is that he gave us a nice picture of how but really he can't be believed in entirety do you understand that either

Jesus was who he says he is and the God and savior of this universe or he's a liar can't have it both ways because here is Jesus saying I I am the way the truth the life and no one comes to the father except by me you're not getting home without me you're not getting there apart from me there is no salvation in any other person's name I remember having a conversation just a couple weeks ago with an individual who made that very interesting statement to me about all roads lead to Rome all roads lead to heaven follow me it's like hey we all believe our own thing and we're going to get there it's going to be all right I said no that's not true that's not true I said there are really only two religions in the world only two one who believes that men can work their way on up the!

ladder by doing nice things the other is believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and the fact that God sent his son to die for our sins that whosoever believes in him might be saved and not perish so here's the thing that I want you to think about this morning in very practical terms all of us here every one of us face daily challenges and trials isn't that right don't ever don't ever get caught by thinking that if you were someone else or if you were in a different place or you had a different job or you had different physical challenges that things would be infinitely better that's not the truth the only thing that will make a world of difference in the way in which you handle the challenges and trials of your life is who you are focused on and who you are trusting you believe in

[35 : 26] God believe in me believe in me believe in my promises I'm going to take you home believe in my path because I am the only one that will get you there let me close with this and have you think about it I made the statement earlier that it's normal and natural it's completely understandable for those who do not know Christ to spend their entire lives consumed to a certain degree by a persistent anxiety about their life and its uncertain does that make sense does that make sense if you don't know Christ you have every reason to be anxious about how the story ends because there is that nagging feeling in your heart that it's not all right and it's not all good and I don't know how this yes you do your conscience is bearing witness that there is a day of judgment coming and that uncertainty really is reflective of the shadow and

God sent his son the Lord Jesus Christ to die for! your sins take away all that shame and guilt and give to you complete confidence in how the story ends do you know what the average Christian should be unbelievable advertisement that they know the one who can make a world of difference in a broken world isn't that right so when was the last time someone said to you hey what's the deal with you did you win the lottery no are you on different meds no do you have a better family no what's the deal oh I have Jesus what yes and I know how the story ends I'm going home not only that I know who's getting me there it's Jesus I gotta tell you close off with this we live in a world everybody lives in a world like me we live in a world around people that are constantly bagged with anxiety and frustration and disappointment and heartache and grief am I right right this passage informs you how to live a life that is victorious and is so atypical that the unbelieving world will ask you a reason for the hope that is in you we're not going to do this next

Sunday but I'd like you to text me text me or email me or even in an old fashioned way drop me a note and say you can't believe this pastor I've been focusing on Jesus and I had people say to me what's going on with you how come you're so happy in the midst of the mess I mean after all we're done with politics there's other things to be messed about right I want you to think about your life does it reflect your confidence in Christ or are you here this morning and you desperately need him to be your savior let's close in prayer our father god this morning as we think about the lord jesus christ we are so very thankful for the blessing we have of knowing him as our god and savior knowing the certainty of his promises and knowing how the story ends and so we would ask this that as we go through our week that lies ahead should you tarry and give us life that we are an honest illustration of confidence in the lord jesus christ there's some of us here that need to confess and repent of falling back to the old ways of being focused on our self and as a result being profoundly unhappy there are also those that are here today that do not know the lord jesus and my plea would be this that today would be the day of salvation that you would be glorified we ask this in jesus name amen holy