

John 14:1-14 "Heavenly Comfort for Troubled Disciples"

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[0 : 00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

We're continuing with our encounter with Jesus in the Gospel of John this morning. Jesus is in the upper room with his disciples the night before his death on the cross.

And they are starting to process some pretty sobering realities. So much so that Jesus addresses their angst in this passage today by starting with saying to them, let not your hearts be troubled.

Why were they troubled? Well, they've just learned that Jesus, the leader they love, won't be with them much longer. That he's about to die.

He's just informed them that one of them will betray him. And then he's told them that another of them, a leader among his followers, will fail him as well.

[1 : 12] How are they going to go on? What's next? Is there any hope at all left for them? That's the context into which Jesus speaks, John 14, some of his most famous words.

They are not just quotes to hang on your wall. They're not just for the sake of his Wikipedia page. They are words targeted for our hearts.

I love that about Jesus. How Jesus saves some of his most glorious truths for some of our most desperate moments. Before I read them, I want to reflect with you briefly about how the hearts of the disciples in this room this morning may be similarly troubled to those this night we're about to read about.

Y'all, there have been many different reasons just in this church family for us to feel troubled lately. Some of us have stood recently face to face with death at the bedside of a loved one.

Others have reeled back with hearing difficult, life-altering health news. I've talked this week with parents.

[2 : 43] At their wits end, heavy hearts feeling like there's just no good path forward with this child they love. Someone else shared with me this week, he's just not sure there's value in what he's been pouring his life into for years.

And what's it for? This job he spent so much time on just doesn't seem worth it to him. Many of us, day in and day out, find just the pace of daily life in this world overwhelming and beyond our control. Some of us, young and old, feel like we're missing out on life.

We're alone. Everybody else is enjoying it. We're not. We're troubled about our uncertain relationship with God, even though we've been in church, around Jesus for a long time.

We're troubled because the best among us seem to be failing Jesus. We're troubled because the group of people that we've followed Jesus with is not what we thought or hoped.

[3 : 55] Troubled by what's happening to myself, to my church, to my Jesus in the world. If you're troubled, if you're not troubled right now, I suspect your heart will sometime soon feel that unsettled, insecure, disrupted feeling.

And Jesus has some of his most hopeful words for some of our most hopeless moments. Hear Jesus' words this morning as I read them.

Listen closely right now because they will bring more comfort than any words I will say this morning. John 14, 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, would I 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. And you know the way to where I am going.

[5 : 09] Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? And Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known the Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.

Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip?

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or else believe on account of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do.

[6 : 20] And greater works than these he will do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son, if you ask me anything in my name.

I will do it. Let's pray together. Jesus, in your name, we ask you to comfort our troubled hearts with your hope, by the power of your Spirit, for the glory of your name.

But please, Jesus, now, would you speak to us? Amen. Many of us can remember a time when we walked into a locker room at halftime with our heads down, beaten down.

We're way behind. We messed up early in the game. Our star player is out for the rest of the game. There's really no hope for the second half.

And the coach has to step up to send us back out for the second half. And he says something like this.

[7 : 48] All right, you guys, you got this. You can do it. Keep fighting. Don't give up. Dig deep. Believe in yourselves. That's the message, right?

You've heard it in a number of different ways. I'm not against a good pep talk, by the way, to encourage or motivate a team. But notice the contrast with Jesus' words to his troubled disciples. He's sending them back out. Where will they find comfort and hope? Is it in digging deep inside themselves?

Believing in themselves? Believe in God. Believe also in me.

This is so important. The hope Jesus offers his troubled disciples throughout this conversation comes from outside ourselves. It's actually so hopeful, so encouraging.

[8 : 55] We need to place our faith in someone else. And he tells us to trust him. Jesus offers himself as our hope whenever we are troubled.

Christian, hear that message clearly this morning. Lest you go back out into the world that he sends you to in your own strength. It's not how he sends you.

And if you have never believed in Jesus, never trusted yourself to him, never decided that he is the source of the life that you are longing for, I'm so glad that you are here this morning.

I would invite you to listen to what Jesus offers to those who do believe in him. Whether you're convinced right now that he can come through on what he offers or not, consider the comfort, the hope that Jesus promises to provide differently from anyone else.

Trust me, Jesus says. And now the comfort that he offers begins. It is all in him.

[10 : 08] Verse two, in my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you. Jesus is about to go away from them, right?

But he is going to prepare a place for them. It's a dwelling, a home, with the idea of these words focusing not so much on the size as on the security, the certainty of the home.

There's a place for you, a place where you belong, a home. When the storms of life have you confused and overwhelmed, there's no place like home.

There's no place like home where you're accepted, right? Where you're at rest. Where's home for us? Paul will later say our citizenship is in heaven.

That's home. With God in his house, a city, a heavenly home that he's made for us and made us for. Are you troubled by life not working out the way that you'd hoped?

[11 : 22] Feeling unfulfilled here in this world? Troubled perhaps by the end of your time here or someone else's time here in this world coming quickly?

Jesus sets our hope, not here, but on a true home that is beyond this world. C.S. Lewis says this is why God gives us here only glimpses of true happiness, never enough to fully satisfy us.

It's because he made us for another world, for another home where we'll more deeply feel that. Lewis writes in *The Problem of Pain*, the security that we crave would teach us to rest our hearts in this world and so it would pose an obstacle to our return to God.

But a few moments of happy love, a landscape, a symphony, a merry meeting with friends, a bath or a football match have no such tendency.

Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant ends but will not encourage us to mistake them for home. Let not your heart be troubled.

[12:45] Jesus is preparing a home for you. And then he clarifies the most important thing about our true home. It's one thing.

It's that that home is with Jesus. Verse 3, 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.

I will take you where? To myself. That where I am you may be also. This, beloved, is heaven to be with Jesus.

How does the Apostle Paul encourage us with hope in the end times? He says, and so we will be always with the Lord.

Home, friends, is where Jesus is. In fact, 1 John 3 tells us we'll be like Jesus because we will finally see him as he is face to face completely remade in his image.

[13:56] Jesus doesn't get into a lot of details about heaven here, does he? How gold are the streets, Jesus? I mean, how big is my house after all?

What will I spend all of my time doing? Listen, he doesn't get into it because none of that comforts like the fact that you will be in the Father's house with Jesus, his Son.

You know this. You know that's the most important thing. What is by far the most important thing about a honeymoon? Is it the particular details of the place that you stay?

Is it the excellence of the food? Is it the quality of the service? No way! It is the presence of your beloved, right? That's what makes it a honeymoon.

Jesus says, I've got a home for you. Not just a week, but an eternity. And I'll be there with you. So you can rest today instead of trying to make life in this world a perfect and satisfying home that gives you everything you've ever longed for.

[15:13] In fact, even those of you who fail me here miserably, you're coming home with me. Look, this is amazing grace beyond what you might be realizing if you're just thinking about heaven and the home right now.

Stop and listen to Jesus here. Jesus is preparing a place for you, right? He's doing all of that work and then he's not waiting for you to find your way to get there to this wonderful place. He's actually coming back to get you.

What comfort! Don't miss that because Thomas is about to miss that, okay? Let not your heart be troubled. Your true home is with Jesus.

Thomas is too practical here, too down to earth, although I'm so thankful he is. Gets us a really beautiful interaction. And I find the same thing in me.

When my heart is troubled, I often find that I grasp for something secure, some very practical security, something I can hold on to even if I know it won't really last.

[16:21] Look at verse 4. Jesus says, you know the way to where I'm going. And Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way? Do you hear him?

Can you feel the anxiety in his voice? Cut the fluff, Jesus. You're leaving us. How are we going to be okay on our own? You've got to give us something more. how can they know the way to be with him?

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

There's an exclusive claim here in this verse and that might be hanging some of us up. We're going to come back to that in just a second, okay? But what's Jesus primarily saying here when he makes the statement about who he is?

He is comforting his disciples by telling them that he is all they need, that he is the sufficient way to the Father to get home.

[17:31] They need only to know him, to trust him, to live in relationship with him. Not some complex set of directions, this is not like the *Mission Impossible* movie where if you're going to find the treasure you have to get through a retina scan and then crawl through the air vents and dodge

security cameras and jump through laser beams and balance on one tiptoe and crack the safe all the same time just to get to the treasure.

That's not what Jesus is saying. He says, no, you trust me. I do the work. I come back to rescue you.

I bring you all the way home. Y'all, that's grace. That's Jesus. That's how he works. I am, he says. Yet again in John, a pointer to his true divine identity. Remember the bread of life, the light of the world, the door, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life and now I am the way, the truth and the life.

We just need to know him because he's not merely the way to the father but the truth and life himself. Just as we said, not merely the way home, the way to that place but he is the destination, the rest, the highlight of the home himself.

[19 : 04] Thomas Akempis famously paraphrased Jesus here in the 15th century. Without the way, there is no going. Without the truth, there is no knowing.

Without the life, there is no living. I am the way which you must follow, the truth which you must believe, the life for which you must hope. I am the inviolable way, the infallible truth, the unending life.

I am the way that is straight, the supreme truth, the life that is true, the blessed, the uncreated life. That's the main thing Jesus is communicating.

That he is the sufficient way. But it's true, and I want to slow down here because this throws most people these days. He is the only way.

That's quite clear in the Greek. The way, the truth, the life. In fact, Jesus clarifies that no one comes to the Father except through him.

[20 : 13] Despite what you hear these days, even in many churches, this is consistent with Jesus' claims elsewhere in John, the teaching of Scripture as a whole.

salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. Acts 4.12. Now, there are books and blogs all over the place about this and what it means and how it impacts us.

Let me just say two things this morning. The first one, primarily for those of you here investigating Jesus, when something is personal, it's always exclusive.

In other words, when it's about relationship, there's only one way. There's only one me and one you. You can't pick someone else and spend time with him, getting to know him, and then claim through that to have a relationship with me.

It's not the nature of relationship. And Christianity teaches that what we need, in fact, what we long for, because it's what we were made for, is relationship with God himself.

[21 : 32] And so, Jesus, as we'll see more here, is connecting us to that uniquely. Christianity is not like many religions, an experience, or primarily a philosophy, or an achievement, something you do.

The God of the Bible is a unique person in relationship with whom we actually get to know him, and we experience true love. We trust his justice.

We rejoice in his presence. So to say that there's a person who exclusively is the way to God is wonderfully personal and completely normal.

Especially wonderful if he's bringing God to us, right? What we should be concerned about when we talk about being exclusive, this is the second thing I especially want those who trust Jesus already to be listening to, who is excluded by Jesus' exclusivity?

We rightly should be careful. Typically, when we think of people being excluded, it is those who don't measure up, who can't reach the bar, who don't offer what's needed.

[22 : 51] Exclusivity almost always means that those who are good enough are in, and those who are too bad are out, right? The good news of Jesus is the most inclusive exclusivity ever.

Listen, this grace we've been talking about here this morning, Jesus prepares the place, he pays the penalty, he comes and brings us home to himself.

What does that mean? It means the weak, the poor, the bad, the humble are in. They're in with Jesus. The ones excluded are those who proudly insist on their own way, who reject a God who's greater than they are, who refuse the path of grace.

Friends, that probably means there is way more grace than we can comprehend for mistakes and misunderstandings and missed opportunities.

So we Christians should be the last people who are looking down on anyone else who disagrees with us. It should be that we're looking out for them.

[24 : 05] We are the bad, the left out, the weak, and Jesus has brought us in. Amen? It's the only way you get there. He is the way, not you being good enough.

Jesus is the way and he loves bringing people home. you struggling with your performance these days?

Are you hurt by your church's failures? Are you thinking you've lost your way in life? Let not your heart be troubled.

Jesus is all you need to get home. Two more bits of comfort more briefly. Jesus continues in verse 7.

If you had known me you would have known my father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him. Philip said to him, Lord show us the father and it is enough for us.

[25 : 08] And Jesus then asks a really sobering question. Especially if you've been in a church a long time but you don't feel close to Jesus.

Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long and you still do not know me? Have I been with you so long and you still don't know me?

See, whoever has seen me has seen the father. How can you say show us the father? Do you not believe that I'm in the father and the father is in me? The words that I say to you, I don't speak them on my own authority.

You know this, Philip. The father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the father and the father is in me. Have you gotten the message yet? Or else believe on account of the works themselves.

Remember that personal knowing that I said Christianity is all about? That's what Jesus is saying here. It's not information about.

[26 : 20] Information about someone is not exclusive. You can read about someone. You can know a lot of information. Jesus wants you personally to know God, your father.

Jesus is telling his friends that when they know him, they know the father. Wow! See, in this culture that would have been unthinkable.

God was the unknowable. Yahweh was high and exalted and above them and so Philip is understandably still worried that Jesus is about to leave and God is still out there unknown. Perhaps he's out to get them. Likely at this point he's disappointed in them, right? And Jesus was this messianic figure that they hoped would lead them to God and so Jesus says don't be confused. Don't be troubled by this. I am who God really is. Jesus came to reveal the father perfectly and personally to us.

[27 : 25] You want to know what God's like? He stoops to wash the feet of those beneath him. He weeps in the face of death at the tomb of a loved one. He feeds 5,000 plus people like that with no effort.

He heals the sick, raises the dead, challenges the proud. In fact, he chases religious profiteers out of his house, drives them away.

It disgusts him when people use his name and his church to hurt others and to point them away from him. Just wait till you see if that's what he's like towards religious people.

What do you think he's going to do when he finds a sinful woman at the well? Well, he patiently and lovingly and against all expectations engages with her.

He in fact brings hope to her life and through her to her whole community. Will God really be that way with me?

[28 : 32] Will it be like that for me? even though I've known about him for so long? Will he still be that way with me? Is there justice for my suffering?

Is there grace for my sin? Yes. Most assuredly, yes, there is. Let not your heart be troubled.

God is really like what you've seen in Jesus. Such good news. We're going to see more of these next hopeful words next week.

But they're words of comfort and hope too. How will we accomplish anything with you gone, Jesus? You know they're asking that. You're the miracle worker.

You're the wise teacher. You're the winner of followers. Verse 12, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do.

[29 : 34] And greater works than these will he do because I am going to the Father. In fact, whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. Believe in me. Right? Right where we started. Jesus offers himself as our hope.

He's leaving, but he's not leaving us alone. He's going to keep working in us to live like him, to do even greater things in the sense of the timing of Jesus' kingdom.

After his death and resurrection, the full gospel will be proclaimed clearly and personally. More people will be brought into his kingdom. God's glory will come and be seen in fresh ways.

And when you start asking, by the power of Jesus, not your own, for the glory of Jesus, not your own, he will delight to hear and answer your prayers.

[30 : 42] You can talk with him like he's still right there with you. Now these last verses can be abused in both directions. I'm aware of that. No, he's not saying name it and claim it, whatever car you want, just it'll show up in your driveway this afternoon.

But I want to warn us Presbyterians more on the other side, okay? Don't underestimate the power of prayer because it connects to the power of Jesus who is alive like he's right here with you.

You long to see Jesus glorified in the life of your child, your neighbor, yourself, in an area that seems to you impossible.

How could the light of Jesus shine there? Ask him. Keep asking. He's telling you that he may not be here performing miracles bodily anymore, but the miraculous things beyond what any of us asks or imagines, they haven't stopped and they won't stop.

And I don't know if you're starting to feel uncomfortable because I am just a little bit, but I'm preaching the text and this is what Jesus says will happen. So he's talking to Peter, listen Peter, you're the one who saw my glory and my transfiguration.

[32 : 03] You're the one who watched Lazarus walk out of a grave. You, Peter, have seen the Samaritan woman come to faith and the Jewish Messiah and I'm telling you that even though all those things have happened, your best days with me are still to come.

Greater things yet will happen, Jesus says. Just ask. You know why? Because you're not on your own. There are greater things with Jesus.

Holy Spirit next week, so good. Jesus will never leave you and in his economy the best things are always yet to come.

Let not your heart be troubled. Your best days with Jesus are still ahead. So much comfort for us in one passage.

right where we most need it. Right? He speaks words like this. I'm not supposed to but I have to show you one last thing. When Jesus says let not your hearts be troubled, he's not saying shut up and quit whining.

[33 : 15] Your troubles are no big deal. He knows there are real reasons in this world to get troubled, to be unsettled, even upset.

I know that because we're told that during this very conversation, just a few verses earlier, Jesus himself is troubled, same word, in his spirit.

As he contemplates his betrayal and his approaching death. So what does Jesus do when his heart is troubled? Hey, take your own advice, man.

Let not your heart be troubled. What does Jesus do? Jesus stays troubled so that we don't have to. Jesus troubles himself for our comfort. Jesus goes to an agonizing death willingly as the way to prepare a home for us, to bring us to that home with him, to love you like God so that you always have hope of brighter days with Jesus.

[34 : 30] He faces the trouble head on to spare us from it so that our troubled hearts today don't have to stay troubled. There's comfort for us today only because there was no comfort for him on the cross.

He died to give us these glorious promises of life. Do you see his love for you? That's the message of the Lord's Supper.

It was this very night where he's saying these things where he would be betrayed. That the Lord Jesus took bread and he broke it and he gave it to his disciples as I'm ministering in his name.

Give this bread to you. And he said, take, eat. This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And in the same way after supper he took the cup and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Drink from it all of you. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. This is Jesus' table.

[35 : 46] It's not the table of Southwood or the Presbyterian church. So child of God let not your heart be troubled.

His body given for you. His blood shed for you. Your home purchased and prepared for you to be with him today.

Come and taste it. To be with him forever. Long for that. Look forward to that. Come and eat. If you don't know Jesus like that, if you have not personally embraced him as the way into relationship with God, the truth and the life that you long for, then don't come take these elements today.

But I would plead with you instead, take Jesus today as he offers himself to you. Believe in him as the hope for your troubled heart.

It's trouble that can't be fully handled, fully satisfied. any other way. And Jesus offers himself to you now and forever.

[37 : 05] Come let us pray with you during the Lord's Supper. We'd love to talk with you more after. But come to Jesus. Let's pray and we'll celebrate together. Jesus, every one of us desperately needs you to come to us.

By your Holy Spirit meet with us now so that very normal bread and wine minister to our hearts in a very holy and powerful way that you would do work here today that we couldn't make happen on our own because you're present and you're giving us your grace again.

Do your work for your glory and our good. We ask in your name. Amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org.