

Promises for Troubled Hearts

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[0 : 00] Do you feel peace? And do you feel all is well? We live in a troubling world, and it's hard to find peace where there's so much suffering.

Horatio Spafford was a Christian in the late 1800s, and he knew a lot about suffering. He was a lawyer and a property owner.

He had a wife and five children. And tragedy struck when their four-year-old son died of scarlet fever.

A year later, a great fire devastated much of his property. And then two years later, deciding to take his family on a holiday to England, he sends his wife and his four children ahead of him on a ship. And their ship sunk, and only his wife survived. His four children drowned at sea.

[1 : 05] And so later on, as he journeys to be reunited with his wife, his last remaining family, he wrote the lyrics to the song that we sung this morning.

When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.

Amidst his suffering and grief, Horatio finds the peace to say, it is well with my soul. This is unlike peace that the world knows.

It's peace that nothing can shake. How do we find peace like this? Horatio found his peace in the promises of Jesus, and we too can find that peace in his promises.

Morning all. If you don't know me, my name's Dan, and I'm a regular here at St. Paul's. It's a real pleasure to bring you the word this morning. What we read in John 14 so far is a small part of a farewell speech.

[2 : 20] This is the last night that Jesus and the disciples would spend together before Jesus' death. They'd gathered in a room to eat the Passover meal, and it's a disturbing start to the night.

What we read last week is that right at the beginning, Jesus stoops down to wash the disciples' feet. It's a deeply uncomfortable, offensive experience.

Jesus then goes on to tell his disciples that one of them is going to betray him. And then the most disturbing part of the night is this bit.

Have a look with me at chapter 13, verse 3 in your Bibles. Jesus says, So Jesus tells his friends that he's about to leave.

He's about to go somewhere they can't follow. He's about to go to the cross, to his death. And the disciples are distinctly troubled by the way Jesus is acting.

[3 : 37] Here is their Savior, the secret to their salvation, the fulfillment of all the Scripture's promises, and he's about to leave? This is not what they'd expected.

And so this week, we pick up in John 14. Halfway through the farewell meal, and Jesus speaks words of comfort. In verse 1, he says, Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Believe, you believe in God, believe also in me. The words Jesus speaks, the words Jesus is about to speak, they're words of comfort to troubled disciples.

And they're trustworthy. Jesus asks them to trust his words just as they trust the words of God. It's a claim to deity, a claim that Jesus is God.

And so these words are of immense importance. Jesus speaks truth to troubled disciples. So before we move on and read and think about it, please pray with me.

[4 : 46] Father, as we read some of the final words of Jesus, would you help us to see that they are comfort to us as they were to the disciples?

And by your Holy Spirit, would you help us to understand these words and to be renewed by them? Amen. So as we crack into the passage, into Jesus' words of comfort, I want you to see two really important promises today.

That is, that Jesus promises his disciples an eternal home, and Jesus promises his disciples an ongoing presence. So keep your Bibles open and ready, and read with me from verse two. My Father's house has many rooms. If that were not so, would I have told you that I'm going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me, that you also may be where I am.

Where is Jesus going? Well, after Jesus dies on the cross, he's going to his Father's house. That is something to rejoice. It's the Son returning to the Father.

[6 : 05] But what is this house? The Father's house, it's a reference to the Old Testament temple. It's the place where God dwells. The house is an image of the presence of God.

And so Jesus is returning to the presence of his Father. How many rooms are in this house? Have we got one for the Father, one for the Son, one for the Holy Spirit?

Not at all. It's got many rooms. Jesus says, my Father's house has many rooms. There's no limit given, no scope to the size of the Father's house.

This is a house for an ever-growing family. And so yes, Jesus is going away. He's going to be with his Father. But he goes with a purpose.

Jesus goes to prepare a place for his disciples. He's preparing rooms, and he's going to come back and get his disciples so they too can live in the presence of God.

[7 : 11] Now this is an immense promise. It's a promise that any first century Jew would jump over joy hearing. This picture of the house of God uses the language of the Old Testament to describe an eternal home.

Listen to this prayer from King David in Psalm 27. He says, One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

The writer earnestly asks that one day he would dwell in the house of the Lord. He longs for the day that he would live there forevermore so that he might gaze on the beauty of the Lord, seek him in his temple.

So Jesus' use of the phrase, the Father's house, it sparks a lot of these thoughts and emotions from the Old Testament. This is heaven that Jesus is talking about.

He's inviting his disciples to live in the Father's house forever in the wonderful, glorious, overwhelmingly loving presence of the Father.

[8 : 35] But the disciples don't jump with joy, not as you would expect. Notice they respond with shock and confusion. In verse 4, Jesus says to his disciples, you know the way to the place where I'm going.

Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you're going, so how can we know the way?

Thomas doesn't get it. He's really confused, and that's quite understandable really.

He doesn't grasp that Jesus is talking about heaven. He's wondering, where is this house, Jesus? I'd really like to follow, but I don't know how. Perhaps you could share an address or a map, perhaps a compass, because we don't know how to get there.

And so Jesus tells them the way in verse 6. Jesus answered, And this is the way to the Father.

Jesus claims that he is the way to the Father's house. The disciples don't yet understand this, but they would soon see. Theologian Don Carson puts it like this.

[9 : 56] Jesus would go the way of death.

Why? Because currently no human can enter the presence of God. No one can reach the house of God, and no one is worthy of heaven.

Our sin and our brokenness will not allow us to live in the presence of God. But God always planned to make a way.

The Father wants to offer us eternal life in his house. And that's why Jesus has to go. That's why Jesus goes the way of death.

Jesus takes our punishment on the cross so that we might enter the house of God. And so Jesus is the way. No one comes to the Father or his eternal house except through Jesus.

[11 : 13] Jesus is the truth. His words are reality, and there's no other truth that can guide us. And Jesus is the life. He died so that we might live.

He died so that anyone who believes in his name would enter the Father's house. Jesus' words of comfort are to the 12 disciples.

But there are also promises recorded so that every disciple since can find comfort in them. If you are a follower of Jesus, don't be troubled about your place before God.

You have an eternal home. You can look forward with hope and joy to life in God's house. And that's promise one.

Jesus' disciples can look forward to an eternal home. But Jesus does far better than just promise us something in the future. He actually promises us something right now.

[12:19] Jesus is concerned with giving comfort then and there for the disciples and to us right now. And so that's where we come to promise two. Jesus promises an ongoing presence.

So what we're gonna do is we're gonna move on from the first half which we read this morning, and we're gonna delve into the second half. In there, we see the next big promise. Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit.

So read with me at verse 15. If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.

The Spirit of truth. It's clear that Jesus cares about his disciples. He tells them in advance. He's not leaving them alone.

Jesus promises to send an advocate, a helper, the Spirit of truth. These are all different names for the one person.

[13:25] That is the Holy Spirit. So to understand this properly, I think it's important that we pause and consider who is the Holy Spirit.

And we've gotta consider the concept of the Trinity, which is all over chapter 14. It's all over there. The Trinity is the understanding that God is one, but also that God is three.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. But they are the one true living God. It's evident from earlier in the chapter where we read that God the Father and God the Son are one.

So when the disciple asked Jesus, when the disciple Philip asks Jesus to show them the Father, Jesus answers like this in verse nine. Anyone 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 that the Father is in me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority.

[14:40] Rather, it is the Father living in me who is doing his work. So the Father and the Son are one. Though the disciples only see Jesus in front of them, Jesus tells them they're actually looking at the Father.

To see the Son is to see the Father. And the same can be said of the Holy Spirit. Notice the strangeness of this. Jesus has just been saying that he's leaving and that he's leaving them with the Holy Spirit.

But then he says this in verse 20. Read it with me. On that day, you will realize that I am in the Father and you are in me and I am in you.

Now that is a confusing statement. Jesus shares that just as he is in the Father, he will be in us. But he's just told us that he's leaving.

You can't go and stay. You can't leave us and be with us simultaneously unless you consider the impossibility of God.

[15:50] Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one. When the Holy Spirit comes to his disciples, it's Jesus too who dwells with them. And the New Testament writers often speak like this, using the name of Christ and the Holy Spirit interchangeably to describe God dwelling in humans.

Far from being just theoretical, the conclusion I want you to make is that the Holy Spirit is God. Both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are God.

They're one. The Holy Spirit is no less God than Jesus is. Because a common misconception is that the Holy Spirit is some impersonal force.

Some people think of the Holy Spirit like we think of the force in Star Wars. A force that we can manipulate and push to our will.

It's a force in the universe. But not at all. The Holy Spirit is a person. When referred to in this passage, the Holy Spirit is not an it.

[17:00] It's a he. The Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of the true God. This is an immense comfort.

For it is God the Holy Spirit who comes to live in his disciples. His personal presence. Always it is God with his people.

When God the Son leaves, God the Spirit comes. Let's read verse 17. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him.

But you know him for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you.

Before long the world will not see me anymore but you will see me. The Spirit will not be recognizable or visible to the world.

[18 : 06] He is with us in a different way than Jesus was. But Jesus does not leave his disciples as orphans. He leaves us with the presence of God.

Look further with me at verse 23. Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them.

Life now is not just a matter of waiting to be home with the Father in heaven. God makes his home in us here and now.

In heaven we'll experience the full presence of God like nothing we've ever seen before. But right now God is with his people by the Holy Spirit. And not only is the Holy Spirit a comfort and a presence but the Spirit helps the disciple.

The Spirit actually does work in the disciple. So look further at verse 26. But the advocate the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

[19 : 28] So the Spirit serves to teach and remind the believer about all that God says. This is a crucial role of the Spirit.

Without the Spirit Jesus' words are worthless to our ears. The Spirit gives these words meaning. He grants understanding. The Spirit allows us to see the glory of God in the Bible.

It is by the work of the Spirit that we can have faith in Jesus' death and resurrection. It's by the work of the Spirit that we can have eternal life. But not only does the Spirit teach in the sense that it grants us this understanding but according to the passage the Spirit will remind the disciple of everything Jesus has said.

That is that anybody with the Spirit will never forget the truths about Jesus. It's written on their heart. Anyone who has the Spirit will be reminded of the truth to the end of their lives.

This is such a comfort. God keeps His disciples secure. His presence in our lives right now means that by His promises we'll remember His words until the end of our days.

[20 : 55] Thank you Holy Spirit. Let's draw these two ideas together. Jesus gives two promises to His disciples.

A promise one is an eternal home. The disciples wait for the day where they'll live in the full presence of God the Father in His house forever.

And promise two is this ongoing presence. Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit would come and dwell with and inside His disciples. And both of these promises only come about because of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Verse 6 again, Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. These promises are attainable because they're a free gift of God.

Anyone who believes in and follows Jesus Christ will receive these promises. And so if you're not a Christian in the room, I would really encourage you, investigate the person of Christ for He freely offers you life in the Spirit now and an eternal home in heaven forever.

[22 : 16] And if you are a Christian, these promises are to mean something to you. They're to mean something to me. They are to be comfort and guidance. Words for troubled hearts in a troubled world.

Look with me at verse 27. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.

Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. These promises mean peace for the troubled heart.

Jesus shares His peace with us. But be very careful in your understanding of peace. For the world says to us, peace is an avoidance of trouble.

I picture the kind of peace I feel on a holiday. day. When there's no work to do. Not much to be anxious about. Books to read. Time to talk and walk.

[23 : 22] Now that is a good kind of peace. But that's not the peace that Horatio Spafford felt when he wrote it is well with my soul.

As he wrote that in the aftermath of losing five children, the peace he felt, the peace that Jesus gives is different. Jesus does not give peace like the world. He gives peace that transcends understanding. Peace that coexists with suffering. Don Carson puts it like this.

This peace is no escape from reality, but a courageous serenity, even in the midst of troubles. Some people don't want this kind of peace because the peace that Jesus gives doesn't remove trouble.

It's for those who are troubled. The peace that Jesus gives is the peace that comes from knowing that Jesus has prepared a place in heaven for you.

[24 : 29] We don't earn our place in heaven. We don't work for it. Jesus has freely given it. Jesus promises us that we can have hope.

We can have assurance. Faith in Jesus means life forever. This is a promise of peace that goes beyond our circumstances.

No matter what happens in an uncertain life, we can have absolute certainty in the future. Jesus has prepared a place for us.

peace of knowing that we have the Holy Spirit in us. He will not let us forget his words.

He will teach us and grant understanding so that we might have salvation. He will remind us these promises again and again through his word of our certain hope in him.

[25 : 30] That is a promise. A disciple of Jesus will be held firm all their days. A disciple gets to live in faith and trust for the rest of their lives.

So as we go out into the rest of our lives, into morning tea, I'd really like to challenge you. Let's explore this question together.

How will the promise of the Holy Spirit's presence and of an eternal home change the way you live now? Let's anchor our lives on these promises.

Let them shape us, change us, transform the way we live our lives. They're promises of peace for a troubled disciple. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.