

# The Comforts of Home

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[ 0 : 00 ] And we'll read again from the beginning. I'm going to look at verses 1 to 3. They're very familiar words to us, I'm sure. John 14, the first three verses. 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.

But where I am, you may be also. So often when you visit folk in hospital, which is always a privilege to do, many times they'll say to you, I really wish I was home.

I'm longing to get home. Even if they appreciate as they do, many of them the care that's given. But they will also find them often saying, I'd love to be home. I don't know when I'll get back home, but I know I need to be in this place just now.

I'm thankful for the care I'm getting. And I know that it's all towards my good and my improvement. Something along those lines. So you've got the longing to get home and the appreciation of the present circumstances, which really are part of what's going on in life at the moment.

[ 1 : 13 ] And that's so it is for the Christian as well. There is a God-planted longing in the heart, a desire, a looking forward to home in heaven.

And yet at the same time, a realization through the teaching of God's word that this is a necessity for us now to go through this life as we are, to have the providence of God as he has arranged it, so that we'll come ultimately as Christians, as believers in Christ, all we believe to come to be in heaven at last.

Jesus here, as you know, is addressing troubled disciples. That's evident from the first few words of verse one.

Let not your hearts be troubled. He's not saying to them there, don't begin to be troubled. He's really saying, I know you're troubled, but don't let them be troubled. Put your troubles aside.

Here is my antidote to your troubles. Let not your hearts be troubled. And what's troubling them is what he has told them previously, that he is actually going to go back to the Father.

[ 2 : 20 ] That he's no longer going to be physically with them. That they're not going to have him here as they've had him over these years, since he took them and made them his disciples. And now he's been telling them that he is going away.

And what he says, in the previous chapter especially, Jesus is saying there, where I'm going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow me afterwards.

So he's been teaching them about the necessity of his going. And in fact, he's been saying to them, it's actually for your good that I'm going. Knowing himself, of course, what was going to follow this time that he spent with them in the upper room, as it's called.

And that he would actually then go back to the Father, having gone to the cross and risen from the dead. And as we'll see, all of that is in his immediate future there, as he's speaking to the disciples. So he's addressing the troubled disciples who are thinking of a future without Jesus. And sadly, so many people in the world don't even have a thought of life without Jesus.

[ 3 : 29 ] They don't actually look into the future and say to themselves, how am I going to manage this without God? We're living in a world where unbelief is such a constant feature of our experience as we meet with people.

And they don't actually have this perspective, this outlook, this forward-looking, whereby they know that they're going to be at last with Christ. And they face the future without Jesus.

And it's always a remarkable thing when we see people, either we visit them or we see them in hospital or whatever, and they face sometimes really critical issues in their lives.

Perhaps even it's a bereavement as well as a physical illness or whatever. And it's always amazing when you actually see, how are they able to cope?

You ask yourself, how can they manage life without God? And of course, the answer to that is, well, we once did as well. Or at least we thought we did. It's just part of our fallen condition.

[ 4 : 35 ] But here are these disciples, and they're troubled because they're thinking of a future without Jesus. So he's redirecting their thoughts. He's redirecting their minds to these things that he says here in this chapter, in this beginning of this chapter to them here as we're looking at it immediately.

So what he's saying really is, not only are they not going to be without him, though that will be the case physically, but in fact, they are actually, eventually and ultimately, going to be taken by him to be with them.

Here they are thinking, how can we possibly manage without him? What are we going to do? How can we go about the business of daily life as people who believe in God, as people are called by Christ to witness for him, but he's not there.

And he's saying to them, don't let your hearts be troubled. I'm actually going to prepare a place for you, and that's a place to which I will come back, to which I will take you when I come back for you. And it's interesting if you compare the first verse there, and we always refer to these chapters as the upper room addresses or discourses of the Lord, which of course includes his own prayer in chapter 17.

[ 5 : 57 ] But if you compare just now verse one of chapter 14, and then let's go forward to the last verse of chapter 16. Here we are at the beginning of chapter 14, let not your hearts be troubled.

And here he is finishing chapter 16. He's saying, I have said these things to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world. In other words, what you're finding is that prior to his prayer, as Jesus taught the disciples and addressed them in what we find in these three chapters, what you really find is he begins it and he ends it with the same note of redirecting them towards things which will comfort them, which will assure them, which will give them the perspective that he wants them to have on a future that he has prepared for them.

And you might say that everything in these three chapters is directed really in the purpose of Christ, and the purpose of God to you and to me tonight as you read them, that all actually, all of these details in these three chapters, 14, 15, 16, are directed towards our assurance and our comfort as Christians.

And isn't that a remarkable thing itself, that all of the details throughout these three chapters are all channeled towards what he says in 14 verse 1 and the end of chapter 16.

[ 7 : 23 ] Let not your hearts be troubled. And if you're troubled tonight, as you often are, and as I often am, if there are things in the world that cause you concern, in your own life that cause you concern, in your family that cause you concern, in your friends over which you're concerned, here is Jesus always redirecting our minds to these things that he speaks of to the disciples, which really puts the present world in perspective, doesn't it?

And which reminds us that actually, ultimately, that's what our mind should be focused on. Not the immediate presence, but what lies ahead, the future that God has prepared in this house that he calls my father's house.

So here's their address to them, his address to them. What is he saying? How is he actually, how is he directing their minds for their assurance and comfort? Well, he's saying three things.

He's saying, first of all, there is a place awaiting you. There is a place awaiting you. Let not your hearts be troubled. 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. Possible to translate these in the older translations as well.

[ 8 : 44 ] If it were not so, would I not have told you? Anyway, let's just stick with what it is. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

Taking it in one sentence as question. Here's the first thing he's saying to them. Don't let your hearts be troubled. There is a place awaiting you. And the second thing he says, connected with that, is the place that awaits you has been prepared or will be prepared by me.

I go to prepare a place for you. This place, my father's house, that has many rooms, I'm going to prepare that as a place, as a residence, as a dwelling place for you.

And thirdly, he's saying, not only is there a place for you, and not only is it a place prepared by me for you, but I will come back for you. I will come again, and I will take you to myself so that where I am, you also will be.

And these are the three great prongs of his address here in these opening verses, where he brings this great assurance to our hearts tonight as to how we face the uncertainties of life, the troubles of life.

[10:05] How do we look beyond them, and what do we see beyond them? Well, we see, as Jesus says here, the Father's house. So here's the first thing. There is a place awaiting them, and we can say as believers there's a place awaiting us here.

But of course, Jesus means heaven by this. Nothing else. It's pretty obvious that's what he means. In my Father's house are many rooms.

He's talking about life beyond this world. He's talking about where God is present in a way that is different, although it's connected with the way that he's present among his people.

Verse 23, for example, you'll find as we read through that, Jesus saying, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Wonderful words in themselves, because he's talking there about how he, especially through the Holy Spirit and the Father, will actually come in the future as he speaks to them to make his home with them.

[11:12] He's going to live in them. He's going to come by his Holy Spirit to reside in their hearts. He's going to make a dwelling place for himself in their souls. And now he's developing that further, and he's saying, not only is that through, but I'm going to prepare a place for you in my Father's house where there are many rooms.

In other words, we could say that, of course, God, in a sense, is present, in a real sense, is present everywhere. There is nowhere in the created universe in which God is absent.

And he's present, as we see, with his people in a special way. You could say that, verse 23, we might call that his gracious presence. He's present graciously in your heart, graciously in the hearts of his people.

But now he's talking about God's glorious presence. His glorious presence as he is in the Father's house.

That's how he directs them against their troubles. But he also says, in my Father's house, there are many rooms. In those days, as indeed today, would be important for somebody like a king or a prince or ruler to make sure that those that were invited as guests to important functions, if they were staying over, obviously it would be embarrassing for him if he didn't have enough rooms for them.

[12:43] So they always made sure that the places they had and lived in were either in the place themselves or round about and plenty of places and rooms in which guests could actually live.

And what God is saying is, in my Father's house, there are many rooms. It is a residence, it is a palace, if you like, where the king himself lives.

But in it, he's made sure that there is enough room for the many, many people who will come to be saved and come to actually live there forevermore with them.

In my Father's house, there are many rooms. And the reference to many is really important because all the way through the Bible, you find a reference to the multitude of God's people that will be saved.

Go to Revelation chapter 7 and verse 9 and you'll find there that the vision that John saw as he saw a great multitude gathered before the throne which no one could number, which no man could number.

[13:50] It's humanly impossible to number those actually who will occupy the Father's house. He knows them, but what he says is there are many rooms because there will be many residents.

Heaven is not going to be sparsely populated. You're not going to have a look, to look around and complain that there's all too few people there with you. There are many rooms, he says, and if it were not so, if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

In other words, he's saying, I have told you, I've told you that this is the case. Would I have told you if this were not true? You know, in other words, the assurance of the disciples is led towards the truthfulness of Jesus himself.

He's saying, I would never have said such a thing if this were not actually the case. But seeing it is the case, I have told you, I've told you so that your hearts will not be troubled.

And I've told you that in my Father's house, there are many, many rooms. And you notice he's also saying here, believe in God, believe also in me.

[15:08] And personally, I prefer the translation that says, you are believing on God or you believe in God, believe also in me. What he's saying, I think, is you already believe in God, you already believe in God and his word has been given to you.

That's Old Testament, of course, the time, what he's saying now is you believe in God, believe also in me. And in fact, the words don't come out in the translation quite as forcefully, but these words in me also are thrown into emphasis so that you can really say this is how it reads literally.

You believe in God, in me also believe. Because he's pointing out the fact that their belief in God, the Father, well, their belief in him has to be on the same level.

And of course, that itself is part of the witness of the Bible to the deity, the divinity, the Godhood of Christ himself. He could never have said such a thing about the Father and himself being, if you like, part of the same foundation on which our faith rests if he wasn't on that same level with him himself.

You believe in God, believe also in me. And of course, he's preparing them in that for all that they're going to be witnesses to as they leave this upper room, as they go towards his trial and eventually his crucifixion and everything that's involved in that.

[16:44] He is saying to them here, don't actually take your eye off this. You believe in God, believe also in me. Let your faith rest as surely in me as it rests in God, the Father.

There is a place awaiting them and it's a place of which Jesus speaks truthfully. He could never do anything else anyway. But the fact that he is himself truth is a foundation for them to accept every single word that he's saying to them.

So, whatever troubles your heart tonight, whatever comes into my mind or your mind from time to time, from day to day, whatever fears may come your way of whatever things you might be troubled about, here is where Jesus will always take us.

Here is where we need to be led to, to the certainties of heaven above the uncertainties of earth.

Let not your hearts be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you. There is a place awaiting them, he says, in my Father's house.

[18:03] We could develop that a bit further but I want to move on to what he says, I go to prepare a place for you. The place, the Father's house that he's speaking of, is a place that he is going to prepare for them.

That's why he's saying he's leaving this world and leaving this world is the means by which this place is going to be prepared for them. And what does he mean by that?

First of all, what's involved in this question, what's in these words, I go. I go to prepare a place for you.

Now you can see these two words in literally half a second. I go or I'm going. But what did he mean? What is involved in his going as he now draws the disciples' mind to the necessity of his going and how that's all part of what he's saying about the Father's house?

Well, you can see it in a couple of seconds but within these words I go stands his crucifixion, his resurrection, his ascension to heaven and his coming to be seated at God's right hand.

[19:13] I am going involves all that. You can see it in a half second but look at all that's contained in it for the Lord himself. In Luke chapter 9 and verse 31, it's interesting there on the Mount of Transfiguration where Jesus appeared in glory with Moses and Elijah and they were speaking with him about something in particular and it's Luke that actually records this for us, not the other disciples.

We have the Transfiguration but not these words. They spoke of his departure, you have it in the ESV, or decease in the AV.

What did he mean? How could this be the subject of their discussion, of their conversation, in that glory on the Mount of Transfiguration?

How could that particular thing be at the center of their conversation? Well, because it meant the going out of Jesus. That's why Luke used the word departure.

It's actually in the Greek text, it's exodus, which means a going out. That's what they were actually dealing with on the Mount of Transfiguration. He was Jesus transfigured so that his glory was made

known.

[ 20 : 29 ] His glory shone through his clothes. He was obviously for those moments dazzlingly glorious. And this is what they were speaking about.

In the middle of that glory was his exodus. In the middle of that glory was his passage out of this world through death and resurrection and ascension.

All of that is packed into the word exodus. And here in the upper room he's saying, I am going to prepare a place for you.

I'm going out. I have an exodus through which I'm going to prepare this place for you. Well, what a going, what an exodus, what a departure, what a going out.

And John, especially in his gospel, is concerned to show how all of these individual aspects of the Lord's work and the Lord's experience are essentially tied together in one great event, his going out, his crucifixion.

[ 21 : 33 ] his resurrection, his ascension. All of these are part of this great exodus that's going out. What is he doing? What's the purpose of it?

I am going to prepare a place for you. This must be a really special place when it took all of that to prepare it.

What is heaven? How can you describe heaven? We can't of course adequately by any means, but heaven is the place that the departure, the exodus, the cross, the resurrection, the ascension of Jesus has prepared for us.

And because that's what's prepared it, it's bound to be special beyond any words we can actually use in this life. It must be simply so exquisite and so beautiful and so good because this is what prepared it.

I am going to prepare a place for you. And you know that place is actually now ready. Nothing else needs to be done to the place to make it ready.

[ 22 : 48 ] It was made ready by his going out, by his going. It was made ready by all of these steps that are joined together until he took his place at the right hand of the Father on high.

Nothing more needs to be done. Heaven is ready. It's all prepared. It's entire. It's perfect. It's complete. All that's required is that God's people will come to take their place there.

But he has already prepared it. It's all there in its pristine condition already. And one other thing that's important when we think of his going to prepare a place for his people and it is this, that the Bible speaks about Christ being our forerunner.

In Hebrews especially, Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 20, wherein he says, the forerunner has entered for us, this Jesus.

And what does that passage mean by forerunner and how is that connected with this passage here in John 14, where the forerunner, the word actually means someone who goes ahead in order to take possession of it.

[ 24 : 04 ] Someone who goes ahead to secure it for you. Somebody who goes ahead to live there as one who now possesses it for his people so that they will come to join him when the time comes.

He is the forerunner. And the fact that he's already there as the forerunner, as the one who has gone to secure and to make this place secure specially for his people, to make it his possession if you like first, so that they then can come to join him in the possession of it.

He has gone as the forerunner to do that. And the fact that he has already done it and that it's already secured means for sure that that's really what it's about.

That it secures your place in heaven. Because this has already happened and it's now ready and prepared. There will be no squatters in heaven.

evictions either. Every single individual and all of them together for whom he died and rose again and ascended to heaven and sat at the right hand of the father.

[ 25 : 28 ] Every single individual and all of them together for which for whom he prepared this place will absolutely and certainly come to occupy their place there.

Don't be in any doubts about that. And it's not by your own achievement. It's not by how great your faith is. It's not by how diligent you've been in this life or you want to be as diligent as possible.

It's not in fact by anything you do at all. It's by all that he has done that makes it secure. There is a place awaiting God's people.

The place has been prepared by Jesus himself. And we remember that of course as we come in steadily towards our communion in just over a week's time when those issues will be before us as

we think about Christ and his death and the remembrance of Jesus and his death as we do in the Lord's Supper.

Well all of that really remembers this amazing fact that he went to the cross and he went through resurrection and he went back to heaven to prepare a place for us.

[ 26 : 41 ] He took our place on the cross but he prepared a place for us in heaven when he reached. In my father's house there are many rooms and I'm going to prepare a place for you.

But then he says thirdly if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and take you will take you to myself but where I am there you may also be.

So there is a place awaiting us there is that place has been prepared by Jesus and thirdly Jesus himself will come to take us home.

Of course we've already mentioned verse 23 that he has already come and taken up his place in our hearts by his Holy Spirit. He has come in that sense and in fact in these verses in chapter 14 the father is mentioned as well.

We will come and make out a board with him as you look into your soul as far as possible through the teaching of God's word as you apply this teaching to your own person to your own life tonight here is something that constantly should amaze you and amaze me that you have in your heart not just God but the three persons of the God head that form the one God actually saying about your heart this is where I've made a home for myself.

[ 28 : 00 ] Your father lives in you through the spirit. Your saviour Jesus lives in you through the spirit. The spirit has come to take up residence and they have come and made their home in that in your heart.

but this is something in addition to that when he's saying I will come again and I will take you to be with myself or to myself but where I am there you may be also.

That's really taking us into if you like the final step of our salvation where Jesus will come and take all his people together together to be with him in heaven.

And it's interesting and significant that he's not sending a representative to gather all his people together. It's not an angel that's going to come on the last day and appear to God's people and invite them to come and join Jesus in heaven.

He will come. If I go to prepare a place for you I will come again. That's why your heart gets excited at the thought of what's going to happen at the end of your course of the world.

[ 29 : 12 ] That's why your heart really takes on an additional beat if you like because you know what Jesus means is I will come again. I'll come and take you to be with myself.

Not just in the sense of when you die and leave this world that he's going to welcome you into heaven while your body remains in this world and goes back to the dust. That of course is true but it's beyond that as well.

I will come and I will take you to be with myself. You and your entire redeemed saved person body and soul together.

So that where I am there you may be also. And it's interesting that he's saying here that I will take you to myself.

and again these words literally are full of beauty and full of power because what they say what they mean literally or what it is literally translated different ways but again in the Greek text that we have in the New Testament what really Jesus literally says is I will take you to be beside me.

[ 30 : 29 ] I will take you to be beside me. so it's going to be close to Jesus. You find people saying well I don't think I'll be as close to Jesus at all as other people that were far better Christians in this life than I am.

Whatever that may be what Jesus is saying is nobody is going to be distant from me because heaven is a place of closeness, a place of intimate fellowship with the Lord and with his people together.

I will come and I will take you to be with myself, to be beside me so that where I am you will also be. And you know we take such a great comfort don't we on the fact that Jesus is true to his promise that he will be with us throughout life, that he will actually be our companion through life, that his presence will be there, that he has promised to be with his people all their journey through life until we leave this world.

And that's a wonderfully comforting truth in itself. But our ultimate comfort will come from being beside him in heaven, will come from being with him in his company in heaven, will come from this

what he's saying here, I will come and I will take you to be beside myself, that where I am there you may be also.

[ 31 : 59 ] Yes, he's with us on the journey, but ultimately we're going to be with him in the place of many rooms in the Father's house.

And that's where our comfort ultimately lies. That Jesus himself not only has prepared a place and that that place is now secure, but will come again and take us to be with himself, to be beside him, to be alongside of him.

And that will never again change. You will never not be beside him once you get to heaven. There is no alternative to being with Christ if you're in heaven.

You don't want of course there to be one, but that's really what he's directing their minds and our minds to tonight for our comfort in this life, but for ultimate comfort of course, as it will be the case in heaven itself.

And of course you remember in chapter 17 as he finished off his time with the disciples in the prayer that he uttered there in the upper room, look what he said in verse 24, father, I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

[ 33 : 28 ] And again, the translation there is not as good as it was in the older translation where desire is fine, but it's not quite strong enough because what Jesus was saying is father, I will.

Father, I will. He's really speaking there with his own authority as the mediator, as the saviour of his people and he's saying, father, this is my will for them.

This is what my authority requires for them. Of course, the father isn't against that, but what he's saying is now that this has been done for them, now that I have in chapter 17 is really a remarkable chapter because it's set as if the cross has now passed.

I have finished the work which you gave me to do. Now, father, glorify me with yourself, with the glory I had with you before the world was. This is how he finishes it.

Father, those whom you have given me, I will that they be with me where I am. We will be in heaven by the grace of God.

[ 34 : 39 ] by the work of preparation that Jesus has executed and completed for us. But we will not be there without his own authority. We will be there because he has willed it.

We will be there because the father will answer his prayer. I will that those you have given me be with me where I am. And so tonight, this world, as he says in chapter 16, will be full of tribulation, sorrow, challenges, difficulties, disappointments, pain, all sorts of things like that.

But he said, take heart. Don't let your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. Believe me when I say to you, there's a place prepared for you.

I have prepared it for you. And I will come again to take you to be beside myself in the place that's ready and waiting for you.

Let's pray. Our father in heaven, we give thanks that you sent your son into this world with a specific mission and purpose to prepare a place for his people ultimately in heaven.

[ 35 : 59 ] heaven. And we thank you, oh Lord, for all that went towards that preparation, a preparation that we cannot ourselves describe for all that we read in your word of the events in the life of our savior, his death, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to glory, his session at the right hand of God, his continuing intercession for his people.

We thank you, Lord, that all these things are true. That they are verities for your people. And we pray that when this world assaults us, when our own hearts, Lord, produce doubts in us, when we find ourselves instead of taking you at your word, sometimes measuring ourselves against other people.

Lord, forgive us, we pray, for diverting our mind from those things that do give us assurance and certainty in what you have gone to prepare for us. Help us especially, Lord, to focus upon your own person, upon the wonder and the glory of your person and on the work that you have done.

Bless us, we pray, as we anticipate shortly, God willing, to remember the Lord's death once again in the Lord's Supper. We ask, Lord, that you'll prepare us for that.

And we pray that we may give serious mind to what we do as we remember the Lord's death in coming to partake of the elements of the supper of bread and wine, which represent the Lord in his death to us.

[ 37 : 34 ] Bless those, Lord, who have not yet come to sit at your table. We thank you that there are among us those whose desire it is to be there. We pray that you would help them to focus on yourself and to focus on the fact that you have made all the preparation necessary for them, not only for heaven, but to come to have a foretaste of heaven to sit at the Lord's Supper.

And so bless them, we pray. Bless those tonight who have illness to contend with, those who have bereavement and sorrow. Remember them, Lord, we pray, in all the troubles that accompany such events in your providence.

We pray for all in the congregation laid aside at this time, whether it be mental illness, mental health issues, or physically, we ask that you would continue to bless them and help us to continue pray for them.

Receive our thanks, cleanse us from all our sin, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Let's now conclude our service singing in Psalm 23.

Psalm 23, the Lord's my shepherd, that's in the Scottish Psalter, the Lord's my shepherd, page 229. Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want. He makes me down to lie in pastures green.

[ 38 : 51 ] He leadeth me the quiet waters by. And we all know how the psalm finishes. Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me and in God's house forevermore.

The Father's house, my dwelling place, shall be. Let's conclude with these verses. The Lord's my shepherd, water, love, and watch one.

He makes me down to high. In pastures green, I'll not want.

He chained to beat by he stone lastativ Madame and My soul he then Some light, Jonin, pralent twerk of the Torhai concerning stone.

Whyst have you come from this temporal ti-founder?

[ 40 : 27 ] Though I walk in death, star-filled, and frail, my dear brother, for thou art with me at thy home, and staph me comforted.

My table thou hast furnished, in merceness of thy clothes, and breaded, lord, and Hebrew breeds with salt, with coverith mure.

I shall surely follow me, and in the times forevermore, my gladness shall be.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore. Amen.