



John 14:1-6

Comfort for Troubled Hearts

The farther we travel down this road of life the greater is the realization that this is not our home –heaven is.

The disciples of Jesus had good reason to be "troubled" because as they reclined at the table a few moments earlier He spoke of the traitor in their midst (13:21), and His leaving them and going where they could not follow (vv. 33, 36). Jesus saw in their faces that night confusion, hurt, disappointment, fear, frustration and bewilderment. Their world was caving in around them like an earthquake.

The conversation in chapter fourteen follows in form closely to the preceding chapter. The conversation continues to flow as Christ prepares His disciples for the day ahead. He comforts them by telling them His departure is to His Father's house, with a view of preparing a place for them and then coming again to those who know the direction of the journey.

It is most unfortunate that there is a chapter break between 13:38 and 14:1. Jesus is answering Peter's question in 13:36-37 that refers back to Jesus' words about His departure in v. 33. The disciples are "troubled" about what Jesus has been revealing to them about His death and resurrection (13:33).

Jesus is consoling His disciples and revealing a greater understanding of Himself to them. As G. Campbell Morgan remarked this is one of those passages, "We might indulge in many speculations, not profitable." We will guard against strange imaginations, but make strong application of these truths to our personal daily experiences.

THE PROBLEM OF A TROUBLED HEART

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me" (v. 1)

These are the words of the Good Shepherd comforting the hearts of His troubled sheep. "You believe in God, believe also in Me" is the revelation of His own heart to them.

The disciples were perplexed and fearful and Jesus had told them earlier, "Where I go, you cannot come." Peter asked, "Where are you going?" Thomas said, "We do not know why you are going, how can we know the way?" Philip said, "Show us the Father, that is sufficient." Thomas was perplexed about the way, "How can we know the way, if we do not know where You are going?" The disciples that night could not comprehend continuing without Him.

continuing without Him.

The very center of their personal life was extremely troubled. Their emotions were boiling over with raw feelings. "The hearts of the disciples were tossed like waves in the wind by the words of Jesus in 13:38)," says A. T. Robertson.

"They were losing Him," says Morgan. "After three and a half-years in His close company, traveling here and there; watching Him, listening to Him; now He was going; they are going to be left. That was their trouble . . . He told them He was going to suffer. He told them He was going to die. He told them He was going to resurrection. They never seem to have grasped the fact of the resurrection."

The night before His crucifixion Jesus slowly stripped away the veneer of a utopia. He completely destroyed their fantasies. In its place He gave them a grater revelation of Himself.

In no way did Jesus intend for His disciples to be escapist, or to live in utopia, or some nebula's dream world. He did not suggest in any way that we would reach a spiritual plateau in which all trouble would disappear and we would live the rest of our lives in perfect serenity and peace. Jesus never suggested that if we followed Him we would never again experience trouble, disappointment or trials. A little later that night He said just the opposite. "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

"Let not your heart be troubled" is present subjunctive with the negative indicating the stopping of an action in progress. "Stop it. Stop it now!" "Stop being troubled in your heart."

Seeing them reacting deeper and deeper in despair Jesus said, "Wait! Stop it now! Stop being troubled! Stop letting your hearts boil over. You are forgetting who I am. You believe in God; believe also in Me. You are not alone; I am with you. You are secure because I am."

Jesus did not promise them their troubles were going away. He told them He would be with them in the midst of their troubles. He would be their stabilizing force and strength. He did not tell them some foolish make-believe philosophy that their pain, suffering, evil and sin didn't exist. Thinking beautiful thoughts won't make these things go away.

Stop for a moment. What is flooding your troubled heart today? What does Jesus see going on in His presence right now? The hurt of those disciples that night was no different from the hurts you experience today. Jesus was telling those disciples to give Him those "troubles" that were boiling over and flooding their hearts. His death was no make-believe; it was real. They felt the trauma of it before them. Jesus recognized what they were experiencing and gave them comfort.

THE PERSON WHO COMFORTS US

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You "believe in God, believe also in Me" (v. 1b).

It is probably best to take both occurrences of the word "believe" in verse one as imperative. Continue to believe and in this way not let your hearts be troubled. "You believe" is best translated, "keep on believing in God and in Me." "Believe in God, believe also in Me."

A. W. Pink wrote, "'You believe in God,' who in invisible; you believe in His love, though you have never seen His form; you are conscious of His care, though you have never touched the Hand that guides and protects you. 'Believe, also in Me;' . . . In like manner you must have full confidence in My existence, my love, and care, even though I am no longer present to sight. *This* comfort remains for *us*; this is the faith in which we are now to live: 'Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory' (1 Peter 1:8)."

W. E. Vine, "It is a faith that goes much farther than an acceptance of a truth, it cleaves to the Speaker." Our highest occupation is with Christ Himself and our personal and increasing knowledge of Him. This is reinforced and strengthened by our experiences of His dealings with us.

"Believe in God and believe also in Me." "Believe in God and in Me believe marks the development of the idea," says Westcott. Let your faith find its rest in Me. "In Christ belief in God gained a present reality. The simultaneous injunction is of faith God and in Christ under the same conditions implies the divinity of Christ. The belief is 'in Christ,' and not in any position about Christ."

Jesus uses strong present imperatives, "Keep on believing in God . . . keep on believing in Me."

A. W. Pink admonishes us,

But it should be remembered that the Lord was speaking not only to the Eleven, but to *us* as well. . . "Believe in God," O Christian. Let not your heart be troubled, for *thy Father* is possessed of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. He knows what is best for thee, and He makes all things work together for thy good. *He* is on the Throne, ruling amid the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can stay *His* refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. . . "If God be for us who can be against us?" *Believe in God*. Believe in His absolute sovereignty, His infinite wisdom, His unchanging faithfulness, His wondrous love. "Believe also in Me." I am the One who died for thy sins and rose again for thy justification: I am the One who ever lives to make intercession for thee. I am the *same*, yesterday, and today, and forever. I am the One who shall come again to receive you to Myself, and you shall be forever with Me. Yes, "*Believe also in me!*"

The deity of Christ

Faith in the deity of the Son of God is fundamental to Biblical Christianity. When Jesus put the question to His disciples, "Whom say you that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." On the strength of that reply Jesus affirmed His purpose of building His church. From that time every true disciple and apostle defended to the utmost the utter Deity of the Lord Jesus.

God compelled three worlds to bear their testimony to the truthfulness of who Jesus is. From Heaven the voice of God the Father was heard, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." On earth the

centurion testified, "Truly, this was the Son of God." Even the devils of hell shouted, "Jesus, You Son of God, what have we to do with You?"

Henry Van Dyke said,

The early Christians looked at God through Christ; they did not look at Christ through a preconceived idea and a logical definition of God. True development of theology . . . was not abstract; it was personal and practical. The doctrine of the trinity came into being to meet an imperious necessity. That necessity was the defense of the actual worship of Christ, the actual trust in Christ as the Unveiler of the Father, which already existed at the heart of Christianity. It was recognized instinctively that the loss of this trust, the silencing of worship, meant the death of Christianity by heart failure. Every speculation which threatened this result; every theory of human nature or the Divine nature which seemed to separate the personality of Christ from the personality of God, was regarded by the church as dangerous and hostile.

Thomas Babington well said, "It was before the Deity, embodied in a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in their manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the synagogue and the doubts of the academy and the pride of the portico and the forces of the lictors and the swords of their thirty legions were humbled in the dust."

It is only before such Deity that men fall, smiting their breasts and declaring, "God be merciful to me the sinner."

THE PLACE THE COMFORTER IS PREPARING FOR US

"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you" (v. 2). This is His present occupation. "I go to prepare a place for you." Heaven is a place and it is a place where God the Father and Jesus are residing. It is His present location.

Jesus referred to the Temple as "the house of God" on various occasions (Matt. 12:4). He spoke of it as His own house, assuming the place of God. The Jerusalem Temple was still in the process of being built and was not finished until ten years after Christ's death.

What is the Father's is likewise the Son's and the Son prepares the abode and will come and convey those for whom it is prepared.

"The Father's house" is "the spiritual and eternal antitype of the transitory temple (2:16)." The earthly temple included in its courts many chambers (1 Kings 6:5, 6, 10; Ezek. 41:6).

B. F. Westcott says, "Heaven is where God is seen as our Father. We dare not add any local limitations, even in thought, to this final conception." The Jewish idea of heaven was an enormous palace with many rooms connected to it.

Christ's divine origin

He resides in His Father's House and when Jesus says "believe in Me also" He brings out His absolute deity in a most unmistakable manner. Martin Luther said, "Here you see plainly that Christ Himself testifies that He is equal with God Almighty; because we must believe in Him even as we believe in God. If He were not true

equal with God Almighty; because we must believe in Him even as we believe in God. If He were not true God with the Father, this faith would be false and idolatrous."

A little later Jesus will say, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father" (v. 9). The force of this statement was: Have you never yet understood *who* I am? He was the visible Image of the invisible God. In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 1:19; 2:9).

The only way we ever arrive at a true knowledge of the Father is by our knowledge of the Son. If we have a true understanding of the Son we will know the Father. You cannot know the one without the other. If our knowledge of the Son is limited, so will be our understanding of the Father. Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh. He is God with us. "

Jesus Christ "claimed as His own the emotions of the heart to which only God has a right and only God can satisfy. Faith in Christ and faith in God are not two, but one, said Alexander Maclaren. "Jesus Christ does not merely set Himself up by the side of God, nor are we worshipers of two Gods when we bow before Jesus and bow before the Father; but faith in Christ is faith in God, and faith in God which is not faith in Christ is imperfect, incomplete, and will not long last. To trust in Him is to trust in the Father; to trust in the Father is to trust in Him."

Christ's present occupation

If Christ's return seems to be delayed, it is because He is engaged in preparing a place for the object of His love. The Groom is getting the home ready for His Bride.

There was "no room" for Jesus in the inn when He was born in Bethlehem; however, He has provided plenty of room for us in His heavenly home. There will be plenty of rooms for all who are saved by grace through faith in Him. There is room for all who will believe. In heaven the believing sinner will never be shut out.

The word translated "mansions" is an old word for *meno*, meaning to abide, abiding places (cf. v. 23). There are many resting places in the Father's house (*oikia*). This is a picture of heaven given to us by Christ. "It is our heavenly home with the Father and with Jesus," says Robertson. The Father's house is the simple word for a permanent dwelling place, a place of abode. In the Father's "house" there are many "mansions," simply an abode.

G. Campbell Morgan said, "In My Father's dwelling place there are many abiding places. The dwelling place is greater than the abiding places. All the abiding places are in the dwelling place."

George Adam Smith helps us understand this picture: "Herod's Temple consisted of a house divided like Solomon's into the Holy of Holies, and the Holy Place; a porch; an immediate forecourt with an altar of burnt offering; a Court of Israel; in front of this a Court of Women; and round the whole of the preceding a Court of Gentiles. Chambers for officials, and a meeting place for the Sanhedrim. Against the walls were built side-chambers, about 38 in all."

Morgan says, "There were many abiding places in the Temple. I believe that the temple as a figure of speech and symbol was in the mind of our Lord when He said, 'In My Father's house there are many abiding places.'" We are reminded in the book of Hebrews the Temple was patterned after things in heaven. The Father's house has many permanent dwelling places.

It may well be the word is referring to resting places, "a place of stay," or "stations" along a great road where travelers found refreshment. "The contrasted notions of repose and progress are combined in this vision of the

travelers found refreshment. "The contrasted notions of repose and progress are combined in this vision of the future," says Westcott.

Jesus was stressing the idea of permanence and that heaven is a place where the Father is. That is security for the troubled heart. Here the Father's house is plainly not on earth. It is the heavenly home to which Jesus is going and in which He promises His people a place of permanent rest (12:26). He will come and personally take His followers to this rest place in heaven. He is going to get a place ready for them and will return to take them there to be with Him. This will be the consummation of perfect and permanent fellowship (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Our loved ones who have died in Christ have gone to a place where we will be reunited with them. This is very personal touch of compassion. "I go to prepare a place for you" (v. 2). He speaks of His personal return even though His spiritual presence would never leave them. These words give great comfort to us who have loved ones who have gone before us into heaven. Our loved ones who have gone from us have simply gone into another abiding place, but the one they have entered is a permanent one in eternity. Our present earthly dwelling place is temporary. Christ opened the way into heaven by his death, resurrection and ascension.

THE PURPOSE OF THE COMFORTER FOR US

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also" (v. 3). He, who predicted His own going, promises His return. The pronoun is emphatic, "I as you have known Me ~~am~~ going."

I go and prepare a place

Christ will come to receive His own and we will always be with Him. He says, "If I go, . . . I will come again." A large crowd of people, probably the 500 who saw Him at one time, saw Him go up from their presence, and He will come again and receive us to Himself (Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 15:6). He was taken up; He went in person; He went visibly; a cloud received Him; angels attended Him. As He went, so He shall come! "Every eye shall see Him!"

Jesus goes ahead of us and opens up the way for us (Heb. 6:20). He is the "forerunner." It was customary to send someone ahead to prepare a place to stay and make arrangements for meals. Jesus had sent Peter and John to make ready for the Passover meal (Mk. 14:12; Matt. 26:17). Jesus is our Forerunner (*prodromos*) in heaven. He is busy preparing a place for us. He leads the way and takes us into the Father's presence.

Jesus is in heaven and He has not only prepared a place for us but also He is the forerunner who has prepared the way and made it safe. Heaven is a safe haven where we will always be with Jesus. The way Jesus traveled was the cross, resurrection and the ascension. Jesus not only prepared the place, He comes and takes us by the hand and says, "Come, I'll take you with me there." When He is the way, you cannot miss it!

I go . . . and I am coming back for you

"I go to prepare a place for you . . . I come again" is in vivid present tense giving full assurance of the future facts.

Jesus is coming again. Christ will take us from the place of meeting in the air into the Father's house to be with Him in His presence forever. We will be with Him "within the veil" (Heb. 6:20). Jesus "will receive you to Myself" —literally, "and I shall take you along (*para*) to My own home" (cf. 13:36). A. T. Robertson says this is a "definite promise of the second coming of Christ. This blessed promise is fulfilled in death for all

this is a "definite promise of the second coming of Christ. This blessed promise is fulfilled in death for all believers who die before the Second Coming. Jesus comes for us then also."

Vine reminds us that Jesus is speaking of the time of the rapture of all believers at the completion of the church. It is the time of the consummation.

The idea of Christ's Presence (*Parousia*) is distinctly implied here. B. F. Westcott makes a good application of this promise to us.

But though the words refer to the last "coming" of Christ, the promise must not be limited to that one "coming" which is the consummation of all "comings." Nor again must it be confined to the "coming" to the church on the day of Pentecost, or to the "coming" to the individual either at conversion or at death, though these "comings" are included in the thought. Christ is in fact from the moment of His Resurrection ever coming to the world and to the church, and to men as the Risen Lord (1:9).

This thought is expressed by the use of the present *I come* as distinguished from the future *I will come*, as of one isolated future act. The "coming" is regarded in its continual present, or perhaps it may be said, eternal reality . . .

Side by side with the constant coming, realized through the action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church (v. 26), is placed the personal, historical, reception of each believer (*I will take you to Myself*) fulfilled through death.

With that application let me make it very clear that yes, I believe Christ is referring to His own imminent, personal, visible coming in glory. Christ's departure is the condition of His return. He will return because He ascended to heaven. Christ will not fail His disciples.

The purpose of Christ's appearance is plainly affirmed. His appearance is our translation.

Jesus purpose of leaving and coming again is that "where I am you may be also." This is the purpose of His departure and return. It will be heaven for the believer to be where Jesus is and with Him forever. The Presence of Christ involves the vision of His glory (17:24) and carries with it the participation in His nature (1 John 3:2). One day we will be like Him and in His presence for all eternity.

When Jesus Christ prepares a permanent dwelling place for us, He also prepares us for that place. God uses the trials and "troubles" in our lives to prepare us for heaven. Pressures are a part of life and we can rest assured that it is the process God is using to perfect us (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 2:10; Jas. 1:2-4). How pure is the gold coming out of His furnace today?

THE PATH TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE IS MADE PLAIN BY THE COMFORTER

"And you know the way where I am going. Thomas said to Him, L'ord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way? Jesus said to him, I'am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (vv. 4-6).

"Because they had seen Jesus who is the Son of God, the Image of God, and like God (1:18). Hence God is like Jesus Christ. It is a bold and daring claim to deity. The only intelligible conception of God is precisely what Jesus here says. God is like Christ," notes Robertson.

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Jesus disciple Thomas said, "We do not know where it is. How do we know the way?" Jesus said, "I am the way." He said, "I am the truth." All the secrets of the universe have their final solution in Christ. He is also the life of the Father's house. He is the truth and the life because He is the way. "No one comes unto the Father, but through Me."

Philip said, "Show us the Father and it is enough for us." Jesus said, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father."

In the person of Jesus Christ we see God upon the cross. "There is nothing so incredible as this in all the world. . . No one would ever have dreamed of a God who chose the cross to obtain our salvation" (Barclay).

Christ is the only Way to God.

Jesus Christ is the way to God and the only way. Any other path than that which leads to the cross of Jesus will never come to the Celestial city. He is the Incarnate Son of God and therefore the only way to God the Father (John 1:1, 14, 18).

To know Jesus Christ is to know both the goal and the way. In the fullest sense He is our way, guide and strength and beside Him there is none other.

Jesus alone is the way to God. Make it explicitly clear, "No one comes to the Father, but through Me" (v. 6b). The apostle Peter filled with the Holy Spirit said in Acts 4:11-12; "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, *but* which became the chief corner *stone*. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved. "

Christ is the door and it is marked plainly, "Whoever believes in Me shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

Christ is the absolute Truth of God.

Jesus is the personification of Truth. It is Truth in which is summed up all that is eternal and absolute. He is the embodiment of Truth. Only Jesus could say, "I am the Truth." He is the full realization of the self-revelation of God. When you look into the face of Jesus you look into the face of God. To see Jesus is to see God. He is the complete, perfect revelation of the Father.

Apart from Jesus Christ there is no good news. The Gospel is centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ. When we preach Christ crucified we preach the Gospel. The preaching of the truth in the person and work of Jesus sets men free. Jesus said, "I am come a Light unto the world." He is the spiritual light that shines in a world of depravity and spiritual darkness. Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." He was saying you will know Me and in Me you have your freedom from the penalty and power of sin.

Would we know the Truth that sets men free? It is the person of Jesus Christ.

Christ is Life eternal.

Life everlasting is in Christ alone. Every believer can say from the depth of his heart of Jesus, "I never knew what life was until I saw it in His eyes." Jesus give us His life (John 10:10b).

Do you want the abundant Life that overflows with life? Jesus said, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." It is only through Jesus Christ that we can approach the Father. There is no other way to Him.

"I am the way and the truth and the life." Jesus is not only the way to God; He is the absolute truth of God. There is no one else to turn to. Jesus is "the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

Jesus Christ utters a single sentence that clears our path to heaven. Jesus said, "I am the Way, I am the truth, and I am the Life. No man comes to the Father, but through Me." He is our Mediator who has provided the way by His incarnation, life, atoning death, resurrection and ascension (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:13, 15, 18; Heb. 7:25; 10:19-21).

Thomas `a Kempis wrote in the *Imitation of Christ*:

Follow thou Me. I am the way and the truth and the life. 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 thou must follow; the truth which thou must believe; the life for which thou must hope. I am the inviolable way; the infallible truth; the never ending life. I am the straightest way; the sovereign truth; life true, life blessed, life uncreated. If thou remain in my way thou shalt know the truth, and the truth shall make thee free, and thou shalt lay hold on eternal life.

Jesus is the only way to the Father in heaven. He has come to take us to the Father. Everything is ready. All we have to do is follow Him. He has prepared the way.

Jesus Christ takes us by the hand and leads us; He strengthens us and guides us personally every day. He does not tell us about the way; He is the Way. Jesus says to you and me, "Come, go with me and I will take you to heaven. I will lead the way. Come, I will take you there Myself."

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