

Easter 6
May 1, 2016

“Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled”

JOHN 14:23-29

Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. ²⁵ “All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, 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. 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. ²⁸ “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

Twice in this chapter our Lord Jesus says to his disciples and to us, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” Jesus knew how troubled his disciples were just as he knows how troubled we are when troubles come to us. “Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen. Nobody knows but Jesus.”

It was a hard time for the disciples. They heard Jesus talk to them about returning to his heavenly Father, about Judas betraying him and Peter denying him, the rest of the disciples forsaking him. Jesus saw how distressed and troubled they were. He said to them, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

Even though Jesus has ascended into heaven, he has left us with words that greatly comfort us when troubles come. As we look closer at these words before us this morning we notice that he comforts us by telling us how blessed we are to keep his Word, how blessed we are to have the Holy Spirit as our Counselor, how blessed we are to have a peace this world cannot give, and how blessed we are to have him in a position of power at the right hand to take care of us.

How blessed we are to have his Word

You are not alone when troubles come to you. You are blessed to have Jesus’ words with you that you can treasure and keep close to you, “Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will come to him make our home with him.’” The word for “obey” could also be translated as “keep.” Because you love Jesus, you keep or treasure his every word that he has given to you. When you treasure the words of Jesus and keep them close to you, Jesus says that his Father will come and make his home with you.

And so we ask ourselves this morning, “What makes a good home?” Is it the cabinets in a kitchen, or the flooring on the floor, or the paint on the walls or the furniture that is chosen? No, what makes a house a home is the love that exists among the people who are

living there. The closer you are to the words of Jesus, the more you will realize just how much you are loved by your heavenly Father. Your Father will come and make his home with you and that is something very, very special in your life. Here is what Martin Luther said about this in his sermon on these words. "This is a rich comfort and exceedingly high honor. What greater glory and honor can there be than for us poor, miserable people on earth to be the Divine Majesty's dwelling, pleasure-ground, and paradise, his heavenly kingdom?"

Jesus wants everyone to be close to his Word and to have the heavenly Father come and make his home with them. There is such sadness in his words as he speaks of those who do not have this blessing. "He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me." Oh, how Jesus wants people all over the world to treasure his Words. How important it is for us to expend ourselves to find ways to bring these words to people so they have the joy of the heavenly Father coming to make his home with them.

I read a story once of a young man who was engaged to a beautiful girl during WW2. He was able to get some time off so he went to see her but arrived a day earlier than he expected. He went to her home and knocked on the door. There she was sitting at the kitchen table reading the latest letter that he had sent to her, a letter she had read many times. She could not get enough of reading how much her future husband loved her. So it is with the words that Jesus has left us here on the pages of this amazing book we call the Holy Bible. The closer we are to this book, the closer we are drawn to Jesus, and the Heavenly Father comes and makes his home with us. That sure comforts us when we are troubled.

How blessed we are to have the Holy Spirit

There is something else we need to remember when we are troubled. We always have the Holy Spirit to be there with us as our Counselor or Comforter. "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, 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." Imagine for a moment what it must have been like to be with Jesus every day for three years and hear all the things he had to say. How would the disciples be able to remember what he said? How would they be able to accurately put his words down for generations of people to read? Here is where the Holy Spirit takes the words of Jesus, teaches them to us and helps us remember them.

Think of all the things the Holy Spirit has taught you over all these words. In 1 Corinthians chapter two, the Apostle Paul says that no one can know the mind of God. "For who among men know the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." I cannot look into your mind and know what you are thinking. I certainly cannot know what is in the mind of God. But then the Holy Spirit reveals the mind of God to us.

This has a profound effect on your life and mine. I don't have to wonder how the world came into existence. The Holy Spirit teaches us that God created the heavens and the earth. I don't have to wonder why I keep falling short of my own expectations. I learn

from God's word that this is sin. The Holy Spirit convicts me of things I do wrong and shows me the consequences of that sin which is eternal death and punishment. It is the Holy Spirit who opens your eyes and mine to see Jesus as the pure source of forgiveness for every sin ever committed. The Holy Spirit helps us believe the words of Jesus that tell us we will someday have a whole better life in the place our Lord and Savior has prepared for us.

We think of the words of Romans chapter 8 that tell us the Holy Spirit keeps testifying to us that we are children of God. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." How many times this past week has the Holy Spirit reminded you that you are a dear child of your heavenly Father? Satan loves to beat up on us and tell us that we aren't all that important to our heavenly Father. When troubles come he plants into our minds the thought that we are not all that special to our heavenly Father. When we are burdened by guilt and shame for past things we have done wrong, Satan likes to beat up on us and bully us by knocking us down even more. It is then that the Holy Spirit testifies to us and reminds us that we are dear, dear children of our heavenly Father through Jesus. He teaches this important truth to us and then keeps reminding us of this over and over again. Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have the Holy Spirit.

How blessed we are to have a peace this world cannot give

Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have a peace that this world cannot give. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give you to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

The world can give us a certain amount of peace. People find peace in having a good income, a nice home, a close circle of friends and even a loving family. All of this peace is different from the peace that Jesus gives. This is the peace that comes from knowing that no matter what happens in this life you are safe and secure in the unfailing love of your heavenly Father. Jesus has earned for you. You did not earn this by your efforts at trying to please your God. This is the ultimate peace and security.

There was once a man named Horatio Spafford who seemed to have everything going for him. In addition to his faith in Christ, he had a beautiful wife and children, as well as a thriving business in Chicago during the late 1800's. Then he lost almost everything he owned investing in land along the shores of Lake Michigan. Rather than cancel a planned trip to England he sent his wife and four daughters on the trip with a promise to come a few days later. The transatlantic steamer was struck off the coast of England by another ship. His wife was saved, but his children drowned. His wife sent an urgent telegram, "Saved alone." He took the first steamer to England to be at his wife's side. As the ship crossed very close to where the shipwreck occurred, Horatio Spafford stood on the deck, in cold winter air of the Atlantic Ocean, thinking of his children, and looking up at the starry sky. That night he went back to a cabin and composed these famous lines, "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." Don't let your hearts be troubled. You have a peace this world cannot give.

How blessed we are to see Jesus' power

Don't let your hearts be troubled. Jesus did not leave you alone when he left this earth and returned to his heavenly Father. Jesus told his disciples, "If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I." Jesus says that Father is greater than he is. That was true while he was here on this earth when he set aside his power as God. The disciples saw him weak, tired, hungry, and praying for strength from his heavenly Father. That all changed when Jesus went home to his Father. Now he sits on the right hand of his Father, where he has assumed the power and glory he had with his Father before the world began.

That means he is in a position to hear every prayer you pray even before you pray. That means he can oversee your life and even micromanage the affairs of your life. He is in a position to take the problems you face and turn them into blessings. Because of the position of power Jesus now has we know the words of Romans 8:26 are not just wishful thinking. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Do not let your hearts be troubled. Amen.