

Pastor Shaun Arndt  
April 26, 2020  
Sermon Text – John 14:1-12  
Easter 5

## Comfort for Troubled Hearts

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort. Amen.*

*Dear friends in Christ,*

The smell of roast lamb and bitter herbs fills the room. But so does a growing fear about what's happening. Anxiety and uncertainty dance about in the disciples' hearts like the flames on the oil lamps that light the upper room. Talk of betrayal and desertion and the death of their Friend and Master sends their hearts lurching like boats on a storm-tossed sea.

And we get it, don't we? Whether we admit it or not, we've been there or we are there right now.

Perhaps these past months of pandemic have given us a little insight into what must have been going on in the hearts and minds of Jesus' followers that first Holy Week. I've heard more than one person comment how celebrating Easter locked in our homes under quarantine similar to the disciples gathered behind locked doors that first Easter night.

And so before it all happened, Jesus turned to His troubled disciples then, just as He turns to you and me still today and gives us exactly what He knows we need: **Comfort for Troubled Hearts.**

Jesus says, **“Do not let your heart be troubled.”** The Lord says things like this *a lot*. The phrase **“Do not be afraid”** comes up more than 100 times in the Bible.

The Lord says this because He knows our weaknesses and vulnerability. He knows that in this sin ruined world there will be dangers, sorrows, temptations and attacks that will **trouble** our hearts and try to shake our faith.

And so Jesus immediately adds: **Believe in God;** calm your hearts by looking away from your troubles and the uncertainties of this world by looking to **God.** Place your trust in Him, for He is bigger and mightier than every trouble. **God** has the power and the perfect wisdom to either deliver you from, or deliver you through every struggle, turning difficulty into blessing, like when our troubles remind us how much we need His help every moment!

But what about when it feels like God is far away, or temptation makes us wonder if He actually cares, or when guilt makes us think there is no way He should care. How can we know what God is thinking about us when trouble and sorrow shake our hearts?

Or we start to wonder as others have before, “Where was God when that happened?!!!” In a way wasn't that what **Philip** was getting at when he said to Jesus: **“Show us the Father, and that is enough for us.”**

Jesus **comforts troubled hearts** that have asked such things with these words: **Believe in God; believe also in me.** In the original Greek language that records Jesus' words here, these two phrases are linked with a special form of poetic device that makes it clear that to **believe in God** is to **believe in Jesus.**

Which is exactly the same point Jesus makes several times in these verses: **I am the Way... No one comes to the Father except through me... If you know me, you would also know my Father... The one who has seen me has seen the Father... I am in the Father and the Father is in me... The words that I am telling you I am not speaking on my own, but the Father who remains in me is doing his works...**

These verses plunge us straight into the mystery of the Triune God—that there is one undivided God and He is three distinct persons. The **Father** and the **Son** are distinct from each other here, yet they are One, One God, One Divine Essence. This mystery is completely beyond our understanding as one would expect God to be!

But the point for us to take away is clear! Jesus Christ, born of Mary is the eternal God the Son. He is the only way to know about the true God and the only **Way** to God. Without Jesus you can never know God.

So when you hear Jesus speak, you hear the very Word of God. If you know how Jesus feels about you, you know how **the Father** feels about you.

No matter how *distant* God may *feel*, He is most certainly not! Just look to Jesus. In Him, true God came down from heaven and became our brother and made our skin, His skin; our flesh, His flesh. He left perfection to make our trouble and our sin to be His trouble and His sin to save us from it!

Know that God is not far off but is with you and utterly devoted to you, for Jesus says and therefore God says: **Surely I am with you always until the end of the age.**

Have no doubt God cares about you and that He loves you with a love every bit as amazing and beyond understanding as God Himself is, for He so loved you and me that He gave His Son to save us. The Son left heaven to hang upon on a cross and be sunk into hell's punishment instead of us. See Him rise from death on Easter morning to give you endless life and know that He loves you with an everlasting love!

*But where was God when this or that happened...* Look to Jesus for the answer to calm your troubled heart. God was lying in a manger, a little baby shivering in the cold, born to endure all human sorrow and all hell's wrath to save us from the greatest trouble of all: the endless separation from God our sin had earned.

Yes, God was there on a cross, carrying the weight of the world's sins, including yours and mine for every time we accused the Holy One and every time our hearts were troubled about all the wrong things, about money rather than souls bankrupt without the gospel or about health of body but not concerned about health of soul. Yes, God the author of life in Jesus Christ was dying in our place beneath sin's curse so that trusting in Him we will never actually have to know what Hell actually is like.

And yes, God was there, ruling all human history, the rise and fall of nations so that you would be brought to a baptismal font and hear in the Word and the Water the voice of your Dear Good Shepherd calling you as His very own.

So know that in every trial and sorrow He is there to hold you up and to keep His promise to work all things for your good, to do what He did for his troubled disciples of long ago, to bring them through the darkness of Good Friday to the bright joys of Easter Alleluias!

Above all this is what your God wants for you. This is what Jesus came to do: not to make life a little nicer in this broken world, but to bring us to the infinitely and eternally better:  
**In my Father's house are many mansions... I am going to prepare a place for you.**

Jesus cuts right to the chase, to the ultimate goal of our Christian faith, what it is all about, where we long to be.

Yes God has given us many promises and much guidance for our life in this world, but it's never been all about the here and now, it's always been about eternal life, about the resurrection, about that everlasting home with the Lord. St. Paul makes that clear when he said: **If our hope in Christ applies only to this life, we are the most pitiful people of all, but in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep** (1 Co 15).

Yes, that's where Jesus was going... to suffer death in the place of all sinners on the cross and then to rise in victory from the grave. In so doing He was carrying out the ultimate reason He came to this world: **to prepare a place for His people.**

Notice Jesus has to do the preparing. He does not show us the way to life with God, but He is **the Way, the Truth, the Life**, nothing we could do could ever earn us a place in the **Father's mansions**, only Jesus' holiness and sin cleansing blood gets you there. You can be sure you will get there when you cling to Jesus, for He is all you need, He is **the only Way.**

**In my Father's house are many mansions...** The Greek word translated mansion means a permanent place, an enduring place, something that remains forever, unlike the things of this world, that all wear out, spoil and fade.

When King David was about to die, he put it this way: **"I am about to go the way of all the earth"** (1 Ki 2:2). That's the way of this world, things pass away and fail, but Jesus, our God and **the Way** to God gives us **the Life** that will never end, never disappoint, never wear out, never be ruined by viruses or heartache or trouble. See He died and rose and has ascended to heaven so that it is all **prepared for you.**

Yes, we will have trouble and uncertainty that will often grip our hearts, but Jesus cuts through all the uncertainty to our ultimate future where Jesus will do for you and every believer exactly what He has promised: **"I will come again and take you to be with me, so that you may also be where I am."**

Listen to Jesus in His Word. Stay with Jesus. For Jesus is **the Way, the Truth and the Life.** He is **Comfort for our Troubled Hearts.** Amen.

*The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*