

128. The Gospel of John—14:1

The Cure For The Troubled Heart

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(12/27/20)

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As we come to the Gospel of John Chapter 13, we are less than 15 hours from the Cross—but more specifically, Chapters 13-17 cover a 6-hour period (roughly 6pm to midnight).

This was such an important 6-hour period that John spends one-quarter of his entire Gospel recording it. It begins in the upper room where Jesus and His disciples are celebrating the Feast of Passover and where He will be giving them one last teaching before His crucifixion.

In John 13–17 we have in essence our Lord's **"farewell message"** to His disciples where He endeavors to comfort their hearts in the *present* but also to prepare their hearts for the *future*.

Last week, we finished Chapter 13 and now this morning we find ourselves entering Chapter 14—which is the same teaching by Jesus (the chapter divisions were added much later). He will be spending these last few hours instructing them, teaching them—but mostly comforting them.

The next few days will be especially difficult for them as their whole world will be turned upside down.

And so, Chapter 14 opens with Jesus saying to His disciples (minus Judas)—

John 14:1 (NKJV)

¹ "Let not your heart be troubled...

This admonition by the Lord Jesus is not surprising. He has just announced that ***one of His Apostles was a traitor who was going to betray Him, and that Peter (the unofficial leader of Jesus' disciples) was going to deny Him not once—but 3 times!***

And then the heaviest blow of all—***He revealed to them that He was going to leave them, and they couldn't follow Him:*** Jesus follows up these 'bombshell' revelations with the words (a command in the Greek)—***"Let not your heart be troubled..."***

One commentator had this to say—

"The last few days had been an emotional roller coaster for the disciples. Their fervent messianic hopes had reached an apex during the dizzying excitement of the triumphal entry—only to be dashed when Jesus publicly announced His impending death: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24), and then repeated that prediction privately to them: "Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come' " (13:33).

Like their fellow Jews, the disciples saw the Messiah as a conquering king. He would, they passionately believed, free Israel from bondage to Rome, restore her sovereignty and glory, and extend it over the world. The concept of a dying Messiah had no place in their theology (cf. Luke 24:21). On a more

personal note, the disciples had forsaken everything to follow Jesus (Matt. 19:27); now He apparently was forsaking them."

I think, on top of everything else Jesus had just predicted (the betrayal of Judas and Peter denying Him)—**I think the greatest thing that troubled their hearts was the statement by Jesus that—He was leaving them** (John 13:33).

And I think that was primarily why Jesus said to them, "**Let not your heart be troubled...**" By saying this, Jesus wasn't telling them, not to *start* being troubled—they were already troubled. He was giving them a command—to *stop* being troubled!

Please understand, God never commands us to do anything without supplying the power for us to obey. This command is tied to their (and our) faith in God—but in particular to His Son Jesus Christ:

John 14:1 (NKJV)

¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

The Greek word translated '**troubled**' is the verb *tarassō*—a word that means "*to shake,*" or "*to stir up*". It is a Greek word that was used *literally* in the N.T. of the waters of the Pool of Bethesda being '*stirred up*' (John 5:4)—and *figuratively* in numerous places in the N.T. such as:

Matthew 2:3 (NKJV)

³ When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Matthew 14:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

The concept of a '**troubled heart**' involves **fear**—and with regard to His disciples troubled hearts—fear for the uncertainty of the future. **So, we could paraphrase what Jesus told His disciples in John 14:1 as—"Don't let your hearts be fearful."**

Before we look at that, let me say: **"fear" is the number one emotional issue plaguing people today.**

"It was reported that newspaper counselor, Ann Landers during the height of her career received an average of 10,000 letters each month, and nearly all of them from people burdened with problems.

She was asked if there was any one problem that dominated the letters she received—her reply was that the one problem her readers seemed to struggle with above all others was fear.

She said, "*People are afraid of losing their health, their wealth, their loved ones—People are afraid of life itself*".

Someone else has said,

"Fear is the most crippling human emotion. It paralyzes soldiers in the mist of battle and keeps Christians from sharing the lifesaving message of the gospel with those who are lost".

REFLECTION: Think about a time where “fear” took control of your life and think about the effects of this fear upon you and your family and/or friends?

In the Scriptures there are places that admonish us to fear some things and even extol fear as a virtue—

Proverbs 9:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom...(the fear of the Lord is to hate evil)

Isaiah 66:2 (NKJV)

² For all those *things* My hand has made, And all those *things* exist," Says the LORD. "But on this *one* will I look: On *him who is* poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.

*But in contrast there are **over 300 places** in the Bible where we are commanded by God, as His people **not to fear** certain things—for example:*

We are not to fear man or circumstance or the uncertainty of the future—

Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls-- ¹⁸ Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Isaiah 41:10, 13 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Fear not, for I *am* with you; Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' ¹³ For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'

Fear robs us of our peace, our joy—and most importantly our faith.

Fear and faith are mutually exclusive and cannot exist together at the same time in a Christian's heart
Hold onto that thought. So, what is it that causes all this fear?

I think that ultimately it is the fact that we are living in a fallen world—and that fear entered the world at the same time that sin entered the world. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit off the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they hid from God—**they hid because they were afraid.**

For the first time in human history man felt that horrible sensation that we all know as *fear*, and ever since, fear has been surrounding us, paralyzing us—and often *overcoming* us.

>>> In the days ahead, our faith might be tested in ways we wouldn't have thought possible last year at this time. The devil might try to come at us "like a flood" in the days and months ahead to overwhelm us with fear and uncertainty about the future.

Jesus said that prior to His return, “people’s hearts would be failing them from fear of those things coming upon the earth.” (Luke 21:26)

But those words spoken by Jesus were directed at unbelievers living during the Tribulation Period—but to His people living before that period of time (like us) He said things like:

Luke 12:29-32 (NKJV)

²⁹ And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. ³⁰ For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. ³¹ But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. ³² Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

I’ve entitled this message: “**Cure for the Troubled Heart.**”

Which begs the question—“What do we do when we find ourselves in difficult and even frightening situations?—What is the cure for a troubled or fearful heart?”

Very simply, the cure for a fearful heart is—faith!

There are basically 2 kinds of faith that a person can exercise: **saving faith and practical faith.**

To *come* to Jesus requires one kind of faith and to *walk* with Jesus requires another.

➤ **Saving faith** is the faith of a moment which affects my eternity.

➤ **Practical faith** is moment by moment which affects my daily life.

A classic passage with regard to *saving* faith is—

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

And one for *practical* faith is—

Hebrews 10:38 (NKJV)

³⁸ *Now the just shall live by faith...*

TO COME TO JESUS
REQUIRES ONE KIND OF FAITH—

Saving Faith

TO WALK WITH JESUS REQUIRES ANOTHER—

Practical Faith

Practical faith starts out as God giving each of us a **“measure of faith” but the more we exercise it the more it grows and the stronger it gets.** In many ways it’s easier to exercise faith for a moment than it is to exercise moment by moment faith for a lifetime.

But as Jesus said, *“According to your faith let it be done to you”*. (Matthew 9:29); and *“He could do no mighty work among them because of their unbelief”* (Matthew 13:55)

“What is the definition of biblical faith?”

One author defines it this way—

“Faith is confidence in the trustworthiness of God. It is the conviction that what God says is true and that what He promises will come to pass.”

Another puts it this way—

“Biblical faith is a confident expectation that grabs the future and drags it into the present so that it governs the way I think, live and view this life”.

Oswald Chambers—

“Faith [True biblical faith] never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One Who is leading.”

Saving Faith

AFFECTS MY ETERNITY...

Practical Faith

AFFECTS MY DAILY LIFE...

In other words,

true faith doesn’t seek to control God—it seeks to be controlled by God. Even as Jesus taught us when He prayed, “Not My will but Your will be done.”

True faith perseveres, it hangs in there, and it sees us through the difficulties of life.

It’s the kind of faith that Peter expressed when he said to Jesus, *“Where else can we go only You have the words of eternal life”*.

One author said—

“Biblical faith is so important to our Christian lives that between the principle “the just shall live by faith” at the end of Hebrews chapter 10—and the exhortation “run with endurance the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith” at the beginning of Hebrews chapter 12—Paul inserts an entire chapter on defining, explaining and illustrating what true faith is and what it looks like in the lives of those who possess it.”

REFLECTION: Try to define Saving Faith and Practical Faith and think of some personal examples?

And one of the great lessons Hebrews 11 (the great hall of faith chapter) teaches us is that **just because a person has great faith doesn't mean they won't experience great adversities, persecutions or even death for their faith in Jesus.**

And yet the point he makes is that **faith trusts God no matter what**—as Job said, *“Though He slays me I will still trust Him”*.

What is faith?—The best definition of biblical faith comes right out of God's Word—

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Biblical faith is always tied to **“things hoped for”** never to things that have already come to pass—even as Paul said in Romans 8—

Romans 8:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ ...hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

**Biblical hope is never a “maybe hope” or a “hope so hope”
it is always a certain hope, a settled fact, a sure thing kind of hope.**

And the reason that biblical hope is a sure thing, a settled fact, is because it's always tied to a promise of God—and God cannot lie and therefore everything He has promised He absolutely will bring to pass.

Hebrews 6:17-19 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, ¹⁸ that by two immutable things, in which *it is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. ¹⁹ This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...

Biblical Hope

IS **NEVER** A "MAYBE HOPE"
OR A "HOPE SO" HOPE
—IT IS ALWAYS A **CERTAIN** HOPE,
A **SETTLED FACT**,
A "**SURE THING**" KIND OF HOPE.
A "**KNOW SO**" HOPE...

IT IS **ALWAYS** TIED TO A *promise of God.*
AND IS ALWAYS *steadfast* AND *sure.*

Look, **God is gracious and will often give us things we ask for even if He hasn't specifically promised those things to us**—a new bike for our son or daughter; or a nice vacation for the family that we can't afford but He graciously provides when we ask Him.

However, these things are **not promised** to us in His Word and therefore are not a **sure hope**.

What He has promised us is the forgiveness of our sins and the gift of eternal life when we put our faith in Jesus.

Furthermore, once we have put our faith in Jesus—**He has promised to provide our physical needs because He is our Father, and we are His children.**

Peter said that the Lord has given to His children "*many great and precious promises*"—everything we need for life and godliness. So, these promises become the focus of our faith and the certainty of our hope—that what God has promised He is able to perform. (Romans 4:21)

REFLECTION: Try to recall times, when God was gracious to you and provided you with something you asked for? Can you explain the difference between this type of "gift" and the promise he has made to you?

But getting back to our theme, "**Cure for the Troubled (fearful) Heart**"—fear robs us of our peace, our joy—and most importantly our faith.

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

The fear of man or circumstance or the uncertainty of the future—is not from God and why Jesus commanded His disciples to "**not let their hearts be troubled (fearful).**"

The Lord went on to tell them why—"you believe in God, believe also in Me."

In other words, **faith is the cure for fear**—faith in God’s promises which He went on to give them in the rest of John 14.

Aren’t you glad that know Jesus Christ?

What peace there is from knowing that our future is secure as children of God and that we don’t need to fear what’s coming! This of course was what Jesus was trying to communicate to His disciples in the upper room the night before His crucifixion when He commanded them not to be fearful about the future but to have faith—faith in God and in the promises He has given us in His Word.

Remember I said that fear and faith are mutually exclusive of one another—they cannot exist in the heart of a Christian simultaneously at same time in the same percentage or intensity.

In other words, you *can’t* have 100% fear and 100% faith existing in your heart at the same time—and neither can 0% fear and 0% faith exist in your heart at the same time either.

Your heart can have 50% fear and 50% faith, or 70% fear and 30% faith dwelling together in your heart ...

REFLECTION: Explain how faith has been your cure for fear? What % of fear/faith do you live with?

My point is the more faith that fills your heart when facing a crisis or adversity of some kind—the less fear will be present (and vice versa). And so, with that in mind, the goal of the Christian life is not to try to *diminish our fear*—we instead must seek to *increase our faith*.

And how is that accomplished? —

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

What you get out of God’s Word will depend upon how you view God’s Word—do you treasure it?

Psalms 119:162 (NKJV)

¹⁶² I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure.

Psalms 119:127 (NKJV)

¹²⁷ Therefore I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold!

The Word of God is valuable—but it will only benefit you (make you rich in faith) if you treasure it and stop giving it lip service and playing games with it.

Vance Havner—

"I have read that years ago in that part of Africa where diamonds in the rough were plentiful, a traveler chanced on boys playing. Closer investigation revealed that they were playing marbles with diamonds! and the coinage of the eternal as though it were play money. It is no time to play marbles with diamonds!"

I wholeheartedly say "Amen" to that!

Listen carefully to me—we could in a very short period of time enter the most serious times of testing with regard to our faith that we have ever experienced. This is not a time to play games—it's not a time to go on enjoying "Country Club Christianity" as so many are doing.

If we don't shift our walk with God into 'high gear' and get serious quickly—many are going to become 'shipwrecked in their faith.' This is no time to play "marbles with diamonds" and treat God's Word like a 'trifle'—the way many treat a message in a fortune cookie—UNSERIOUSLY!

I'm not saying that God gave me this verse for our church or even for the Church of Jesus Christ in America at this time in history—**but it is in His Word and we need to take it seriously:**

Revelation 2:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

May God give us grace, strength, and courage for what lies ahead—in Jesus precious name!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower, and not an earth-dweller—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

This image shows a full page of a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.