

Exalting Jesus Christ

"Tranquil Words for Troubled Hearts"

INTRODUCTION:

- I. For the prodigal son, who left his family and squandered his inheritance in indulgent, immoral living, home was a faraway place.
 - A. And yet, when thoughts of home tugged at his heart, it brought him to his senses.
 1. Returning home, he found the warm embrace of a father who adorned his son with robes, rings and new shoes, and celebrated the return of his son with a fatted calf, music and dancing.
 - a. There he found acceptance, restoration, fellowship and joy.
 - b. He found a tranquil haven for his troubled heart.
 2. Our homes are designed to be a hint of heaven – the dim glimmer of a more beautiful, more secure, more peaceful place.
 - B. For Christians, our pilgrimage here on earth is filled with all kinds of experiences – some frightening and disappointing, and some filled with joy and hope.
 1. But the older we get, and the further we travel down the road of life, it becomes increasingly apparent that this world is not our home – heaven is.

C. As we come to the fourteenth chapter of John, Jesus senses that His disciple's hearts are deeply troubled over the words He had just spoken in the previous chapter.

1. **John 13:33** – *"Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you."*
2. **John 13:36** – *"Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward."*
3. Just imagine the emptiness and sense of loss each of these disciples felt upon hearing that the Lord would soon be leaving them, and where He was going they could not follow – at least not immediately.

II. Therefore, as we continue our series of studies "Exalting Jesus Christ" we come to the fourteenth chapter of John where Jesus provides "Tranquil Words for Troubled Hearts."

A. These are words of great comfort and assurance that turn their hearts toward home – a home in heaven.

1. For us, the chapter break between John 13:38, where we ended the last lesson, and chapter fourteen, where we start today's study, is abrupt and unfortunate.

- a. It's unfortunate because if we open our Bibles and begin reading with verse 1, we don't have the background we need to understand this statement.
 - b. What Jesus says in chapter fourteen is inseparably linked to the things He has just said to His disciples in chapter thirteen.
2. Contextually, the words of Jesus in chapter 14 answer Peter's questions in chapter 13.
- a. **John 13:36** – *Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?"*
 - b. **John 13:37** – *Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake."*
 - c. And, of course, these questions refer back to the statement of Jesus in verse 33 about His imminent departure.
 - d. This explains why the disciples in chapter 14 are deeply troubled.
- B. Therefore, as we take a closer look at these verses there are some wonderful truths revealed here.
1. First, we want to take a closer look at the thoughts that troubled not only their hearts but ours as well.
 2. Then, we want to consider the things Jesus says that not only quieted their troubled hearts but will quiet ours also.

BODY:

- I. From the words of Jesus concerning His imminent departure, it seems there are at least three things that troubled the hearts of these disciples – and can trouble ours as well.
 - A. First, their hearts and ours are troubled over thoughts of death.
 1. Jesus had just told His disciples that He would die soon.
 - a. **John 13:33a** – *"Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer."*
 - b. No doubt, this evoked fear in the hearts of these men.
 2. The fear of death – whether our own or a loved one – troubles our hearts like a storm that destroys everything in its path.
 - a. Although we may show great faith and courage when the moment finally comes, it's when we first hear the bad news that our hearts are shaken to the very core.
 - b. No matter how strong and faithful we may be, hearing news for the first time that we or someone we love is facing death can be earth-shattering.
 - B. Not only were their hearts troubled by the news that Jesus would die soon, their hearts and ours are also troubled by thoughts of trials that bring on fear and anxiety.
 1. Jesus told His disciples that they could not come with Him when He would leave.

- a. **John 13:33b** – *"You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you."*
 - b. For the disciples, this trial was not only confusing, but filled them with anxiety and frustration.
2. Let's be real honest with ourselves – daily living takes a toll on each of us.
- a. Despite the numerous passages that are designed to give us hope and assurance in times of trouble, we still get overwhelmed at times when those storms of trial come sweeping through our lives.
 - b. We feel so helpless – so confused.
 - c. And the word that pops up in our thoughts more than any other is the word "Why" – why me, why this, why now?
 - d. And what makes matters worse is that we don't always find the answers to those questions – just like Job who didn't understand why God was bringing so many trials and adversities into his life.
- C. And, not only are our thoughts troubled by trials, the Lord's disciples hearts and ours are also troubled by thoughts of failure.
1. Upon hearing Peter's strong pledge of loyalty, Jesus predicted that he would ultimately fail the test.

- a. **John 13:37-38** – *Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake." 38 Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times."*
2. Disobedience and disloyalty always produce guilt and worry – because, despite our best intentions, we failed the Lord.
 - a. Like Peter, all of us have denied Christ in some way or another in moments of weakness.
 - b. If we haven't denied Him with words, then we have in deeds.
 - c. And if we haven't denied Him in deeds, then we've certainly denied Him in thoughts.
3. Even the apostle Paul was concerned about this, and that's what motivated him to work hard at remaining faithful to the Lord.
 - a. **1 Corinthians 9:27** – *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*
 - b. If Paul knew there was a real threat of him being disqualified by failing to remain faithful, then what should that say to us?

II. However, despite the things that troubled the hearts of these disciples, I find at least six great truths in the words of Jesus in chapter 14 that can quiet any troubled heart.

A. First, I think we need to understand that personal faith in a personal God brings personal strength.

1. Jesus said: **John 14:1** – *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me."*

a. The verbs in this verse are present imperatives – which conveys the idea of "keep on believing in God. . . keep on believing in Me."

b. The disciples had trusted Jesus up to this point.

c. Now He is telling them to keep on trusting in Him through the approaching storm that will, no doubt, shake their faith to its very core.

2. The message is the same for us.

a. We trusted in Jesus to be the Savior of our souls when we gave our lives to Christ in obedience to the gospel.

(1). We trusted Jesus to cleanse us from all sin through His blood.

(2). And we've trusted Jesus to continue to cleanse us from sin every time we confess those sins to God.

b. When trials come our way, trusting in Jesus becomes even more critical – because it's at these moments that we become most vulnerable.

(1). While Satan will use trials to weaken our faith and turn us away from the Savior, God uses those same trials to build us up and make us even stronger.

(2). Therefore, when the storms of trials and adversity come over the horizon, *"Let not your heart be troubled."*

(3). Keep on believing in God. . . keep on believing in Jesus.

B. Second, we need to remember that while Jesus is preparing a place for us, He is also preparing us for that place.

1. **John 14:2-3** – *"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And 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."*

2. Make no mistake about it, God is preparing us for heaven just as sure as Jesus is preparing heaven for us.

3. However, the way God prepares us for heaven is most often through trials and troubles.

a. **James 1:2-4** – *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces*

patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

- b. **James 1:12** – *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*
 - c. **Romans 5:1-4** – *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.*
 - d. **Philippians 2:12-13** – *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*
4. Pressures are part of the process of making us perfect and complete – that's why God's allows trials and troubles to come our way.
5. But I want you to notice something. The statement of Jesus in John 14:4 prompted Thomas to ask:

- a. **John 14:5** – *"Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"*
6. To which Jesus replied:
 - a. **John 14:6** – *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*
 - b. Imagine yourself asking for directions in a strange town, only to have the person say, "Take the first left here and then go left at the second intersection, then turn right at the second street, and go left when the road makes a Y, and then take the first right."
 - c. Then imagine asking for directions only to have the person say, "Follow me, I'll take you there."
7. Jesus is the way – the true and living way.
 - a. He doesn't point to the way in the distance or draw us some impersonal map.
 - b. Rather, Jesus takes us by the hand and leads us.
 - c. He leads us all the way home to the Father – the only way. . . the true and living way.
 - d. All He asks is that you place your hand in His and follow Him.
- C. Another great truth we can learn from these verses is that we have a living portrait of the character of God in Jesus.

1. Sometimes we get a completely confused picture of God from the Bible.
 - a. From the Old Testament we get the picture of a vengeful God of wrath and judgment – a God to be feared rather than loved.
 - b. But Jesus said: **John 14:7** – *"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."*
 - c. This prompted Philip to say: **John 14:8** – *"Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."*
 - d. To which Jesus replied: **John 14:9-11** – *"Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."*
2. When you look into the face of Jesus, you are looking into the face of God – you are seeing the same loving, gracious, merciful Father that you see in the Son.

- a. This is why the Hebrew writer compared Jesus to the Father by saying that Jesus is: **Hebrews 1:3** – “. . .*the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. . .*”
3. We can take great comfort in knowing that our God is a God of great mercy and compassion.
 - a. We know that simply because Jesus and the Father are of the same divine essence, and of the same divine nature.
 - b. To see Jesus is to see the Father.
 - c. This does not mean they are the same person, but that they are of the same divine loving, compassionate and gracious nature.
- D. Another great truth from this wonderful passage is that great things occur when we pray in Jesus' name – praying in a way that glorifies the Father.
 1. **John 14:12-14** – *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”*
 2. Although Jesus was specifically speaking to the apostles and talking about the works they would accomplish through the Holy Spirit, there is a great message for us.

3. Unfortunately, we have a lot of misconceptions about prayer.
 - a. Some think of prayer as a kind of magic lantern – all we need to do is rub it and our wishes come true.
 - b. Or we think of prayer as some kind of cosmic vending machine – all we need to do is drop in the right prayer and out pops what we wanted.
 - c. Prayers like this are all self-centered and selfish – they are all about us and what the Lord can give us in return.
4. But Jesus points out that praying in His name should have one ultimate aim – one ultimate purpose – *"that the Father may be glorified in the Son."* (v. 13).
 - a. When we pray to the Father in the name of Jesus, and our prayers are answered, we need to see that as God being glorified through His Son.
 - b. And most importantly, we need to thank God and glorify God for answering our prayers – despite the fact that we often forget to thank God for the answer.
 - c. We are so quick to blame God when He doesn't answer our prayers the way we expected. But how quick are we to thank Him when He does answer as we requested?
- E. And, another great truth we learn here is that when we pray we are not alone – we have a Helper.

1. **John 14:15-18** – *"If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."*
2. Again, while we realize Jesus was speaking specifically to His disciples, the apostles, here, there are some great truths here for us as well.
 - a. When Jesus promised *"another Helper"* in verse 16, the term *"another"* literally means "another of the same kind."
 - b. The Holy Spirit is "another Helper" just like Jesus – meaning the Holy Spirit is "of the same kind" as Jesus, of the same divine nature and character as Jesus. The third member of the Godhead.
 - c. This "Helper" abides in us and will be with us forever.
3. No doubt this is what prompted the apostle Paul to write:
 - a. **Romans 8:26-27** – *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches*

the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

4. Have you ever been at a loss for words when you prayed, and yet you knew God understood – you knew God knew what you were trying to say?
 5. I don't pretend to understand how the Holy Spirit does this, but I know "*He makes intercession for us according to the will of God*" – especially when "*we do not know what we should pray for as we ought.*"
 6. We're not alone. Even though Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us, He has left us with the Holy Spirit – our Helper.
- F. And finally, from these verses in John chapter fourteen we learn that our life is inseparably linked to Christ Himself.
1. **John 14:19-20** – "*A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. 20 At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.*"
 2. The world around us lives by sight, and when Jesus is out of sight, He's out of mind.
 3. But you and I as Christians live by faith (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7), and we see Jesus everywhere we turn.

- a. We see Jesus behind every circumstance – and we have confidence that whatever circumstance may befall us, Jesus is still with us, and everything will eventually work together for our good.
- b. **Romans 8:28** – *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

CONCLUSION:

- I. As we bring this lesson to a close, I don't want to leave without showing you three things we can do to strengthen our hearts.
 - A. These wonderful truths are found in the next three verses.
 - 1. **John 14:21-24** – *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "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. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."*

B. If you look closely at verse 21, you'll notice the words "*has. . . keeps. . . loves.*" "*He who HAS My commandments and KEEPS them, it is he who LOVES Me.*"

1. These words relate directly to the three realms of worry that so often trouble our hearts: fear. . . anxiety. . . guilt.

a. First, knowledge of the truth removes fear. It's remarkable how information from God's Word takes away the superstition and trauma of death.

b. Second, application of the knowledge reduces anxiety. Do you recall the phrase in verse 21 – "*and keeps them.*" That means God's Word needs to be a vital part of our lives, and we need to be obedient to it. Knowing we are obedient reduces anxiety.

c. And third, love for the Lord releases guilt. We have no guilt when we know our love the Lord is strong enough to motivate us to please Him and remain faithful to Him.

II. At the beginning of this chapter Jesus calmed His disciples with words about His Father's house.

A. If that hasn't been enough to calm your troubled heart, then perhaps His final words will.

1. **John 14:23** – *"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."*
 2. While you and I are living on earth, we are living in a temporary home – even our own bodies are temporary.
 - a. But we can still have the assurance that Jesus and the Father will be with us – dwelling in our hearts by faith.
- B. But this promise is only to those who truly love the Lord enough to keep His commandments.
1. Are you that kind of person?
 2. If not, then you can become that kind of person today by coming to Christ in faithful obedience to the gospel, or by coming back to Him in genuine repentance and godly sorrow.
 3. Do whatever you need to do to open your heart and welcome Jesus and the Father in as guests – until the day they welcome you into their home in heaven, forever.