

Trouble-free living?!

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Anxiety; Suffering; The Way; Way of the Cross / John 14:1–14 Easter 5A

- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.
- › Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

A Funeral Text?

For yet another Sunday we hear a text that we typically hear at a funeral. When we hear John 14 we might expect to see a casket in front of the church. This text provides hope for the family that Jesus has prepared a place for their loved one and that He is the Way to eternal life and He is Life itself.

Typically there is anxiety and trouble in the lives of those gathered at a funeral of someone they love. Yet, on any given Sunday, you and I are filled with anxiety and trouble in our hearts. As we look at our text for this morning and find comfort, peace, and hope - we can ask ourselves is Jesus telling us that we will have trouble-free living if we believe in him as the true God? Or is there something else going on. After all Jesus does say, "Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me."

Jesus is speaking to the disciples on Maundy Thursday hours before he would be betrayed into the hands of evil men and denied by Peter. He is speaking to the disciples as he is headed to the cross and soon will no longer be physically present among them. Jesus is going the way of the cross and the disciples are feeling anxious! For immediately before this he speaks of the betrayal of Judas and Peter's upcoming denial.

I am sure in the Upper Room, anxious and troubled hearts are filling the room. Whether it be in the Upper Room, at a funeral, or on any given Sunday anxious and troubled hearts fill the room seeking God's peace, comfort, and joy.

Anxious and Troubled Hearts

The disciples were anxious that their Lord and Teacher, Jesus Christ is about to be taken away from them. Hearing that one of their own was going to betray Him and deny Him troubled them. Families and friends that gather at the death of a loved one and hear this text at a funeral have anxious and troubled hearts. They wonder how the monster-size hole in their heart is

going to be filled or even the seat at the table. Perhaps families are trying to figure out who's going to take care of the daily tasks that used to be taken care of by the now deceased. Anxious and troubled hearts are real.

You have them and so do I. You have them when you are the person looking at the casket of someone you love...whether it has been a spouse, a parent, a grandparent, a friend, and even a child. What else causes you anxious and troubled hearts? What keeps you up at night? A fight with a spouse? A dispute with a neighbor? A conflict with a church member? A relationship with a child that is damaged? Any relationship that needs restoration and reconciliation?

- Maybe you have financial trouble or are worried about the upcoming year and what the weather will do and how the crops will fair this year.
- Anxious and Troubled Hearts come when you wish you knew the future. Or perhaps it's all the change going on in the world. Maybe it's the Health Care Bill or the Trump Budget or even the ideas of a tax reform.
- Anxious and troubled hearts come when you not only wish you knew the future, but maybe feel as though it is unsettled.
- You experience anxious and troubled hearts when you or a family member is suffering from a deadly disease.
- You experience anxious and troubled hearts when you just don't know what to do as a parent anymore to help your child's anxious and troubled heart.
- You experience anxious and troubled hearts when sin is in your life. Sin that others know about or sin that is deep inside of you - that is secret and would be quite embarrassed if it was brought out to the open.
- You each have your own situations that cause your hearts to be filled with anxiety and trouble. You know what they are.

At points with your anxious and troubled hearts you try to find a way to calm them down. And you might even use the ways of Satan and his temptations. Maybe you try to cure your anxious hearts with alcohol, drugs, or some form of sexual fulfillment. Maybe you spend more time at work. Maybe you spend more time at the gym. Maybe you spend more time in bed. Maybe you spend more time with your athletics and sports or cabin or fishing or whatever you find comfort in. Whatever the case is - Satan can drag you away from the real healing for anxious and troubled hearts.

Luther tells us:

Luther's Works, Volume 24 Believe in God, Believe Also in Me.

As Christians you must not mourn and tremble; you are different from those who lack comfort and confidence in affliction, misfortune, and adversity. They do not believe, nor do they know God's Word; but they place their trust in temporal things and attach their hearts only to what is present and visible. Whenever this vanishes, courage and trust vanish with it.

That's the thing with looking for healing for your anxious and troubled hearts...if you look for it with earthly and temporal things...when that is no longer there or no longer present in your life - the anxious and troubled hearts are still there.

The way to healing

So Jesus says to each of you as he did to the disciples.

English Standard Version Chapter 14

Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going."

In essence Jesus tells the disciples: "Trust me, I am going to take care of you. I will be with you, even though I may not be physically present with you. I have cared for you in the past." Later on he adds that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. The Lord God has always cared for His people even before Christ walked the earth. He brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. He care for Israel throughout their history and not to mention the Genesis accounts of care and protection include Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and even Joseph.

He also tells them...the place where I am going, I am going there to prepare a place for you and I am going to come back and you will be with me for eternity when that time comes. And He adds, "and you know the way to where I am going."

He clarifies that saying and says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." He says to his disciples, "I am the way to God. I am God. I am the way to healed hearts. Hearts that are not anxious, hearts that are not troubled. Hearts that believe in me and my words.

He even says words in Matthew 11 that provides rest for your hearts.

English Standard Version Chapter 11

28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

He not only says these things to His disciples. He says them to you. Jesus Christ is the only way that provides rest for your troubled and anxious hearts. Jesus Christ is the truth that provides healing to your troubled and anxious hearts. Jesus Christ is the life that provides great comfort to you. And through His life, death, and life again, He prepares a great place for you. A place that is with him for all eternity.

He is the only way! Does His way though provide trouble-free living? Is that way He is saying when he says, "Let not your hearts be troubled!"

Not in the slightest. You see, the way of Jesus, the way to eternity for all of us is the way of the cross. The cross of Jesus Christ. That way is the way of humility.

Satan, the world, and even your own sinful flesh will tempt you to think and believe that he is not the way and try to persuade you to follow another path...paths that were talked about earlier.

Luther adds these words:

Luther's Works, Volume 24 6. Jesus Said to Him: I Am the Way and the Truth and the Life.

Yet the world is so blind and stupid that it always seeks and explores other ways. It is gullible and willing to follow where anyone directs and leads it. It will try, and rely on, any method or any work suggested to it. But one thing it cannot do, namely, remain on this one safe way with firm and steadfast faith. And though it hears and is told that Christ is the Way, it adulterates this message and seeks bypaths and other ways. It does not let Him have the exclusive honor; but it usurps part of this for itself, as though it could contribute something and find the way to heaven by itself.

My dear family of God...Jesus Christ is the only way, truth, and life. Jesus Christ is life and he lived his life in humility for you.

Is the life of a baptized believer trouble-free...not in the least bit. For the way of the cross is also ours. Not in the way that Jesus walked...He walked the way that only he could walk. The way of Gethsemane, the way of Golgotha, the way of His cross and the way of death. The way of Christ is the way to death and the empty tomb.

Jesus went the way of the cross to bring life out of death. He promises you life out of His death. He promises you life when you die.

He promises you life on your own personal way of the cross. Your own personal sufferings in your life as a Christian.

Dear family of God...as a Christian, Christ does not promise an easy way, it will actually be a very difficult way as we are in a battle each and every day. You will face difficult decisions when it comes it to your faith and your opportunities to be renewed in faith and your opportunities in faith. We will experience trials and tribulations and sufferings in this life

because of our faith. We may see them give us troubled hearts, but remember what Jesus said, "Take heart, I have overcome the world." Remember that the way of Jesus led him to the cross to not just overcome the world, but to defeat Satan and finally to defeat death itself. On the cross, Christ forgives your sins. When He came out of the tomb, He granted you life eternal as He overcame death itself.

Christ has promised a mansion for you when He comes back to this earth that will one day be renewed. What a great comfort that is even amidst troubled and anxious hearts. Jesus Christ is your way, your truth and your life.

In Jesus Name. Alleluia Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia! Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.