

May 7, 2023  
Fifth Sunday on Easter  
St. Timothy Lutheran Church – Huber Heights, OH  
Pastor Joel Sutton

John 14:1–14

LET NOT YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED, BUT TRUST IN GOD AND TRUST IN JESUS.

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

Our text for meditation today comes from the Gospel according to St John, the 14th chapter, which you heard read earlier.

The first six verses of our Gospel text this morning are often used as the sermon text at funerals, and for good reason. But you do not have to be grieving the death of a loved one to feel overwhelmed or grieve the misfortune and uncertainty of living in this chaotic world. Every moment of this earthly life is lived in uncertainty. Life is short. Things happen big and small. God and you alone know the burden you are carrying – plus – the guilt of the sins you have committed and the shame of those sins that have been committed against you. And all the while, sooner or later, death will be coming for you.

Where do you turn when your burden is heavy and your road is dark? To what do you grasp hold and cling to in confidence and trust? To whom do you go for forgiveness of your sins and for justice of the sins committed against you? How do you overcome your fear and calm your troubled heart knowing that death may soon come for you?

The conversation in our Gospel text takes place between Jesus and His disciples in the Upper Room on the night when Jesus was betrayed. It is just a matter of hours before He would be handed over to sinful men, be brutally beaten, and nailed to Calvary's cross for the sins of mankind. But first, they eat the Passover meal together. (cf: Matthew 26:17–20)

Time is short and Jesus has so much more to teach them, including His institution of the Sacrament of His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. (cf: Matthew 26:26–29) This night He is troubled in His spirit. (cf: John 13:21) His appointment of having His very own body broken and His blood shed draws near. (cf: Luke 24:7) Having told His disciples all that was going to happen, you would think that it would they who offer emotional and spiritual support to Him – yet it is He who comforts and instructs His disciples.

Their lives are about to be turned upside-down. For three years they had always felt secure assured because of Jesus' personal presence. They had been eyewitnesses to His mighty signs and miracles. They had heard Him preach and teach with the authority of the Father, which left the crowds and religious leaders dumbfounded. But the chaos, horror, and fear of the coming

hours and days would leave them overwhelmed with grief and uncertainty, even fear of their own deaths. Their burden will be heavy and their road dark as it had never been before.

Troubled hearts, fear, and dread are no match for the Word of the Lord. Instead of being served in preparation for His own death, the Word become flesh, continues to serve His disciples by teaching them and you and me, how not to be anxious and troubled in the face of uncertainty, turmoil, and death, saying:

***“Let not your hearts be troubled.”*** (John 14:1)

Jesus calls them to faith with an imperative command as if saying: *“Stop letting your heart be troubled because you have no reason to be troubled.”* All times are uncertain times. In Baptism you were marked with the sign of the cross marking you as God’s own child and as a member of the priesthood of all believers. But the **“*unholy trinity*”** of the devil, the world, and your sinful flesh, want you to deprive you of the joy of the promises God made you in Baptism. They daily toss trouble, anxiety, and terror into your life so that you take your eyes off your salvation in the One who has all authority over heaven and earth, and look to your own reason and strength, in attempt to sooth and calm your troubled heart.

The way of the Christian is the way of the cross. Jesus says:

***“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*** (Luke 9:23)

The devil is your adversary. He is your enemy. He knows that you are a baptized child of God and he is prowling like a roaring lion, seeking to devour you. (cf: 1 Peter 5:8) When you are in turmoil and grief, you know that he is pressing in on you with all his might hoping you will stumble so he can steal your faith. But Jesus says to you: *“Stop letting your heart be troubled because you have no reason to be troubled.”*

He goes on to say:

***“Believe in God...”*** (John 14:1)

Trust and believe in God the Father Almighty who created you and all things visible and invisible. Trust and believe in Him who numbers the hairs on your head and who beautifully clothes the lilies of the field. He knows exactly what you are going through for not even a sparrow falls to the ground apart from the Father’s knowledge. (cf: Matthew 10:29) He will see you through your suffering and work it for His glory. He loves you more than every other thing He created. You know this because He handed His only Son into death to save you from your sins.

Jesus says:

***“Believe in God; believe also in me.”*** (John 14:1)

He wants you to trust and believe in Him just as you trust and believe in the Father. If He were not very God with the Father, He would be speaking blasphemy. But Jesus is One with the Father. He is in the Father the Father is in Him. Whoever has seen Jesus with eyes of faith has seen the Father. (cf: John 14:9) However heavy your burden, you know that the Father has sent His Son to carry that burden. Take Jesus’ yoke upon you, and learn from Him:

***“... for [He is] gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For [His] yoke is easy, and [His] burden is light.”*** (Matthew 11:29–30)

However dark your road, Jesus is:

**“... the light of the world. Whoever follows [Him] will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”** (John 8:12)

The devil and the world wish to torment and torture you. But let them do their worst. What more can they do than torment and kill you in the body. Martin Luther once wrote:

**“[The devil] ... cannot kill me oftener than God can revive me. No matter how much shame, harm, and grief [the devil] cause me, God can make thousandfold restitution and reimburse me with honor and goods.”** (LW 24, 20)

Stop letting your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Jesus. Trust and believe in the One who sent His only begotten Son to a bloody death on the cross to suffer His wrath against your sins, to pay your penalty, and redeem you from sin and death. All the sufferings of this present time are insignificant compared with the peace you have in God for the sake of Christ Jesus. (cf: Romans 8:18) You have a Master and God who will compensate you a hundredfold for every suffering and injustice you may face in this life. He can, and by trusting in Christ, He will one day restore everything that you have lost in this life, by raising you to a new life in heaven, imperishable and eternal, which no one can ever take from you.

Dear Christian, repent. Repent of trusting in your own reason and strength. Repent of trusting in the world, your sinful flesh, and your own unclean and troubled heart. Repent and let not your hearts be troubled. And in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Stop letting your heart be troubled because you have no reason to be troubled. Trust and believe in God. Trust and believe also in Jesus. Grasp tight and hold fast with certainty in faith and trust in the One true God who is your sure and certain hope of something much more glorious and grander than living in this world. You are merely a stranger and exile in this world. Your trials and tribulations are temporary. (cf: Hebrews 11:13) Your permanent home is in heaven where Jesus is preparing a place for you. He would not have said so if it were not true. And on the Last Day, He will come again and take you to Himself, that where He is, you will be also... forever. He is your certainty at all times. He is:

**“... the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through [Him].”** (John 14:6)

This certainty and hope strengthens and prepares you live each day as God’s own child as a member of His holy priesthood, the priesthood of all believers. In our epistle text this morning, St Peter writes that you’re being built up:

**“... to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”** (1 Peter 2:5)

As I said earlier, you were brought into this priesthood in Baptism where God granted you the gift of faith and the Holy Spirit. You were set apart to belong to God alone, set apart for His service regardless of your vocation or station in life: parent or child; employer or employee; citizen or ruler or neighbor. Now – this does not mean that everyone is a pastor and minister just like not every Israelite was called to serve in the temple or to be a Levite priest. (cf: Numbers 18)

In your various vocations and stations in life, offer sacrifices. Not sacrifices for sin. No, that once-and-for-all perfect sacrifice was already offered up on the cross by our great High Priest, Jesus Christ. His sacrifice on the cross is the only sacrifice that atones for sin and it is complete. It is finished. The Christian offers sacrifices of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. The Christian offers sacrifices to show their thankfulness for the One who is your sure and certain hope, the:

**“... one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”** (1 Timothy 2:5)

The Christian offers sacrifices of obedience to the Father, keeping His Law and Commandments. Not to earn merit or favor, but to show your love in response to Him who first loved you. (cf: 1 John 4:19) The Christian offers sacrifices of love and service to neighbor just as God in Christ loves and serves you. In your various vocations and stations in life proclaim the excellencies of your sure and certain hope in tumultuous and uncertain times. Proclaim the joy of being called to repentance and out of the darkness of sin into the marvelous light of Jesus who is the light of the world.

**“Whoever follows [Jesus] will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”** (John 8:12)

Being called into His marvelous light, proclaim the joy of being reconciled with the Father and having confidence that on the Last Day, Christ will return to take you home to live with the Father in His Kingdom forever – knowing that even during grievous and uncertain times, your trials and tribulations are temporary. Your hope is secure in the One true God who is your sure and certain hope. All that He has won for you is much more glorious and grander than living in this world.

- **Jesus is the way**, for it is through Him that you have access to the Father. (cf: Ephesians 2:18)
- **Jesus is the truth**, for He is the Word become flesh who has come into the world to bear witness to the truth. (cf: John 18:37)
- **Jesus is the life**, for whoever lives and believes in Him shall never die. (cf: John 11:26)

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understand, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,  
Amen.