

August 4, 2019

John 14:1-27

"A Bridge Over Troubled Waters"

We're all going to have troubled hearts. None of us are immune from heartache and pain. Christians who are serving the Lord go through tragedy. None of us are protected from circumstances and struggles and evil that come into our lives. Those are some of the things that cause troubled hearts. Every person here today could tell the story of a troubled heart. We all realize how close we are to disaster.

I was reminded of this by two incidents that happened back in June.

A 21-year-old California woman was on vacation with her family in the Bahamas in late June. They were snorkeling together in a beautiful, clear cove near a smaller island. If you've ever gone snorkeling in the ocean, you know there's hardly a more beautifully serene activity you can do in the water. They all were enjoying fun family time. Out of nowhere, she was attacked by three sharks. She bled to death before arriving at a hospital.

A few weeks later, in late June, a family was vacationing in North Carolina. Their 17-year-old daughter was attacked by a shark. The father repeatedly punched the bull shark until it let go. As her father carried her to shore, she kept repeating, "Dad...dad..." She lost her left leg and two fingers on her left hand, but she's alive.

You never know how and when trouble will strike. But you know it's out there. Trouble is always lurking in the shadows.

Jesus knows we're in a world where we will have troubled hearts. Why do children get cancer and die? People lost their houses during the economic downturn over a decade ago. People lose their jobs. Relationships break. We live in a broken, fallen world. God allows bad things to happen. We'll never fully understand why in this life. In **1 Corinthians 13:12**, Paul promises us that, **"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."** But until then, you and I live in an evil world. We're a witness of hope and faith to an evil world. We cannot escape evil. The Bible says the sun rises on the evil and the good. The rain falls on the evil and the good.

Bad things happen to the evil and the good.

That's the reality of the world we live in. The question is never *how can God protect me from the really tough times?* The honest question is:

How can God help me get through the really tough times?

The place to start is with **John 14:1:**

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

That's fairly simple. It's a good start. Don't let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God. Trust in Jesus. The word for "troubled" means to put something in motion, to agitate back-and-forth, to set in motion what needs to remain still, to cause emotional agitation, to stir something up.

Has that ever happened to you? Have you ever felt like your heart was going through a storm? You do all kinds of things to address it, but the storm keeps churning.

Jesus understands that storms rise up in our hearts. So he says, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me." These disciples

have troubled hearts. For some of the same reasons we have troubled hearts.

They have troubled hearts because of failure. Jesus has shared with Peter that he would deny Jesus three times. And he tells them one of them is going to betray Jesus. So their hearts are troubled.

They are also troubled by confusion. For a lot of people that's a big one. Confusion in not knowing what's going to happen next. How is God working in and around and through the events in your life? Remember, Jesus is talking about going somewhere else and the disciples not being able to go with him. That is confusing. There are so many unknowns that confuse us.

The disciples also face fear. The fear of not knowing what tomorrow will bring. The fear of an anticipated event or encounter. We've all been there.

Jesus sees the fear in them. He sees it and he says, *don't be troubled*. And then he shares with them truths we all need to hear when our hearts are

troubled. Some people are rock solid in the face of trouble. Some people are like Jell-O. It's the difference between trusting and not trusting. Don't let your hearts be troubled.

What's your strategy when trouble strikes? We all have one. What's your strategy?

Do you ignore trouble when it strikes? Do you pretend it's not there? Some people ignore the trouble, no matter how threatening.

Do you hide from it? There's lots of ways people hide from their troubles. There's drugs...alcohol...sex. People hide by throwing themselves into their work. Or watching television. Or by shopping. Some people even hide from their troubles by being hyper-religious.

Do you pour your troubles into other people's lives? That's how some deal with problems of the heart. They dump on others. They blow up. They spread their David or Doris Downer attitude to others. Some people need to spread the misery they feel.

Well, what does Jesus say? We all have ways of dealing with trouble. How does Jesus help us?

The first thing you need to understand is Jesus isn't condemning us when our hearts are troubled. Remember, Jesus said he came into the world not to condemn it but to save it. When Jesus says, "Don't let your hearts be troubled," he's not condemning them. It was only back in chapter 13 where Jesus, when talking about someone betraying him, tells his disciples, "My heart is very troubled." That's the same word he uses here in chapter 14. So it's not a sin to have a troubled heart. Jesus isn't condemning us. It's not a sin to have a troubled heart. It is a sin to allow your heart to stay troubled for weeks or months or even years. All our hearts are troubled when we face difficulties. Your child gets seriously ill or injured, that's a parent's nightmare. Jesus isn't condemning troubled hearts.

What Jesus is doing is he's commanding us to look to him to calm our troubled hearts. He's not making a suggestion. Jesus is saying, when your hearts are troubled, here is what you have to do. The first part of verse 1 literally translates as:

Not let be troubled of you the heart.

For the next few minutes, we're going to look at how Jesus helps us to let our hearts neither be troubled nor afraid.

First, and most important, Jesus says I will come back and I'll take you with me. So, when your heart is troubled, one of the first things you need to think about is home. And Jesus isn't talking about where you live right now, or where you grew up, or even your dream house on a lake. Jesus is talking about your heavenly home. That is your greatest place of security. Jesus says your are included in his plans. He's going to take you to where he is.

In fact, Jesus goes on to say:

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? 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. And you know the way to where I am going.

What makes a house a home? Right...the feeling of welcome; the love; the

sense of joy and happiness that fills the place. That's a home. Jesus says he has already prepared a beautiful place for us. And there's enough room for everybody. **Why let your heart be troubled when a place of love has already been prepared for you?**

Sometimes you open up the paper or go online and you get a troubled heart. You read about things that are happening around the world or in your own community, and it troubles your heart.

While that's true in a sinful, fallen world, where evil abounds, Jesus says the storyline for us is home. We're going to be with him for eternity. That's help for a troubled heart.

Jesus ends this section by saying, **"And you know the way to where I am going."** We're going to stop there. I want you to think about that statement. Put yourself in the disciples sandals. A new teaching is racing around their brains. What would you say to that? Do you know the way to where Jesus is going? Come back next week with your answer.