

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

The Secret to Peace

John 14:1-3

Intro: The disciples are having quite a rough night. In their minds, they were expecting a quiet supper with their Master in the upper room, even though they knew it was dangerous for them to be in Jerusalem. The religious rulers had ramped up their opposition of Jesus and were on the prowl, looking for a way to be rid of Him for good. But so far, the evening had been far from quiet. Jesus began by washing their feet, which caused no small stir amongst them. Then He told them that there was a traitor in their midst. Once Judas was gone, Jesus further shocked them by telling them that He was about to go somewhere they couldn't follow Him. The final shocking statement comes at the very end of ch13 (**vs38**). Peter, recognized as the leader of the disciples and most likely the strongest, has just been informed that he would deny the Master he loves so much and that he would do it that very night!

Any one of these things would have been a surprise to this group of men but taken altogether, it must have set them reeling. It is this state of confusion and fear that brings us to our text today, arguably one of the most assuring and encouraging passages of Scripture for the fear and confusion the circumstances of life in this world often brings

1-3- It benefits us to remember that Jesus isn't speaking to the world in general here; He's speaking to His disciples. Not just the 11 in the upper room but all of them. What's a believer to do when the bottom falls out of their world? What are we to do in the day of great trouble? There are pertinent questions because life is filled with troubles. Disappointment is trouble and there are many in this life. We're often disappointed by other people for a variety of reasons but our greatest disappointments are usually with ourselves because we're often not who we want to be.

Circumstances can increase our troubles. Sometimes we can do something about them but often we can't. Spiritual troubles can also affect us, especially when we feel that the Lord's presence is gone from us and we sink down into a deeper spiritual depression. What are we to do at such times, what are we to do with despair? How do we find peace in the midst of

difficult circumstances and disappointments? We do exactly as our text says: we get a hold of ourselves and strengthen our faith in God. When our world begins to fall apart, we're to focus on God and overcome trouble by reminding ourselves of the power and promises of God and by trusting Him. Our text is a call for us to become strong Christians, the kind who have great faith and are a source of strength to others.

There are 2 important truths that we must consider in order to properly understand our text. 1st, oddly enough, is that we often have real cause to be troubled. It would seem this goes without saying but a large portion of the Western church is under the delusion that trouble should be foreign to them. They pretend that there are no troubles in life for the truly surrendered child of God. Their distorted view of [Rom 8:28](#) is that only good things come into the lives of those who truly love God when, in fact, it's actually saying that trouble will come but God will still accomplish His own good purposes in spite of it. Evil does exist, troubles will come. Instead of denying this, we must be realistic.

Clearly, Jesus said this because the disciples were obviously agitated about what He had just told them. Even Jesus Himself had been troubled in His spirit – at the tomb of Lazarus ([11](#)); in [12:27](#) in light of His imminent execution and [13:21](#) in light of Judas' betrayal. If Jesus was troubled by things, did the disciples have cause to be troubled by them too? Of course! This means it's never wrong to honestly recognize and analyze our problems. It's also not wrong to recognize and openly acknowledge things that trouble others. That's what Christian counseling is all about. Nothing is gained by ignoring our troubles or minimizing them in a superstitious belief that they will just go away on their own.

2nd, Christians should be realist about all of life's problems. At the same time, Christians must also be realist about the power of God and His promises. This means that while there is real cause to be troubled in this life, there is even greater cause not to be. Regardless of what life brings to cause us to be troubled as Christians, we still have greater cause not to be troubled! This is not just a mental determination that we are to make. There are several concrete reasons why we as Christians should not be troubled.

1) We know Jesus He is God. He knows all about us and our circumstances and He is able to deal with them. Thus, we have every reason to trust Him!

Jesus says as much when He issues the challenge: “You believe in God, believe also in Me.” Instead of giving into a troubled heart, Jesus tells them to put their trust firmly in God and in Himself. This was a radical call to trust in Jesus just as one would trust in God the Father and a radical promise that doing so would comfort and peace to a troubled heart. But, how can that be since Jesus just told them He was leaving them?

What Jesus was saying was, “Trust that I know what I am doing. Trust that I’m going away for a purpose. Trust that the purpose will be accomplished and I will come back to you so we can be together again.” The 1st reason the disciples were not to be troubled is that they knew Jesus and they had every reason to trust Him. So do we! In fact, we have greater reason to trust Him because they were standing on the other side of the resurrection and couldn’t see the victory that the cross would be, as we can today. Did Jesus know what He was doing? Absolutely! Could He be trusted? Without a doubt! Then let us trust Him too. Whatever the hardship or circumstance, let’s believe He has a purpose for those circumstances and is working them out for our spiritual good.

2) We have a home in heaven. This is not escapism, but a real promise of a real place with Jesus in eternity. Every life is different but the one trouble every human will face is death. But, the death of a Christian is unlike the death of an unbeliever because the Christian knows where they are going. They are assured of a home in heaven. If that’s true (it is) then the life of a Christian should also be unlike the life of an unbeliever. Knowing their destiny, knowing that they will see Jesus in that heavenly home, the faithful Christian follows Him now and lives for Him ([1 Jn 3:2-3](#)). Knowing our destiny is a great incentive for godly living as well as enjoying peace in the midst of trouble.

3) He going to prepare a place for them. This goes beyond the last point. There is a place called heaven. Jesus was going there. But, more than that, He’s going there to do work for them when He gets there! Quite a bit of focus has been put on the nature of the place He is preparing but nobody really knows. The Bible is not clear on that. If we focus on the words “for you” then no matter what the structural alterations may be in heaven, it’s for us as individuals that He’s doing the work. That should be a comforting thought. When a new family member is coming into the home, people like to prepare a room that’s perfectly fitting and accommodating for the new

occupant. If we take care in such preparations, do we think Jesus would do any less for those He loves so much more?

4) Jesus is returning for them and 5) they will be with Him forever. Jesus receives the believer for the express purpose that they might be with Him for all eternity. His return for us and subsequent eternal bliss are true comfort for hurting and troubled hearts as Paul describes in [1 Thess 4:16-18](#).

What does a Christian do when the troubles of this life surround them? Focus on the true character and nature of God, on His great strength and divine, unbreakable promises and increase your faith in Him. Jesus never promised us a life without troubles but He does promise that we can have an untroubled heart even in the midst of a troubled life. We can be victorious if we will just remind ourselves of what we know about Him and trust Him to be who He is.

2-3- Besides sharing the secret to peace, Jesus also reveals quite a bit of information about heaven. Granted, it's not as much as we would like to have but it is certainly enough to encourage us through anticipation. The 1st thing we notice is that heaven is a real place, not just an ideal or mystical state of existence. In fact, Jesus doesn't describe heaven in this passage at all but He does call it a place to which He was going, from which He would return and to which He would one day bring all those who belonged to Him through faith. In the NT, heaven is described as a kingdom ([2 Peter 1:11](#)), an inheritance ([1 Peter 1:4](#)), a country ([Heb 11:16](#)), a city ([Heb 11:16](#)) and a home (here). Jesus spoke with complete confidence about heaven because He knew what really lay beyond the valley of death.

Jesus refers to heaven as His Father's house. Heaven is not just a place; it's a home; a home for God's children. The poet Robert Frost defined home as the place that, when you arrive there, they have to take you in. The basic desire of the human heart is to have a genuine place of our own, a home, a place where we belong and know ourselves to belong. The problem is many people never find this place and spend much of their lives wandering. It's a tragic reality in the human experience. Adam and Eve were evicted from their first home because of sin. Cain was condemned to a life of wandering because he killed his brother. The men of Babel opposed God's will and were scattered and made homeless. Sin brings alienation and one aspect of alienation is that people lose their homes.

Earthly homes are necessary and valuable but, to be honest, they are at best only temporary. No, the only way that the basic human need for a home can be fully met is when Jesus Christ Himself prepares us a home in heaven. And, since believers have this home in heaven and are assured of it, they can be “at home” anywhere. The assurance of a heavenly home gives them the confidence to trust God in every aspect of this life without being restless or unfulfilled.

Jesus is now preparing places for all true believers and each place will be beautiful. Imagine, the One who created the universe and the world we live in is fashioning a place for those who believe in Him. It’s unimaginable!

Despite the glorious reality of heaven, the prepared places, the golden streets, the pearly gates; as wonderful as all this sounds, this isn’t even the best part of heaven. No, what really makes heaven glorious is that its there that we will finally get to see Jesus and enjoy Him. That should be the first priority of every believer, and if its not it will be because the thing that makes heaven a true home is being with Jesus. To know that we are going to heaven is a wonderful thing but even better than that is the knowledge that we will see Jesus there and finally be able to express to Him the praise and love He deserves for leaving heaven to come to earth to die for us sinners. It is this expectation that makes heaven a true home for us.

Seeing Jesus in heaven is clearly revealed in Scripture, but what about other people? Will we recognize friends and loved ones who have gone on before? Does the Bible give any clear answers to this question? Yes, every indication is that we will. In the OT, one phrase is commonly attached to the obituaries of the patriarchs, “and he was gathered to his people.” it was said of Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob Moses and Aaron. The phrase refers to those men joining those who had gone before them into eternity. David’s comment about the death of Bathsheba’s child reveals he believed he would see the child again in eternity ([2 Sam 12:22-23](#)). On the Mount of Transfiguration, when Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus, the disciples who were there accurately recognized them without ever having seen them before. The story of the rich man and Lazarus clearly involves recognition of the departed, not only as they appear in this life but as they appear to each other in the life to come.

Finally, there’s a great statement from Jesus Himself concerning the many

Gentiles who will join with believing Jews in a great reunion in heaven ([Mt 8:11](#)). This is a great promise, but it's only possible if there's a full recognition of all who have died. Clearly the patriarchs are to know each other at this holy reunion, and so will all those who have died in Christ and who will be gathered to the reunion from the far corners of the earth. In that day we may well be surprised to see many in heaven whom we do not expect to be there. And we will be just as surprised not to find many there whom we thought would be present. Many of us have lost believing loved ones. If you haven't and you live long enough, you will. Of course, we haven't really lost them, they're with Jesus and we will see them again.

Heaven is a real place, a glorious place. It is a home. It's also the place where we will be united with Jesus and reunited with believing friends and loved ones who have gone on before. But, there is one other aspect of heaven which is just as encouraging as these others; the fact that we will finally see each other, not as we are now or as we have been but as we are meant to be. That's the true significance of [1 John 3:2](#) – it's not just that I will be made like Jesus but that we all will be like Him! That means all the sin, ignorance, anger, hate and perversity that mar our earthly relationships will then be completely eliminated. In that day we will have a fresh view of each other, for we will see each other, not as we have come to know each other here below, in our sin, but rather as we were meant to be.

On top of that, we will see each other rewarded for faithful service in this life. In several places, the Bible mentions various crowns that will be given to those who are faithful. Sure, there's a wrong way to think about rewards. If we're only serving for what we can get out of the arrangement, we're no better than hirelings. Also, if we're working for rewards in this life (money or praise) we're not fit to be Christ's servants. Still, there's a right way to consider crowns, because the promise of rewards is set before us as a reason why the patriarchs and others were faithful. There was a lot to discourage them but they looked ahead to the reward ([Heb 11:26](#)).

This reality will give us the opportunity to rejoice in the triumphs of other Christians. But, if this will be true of us in heaven, should it not also be true of us now? Instead of being critical of one another, and there's good grounds for it, let us be encouraging one another, lifting each other up in spirit and in prayer. If we could learn to rejoice in one another's triumphs then we would begin to see one another differently and we would begin to

pray for one another more fervently. Let's pray in that direction and let's work towards it in our own lives until the day when the entire ransomed church is raised to be with Jesus and is made to be like Him.

Are you troubled in heart? Jesus takes no delight in seeing His disciples upset and fearful, thus, the statement He makes in **vs1** is more of a command than a suggestion: "Set your heart at ease. Stop being troubled." How? By trusting in the Father and in Himself. For Jesus, the solution to a troubled heart is not a recipe; it's a relationship with Him! Have you entered into that relationship with Him? Have you acknowledged His sacrifice for your sin and your responsibility for it? The good news is His sacrifice removes your responsibility but only if you accept Him as your savior. Otherwise, your responsibility remains and must be accounted for yourself.

Do you have that home? If you've never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you need to do so today. Receive Him as your Savior and discover the joy of possessing a place in eternity prepared by His own capable hands.

Christian, are you anxious to see Jesus? Are you excited to finally see yourself as God had always intended you to be? If so, just know that you don't have to wait until heaven to start moving in that direction. You can begin the process now by allowing the Holy Spirit to accomplish His work of transformation in your life. 😊