

John 14-1-3

Let not your hearts be troubled!

Prayer for illumination:

Sermon introduction:

My friend David Thommen was a pastor in Portland, and an employee at Western Seminary. We became good friends during my doctoral studies. A few years ago, I tried to get him to apply to work for GCF. Dave was a gifted preacher and a gifted organizer. Dave also ran a CrossFit gym in the Portland area. Two years ago, he was working out at the gym when he experienced a massive heart attack. He fell to the ground clutching his chest and died a few minutes later, leaving his relatively young wife and three children shocked and devastated.

As you can imagine, his wife and children were deeply troubled. Life is full of trouble. When was the last time you were deeply troubled?

A job loss?

A very difficult situation at work?

The death of a loved one?

A scary diagnosis?

An awful car accident?

A wayward child?

Life is full of trouble. How should we respond to trouble? How do you respond to trouble? This brings us to John 14. The disciples are greatly troubled. Why?

They were just told that Judas was going to betray Jesus, then they were told that Jesus was about to leave them, and then they were told that Peter was going to deny Jesus.

According to one scholar, the disciples were "*under substantial emotional pressure and on the brink of catastrophic failure.*" (Carson) Maybe you have felt this way recently.

Amid their trouble, Jesus says, "Let not your hearts be troubled." Jesus says the same thing to us. But why? Because you are going to heaven.

Here is the point: ***when our hearts are troubled we must fix our gaze on heaven.*** This text tells us at least five things about heaven. When your hearts are troubled, consider these five things...

The size of heaven

The certainty of heaven

The preparation of heaven

The timing of heaven

The joy of heaven

First, the size of heaven

John 14:1-2 (ESV) – 1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. 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?"

The phrase "my father's house" refers to heaven. Jesus says, "In my father's house are many rooms." What does this phrase tell us about heaven? Jesus is saying that heaven is very spacious. In other words, there is plenty of room for all of God's children.

In ancient Palestine, wealthy patriarchs often lived in large villas. As their family grew, they added wings and rooms for children, grandchildren, and other extended family. The image is that of "a large compound centered around a communal courtyard." Likewise, there is plenty of room in heaven for all of God's family.

How large is God's family?

While the road is narrow and the gate is small that leads to life (Matt. 7:14), the Bible also says that the number of Abraham's children is like the sand on the seashore and the stars in the sky (Gen. 22:17). Furthermore, the book of Revelation describes, "a great multitude (in heaven) that no one could number." (Rev. 7:9).

There will be rooms in heaven for everyone who believes.

Illustration:

Two summers ago, we were in PDX for a graduation. It was a long and exhausting weekend. We planned on staying in a hotel in a PDX suburb on Sunday evening before driving home on Monday morning. We booked the hotel several months in advance. When we pulled up to the hotel, exhausted and weary, I knew something was wrong. The parking lot was totally empty, and I saw construction cranes and trucks everywhere.

It turns out that the hotel was still being built. As a result, all the doors were locked. It was closed. No one could get inside. It looked really nice, but we were barred from entry. We booked rooms to a hotel that was still being built. There were no rooms available. We were dejected. I was so upset, I decided to drive all the way back to Spokane that night.

Unlike this hotel, there will be plenty of rooms in heaven.

Roughly a year later, we traveled to Moscow Idaho to stay with my brother's family. They placed an elaborate gift basket on our bed filled with beef jerky, chocolates, candy, drinks, and lots of other goodies. It was a spacious and well decorated room with fresh sheets and fresh towels. What a contrast to the hotel, that was not a hotel, in Portland.

In a similar sense God the father has a specific space in heaven for every one of his children. And there is plenty of room.

Application:

Are we all going to live in a giant hotel or mansion in heaven? Probably not. The rooms are a metaphor. But the point is simply this—there will be plenty of room in heaven for all the saints.

In addition, the phrase "a house with many rooms" would have been understood by the disciples as a place of rest for the weary—a giant inn or mansion for the tired. Heaven will be a place of rest for the weary traveler. Are you tired? Are you weary? Do you need rest?

Finally, in a matter of hours, Jesus would be arrested, and murdered. The disciples would feel abandoned. The devil likes to whisper in our ear, "God has forgotten you. He has abandoned you." In those moments we must remind ourselves that God the father has not forgotten us. In his house are many rooms...

This sounds wonderful, but is heaven certain? This brings us to the next point.

First, the size of heaven.

Second, the certainty of heaven

John 14:1–2 (ESV) – 1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. 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?"

One of the oldest theological questions is the question of the afterlife. When we die, will we live again? Or will we cease to exist? Is there hope after death? Or is death the end?

Will we see our Christian loved ones who have died? How can we be certain?

Jesus says, "In my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I to prepare a place for you?" This is a rhetorical question, and the rhetorical answer is no. Jesus would not have said these words if heaven were uncertain. Heaven is certain because Jesus spoke these words.

All we need to believe in the certainty of heaven are the words of Jesus. And we have them right here in John 14:1-2.

Illustration:

A best-selling book begins with these words,

"I died on January 18, 1989. Paramedics reached the scene of the accident within minutes. They found no pulse and declared me dead.

They covered me with a tarp so that onlookers wouldn't stare at me while they attended to the injuries of the others. I was completely unaware of the paramedics or anyone else around me. Immediately after I died, I went straight to heaven. While I was in heaven, a Baptist preacher came on the accident scene. Even though he knew I was dead, he rushed to my lifeless body and prayed for me. Despite the scoffing of the EMTs, he refused to stop praying. At least 90 minutes after the EMTs pronounced me dead, God answered that man's prayers. I returned to earth. This is my story." (Piper, 90 Minutes, 13)

The following 192 pages chronicle Don Piper's ninety minutes in heaven between his death and when he "returned to earth." He goes on to explain how his account of heaven has provided certainty and hope for thousands.

He writes, "I've changed the way I do funerals. Now I can speak authoritatively about heaven from first-hand knowledge" (ibid., 129).

Did he really go to heaven for 90 minutes? Who knows. But here is what I do know. We don't need his account of heaven to be certain about heaven. Our certainty about heaven rests in the words of Jesus Christ.

Application:

Jesus says, "In my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:2)

This means that we can be certain that we will see our deceased loved ones again if they were Christians.

This means that we can be certain that we will see the face of Jesus.

This means that we can be certain that we will dwell forever in glorified resurrection bodies.

How can we be so certain? Jesus says so.

How can we trust his words? He rose from the grave.

Furthermore, we can be certain of heaven because of the longings in our hearts. What do I mean? Commenting on heaven, C. S. Lewis writes,

“Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing.” (Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 136–37)

All our unmet and unfulfilled longings prove that we were made for another world or another place. We were made for a place where our deepest longings will be fulfilled. We were made for heaven.

But how do we get to heaven? This brings us to the next point.

The size of heaven

The certainty of heaven

Third, the preparation of heaven

John 14:1–2 (ESV) – 1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. 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?”

Maybe when you hear Jesus say, “I am going away to prepare a place for you,” you picture Jesus dressed in overalls, wearing a tool belt, maybe driving a tractor to construct a heavenly mansion.

But most scholars agree that the preparation of the place is not with a hammer and nails. The tools he uses are a cross and a grave. The way Jesus prepares this special home for his disciples is by laying down his life on the cross.

The path to heaven is through Jesus, specifically through the cross and the resurrection. We can't be in God's holy presence, due to our sin, but Christ's cross enabled all our sins to be forgiven. He is preparing us for heaven through the cross.

Jesus is the path. Due to his life, death, and resurrection heaven is ours free of charge. Christ did it all, which means that there is nothing left for us to do but believe.

Illustration:

A few years back, my wife and I celebrated 20 years of marriage. Our anniversary trip required meticulous planning and saving. We were gone for roughly 9 days. I'm sure many of you have taken nice vacations that required years of saving and planning. Heaven (the eternal vacation) is ours free of charge.

Application:

Have you trusted him...

Maybe you are thinking, "heaven sounds amazing, when do we get to go there?" This brings us to the fourth point.

The size of heaven

The certainty of heaven

The preparation of heaven

Fourth, the timing of heaven

John 14:3 (ESV) — 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.

When will we actually arrive in heaven? Jesus says, "that he will go and prepare a place for us (a reference to his cross and resurrection)." Then he says that he will come again and take us to himself. This is a reference to his second coming.

This needs some explanation. Explain the intermediate heaven (intermediate state) and the permanent heaven. When we die, our souls

will go to be with Christ (intermediate heaven/paradise), and our bodies will go to the grave. When Christ returns, he will reunite our bodies and our souls and recreate planet earth and we will dwell with him forever on this planet—the eternal heaven.

Revelation 21 describes the arrival of heaven.

Revelation 21:1–4 (ESV) — 1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

See also Rev. 19:11-15

Application:

When Christ returns in glory, heaven will arrive with him.

Are you ready for Christ’s return? When he comes it will be too late. You must prepare now.

Are you excited for Christ’s return? Some of us are apathetic. Why? Why don’t we long for heaven? We are too attached to the things of this world (possessions, wealth, sin, etc...).

Or maybe we don’t fathom what is in store for us. Which brings us to the last point.

The size of heaven

The certainty of heaven

The preparation of heaven

The timing of heaven

Fifth, the joy of heaven

John 14:3 (ESV) — 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.

In heaven there will be immeasurable sources of unspeakable joy.

We will see beauty that will make summer sunsets, mountain ranges, and roses seem like kitsch.

We will hear sounds that make Bach or Beethoven sound like fingernails on a chalkboard.

We will taste things so delicious that our taste buds will explode.

We will be in better shape than the world's greatest decathletes.

We will sit around with friends and tell stories, laugh, and then laugh some more. And no one will feel left out or lonely or insecure.

We will probably participate in great competitions for the glory of King Jesus.

We will create great works of music, architecture, and literature for God's glory.

We will love everyone with perfect sinless love (what will that be like?)

We will always do the right thing.

We will not experience anything that will make us sad, afraid, lonely, depressed, discontent, angry, jealous, bitter, or tempted to sin.

There will be great joy in heaven.

Thomas Brooks-

"If all the earth were paper, and all the plants of the earth were pens, and all the sea were ink, and if every man, woman and child had the pen of a ready writer, yet they would not be able to express the thousandth part of those joys that saints shall have in heaven."

But what will cause the greatest joy in heaven? Back to our text.

John 14:3 (ESV) – 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.

The greatest source of Joy in Heaven will be Christ himself. Christ says that when he returns, he will take us to himself. Heaven is heaven because God is there. God, the triune God, is the source of all joy. He created Joy. He wants to share his joy with us.

Psalm 16:11 (ESV) – 11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Here is the best part, heaven will be a place of increasing joy for all eternity. How? God is infinite and our joy is based on knowing him more. But we can never exhaust our knowledge of him. So, we will spend all eternity learning more about him always increasing in joy forever (literally).

Storms says again-

“We will constantly be more amazed with God, more in love with God, and thus ever more relishing his presence and our relationship with him. Our experience of God will never reach its consummation. We will never finally arrive, as if upon reaching a peak we discover there is nothing beyond. Our experience of God will never become stale. It will deepen and develop intensify and amplify, unfold and increase, broaden and balloon. Our relishing and rejoicing in God will sharpen and spread and extend and progress and mature and flower and blossom and widen and stretch and swell and snowball and inflate and lengthen and augment and advance and proliferate and accumulate and accelerate and multiply and heighten and reach a crescendo that will even then be only the beginning of an eternity of new and fresh insights into the majesty of who God is!” (Storms, 172-3)

Heaven is a place where Joy increases for all eternity. If you are a Christian, your joy will increase for all eternity. Christ has secured this eternity for you. Why? He loves you!!!

Conclusion:

What troubles do you face this week?

Financial loss
Suicidal thoughts
Crippling depression
The loss of a close friendship
A broken relationship
A very difficult work environment
Severe health problems.

Let me close with the words of Jesus.

John 14:1-3 (ESV) – 1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. 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.

Let's pray...