

Wiersbe Bible Exposition Commentary

JOHN 14:1-8

HEART TROUBLE

John 13:36–14:31

This section opens and closes with our Lord's loving admonition, "Let not your heart be troubled" (John 14:1, 27). We are not surprised that the Apostles were troubled. After all, Jesus had announced that one of them was a traitor, and then He warned Peter that he was going to deny his Lord three times. Self-confident Peter was certain that he could not only follow his Lord, but even die with Him and for Him. Alas, Peter did not know his own heart, nor do we really know *our* hearts, except for one thing: our hearts easily become troubled. Perhaps the heaviest blow of all was the realization that Jesus was going to leave them (John 13:33). Where was He going? Could they go with Him? How could they get where He was going? These were some of the perplexing questions that tumbled around in their minds and hearts and were tossed back and forth in their conversation at the table. How did Jesus calm their troubled hearts? By giving them six wonderful assurances to lay hold of, assurances that we today may claim and thus enjoy untroubled hearts. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you may claim every single one of these assurances.

You Are Going to Heaven (John 13:36–14:6)

Jesus did not rebuke Peter for asking Him where He was going, but His reply was somewhat cryptic. One day Peter would "follow" Jesus to the cross (John 21:18–19; 2 Peter 1:12–15), and then he would follow Him to heaven. Tradition tells us that Peter was crucified, though he asked to be crucified head-downward because he did not feel worthy to die as his Master died.

Just as Peter was beginning to feel like a hero, Jesus announced that he himself would soon become a casualty. The message not only shocked Peter, but it also stunned the rest of the disciples. After all, if brave Peter denied the Lord, what hope was there for the rest of them? It was then that Jesus gave His message to calm their troubled hearts.

According to Jesus, heaven is a real place. It is not a product of religious imagination or the result of a psyched-up mentality, looking for "pie in the sky by and by." Heaven is the place

where God dwells and where Jesus sits today at the right hand of the Father. 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 (John 14:2).

The word *Father* is used fifty-three times in John 13–17. Heaven is “My Father’s house,” according to the Son of God. It is “home” for God’s children! Some years ago, a London newspaper held a contest to determine the best definition of “home.” The winning entry was, “Home is the place where you are treated the best and complain the most.” The poet Robert Frost said that home is the place that, when you arrive there, they have to take you in. A good definition!

The Greek word *monē* is translated “mansions” in John 14:2 and “abode” in John 14:23. It simply means “rooms, abiding places,” so we must not think in terms of manor houses. It is unfortunate that some unbiblical songs have perpetuated the error that faithful Christians will have lovely mansions in glory, while worldly saints will have to be content with little cottages or even shacks. Jesus Christ is now preparing places for all true believers, and each place will be beautiful. When He was here on earth, Jesus was a carpenter (Mark 6:3). Now that He has returned to glory, He is building a church on earth and a home for that church in heaven.

John 14:3 is a clear promise of our Lord’s return for His people. Some will go to heaven through the valley of the shadow of death, but those who are alive when Jesus returns will *never* see death (John 11:25–26). They will be changed to be like Christ and will go to heaven (1 Thes. 4:13–18).

Since heaven is the Father’s house, it must be a place of love and joy. When the Apostle John tried to describe heaven, he almost ran out of symbols and comparisons! (Rev. 21–22) Finally, he listed the things that would not be there: death, sorrow, crying, pain, night, etc. What a wonderful home it will be—and we will enjoy it forever!

Thomas’ question revealed his keen desire to be with Jesus (see John 11:16), and this meant that he had to know where the Master was going and how he himself would get there. The Lord made it clear that He was going to the Father, and that He was the only way to the Father. Heaven is a real place, a loving place, and an exclusive place. Not everybody

is going to heaven, but rather only those who have trusted Jesus Christ (see Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:4–6).

Jesus does not simply teach the way or point the way; *He is the way*. In fact, “the Way” was one of the early names for the Christian faith (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). Our Lord’s statement, “No man cometh unto the Father but by Me,” wipes away any other proposed way to heaven—good works, religious ceremonies, costly gifts, etc. There is only one way, and that way is Jesus Christ.

How would this assurance of going to heaven help to calm the disciples’ troubled hearts? Dr. James M. Gray put it beautifully in a song he wrote years ago: “Who could mind the journey, when the road leads home?” The assurance of a heavenly home at the end of life’s road enables us to bear joyfully with the obstacles and battles along the way. It was this assurance that even encouraged our Lord, “who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross” (Heb. 12:2). Paul had this truth in mind when he wrote, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18).

You Know the Father Right Now (John 14:7–11)

We do not have to wait until we enter heaven to get to know the Father. We can know Him today and receive from Him the spiritual resources we need to keep going when the days are difficult.

What does it mean to “know the Father”? The word *know* is used 141 times in John’s Gospel, but it does not always carry the same meaning. In fact, there are four different “levels” of *knowing* according to John. The lowest level is simply knowing a fact. The next level is to understand the truth behind that fact. However, you can know the fact and know the truth behind it and still be lost in your sins. The third level introduces *relationship*; “to know” means “to believe in a person and become related to him or her.” This is the way “know” is used in John 17:3. In fact, in Scripture, “to know” is used of the most intimate relationship between man and wife (Gen. 4:1).

The fourth use of “know” means “to have a deeper relationship with a person, a deeper communion.” It was this level Paul was referring to when he wrote, “That I may know Him”

(Phil. 3:10). Jesus will describe this deeper relationship in John 14:19–23, so we will save any further comment until we deal with that section.

When Jesus said that knowing Him and seeing Him was the same as knowing and seeing the Father, He was claiming to be God. From now on, they would understand more and more about the Father, even though Jesus was leaving them.

I appreciate Philip's desire to know the Father. He had come a long way since that day Jesus found him and called him (John 1:43–45). The burning desire of every believer ought to be to know God better. We read and study the Word of God so that we might better know the God of the Word.

The Greek construction of the question in John 14:10 indicates that the Lord expected a yes answer from Philip: he *did* believe that Jesus was in the Father and the Father in Him. That being the case, Philip should have realized that the words of Jesus, as well as His works, came from the Father and revealed the Father. Believers today have not seen the Lord Jesus in the flesh (1 Peter 1:8), but we do see Him and His works in the Word. The emphasis throughout John's Gospel is that you cannot separate Christ's words and works, for both come from the Father and reveal the Father.

The "believe" in John 14:10 is singular, for Jesus was addressing Philip; but in John 14:11, it is plural and He addresses all of the disciples. The tense of both is "go on believing." Let your faith grow!

Four hundred years before Christ was born, the Greek philosopher Plato wrote, "To find out the Father and Maker of all this universe is a hard task, and when we have found Him, to speak of Him to all men is impossible." But Plato was wrong! We *can* know the Father and Maker of the universe, for Jesus Christ revealed Him to us. Why should our hearts be troubled when the Creator and Governor of the universe is *our own Father*?

The very Lord of heaven and earth is our Father (Luke 10:21). There is no need for us to have troubled hearts, for He is in control.¹

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 349–351.