

John 14: Jesus' "Father" Theology

Counsel for a Troubled Heart

John 14.1

John 14-17

- ❖ These chapters contain Jesus' most extensive time of teaching with his disciples, as well as his most theological and systematic teaching with these who will be the apostolic foundation of the Church.
 - ▶ In chapter 14, the emphasis of Jesus is on the Father—there are no less than 23 references to the Father—and Jesus in direct connection with the Father.
 - ▶ Chapter 15 begins with an emphatic “I am” followed by 45 additional first person pronouns, all in reference to Jesus.
 - ▶ Chapter 16 contains the longest consecutive teaching about the Holy Spirit found in the Gospels, and comparable in the New Testament to only Romans 8.
- ❖ Thus, these chapters are thoroughly Trinitarian in their presentation, while also deeply relational and experiential—true discipleship is living in relationship with the Godhead.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.

You believe in God; believe also in me.

My Father’s house has many rooms;

if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there
to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I will come back and take you to be with me
that you also may be where I am.

You know the way to the place where I am going.”

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

Question 1: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

Answer: That I am not my own,¹ but belong—

body and soul, in life and in death—²

to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.³

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,⁴

and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.⁵

He also watches over me in such a way⁶

that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven;⁷

in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.⁸

Because I belong to him,

Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life⁹

and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.¹⁰

¹ 1 Corinthians 6,19-20 ² Romans 14,7-9 ³ 1 Corinthians 3,23; Titus 2,14 ⁴ 1 Peter 1,18-19; 1 John 1,7-9; 2:2 ⁵ John 8,34-36; Hebrews 2,14-15; 1 John 3,1-11 ⁶ John 6,39-40; 10,27-30;

² Thessalonians 3,3; 1 Peter 1,5 ⁷ Matthew 10,29-31; Luke 21,16-18 ⁸ Romans 8,28 ⁹ Romans 8,15-16; 2 Corinthians 1,21-22; 5,5; Ephesians 1,13-14 ¹⁰ Romans 8,1-17

A Troubling Moment

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God.

PSALM 42.11

- ❖ Although our reference Bibles have these words as the beginning of a new chapter, there is no transition in the setting or the context; these words of Jesus follow what has just, as well as all that has, transpired on this evening with his disciples. Mixed in with his humble example of service, the Passover meal with its new covenant implications, and the new demand that Jesus places on those who are his followers, are deeply troubling events and statements.

- ▶ *After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.” His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant.*
 - ▶ *“My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.”*
 - ▶ *“Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!”*
- ❖ *Note that Jesus was troubled in his spirit by the betrayal of his companion with whom he had enjoyed fellowship (Psalm 55.13-14, 20-21). In Jesus’ next sentence we will hear words that emphatically emphasize his divine nature and equality with the Father, but first we see the troubling impact on his human nature by this impending betrayal.*

(In a most interesting correlation between Psalm 55 and these words of Jesus, the encouragement to “Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you” follows the troubling expressions of betrayal just as the words of Jesus here in 14.1 follow the troubling moments of the evening.)

- ❖ “troubled” (*tarasso*) —
 - ▶ to agitate or trouble the mind with fear
 - ▶ to trouble with grief and anxiety
 - ▶ to unsettle with doubt
- ❖ These three moments are a concise picture of the realities and experiences in human existence that are the most troubling for us —
 - ▶ betrayal – *hurt by others*;
 - ▶ separation – *loss of those close to us*;
 - ▶ failure – *shame and disillusionment resulting from failure by ourselves or others*.
- ❖ A deeper revelation comes with the admonishment of Jesus: “Do not let your heart be troubled.” These experiences and the extent of being troubled reveal the depth to which we have connected our hearts to someone or something.

- ▶ To what extent is my sense of stability and well-being dependent on how others treat me?
 - ▶ How much is my sense of security dependent on the presence of others and threatened or debilitated by their (or the prospect of, in this case) absence or loss?
 - ▶ To what extent is my faith affected by my sense of personal weakness or by the failure of others?
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- ❖ Ultimately the question comes down to this: how sustaining is my faith and trust in Jesus? Am I more dependent on others than I am trusting of Jesus? How strong is my focus on the spiritual and the eternal?
 - ❖ “Do not let your heart be troubled.” (*present tense imperative*) “When circumstances trouble you, don’t be too troubled, don’t stay troubled.” Beyond the trouble is a certain and trustworthy God—on Him we set our hope (2 *Corinthians* 1.10).