

**Good News in Hard Times** Jn 14:1-14 [www.bible-sermons.org](http://www.bible-sermons.org) March 22, 2009

If you listen to the news these days, it can be down right depressing. Iran is about to make a nuclear weapon. North Korea is ready to go to war. A detainee we released from Gitmo is the new head of the Taliban. Our government just proposed more spending in the last two months than in the last 230 years with no real idea how we are going to pay for it. Most people lost half their retirement when the stock market dove to half of what it had been, and then someone comes on the TV and says, "Things are looking up. Be optimistic. It's not as bad as it seems."

Jesus gave His disciples the worst news they could imagine but then He told them to not trouble their heart about it. Here's how it went. He said He would be handed over, beaten, spit upon, and crucified. (Mark 10:33-34) One of their own would betray Him and Peter would deny He knew Him before the next morning. The next words out of His mouth seemed like the optimistic talking head on TV. The big difference is that Jesus knows what He's talking about. Jesus knows the future.

He said, <sup>1</sup> "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. I am so glad I switched from topical to expository preaching. I have learned so much more from this series through John than I'd ever seen in it before due to the careful study of context. This verse is a good example. When I started to prepare I thought, "Wait a minute, Jesus said His soul was troubled when He thought about what He would go through on the cross, bearing our sins." (John 12:27) At first it appeared that He was telling the disciples to do something He didn't do. That couldn't be right, so I looked at the difference between the word for soul and heart. That certainly has something to do with it, but the major issue is that we don't need to be troubled about our eternity or about judgment, because Jesus took care of it. (Romans 5:1) If the sins of the world were going to be placed on me, my soul should be troubled! If you and I have to face God and account for just our own sins, we should be troubled. Jesus knew He was about to deal with our sins for us so we don't need to be troubled. This is one point in which the life of the Son of God was different from the life He asks us to live. He was troubled (stirred in spirit, agitated) so that we never need be troubled over our eternal destiny.

As long as we place our trust in God and Christ Jesus, our future is secure. (Psalm 37:3) To trust (*pisteuo*) is to entrust yourself to someone. When we are sick and unable to care for our self, we entrust our self to a doctor or hospital. We place our life in their hands. If they say we must take a certain medicine we take it. If they say we need to get up and walk, we try to follow their instructions as best we are able. That is to entrust yourself to another. So to entrust our self to God is to have the faith that He knows what is best for us and follow His instructions. We no longer rely on self because we have recognized that we are unable. We need someone to tell us what to do. We need help.

Someone once said churches are full of spiritually sick people. That is short of the whole truth. The world is full of spiritually sick people. (Psalm 14:3) People in church just realize they are sick and know they need help. Our only advantage over non-church goers is that we recognize our condition and where to get help. Help isn't in

**Commented [notes1]:** 33 "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."  
Mark 10:33-34 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 27 "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.  
John 12:27 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
Romans 5:1 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.  
Psalms 37:3 (NIV)

**Commented [notes5]:** 3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.  
Psalms 14:3 (NIV)

the building but in our Lord and Savior to Whom we have entrusted ourselves. (Psalm 124:8) He put us all together, under His care, in a family called the church. Here we can encourage and help one another with the help we receive from God. (2Corinthians 1:4)

**Commented [notes6]:** 8 Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. Psalms 124:8 (NIV)

So we are to not trouble our hearts but to entrust ourselves to God and His Son Christ Jesus. Now that is the formula to live in a state of real peace. (Romans 15:13) We are in times of uncertainty and fear seems to permeate the world, but the child of God who has entrusted himself to the care of the Father need not be troubled. We trust the One who is in charge. He can care for me like He cared for Elijah when the ravens brought him bread. (1Kings 17:4) He can care for us like he cared for the widow whose cruse of oil lasted until the drought was over. (1Kings 17:14) Did the nation of Israel lack food or clothing as they wandered 40 years in the desert? (Deuteronomy 8:3-4) The only thing they lacked was trust in God who was providing everything for them. How much better off they would have been had they just trusted Him instead of being fearful and worrying!

**Commented [notes7]:** 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. 2 Cor 1:4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes8]:** 13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13 (NIV)

**Commented [notes9]:** 4 You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there." 1 Kings 17:4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes10]:** 14 For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.'" 1 Kings 17:14 (NIV)

The day will come when each one of us will be called to our heavenly home. We don't need to be worried about that either, for Jesus said, *<sup>2</sup>In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.* Jewish families in Galilee lived around a common courtyard. When a young man was ready to take a wife, he would go with his father to the father of the prospective bride and arrange the bride-price. (Exodus 22:16) The better off the family and the more value placed in the bride, the higher the price. It was insurance money to be held for the bride in case the husband died. Once the price was set, the groom would give the bride a cup of wine and ask her to drink all of it. If she did, it meant she received his life and gave him her life. That had just taken place at the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:27)

**Commented [notes11]:** 3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. 4 Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Deut 8:3-4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes12]:** 16 "If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price, and she shall be his wife. Ex 22:16 (NIV)

**Commented [notes13]:** 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. Matt 26:27 (NIV)

Then the groom would tell the bride verses two and three of our text. He would go back to the family insula and add a room. As soon as the father of the groom approved of the finished room, the groom would call his friends and they would go to the bride's home for a weeklong party. At the end of the party he was to take her to the new room he had prepared. *<sup>3</sup>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.* This is marriage covenant language. I imagine that the disciples' jaws dropped when Jesus said these things. They probably looked at each other in disbelief. Can you imagine at men's breakfast if the speaker asked the men there if they would marry him? They might tar and feather him.

John may not have understood it at the time, but he certainly understood later when he wrote the Revelation. He wrote, *<sup>7</sup>Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. <sup>8</sup>Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) <sup>9</sup>Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."* Revelation 19:7-9 (NIV) The Lamb of God not only took care of your sins, He wants to marry you! The Apostle Paul told us that marriage was a picture of

Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:32) Let me assure you, being married to Jesus is something so much greater, more wonderful, than anything you can imagine. The best marriage on earth is just a shadow of what our relationship with Jesus will be like in that day.

**Commented [notes14]:** 32 This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church. Eph 5:32 (NIV)

Now that is hope, or as some say, "the blessed hope"! (Titus 2:13) I don't have much hope for the kingdoms of men, or for man solving his problems, or even for our country getting out of the massive hole of debt and moral decay, but I have an insurmountable hope in the consummation of our relationship with Jesus.

**Commented [notes15]:** 13 while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, Titus 2:13 (NIV)

He prepared a place for us and when He creates, it's always stunning. We don't have many descriptions of heaven in the Bible, but here is what we do know. There will be no complaint department in heaven. There will be no bills, no tears, no pain, no fear, just a joyful eternity in fellowship with Jesus as we worship around the throne. (Revelation 7:17) You will never be bored. (Revelation 22:3-4) It is our fleshly dullness to the wonder of God that causes us to be bored in this life. You'll have a transformed body to take it all in. (1Corinthians 15:53) I would hesitate to compare it to any natural joys in this life, as it will far surpass them, but there are spiritual joys that give us some insight. Do you remember the joy you felt when you were saved? Do you remember the thrill when you heard God speak to your heart, or supernaturally work through you? That will be the new normal and you'll never get used to it. So when your eyes get a little too focused on the here and now, sit back, and think about where Jesus promised to take us and the relationship we will enjoy! Heaven is heavenly because He will take us to be with Him. (2Corinthians 4:18)

**Commented [notes16]:** 17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Rev 7:17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes17]:** 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. Rev 22:3-4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes18]:** 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 1 Cor 15:53 (NIV)

**Commented [notes19]:** 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Cor 4:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes20]:** 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. John 10:9 (NIV)

*<sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going."* *<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"* They knew Jesus. They knew the way. Jesus is the way to heaven. He is the gate. (John 10:9) He is the only entrance. They obviously didn't know what He was getting at when He said, "*You know the way to the place where I am going.*" It seems to me Jesus said this so that He could make it crystal clear to them and to us how to get to heaven, how to have the blessed hope.

*<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* Jesus is the way to God, the way to a relationship with God that guarantees eternity in fellowship with Him. He is the truth. Truth is not relative or subjective. It is the eternal being, God. He never changes. He is the same in every age and in every culture. We do have objective, unquestionable truth. His name is Jesus. (John 1:14) He is life. Without Him there is no life. He is the life giver and the life sustainer. (John 1:4) He is the only way to God!

**Commented [notes21]:** 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes22]:** 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. John 1:4 (NIV)

To understand the fullness of what Jesus was saying, we must go back to a bit of Jewish history. The Jews had worshiped in the tabernacle until the temple was built. It had three gates or curtains that led to the innermost Holy of Holies. It was a design that God gave to Moses. (Hebrews 8:5) God told Moses to build it exactly according to what he had seen on the mountain with God. The gate through which everyone entered was the Life Gate. It was the widest gate leading into the public court where the altar was kept. Beyond that was the Truth Gate. You could only go

**Commented [notes23]:** 5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." [Heb 8:5 (NIV)]

in if you were a priest that was ceremonially clean. There was the golden candelabrum and the table of shewbread. The innermost room was sealed off by The Way curtain. Inside was the very presence of God, the Shekinah, over the Ark of the Covenant. (Exodus 25:22) Jesus is one with the Father. When He came to us He came through the Way Gate, then the Truth Gate, and finally into our world through the Life Gate. He is every one of those Gates. The order in which He spoke this verse tells us He was declaring He came from the inside of the Holy of Holies. He dwelt in the eternal Holy of Holies but came out into the world to meet us. Realizing this helps make Jesus' answer to Thomas clearer. (John 6:33)

**Commented [notes24]:** 22 There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites. Ex 25:22 (NIV)

<sup>7</sup> *If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.*" He said this in the end of chapter 12 as well. See Jesus; see God. Know Jesus and you know God! He couldn't make it any clearer. I think that even with all they had seen and heard it was still such a stretch for them. Though the Jewish writings mention YHWH appearing to man, the rabbi explain these appearances by saying that one called the Prince of the Countenance appeared for the invisible God. He was a being that came and went like an angel. Even though Jesus clearly declared it, they just couldn't make the connection that this Jesus is the living, breathing, Prince of the Countenance, and more. Later they would understand He is the exact representation of God. (Hebrews 1:3)

**Commented [notes25]:** 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." John 6:33 (NIV)

<sup>8</sup> *Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."* Jesus just told them to see Him is to see God. He said they had already seen God. Listen to the frustration in Jesus' answer. <sup>9</sup> *Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"* Do you hear it? How many times can He say it? There are times when I'll share a truth with someone and they will bring up an error that the truth negated. They'll bring up the error again and again. It is so frustrating. Why can't they listen? Why don't they get it? It is as if they didn't hear or accept the truth, but they won't say that because that position is indefensible. That must have been how Jesus felt, only remember, this is the last night. If they don't get it now, would they ever get it? Jesus needed them to believe that He was not speaking in error, or in allegories, but the very words of God.

**Commented [notes26]:** 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Heb 1:3 (NIV)

<sup>10</sup> *Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.* Notice that Jesus didn't say the Father living in me is saying these words. Jesus is saying God is doing His work. The miracles and the words are all the work of God. They can't deny the miracles. The words are God's work as well. You can't accept one and reject the other. Jesus' words are the Father's work even when He said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

Jesus relied completely on the Father. His words and His actions were the work of the Father. If Jesus entrusted His earthly life to the Father, don't we have even a greater need to do so? (John 15:5)

**Commented [notes27]:** 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5 (NIV)

<sup>11</sup> *Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.* If you struggle believing my words, at least accept them because of the evidence of the miracles. God is in me

and I am in God. This is that mystical union that we are invited to enter into by being in Jesus. (John 14:20) This is true marriage, the ultimate sharing of life.

*12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.* Another amen, amen declaration. If you have placed your faith in Jesus, you will be a life giver as well. I'm not saying you will become Jesus, but His life in you will flow through you to others. Your life will touch the lives of others like Jesus' life did. You will be a light in the darkness. (Matthew 5:14) Lives will be transformed because of their interaction with you. And perhaps, if the situation requires it, if God will be glorified through it, Jesus will even perform the miraculous through you so that others might believe.

To ask in Jesus' name is to ask with His authority. It is to represent Him. Of course He will do what He authorizes us to do, whatever will bring glory to the Father. We tend to use "in Jesus' name" as the magic ending on our prayers. It isn't a magical phrase like "Abracadabra". When we end our prayer with those words it should declare that we are praying in unity with Jesus' will to glorify the Father. We should be conscious that we are claiming the authority Jesus gives us.

*14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.* You can ask anything with Jesus' authority. Of course you only have His authority when you are glorifying the Father. The emphasis here is not that Jesus will do whatever you want, but that no matter how great your request, if it is with Jesus' authority and to glorify God, Jesus will see it is done. (1John 5:14) How comforting that must have been to those disciples who heard that Jesus was about to be betrayed by one of them. How comforting for Peter, who had just heard he wouldn't make it through the night before denying Jesus three times. How comforting to us in times of difficulty!

Jesus just explained that this was not the end of their relationship, but the beginning of a more intimate one. They will be His bride. Jesus has come to us from the heavenly Holy of Holies to enter into our world so that we might have a way to be with Him forever. He is the way there. He is truth. He is life. We see God when we see Him. His words and actions are the work of the Father in Him. We will do these works and greater works if we live in Jesus, letting His life and authority work in us. These are Jesus' words of assurance that though the times are the toughest they have ever faced, the times will bring them to a deeper relationship with Him. It's a relationship that should make the troubles of this life seem insignificant. (Romans 8:18)

I believe that what was true for the disciples is true for us. Jesus proposes to you. Will you accept His life and give Him yours? If you do, He's gone to prepare a room for you and He will be back for you. But for now, His Spirit in you can make your life rise above the mediocrity of this world and soar on wings like eagles. He can live in and work through you just as the Father worked through Him. Will you join your will with His? Will you say with Jesus, "Not my will, but Yours be done?" (Luke 22:42) Then you can act in Jesus' name and bring glory to God. Every day the world seems to grow darker, but every day in Jesus grows brighter.

**Commented [notes28]:** 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.  
John 14:20 (NIV)

**Commented [notes29]:** 14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden."  
Matt 5:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes30]:** 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.  
1 John 5:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes31]:** 18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.  
Romans 8:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes32]:** 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."  
Luke 22:42 (NIV)