CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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 not only could he 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 can 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 too can 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) ***"36 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." 37 Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." 38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times."***

CHAPTER 14 "1 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way where I am going." 5Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How do we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.

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 (Hebrews 11:16), a city (Hebrews 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 *mone* 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 Thessalonians 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!

(Revelation 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 as Lord (see Acts 4:12; Romans 10:9-10; 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 comes 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*" (Hebrews 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*" (Romans 8:18).

You Know the Father Right Now (John 14:7–11) ***7 If you have come to know Me, you will know My Father also; from now on you know Him and have seen Him." 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all so long and have you not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.***

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 (Genesis 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" (Philippians 3:10). Jesus will describe this deeper relationship in John 14:19–23. 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!

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.

You Have the Privilege of Prayer (John 14:12–15) ***12 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do because I go to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in My name, this will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. 15 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.***

"Why pray when you can worry?" is a popular plaque. Of course, the best remedy for a troubled heart is prayer*: "O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear; All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer."*

However, if God is going to answer our prayers and give us peace in our hearts, there are certain conditions that we must meet. In fact, the meeting of these conditions is a blessing in itself!

We must pray in faith (v. 12). This is a promise to claim, and the claiming of it demands faith. The double "verily" assures us that this is a solemn announcement. The fact that Jesus did return to the Father is an encouragement, for there He is interceding for us. He will have more to say about this intercessory work later in His discourse.

The "greater works [things]" would apply initially to the Apostles who were given the power to perform special miracles as the credentials of their office (Romans 15:18–19; Hebrews 2:3–4). These miracles were not greater in *quality*, for "*the servant is not greater than his lord*" (John 13:16), but rather in scope and quantity. Peter preached one sermon and 3,000 sinners were converted in one day! The fact that ordinary people performed these signs made them even more wonderful and brought great glory to God (Acts 5:13–16).

Of course, it is not the believer *himself* who does these "greater things"; it is God working in and through the believer: "*The Lord working with them*" (Mark 16:20). "*For it is God who works in you*" (Philippians 2:13). Faith and works must always go together, for it is faith that releases the power of God in our lives.

Both love and obedience are part of effective prayer. "*If I regard [see and approve] iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*" (Psalm 66:18).

We do not obey the Lord simply because we want our prayers answered, somewhat like the attitude of a child just before Christmas. We obey Him because we love Him; and the more we obey Him, the more we experience His love. To "*keep*" His commandments means to value them, treasure them, guard them, and do them. "I *have esteemed the*

words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). Believing prayer is wonderful medicine to soothe a troubled heart. Meditate on Philippians 4:6–7—and then put it into practice!

We must pray in Christ's name (vv. 13–14). This is not a "magic formula" that we automatically attach to our prayer requests, guaranteeing that God will answer. To ask anything of the Father, in the name of Jesus, means that we ask what Jesus would ask, what would please Him, and what would bring Him glory by furthering His work. When a friend says to you, "You may use my name!" he is handing you a great privilege as well as a tremendous responsibility.

The "*whatsoever*" in John 14:13 is qualified by all that God has revealed in His Word about prayer; likewise, the "*anything*" in John 14:14. God is not giving us *carte blanche*; "*in My name*" is the controlling element. To know God's name means to know His nature, what He is, and what He wants to do. God answers prayer in order to honor His name; therefore, prayer must be in His will (1 John 5:14–15). The first request in "The Lord's Prayer" is, "*Hallowed be Thy name*" (Matthew 6:9). Any request that does not glorify God's name should not be asked in His name.

We must pray in loving obedience (v. 15). When you love someone, you honor his or her name; and you would never use that name in a demeaning manner. *Love* is an important theme in the Gospel of John; it is used as a verb or noun a total of fifty-six times.

We Have the Holy Spirit (John 14:16–18) ***16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, that He may be with you forever; 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. You know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.***

Jesus had a great deal to say about the Holy Spirit in His Upper Room message, for apart from the indwelling power of the Spirit of God, we cannot live the Christian life. We must know who the Holy Spirit is, what He does, and how He does it.

The Holy Spirit is given two special names by our Lord: "*another Comforter*" and "the *Spirit of truth*." The Greek word translated "Comforter" is *parakletos* and it is used only in John (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1). It means "*called alongside to assist*." The Holy Spirit does not work instead of us, or in spite of us, but in us and through us.

Our English word *comfort* comes from two Latin words meaning "with strength." We usually think of "comfort" as soothing someone, consoling him or her; and to some extent this is true. But true comfort strengthens us to face life bravely and keep on going. It does not rob us of responsibility or make it easy for us to give up. Some translations call the Holy Spirit "*the Encourager*," and this is a good choice of words. *Parakletos* is translated "*Advocate*" in 1 John 2:1. An "advocate" is one who represents you at court and stands at your side to plead your case.

As "*the Spirit of Truth*," the Holy Spirit is related to Jesus, the Truth, and the Word of God, which of itself is the truth (John 14:6; 17:17). The Spirit inspired the Word and also illumines the Word so we may understand it. Later on in this message, Jesus will explain the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Since He is the "*Spirit of Truth,"* the Holy Spirit cannot lie or be associated with lies. He never leads us to do anything contrary to the Word of God, for again God's Word is truth.

If we want the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, we must seek to glorify Christ; and we must make much of the Word of God. When you compare Ephesians 5:18–6:9 with Colossians 3:16–4:1, you will see that both passages describe the same kind of Christian life—joyful, thankful, and submissive. To be filled with the Spirit is the same as to be controlled by the Word. The Spirit of Truth uses the Word of truth to guide us into the will and the work of God.

The Holy Spirit abides in the believer. He is a gift from the Father in answer to the prayer of the Son. During His earthly ministry, Jesus had guided, guarded, and taught His disciples; but now He was going to leave them. The Spirit of God would come to them *and dwell in them*, taking the place of their Master. Jesus called the Spirit "*another Comforter,*" and the Greek word translated "*another*" means "*another of the same kind.*" The Spirit of God is not different from the Son of God, for both are God. The Spirit of God had dwelt *with* the disciples in the person of Jesus Christ. Now He would dwell *in* them.

Of course, the Spirit of God had been on earth before. He empowered men and women in the Old Testament to accomplish God's work. <u>However, during the Old Testament Age, the Spirit of God would come on people and then leave them</u>. God's Spirit departed from King Saul (1 Samuel 16:14; 18:12); and David, when confessing his sin, asked that the Spirit not be taken from him (Psalm 51:11). When the Holy Spirit was

given at Pentecost, He was given to God's people to remain with them forever. Even though we may grieve the Spirit, He will not leave us.

The way we treat the Holy Spirit is the way we treat the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer's body is the temple of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19–20), so what he or she does with that body affects the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit wrote the Word of God, and the way we treat the Bible is the way we treat the Spirit of God and the Son of God.

The world cannot receive the Spirit because the world lives "by sight" and not by faith. Furthermore, the world does not know Jesus Christ; and you cannot have knowledge of the Spirit apart from the Son. The presence of the Spirit in this world is actually an indictment against the world, for the world rejected Jesus Christ.

The word translated "*comfortless*" in John 14:18 means "*orphans*." We are not alone, abandoned, helpless, and hopeless! Wherever we go, the Spirit is with us, so why should we feel like orphans? There is no need to have a troubled heart when you have the very Spirit of God dwelling within you!

We Enjoy the Father's Love (John 14:19–24) ***19 After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. 20 On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. 21 He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.***

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). Orphans feel unwanted and unloved, but our Father shares His love with us. Jesus explained a threefold manifestation of God's love.

There was a past manifestation to the disciples (vv. 19–20). John 14:19 focuses on His resurrection and post-resurrection appearances to His disciples and other believers. The last time the world saw Jesus was when Joseph and Nicodemus took Him from the cross and buried Him. The next time the world sees Him, He will come in power and great glory to resurrect the saints and to judge lost sinners.

John 14:20 centers especially on the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and the oneness of the believers with their Lord. Jesus returned to heaven as the exalted Head of the church (Ephesians 1:19–23); then He sent the Spirit so that the members of the body would be joined to their Head in a living union. Believers today, of course, did not see Jesus after His resurrection or in His ascension, but we are united to Him by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

There is a present manifestation of Himself to believers (vv. 21, 23–24). Note the repetition of the word *love*. If we treasure His Word and obey it, then the Father and the Son will share Their love with us and make Their home in us. The word translated "*abode*" in John 14:23 means "make our home" and is related to "mansions" in John 14:2.

When the sinner trusts Christ, he is born again and the Spirit immediately enters his body and bears witness that he is a child of God. The Spirit is resident and will not depart. But as the believer yields to the Father, loves the Word, prays, and obeys, there is a deeper relationship with the Father, Son, and Spirit. Salvation means we are going to heaven, but submission means that heaven comes to us!

This truth is illustrated in the experiences of Abraham and Lot, recorded in Genesis 18 and 19. When the pre-incarnate Jesus and the two angels visited Abraham's tent, they felt right at home. They even enjoyed a meal, and Jesus had a private talk with Abraham. But our Lord did not go to Sodom to visit Lot, because He did not feel at home there. Instead, He sent the two angels.

Our experience with God ought to go deeper and deeper, and it will as we yield to the Spirit of Truth and permit Him to teach us and guide us. If we love God and obey Him, He will manifest His love to us in a deeper way each day.

There will be a future manifestation when Jesus Christ returns (v. 19). Judas (not Iscariot) recalled that Jesus had said He would not manifest Himself to the world (John 14:22). But this seemed to contradict other statements He had made, such as recorded in Matthew 24:30. His question was, "*What has come to pass that You are no longer going to reveal Yourself to the world*?" *Has there been a change in the divine plan*?

Jesus had been rejected by His own people, so He could not manifest Himself to them. In fact, it was an act of mercy that He did not manifest Himself to the world, because that would have meant immediate judgment. He has revealed Himself to His church and

left the church in the world to be a witness of God's love. He is patiently waiting, still giving lost sinners opportunity to repent and be saved (2 Peter 3:1–10). One day He will return (Revelation 1:7) and the world will behold Him.

One of the best ways to ease a troubled heart is to bathe it in the love of God. When you feel like an "orphan," let the Spirit of God reveal God's love to you in a deeper way. Charles Spurgeon said, "*Little faith will take your soul to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your soul*." Your heart can become a "heaven on earth" as you commune with the Lord and worship Him.

You Have His Gift of Peace (John 14:25–31) ***25 These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. 28 You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. 30 I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; 31 but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here."***

Shalom—peace—is a precious word to the Jewish people. It means much more than just the absence of war or distress. *Shalom* means wholeness, completeness, health, security, even prosperity in the best sense. When you are enjoying God's peace, there is joy and contentment. But God's peace is not like the "peace" that the world offers.

The world bases its peace on its *resources*, while God's peace depends on *relationships*. To be right with God means to enjoy the peace of God. The world depends on personal ability, but the Christian depends on spiritual adequacy in Christ. In the world, peace is something you hope for or work for; but to the Christian, peace is God's wonderful gift, received by faith. Unsaved people enjoy peace when there is an absence of trouble; Christians enjoy peace *in spite of trials* because of the presence of power, the indwelling Holy Spirit.

People in the world walk by sight and depend on the externals, but Christians walk by faith and depend on the eternals. The Spirit of God teaches us the Word and guides us (not drags us!) into the truth. He also reminds us of what He has taught us so that we

can depend on God's Word in the difficult times of life. The Spirit uses the Word to give us His peace (John 14:27), His love (John 15:9–10), and His joy (John 15:11). If that does not calm a troubled heart, nothing will!

Again, Jesus assured them that they would see Him again (John 14:28). Why rejoice because He returned to the Father? Because His return made possible His wonderful intercessory ministry on our behalf, our great High Priest in heaven (Hebrews 2:17–18; 4:14–16). We have the Spirit within us, the Savior above us, and the Word before us! What tremendous resources for peace!

In John 14:30–31, the Lord named two of our great spiritual enemies—the world and the devil. Jesus overcame the world and the devil (John 12:31), and the devil has no claim on Him. There is no point, place or opportunity in Jesus Christ where the devil can get a foothold. Since we are "in Christ," Satan can get no foothold in the believer's life, unless we permit it. Neither Satan nor the world can trouble our hearts if we are yielded to the "peace of God" through the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus said "*My Father is greater than I*" (John 14:28), He was not denying His own deity or His equality with God, for then He would have been contradicting Himself (John 10:30). When Jesus was here on earth, He was necessarily limited by having a human body. He voluntarily laid aside the independent exercise of His divine attributes and submitted Himself to the Father. In that sense, the Father was greater than the Son. Of course, when the Son returned to heaven, all He had laid aside was restored once again (John 17:1, 5).

Jesus showed His love for the Father (and for the world) by voluntarily going to the cross. He did not hide or flee. He willingly laid down His life. He and the disciples may have left the Upper Room at this point (John 14:31) so that what Jesus said from that point on was spoken on the way to the Garden. We can easily imagine the allegory of the vine being given as they walked that night through the vineyards.

His own perfect peace assures us that He alone can give true peace. Jesus was always the Master of the situation, and He enables us to take control of our lives as we surrender to Him and receive His legacy of peace.[1]

---

[1] Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 349–354). Victor Books.