
[Jesus said], ¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many dwellings; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you..... ⁶ I am the way, the truth, and the life."

From John 14:1-14 (NKJV)

Outside the front of the place in which we live is an interesting footpath – insofar as the footpath runs across the front of the house and stops just at the boundary, and only continues some 100 metres further up the road. There have been times when I have been tempted to go outside with a large Texta and write “You’re on the road to nowhere” – thinking of the song by ‘Talking Heads’. In this song there are the lyrics *“Well we know where we're going, but we don't know where we've been. And we know what we're knowing, but we can't say what we've seen. And we're not little children, and we know what we want. And the future is certain, give us time to work it out. Yeah, we're on a road to nowhere, come on inside. Taking that ride to nowhere, we'll take that ride. I'm feeling okay this morning. And you know, we're on the road to paradise.”* The writer of the song, David Byrne, explains the meaning of the song in this way: *“It's this little ditty about how there's no order and no plan and no scheme to life and death and it doesn't mean anything, but it's alright.”* And *“I wanted to write a song that presented a resigned, even joyful look at doom.”*

Everyone is on a ‘journey in life’. If you think about any show on television (even the so called ‘reality shows’), people are asking questions about the choices they are to make, and the results of those choices. We look to politicians and government and business leaders and the like to ‘make the right decisions’. And we all somehow like to feel as though we are ‘on the road to somewhere’. But where is that ‘somewhere’...? And what should we do when we feel like we are ‘on the road to nowhere’?

Have there been times when you have struggled with a sense of ‘purpose’ or ‘direction’? Do you ever feel like you're going in circles and not making any progress? At least not the kind of progress you were expecting.... Are the constant appeals of our world pulling you in a million different ways, causing you to question if you're headed in the right direction?

On the night He was betrayed Jesus spoke about the future direction of His life. And He said to His disciples, “Let not your heart be troubled...”

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.” Few words in the Bible are better known or more often quoted than these.

As we come to these words, it is always helpful to remember their original context. This text is part of the conversation Jesus had with his disciples on the night of his betrayal. They have shared a Passover Meal together in the Upper Room. Jesus knew what lay before Him – His betrayal, denial, the mock trial, the miscarriage of justice, His crucifixion and death. And He knew the effect this would have on His disciples. Here He begins the process of preparing them for His end.

Jesus says, "Let not your hearts be troubled." We note here a 'passive', that is not only 'something we are called to do', but something we are called to let happen to us. Jesus said, "You believe in God, believe also in Me." This verse is much discussed. If you look at various translation it has been translated as either a double-command (imperative, imperative), ie: "You must believe in God, you must believe in Me."; and it has been translated as a reminder and command (indicative, imperative), ie: "You are believing in God, so you must also believe in Me."; and it has also been translated as a double reminder of what's really happening in their hearts (indicative, imperative), ie: "You are believing in God and you are believing in Me." Are Jesus words a 'command' or a 'reminder' of what is happening in our hearts? Or maybe they're both (command and reminder). Jesus commands "Have faith in God; have faith in Me." But Jesus also reminds us of an underlying reality we don't always realise: "You have faith in God; you have faith in Me."

In a very short time life for the disciples was going to fall in. Their world was going to collapse in chaos around them. At such a time there was only one thing to do – to hold on to trust in God. As the Psalmist had said: "I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Psalms 27:13). "But my eyes are toward You, O Lord God; in You I seek refuge" (Psalms 141:8). There comes a time when we have to believe where we cannot prove and to accept where we cannot understand. If, in the darkest hour, we believe that somehow there is a purpose in life and that that purpose is love, even the unbearable becomes bearable and even in the darkness there is a glimmer of light.

Jesus says: "Believe in God, believe in me." If the Psalmist could believe in the ultimate goodness of God, how much can we.

Jesus is the proof that God is willing to give us everything He has to give. As Paul put it: "He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, will He not also give us all things with Him?" (Romans 8:32). In Jesus we see the picture of God and the face of His amazing love. And so Jesus speaks of 'many rooms in His Father's house'. This is not simply about a dwelling place in heaven that lies for us all, but it is about relationship with God as we journey through this life. A home is a place where people live. There are many places God has prepared for us as we journey through this life. And Jesus has prepared the way.

One of the great thoughts of the New Testament is that Jesus goes on in front for us to follow. He opens up a way so that we may follow in his steps. One of the great words which is used to describe Jesus is the word *prodromos* (see Hebrews 6:20). The King James Version and the Revised Standard translate it *forerunner*. There are two uses of this word which light up the picture within it. In the Roman army the *prodromoi* were the reconnaissance troops who went ahead of the main body of the army to blaze the trail and to ensure that it was safe for the rest to follow. And when ships came into the harbour of Alexandria, which was very difficult to approach, a little pilot boat was sent out to guide them channel into safe waters. That pilot boat was called the *prodromos*. That is what Jesus does; He blazes the way to heaven and to God.

Jesus is 'the way' and 'the truth' and 'the life'. These three words are important for us as Christians. These three words are important for our knowledge, our faith, and our living relationship with the one true God.

Jesus is 'the way'. If you look in the Bible you will see that the word 'way' is important. 'Teach me Your way, O Lord, and I will walk in Your truth,' the Psalmist says (Ps.86:11). When the people were captive in Egypt the cloud in the daytime, and the fire in the night 'led them on their 'way' (Ex.13:21 etc). Isaiah says, 'Prepare the Way of the LORD' (Isa.40:3). The Psalmist also says, 'Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path (or way)' (Ps.119:106). And, importantly, the Early Christians were known as followers of 'the Way' (Acts 9:2; 24:12 etc). Jesus is 'the way', and therefore...

Jesus is 'the truth'. Jesus is the truth because He reveals who God really is. Jesus is God's revelation to us. The prologue of St. John's Gospel tells us "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, ever at the Father's side, who has revealed Him" Jesus has revealed the Father to us in His very being and life. He not only taught about a loving and forgiving Father, He lived His own life in a loving and forgiving way. And, therefore...

Jesus is the life. Jesus revealed God's great love for all people in His death and resurrection. Jesus is also the life because in and through Him we are restored to a right relationship with the Father.

In Jesus we see God loving. The moment love enters into life pain enters in. If we could be absolutely detached, if we could so arrange life that nothing and nobody mattered to us, then there would be no such thing as sorrow and pain and anxiety. But in Jesus we see God caring intensely for people... for us... for you...

Sometimes we face circumstances in life that are just out of our control. No amount of our own planning and effort can make it better, or could have even prevented it from occurring. Hard things happen. We feel at a loss in how to fix it all. Sometimes it seems too broken. We may try hard to regain some sense of order, but life can still feel unbalanced, uncertain, even chaotic, because of the pressures that cling too tightly. Jesus Himself understood. Over and over in His Word, He reminds us not to worry, not to fear, not to be "troubled" in our hearts.

Twice in this chapter, Jesus gives the directive, "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (verses 1 & 27). The second time He adds, "And do not be afraid." Jesus gives us the responsibility of not allowing our hearts to be troubled or afraid. However, He doesn't leave us floundering; He tells us how, "Trust Me." Sounds simple enough but we soon find it's easier to be troubled than to trust.

When we trust in God, we aren't trusting God to remove all our difficulties. Rather we are trusting Him to be our Sustainer in the difficulties.

There's a famous scene from the C.S. Lewis' book, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* where Mr Beaver is talking about Aslan, the lion who represents God. Lucy is a bit concerned about meeting a lion and asks if he is "quite safe". Mr Beaver responds, "Safe? Safe? Who said anything about safe? Of course he isn't

safe. But he's good." We trust God, not because He is safe or promises us a life of ease but because He is good. We trust in the character of God, knowing an all-good God will enable and empower us to cope with whatever comes our way.

Jesus is 'the way' and 'the truth' and 'the life'. It is no accident that these words are often spoken at Confirmations and funerals. Our lives are to be fixed in Jesus. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." And Jesus does not merely point out the way and teach the truth and talk about what life is all about; He is The Way and The Truth and The Life.

Throughout the Gospels we so often hear how the disciples struggled to understand who Jesus was, and what He had come to do. They struggled to believe. But this sort of 'doubt' can be divided into two categories. There is that sinful doubt that is looking for all sorts of 'ways' and 'reasons' to not 'believe'. Or there is that honest 'doubt' where a believer is walking with Jesus, but is unsure about what it means.

"I have seen the Lord!" exclaimed Mary Magdalene. At first she does not recognise who is standing beside her. When she realises it is the risen Jesus she wants to grasp Him. He holds her off and tells her to go and share what has happened: He has walked through death and has created a path for us to follow, now and on through our own death. In these 50 days of Easter, celebrating what Jesus has done for us, we are invited to recognise Jesus standing beside us, as He did with Mary.

In our feeling-sensitive world, it is worth noting that Jesus acknowledges the disciples' fear without endorsing it. Instead of making their fear the focus, Jesus calls them to faith. Jesus calls the disciples to believe, not because of circumstances but in spite of them. Jesus is 'the way'. Jesus has opened up the path of daily forgiveness and reconciliation. Jesus has opened up the way to 'new life' – for each and every day of living on this earth. Jesus has shown us 'the way' – not only by what He taught; or by the way He lived - but also by being the one and great and only atoning sacrifice for sin. And, therefore, Jesus has opened up for us the 'way' to eternal life'.

To those who say, "Why should we believe in Jesus?", Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled." The result of believing in Jesus is peace. Our hearts are no longer troubled and anxious. We may have sorrows, we may have uncertainties in life, but we have the compassion and power of Jesus, and knowing this gives us peace and hope and strength. We are never 'on the road to nowhere'. With the eyes of faith we see that God walks with us in Christ Jesus. What a wonderful gift this is! Amen.

Prayer: Gracious Lord Jesus, You love us in the face of life, and You love us in the face of death. When we often see something in life as a bleak brick wall or an enormous black hole in our hearts, help us see Your confidence as You faced Your own death. And help us also see all things through the lens of Your resurrection. You are the Way and the Truth and the Life. Help us see the peace we have in You. Amen.