

TBC – 10/22/00 a.m.

A PREPARED PLACE

John 14:2-3

Intro: I would like today to add to what we considered together last Sunday morning. I say, “add to,” because most verses in Scripture can stand alone. But I think that we can say that no verses were intended by the Holy Spirit, nor the writers of Scripture, to stand alone. Verses by themselves have always been a source of blessing to those of us who are the Lord’s people. But there are additional blessings always to be found when verses are related to those that have gone before, as well as with those that follow after.

We can take a verse like John 14:1 and apply it, as I did, to the many things that cause each one of us normally to be troubled. We live in a world where we have many causes each day for us to be troubled. Whatever has the possibility of making us worry, or anxious, or upset, is trouble. All you have to do today is to listen to the news on radio or TV, or read your newspaper, or talk to your friends, and you will find that people are troubled about almost everything. This includes the trouble in the middle East, terrorism, crime, politics, and on down to the personal problems which all of us face every day.

Those of us who are Christians are troubled by the widespread acceptance of things which we know are abominable in the sight of God – adultery, homosexuality, abortion, widespread dishonesty in government and business – and we know that the Lord is not going to let all of this go on endlessly. We as a nation have lost our way. It seems that there is almost no wrong in anything today, to listen to a lot of people. If you stand for what is right in God’s sight, you are a bigot, or intolerant, or something even worse. And even if you say there is only one way of salvation, and only one true God Whose Son is Jesus Christ, only one verbally inspired Word of God, then you are faced with a lot of other troubles.

Then personally we face the problems which everybody faces – health problems, family problems, financial problems, and on and on. There have always been problems to trouble people, but we can wonder if there ever has been a time when they are as numerous and as difficult and as dividing, as they are today.

So the Lord’s words, “Let not your heart be troubled,” almost sound too

idealistic to be possible. But they are not impossible unless you ignore what the Lord said immediately after those words. What did He say? He said, “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.” Literally He said, “Ye believe in the God,” meaning the only, the one true God, Whom He identified in verse 2 as *My Father*. Now you couldn’t say that just to any group of people because many people, perhaps I should say, *most people*, do not believe in the one, true God.

Many of us have just finished reading through the prophecy of Isaiah in our Bible reading. If that includes you, then you probably remember that many times the Lord said to His people in those days through Isaiah the prophet, words like we find in Isaiah 43, verses 10 and 11:

10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

Personally I am absolutely convinced that those words are true, and I know that most of you can say the same thing.

A reading of the Bible teaches us that there are Three Persons in the Godhead, and yet they are one in nature, and one in Their purposes. The Lord Jesus said while He was here on earth, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). So that is why the Lord said, “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.”

The present answer to any and everything that troubles us is faith in God, and faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And when we talk about believing in God and in His Son Jesus Christ, we are not saying just that we believe that such a God exists, and that He has a Son, *but that we know Him, and we are trusting Him for our salvation, and trusting Him with all of the cares and troubles of our lives. We can’t handle them, but He can, and He will! He is working all things out in full accordance with His own will and sovereign purposes. The world looks chaotic to us, but everything is under His sovereign control. You may think that there is no solution to the problems in your life, but there are solutions. What we need to do it to trust God, and to trust His Son Jesus Christ, the Lord – not just with our problems, but we need to trust God and Christ first of all for the forgiveness of our sins. That is our basic problem – our sins! But as long as we buy the idea that is so popular today, that there are no sins,*

we will never find God's solution for troubled hearts.

The disciples were troubled because the Lord had told them that He was going away, and that they could not go with Him. They had been with Him for three years, more or less, and they could not think of living without Him. *That is what was troubling them!* They were troubled in their hearts, inwardly at the very center of their beings. They were trusting in God, and they had also trusted in Christ, but now He was calling upon them to trust Him in the circumstances which they faced them. Every new trial is a fresh opportunity to trust the Lord in a new, and perhaps in a deeper way.

So what did the Lord do? He started speaking to them about His Father in heaven. He spoke to them about:

I. HIS FATHER'S HOUSE (John 14:2a).

When the Lord taught His disciples to pray, you all remember those familiar words by which He said that they should address God. He said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: "Our Father which art in heaven."

Now we know, or we ought to know, that God the Father is omnipresent. That is why we have statements like Solomon made in his prayer at the dedication of the temple which he had built as a house for God. He said, 2 Chron 6:18

But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!

In Isaiah 66:1 we read,

Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

When we move from the temporal conditions of earth to consider the eternal conditions of heaven, we are moving into a realm which is at the present time beyond our comprehension. As Paul said in 1 Cor. 13:12, "For now we see through a glass darkly." We are going to have to wait until we get there before we will really know what it is like.

But here the Lord said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." This has given rise to a lot of ridiculous statements as to the fabulous places

we are going to have to live in when we get to heaven. That is not what the Lord Jesus meant. I am sure that there will be a glory about heaven that is far beyond anything that has ever entered into the heart of any child of God, but we are still going to have to wait to find out what it is like. It is so wonderful that we wouldn't be able to comprehend it all if it were described for us in the Bible. We have glimpses here and there in Scripture, but that is all.

What the Lord Jesus was indicating was that there will be a place for all of the people of God. The word which the Lord used here is only used twice in the NT, and both of those occurrences are right here in John 14. The other place is in verse 23 where it is translated, "our abode." It is the Greek word *μονή*. It was the word used for stations along the roads in Israel where travelers would find rest and refreshment after traveling along the hot, dusty roads. So heaven is going to be a great resting place, not that we won't have work to do, but it will mean serving the Lord in an atmosphere where we will never again be troubled with the problems that have plagued us throughout our lives. Things will be altogether different in heaven. It will be an eternal existence of perfect peace where we will never be troubled with troubles again. The word *μονή* means *an abiding place*, not just a place to live, but a permanent place. Nothing gets old nor does anything decay in heaven. I often wonder what is the experience of people who out of great affliction, passing through the valley of the shadow of death, suddenly find themselves with the Lord in heaven. I am sure that there is nothing on earth that can possibly mean the same. By God's grace we can experience a lot of heaven on earth, but to experience heaven in heaven, we all have to wait.

This wonderful word is followed by:

II. A FURTHER WORD OF ASSURANCE FROM THE LORD (John 14:2m).

I am referring here to the Lord's words, "If it were not so, I would have told you." Don't you love those words? The Lord is not like the people of the world, and like those false teachers who are always present who tell us things that will never be realized. Our politicians, most of them, would like for us to think that they, or they and we working together, can produce a heaven on earth. It will never be. This world is passing away as the Apostle John was directed by the Holy Spirit to tell us long ago.

See 1 John 2:17. Never fear to take any of the promises of God as being absolutely trustworthy. God has never told a lie, nor has He nor His Son ever promised something that they cannot deliver. Never! And that applies to the present as well as to heaven. The Lord would never have said the wonderful things that He said if all of it were not true. So we need to trust Him, knowing that He will never lead us astray, nor will He encourage us with a lie. He is always faithful in what He does; He is always faithful in what He says.

And this led the Lord to give His disciples:

III. A BUNDLE OF AMAZING PROMISES (John 14:2b-3).

There are at least three great and glorious promises here:

- 1) "I go to prepare a place for you."
- 2) "And if [since] I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again>"
- 3) "And receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

We can't know what troubling thoughts filled the hearts of the disciples as the Lord spoke of His departure from them. But there could have been the thought that the Lord would not be as mindful of them, and as concerned about them after He went away as He had been while He was with them. If that were the case, then the Lord's words would have caused those concerns to vanish by the four times He referred to them in these words that we are to consider now. Let me point out what I mean:

I go to prepare a place **for you**. And if I go and prepare a place **for you**, I will come again, and receive **you** unto Myself; that where I am there **ye** may be also.

It was all for them. And His words are for us too. You see, you don't forget the people you love. And all of the time that the Lord was away He was looking forward to the time when they would all be together again. And He is looking forward to the time when **we** will be with Him in person for the first time.

Do you men remember when you fell in love with the one who eventually became your bride and life-long companion? I do, and I remember one time when Lucille was going home, and I had forgotten how long we were going to be apart. Maybe that was the time I was headed for home too. But all unknown to me she had her picture made, and she worked out

a deal with a friend of mine that while I took her to the train, he would put that picture on my desk so that it would be there when I got back to my room. Well, when I got back there was that picture, and I had the first hot flash that I ever had. I didn't have her, but I had her picture, and that was great!

You know, we don't have the Lord visibly present with us now, but we have His picture in the Word, and we have His promise that He is preparing a place for us, and that He is coming after us to take us where He is. Look at these words as I close this morning.

A. "I go to prepare a place for you."

Now I confess to you that I don't really know what that means. I don't really know what the Lord is doing. We think of heaven as a perfect place, and it is, but evidently the Lord had some things to do to get things really ready for us. God has revealed many things about the future for us in the Word, but He hasn't told us everything! I believe this, but I can't really explain it.

But I can do a little better with the second promise:

B. "And if [since] I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again."

The disciples all went one by one by death, but this is not what the Lord was talking about. He was talking about a moment in history when all living believers would be caught up to meet Him in the air, and just before them the dead in Christ would rise first.

This world is not just going on and on like it is, getting worse and worse. The Lord is going to deal in judgment with this world, but our hope is that He is coming for us to take us out of this world. He keeps us from the ravages of the world now, but total deliverance is ahead.

However, that is not the main part of the promise. He saved that for the last. The last is:

C. "And receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

We know that we have a God (and this includes our Lord) Who is self-sufficient. He is not dependent upon us for anything. But without denying that glorious attribute in our Lord, let me say that the Lord is not going to be completely satisfied until we are all in heaven with Him.

Have you noticed that this is the way the coming of the Lord is described in Scripture, not taking us to heaven (although that is what He will do), but taking us to be where He is. Let me give you some verses to prove what I am saying:

1) John 17:24:

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

2) 2 Corinthians 5:6-8:

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

3) Philippians 1:23:

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

4) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18:

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Concl: Many of the Lord's people are "with Him" today, having gone by death. Perhaps many more of us will go that way. But the day is coming, and it could be very soon, when the Lord will descend from heaven as He promised that He would do, the dead in Christ will rise first and be glorified, and those who are still living will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air," and then we will all be "with the Lord."

Are you ready? Are you looking for Him? To be ready means that we are trusting in Christ as our Savior, and seeking to please Him each day.