

TBC – 10/15/00 a.m.

## CHRIST, THE HEALER OF TROUBLED HEARTS

John 14:1-6

— **Intro:** All of us know what it means to have a *troubled heart*. By definition it means *to be worried, to be anxious about anything, to have little or no peace*. We may look calm on the outside, but inwardly we have a lot of commotion, much turmoil. This is the word that Luke used to describe Zacharias' reaction when Gabriel appeared to him in the temple standing by the altar of incense. Luke said, "And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him" (Luke 1:12).

This is the word that Matthew used to describe Herod, the king's reaction, when he heard about the birth of the King of the Jews. Cf. Matt. 2:3. Matthew said that "he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."

It is the word that Matthew used again to describe the reaction of the disciples when the Lord Jesus came walking to them on the water. This is what we are told in Matt. 14:26:

And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

— So a troubled heart is often accompanied by fear.

This word is even used of the Lord Jesus in John's Gospel a couple of times. As He approached *His hour*, the hour when He would give Himself as a sacrifice for sins, He mentioned that He was troubled, and He immediately began to pray. In John 12:27 and the first part of verse 28 we find these words of the Savior:

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name (John 12:27-28a).

And then in John 13 as the Lord was informing His disciples that one of them would betray Him into the hands of His enemies, we read this in verse 21:

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me (John 13:21).

— It would be wrong to say that the Lord worried about anything, but He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, our weaknesses, according to Heb. 4:15, "yet without sin." But the Lord knew that inner turmoil,

that commotion of heart, that we feel, but which often leads us to distrust and worry, and a lack of peace.

— Twice the Lord said “Let not your heart be troubled” to His disciples on this occasion in John 14. You find it again in John 14:27 where the Lord said to His disciples,

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

In speaking about peace last Sunday night I spent some time on Phil. 4:6 and 7 where Paul wrote about a “peace that passeth all understanding.” And you can see from those two verses that Paul was talking about having peace even when the cause for our being troubled is still with us! That is why it is beyond our understanding. Now the peace that the world gives is a peace that calls for the removal of every disturbing element in the world. And when since you have been born has that ever been the case? Never! There are always things in our lives which we would never choose, or things going on in the world that disturb us.

— This past week there were two incidents which have troubled the whole world, especially one of them. But both have the potential of starting a third world war. One was the bombing of one of our naval destroyers, the USS Cole, which resulted in the death of, what is the total, a couple of a dozen of our servicemen and women? And then to hear one of our top naval men say that there is no way that we can protect ourselves from such acts of terrorism. That is a big reason for being troubled, greatly troubled.

And then there was the gruesome murder of those Israeli servicemen which followed all of the other unrest that we have heard about recently between the Palestinians and the Jews. I doubt if those of us who are Christians have had much hope of a lasting peace between the Jews and the Palestinians, but what has happened has given the whole world a troubled heart.

— Then it has impossible to know what is happening in the world of finance. And we hear about the increasing price of gasoline and heating oil, which are directly affected by all of the tragic events in the Middle East.

Plus there are many personal things that cause unrest, aren't there? We are troubled when we have loved ones who do not know the Lord, and who seem to be moving farther and farther away. We pray, but we see no evidence that our prayers are being answered.

Or sickness and death, or the fear of death, are two of the greatest reasons for having a troubled heart. Job insecurity causes many to have troubled hearts. Even false teaching can trouble people. You may remember what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatian churches. He said, as he began his letter to them,

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-7).

And then in chapter 5 he wrote this to them: "He that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be" (Gal. 5:10).

It would be interesting for all of us to write down all of the events in our lives in a single day that trouble us. Our lives are full of troubling experiences. We get troubled by things that people say to us, or about us.

Sometimes we get troubled because of the reaction people take to our faith in Christ. I heard a man say on the radio the other day that he could not stand people who believe that there is only one way to get to heaven. Peter had this to say about situations like that:

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ (1 Peter 3:13-16).

So we can't avoid *trouble*, but we must not be troubled by our troubles. This is what the Lord was saying to His disciples. "Let not your heart be troubled."

Now let us ask the question:

## I. WHAT WAS TROUBLING THE DISCIPLES OF OUR LORD?

In Charles Williams' translation, which was highly praised by many Greek scholars for his translation of the Greek verb, we have this rendering of the first clause: "Stop letting your hearts be troubled." The Lord was not telling them to keep their hearts from being troubled, but to stop what was already going on in their hearts. That is the reason I have asked the question, "What was troubling the disciples of our Lord?" But notice that it was their hearts that were troubled.

The Lord was not speaking of our physical hearts which is the center of our physical life, although our physical hearts can be greatly affected by troubles that affect us. The word for this is *stress*. *But when our Lord spoke of the heart, He was speaking of that which is "the center and seat of our spiritual life"* (Thayer, p. 325). It has to do with our thoughts, our affections, our wills. It is all that we are as persons living in these bodies of ours. It is what Solomon had in mind when he said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). That is a verse that we all need to read and think about every day that we live. It is "the inner man," or what is called in Scripture, soul and spirit. It is by believing with our hearts that we are saved. Cf. Rom. 10:9-10. The Lord said of Israel in OT, "This people draw near to me with their mouth, and with the lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men."

But why were the disciples troubled in their hearts? If you read the latter part of John 13 you will find that the Lord had told them that He was going away, and that they would not be able to go with Him. They were beginning to realize that He was going to die, but they did not understand about His resurrection. So it is easy to see why they were troubled. It had been their hope that he would overthrow Rome, and set up His own kingdom. But at that moment that hope was passing from them. But they were so devoted to the Lord Jesus that they could not think of being without Him. *And so they were troubled.* And we would have been troubled, too. Many think that, humanly speaking, this was why Judas decided to betray the Lord. He was a thief at heart, and considered that he could make more by betraying the Lord than he could be by remaining as His disciple.

Whatever the situation may have been, after the Lord told not to let their

hearts be troubled, then He proceeded to tell them how they could be healed from *spiritual heart trouble*.

Now as I point out what the Lord said to His disciples, I want you to join me in making a personal application to ourselves of what He said. Often, I hate to say, that our trouble is with the Lord. Perhaps we feel that the Lord is treating us unfairly, or we feel that way about what someone who is very dear to us is going through. Or we have prayed, and really haven't seen any change.

Asaph wrote Psalm 73 to tell how he had seen the prosperity of wicked people, and then compared it with the trouble that the people of God were having. And he felt that it didn't help much to try to please the Lord.

And so he wrote this in his Psalm:

13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.

16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me (Psa. 73:13-16).

If you read on in that Psalm you will see how Asaph came out of his troubles in that particular instance.

But let us look at another example, and this also is from Asaph – Psa. 77, the first four verses:

1 I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

3 I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak (Psa. 77:1-4).

But this Psalm also tells how Asaph found peace.

Now from our text in John 14, let us ask and seek the answer, our Lord's answer for a troubled heart.

## II. WHAT IS THE LORD'S CURE FOR A TROUBLED HEART?

This is a very familiar passage for most of us, and yet it is often the case that our familiarity with a verse, or verses, seems to hide the real meaning rather than lead us to peace.

The answer here is exactly the same that it is in those most familiar words with which Paul characteristically began his letters. I am referring to, "Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

### A. The Lord Jesus turned their thoughts away from their troubles to God first, and then to Himself – the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:1).

What I am going to point out first is so obvious that it is easy for us to overlook it. The Lord was turning them from the things that they could not understand to two great doctrines that they could understand. And those two doctrines are *the doctrine of God* and *the doctrine of Christ*.

Don't we all have to confess that many times we get so overwhelmed with whatever is troubling us that we forget about God, and we forget about the Lord Jesus Christ. And in a way you could say that we are brought under the power of our troubles and we are forgetting to take hold of the One and only One Who can help us.

Last Sunday night I referred also to those two great verses in Isaiah 26 – verses 3 and 4. And they tell us this – Isaiah was speaking to the Lord:

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength (Isa. 26:3-4).

And we learned that "stayed" means, not just to know that there is a God, but to be established in what the Scriptures reveal of Him. Plus, it also means *to lean upon Him, to take hold of Him*.

Now the fact that things weren't working out the way the disciples thought that they would work out, was no indication that God had changed, that He had had a change in plans! No, but it means that when troubles come, we turn first to the Lord. We remember His love for us,

proven by the death of Christ for our sins.. We remember His sovereign power, that there is none greater than He – not even all of the forces of hell combined.. We remember His faithfulness to His people. He never has failed His people. We remember his infinite wisdom and perfect knowledge, that He has never been wrong. We take our Bibles and saturate our hearts in what they tell us about God. And then we do the same with Christ. Don't take your information from secondary sources, but go directly to the Word of God. The Spirit is pleased when that is what we do.

Turn your heart to God. Think about Him. Call to mind all that you know about Him. And then do the same about Christ. And immediately you will begin to experience the peace of God in your heart – and I will too.

But there is something else to do.

### **B. Examine your faith.**

The word “believe” as it appears in this verse in the original is exactly the same. But the problem is that they can either be indicatives, in which case we would interpret them, “You believe in God, and you believe in Me.” Or the same form is found in the imperative, making both a command. Then we would translate them, “Believe in God, and believe in Me.” Or we could take one to be a statement of fact, and the other a command to obey. *This is what the translators of the KJV have done. They took the first to be a statement of fact, and the second a command.*

Can the Lord say about us what He said to His disciples. “You believe in God; believe also in Me”? This means, “You believe in what I have told you about God, and in what you have learned from the OT Scriptures about God – and you are trusting in Him. Now “believe in Me also.” *Our troubles are usually designed to draw us into a closer fellowship with the Lord, to deepen our understanding of Him, to deepen our love for Him, and to deepen our trust in Him.*

In no way does the Lord ever depart from His plan for us. And because He is God, He cannot fail. That is an impossibility. And as we drink in what the Scriptures teach us of God, our heavenly Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, it will be inevitable that our faith and trust in

Him will increase – and our hearts will find their rest in Him even while the storms may be raging all around us.

**Concl:** I have not finished all that I wanted to say about this passage, and so I will come back to it next Sunday morning, the Lord willing. But as you and I think over our troubles, and the events of life which cause us to be troubled (and there are plenty of them), let us respond to our Savior's words. We can't escape our troubles, but, if you can understand what I mean when I say that *we must not let our troubles trouble us*, then I think that we will have grasped the truth which the Lord expressed in just the first verse of this wonderful chapter.

Since He said, "Let not your heart be troubled," then we can expect from Him the grace that will keep us from being troubled. And we will begin to look upon all anxiety and worry, as sin. May the Lord enable us to glorify Him in these troubled times in which we are living.