



Give Them Jesus (The Gospel of John)

The Cure for a Troubled Heart

Keith Cowart, September 11, 2016

United States, September 11, 2001

- September 10, 2001, Keith and Pam left for Utah for their first vacation without children in five years. They awoke the next morning to live footage of the Twin Towers tumbling.
- Fear and confusion gripped our nation. We were under attack, but weren't even sure who the enemy was. We were, individually and as a nation, deeply troubled.
- Where were you on 9/11? What did you feel?

Jerusalem, Passover, A.D. 33

- A few days ago, a small band of disciples and their leader entered Jerusalem like a triumphant army returning from battle. Throngs of people crowded around them and shouted praises, waving palm branches – the symbol of Jewish independence. *They were on top of the world.*
- Now that same group of disciples was huddled in a remote room where their leader was telling them unimaginable things. He was about to lay his life down. He was going away to a place they could not go. One of them would betray him. Another would deny him three times before daybreak. *Suddenly their world was falling apart.*
- Into this chaos, Jesus spoke these words, "Do not let your heart be troubled."

Read John 14:1-14

"In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33)

The Greek word here for "troubled" is *tarasso*. In the NT, it is translated as disturbed, stirred up, shaken, in turmoil, confused, and frightened. It is a word we use when the future is uncertain, or when unexpected circumstances shake the very foundation of our lives, and we realize that our carefully laid plans are meaningless.

We've all been there, and Jesus speaks directly into this trouble. But notice two things:

1. Jesus didn't condemn the disciples for being troubled.
 - In fact, he himself had been troubled (John 13:21) as he contemplated the road he must walk. He knew the pain he would endure, the sin and darkness that he would take on himself. He knew that he would be completely alone, separated from the Father for the first time in eternity.
 - And yet with all of this on his heart, Jesus spent the night caring for and trying to prepare his disciples for what lay ahead.
2. Jesus is inviting them to make a choice.
 - They had no control over the circumstances or their initial response, but the question was, *what would they do with their trouble?* Would they become trapped and overwhelmed, or would they move beyond to a place of peace, security and strength?

Five Reasons Not to Get Trapped in Trouble (The Cure for a Troubled Heart)

1. Trust in God/Me (v.1).

- We need a foundation on which to stand, and we all trust in something (job, money, relationship, etc.). Trouble exposes that our foundation is not really solid.
- But God wants to be that foundation in your life. When David was persecuted, he knew God to be that foundation (Psalm 62:1-6).
- Hebrews 12:26-29 describes a shaking of God that is not meant to destroy but to purify and reveal that foundation which is unshakable.

2. You Have a Future Hope (vv.2-4).

- Trouble often causes us lose perspective. We can come to believe there is nothing greater or beyond our current trouble.
- For those who have been saved, the greatest perspective is our current trouble in light of our eternal destiny.

3. You Know the Way (vv.6-7).

- D.A. Carson: "Jesus is the way to God precisely because He is the truth of God and the life of God."
- When we are in trouble, our instinct is to figure our way out. Jesus is calling us to resist the temptation to figure it out, and rather turn to Him who is the way to God, our Rock, our foundation. Jesus is the Way to Heaven.
- There is only one way to heaven, and that is the person of Jesus Christ.

4. You will Do What I Have Been Doing (v.12).

- What does mission have to do with trouble? A troubled heart can quickly turn inward, and once turned inward becomes a downward spiral toward self-consumption.
- Mission forces us to look outward and upward.

5. Ask Me for Anything (vv.13-14).

- The *context* for this promise is encouragement ("Do not let your heart be troubled") and mission ("You will do what I have been doing").
- The *condition* for this promise is "in my [Jesus'] name." To pray in Jesus' name is in a way consistent with His character and His will.
- N.T. Wright: "Praying 'in Jesus' name,' then, means that, as we get to know who Jesus is, so we find ourselves drawn into his life and love and sense of purpose. We will then begin to see what needs doing, what we should be aiming at within our sphere of possibilities, and what resources we need to do it. When we then ask, it will be 'in Jesus' name', and to his glory; and, through that, to the glory of the Father himself (v.13). But, when all this is understood, we shouldn't go soft on that marvelous word 'anything.' He said it, and he means it.

Questions for Reflection

1. What are the things that we often put our trust in? Have you ever experienced a trial that really shook you to your foundation? What did you do?
2. How does an "eternal perspective" make a difference when facing troubles? How does it make a difference in your day-to-day?
3. When facing trouble, are you tempted to figure a way out on your own? What does turning to Jesus look like in those situations?
4. What does it look like to "do what I have been doing"? Where do you feel like Jesus is calling you to carry on his work?
5. How do the context and conditions better help us to understand Jesus' promise? Are we boldly asking "anything"? If not, why?