

Heavenly Help for Troubled Hearts (John 14:2-6)

Please turn in the Word of Christ to Jn 14. This is my favorite chapter in the Bible ... this month. Last month Jn 13 was but I'm not alone in seeing Jn 14 as a favorite chapter. R.C. Sproul said he used to get surveys sent to biblical scholars asking them their favorite chapter in the NT, and he said perennial top 2 picks year in and year out were Jn 14 and 1 Cor 13, this chapter we're studying on Sunday mornings, the other we're studying Sunday evenings. If you love these studies and sections, you're in good company historically.

These words of Jesus beginning in Jn 14, this farewell message in the upper room, Martin Luther called 'the best and most comforting sermon preached by Christ while on this earth...a jewel and treasure not purchasable with the world's goods. It...contains the most precious and cheering consolation, the sweetest words of Christ, the faithful and beloved Savior ... words such as no man on earth is able to employ toward his dearest and best friends. They show how He provides for them out of the pure...burning love of His heart, and how He is concerned about them far more sincerely than any man is about the greatest need and danger of his most intimate friend ... [Luther said John 14-16 is the Christian's] highest and most precious treasure...'¹

The context is Christ's last supper with His men before He goes to the cross. Let me read John 14:1-6 in the NKJV that I first learned it in. This is the Word of Christ: *'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.'*² *In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 where I go you know, and the way you know.'*⁵ *Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"*⁶ *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

This is one of the clearest passages in the Bible on salvation through Christ alone. It's also one of the most calming passages for troubled hearts as we saw last time, as it draws our focus from this troubled world to heaven and the coming again of Christ. It's one of the most comforting passages in the Bible for those who die in Christ, or have loved ones who die in Christ, as Christ talks about the Father's house and the place prepared for followers of Christ. Christians through the centuries have applied this to the end of life and not just to end times. Much like 1 Thess 4, I think it prophesies a future return of Christ, but also intends peace in the present and comfort for hearts.

This is one of the most common passages preached at funerals or memorials - I was just asked to speak on this text last month for a new widow with us - last week I sought to minister its truths to a couple who lost an unborn baby. It's truth for grieving hearts, anxious hearts, troubled hearts to keep trusting God. It's proved through the years one of Christianity's most consoling texts

Kent Hughes tells of a famous theologian whose 'family treasures [include] a German Bible that went back many generations. He said one could open that Bible to some pages and it looked like it had just come off the press, but when opened to John 14, it was spotted, soiled, and worn from the tears of many generations. John Watson, the great preacher, said that if someone in his flock was going through deep waters and was about to die, sometimes he would kneel down next to them and whisper, "In My Father's house are many mansions," and he said that three quarters of the way through the river, they would almost turn around and come back, and he would hear them repeating, "... Father's house ... many mansions...." Henry Venn, a Puritan preacher, was dying and, his biography tells us [thinking of going to be with Jesus], "The prospect made him so high-spirited and jubilant that his doctor said that his joy at dying kept him alive a further fortnight."²

This passage shows us 3 glorious truths of heaven to comfort our hearts, 3 realities about the future to help us in the present live calmly, courageously:

- 1. The Glory to Come (v. 2)**
- 2. The Lord to Come Again (v. 3)**
- 3. The Savior to Come Through (v. 4-6)**

Last week we focused on v. 1, how to let not your heart be troubled in the troubled world we live in with its sinful decisions. Our hope isn't based on what the Supreme Court decides, we trust what our Sovereign King decrees. I don't have to lose sleep over troubling news, I can trust the Lord who's on His throne and never slumbers or sleeps. He tells troubled hearts in v. 1 to trust in Him. He's not surprised by sin, He's sovereign over sin, He's spoken about marriage and matters that concern our hearts. We saw last week we're to keep trusting in Christ and the gospel as our hope to save our sinful world

This morning in v. 2-6 we continue with heavenly help for troubled hearts. We may worry, wonder what's to come in our world or for us in it, but Jesus here wants to first lift our focus to another world, to fix our eyes on heaven.

1st focus: The Glory to Come

² *In My Father's house are many mansions ...*

When we were driving to family camp there was a stretch of road on Sierra College Blvd before you get to Hwy 80 with several mansions. Some of our younger kids saw them and were amazed at the size, ‘wow, that’s a *house!*?’ It looked like their second garages had more square feet than our home! If you’ve driven there, you know what I mean, but that’s nothing compared to what Jesus is talking about here. If we take Rev 21 as literal measurements of the Father’s house in heaven, this house’s square footage is in *millions!* If we’re to take its dimensions literally upward, it’s over 3 *billion cubic miles* (not feet, *miles*--if my math is right that’s 18 *trillion cubic feet*). What’s the point of the massive size in Rev 21 and the mansions of glory here? I think the point is there’s plenty of room! Jn 14:1 can be translated ‘many *rooms.*’

Mansions came into the Old English translations from the Latin *mansiones*, but the thrust of the Greek word isn’t about how big each house is, it’s that there’s many *dwellings*, plenty of *rooms*, room to spare. When Jesus came into this world, there was no room in the inn for Him to be born. The Son of Man had no place to lay His head, but now Jesus says He’s going to prepare a place that will never run out of room, for all who rest their faith in Jesus. The Savior born in Bethlehem never turns away those who want to be born again. He’ll never tell them there’s no room or inn for them. He’ll never put a guest out in the cold or in the barn or stable where the cattle are lowing. If we come in faith to heaven, Jesus takes us right into His Father’s house, to a massive glorious place that makes 7-star hotels or celebrity cribs look cheap

The end of v. 2 says Jesus goes to prepare us a place in His Father’s house. As we enter we find out we have a personal reservation in our own name! It’s been prepared by Jesus and pre-paid by Jesus, it’s a true Master’s suite! More than a place, it’s a palace, a personal dwelling of God for us to live in! Better than any earthly mansion, in the heavenly kingdom we get to stay in a room fit for a king, and a dwelling actually fitted for us by heaven’s King!

If you’ve ever traveled and experienced coming to a nice place prepared just for you, with personal touches just for you, just multiply that exponentially a hundredfold, and you have a little taste of the place Jesus prepares for us. Look at the end of v. 2: ‘...*I go to prepare a place for you.*’ Jesus is talking to His followers. In the context Jesus told them He was about to go, this was His going to die. 13:3 says He’s going back to His Father. Here He explains it’s to prepare a place for them there. Jesus told them days earlier that those who had left houses, lands and family to follow Jesus, they would inherit an infinitely exponentially greater portion in a future new world (Mt 19:28-29).

Other biblical names for the Father's house? The *third heaven* emphasizes it transcends sky and space, another realm of glory. Jesus often calls this place the *kingdom of heaven*, to emphasize its King and His rule. It's called a *city*, I think to emphasize it's a community. On the cross Jesus called it *paradise*, I think to emphasize it's like Eden restored, an earth renewed like the first one, but better. Jesus calls it *Abraham's side* in Lk 16, I think to emphasize it's the place of the faithful of old and everyone in it is close to the father of their faith. Hebrews calls it the *heavenly Jerusalem*, I think to emphasize OT covenant promises and *a heavenly country, a better country* Abraham was looking for as a sojourner, I think to emphasize this world is not our home, we're just passing through. Here Jesus calls it *the Father's house*, I think to emphasize it's a family dwelling of a loving Father, and it's home.

The context of v. 1 is comfort to troubled hearts. 1st application for our heart **This is where loved ones in Christ go** (be comforted by that very thought)

When Jesus said v. 2 to His disciples, the Father's House was their glory to come. For those who die believing in Christ as v. 1 says, this is their glory that has come. The Bible says the moment a believer in Christ dies, our soul is absent from the body but present with the Lord. Like the thief dying on the cross next to Jesus who put His faith in Jesus, *that very day* He was with Jesus in glory. Revelation describes the Father's house as the paradise of God, a garden with the river of life running through it, the temple of God, the tabernacle of God or dwelling of God with men, and the city like a bride adorned for her husband, a wife who enjoys Christ's intimate love forever. In Bible times a man would go to prepare a home for a bride-to-be, Jn 14:2.

Revelation also pictures Him standing at the door and knocking, desiring to come in and feast with us, desiring intimate fellowship, the wedding supper. Think of the intimate love of God expressed in Revelation when God wipes away every tear from their eyes, and shelters them, and shepherds them, and shares with them the inheritance of His Son, sharing His reign in some way, and even amazingly sharing a seat on Christ's throne with His Father (3:21)

Rev 20 says Satan and sin will be banished and Rev 21 says there will be no more mourning, crying, or pain. Most of all there will be no more death and all that comes with death, disease, disorder, disability. The Father's house is a place free of sickness, sorrow, suffering. Rev 22 pictures leaves of healing and no more curse and no more night and no more separation between man and God, all will see Him face to face and have His name on their forehead.

The John who wrote Revelation and saw in a vision the place Jesus went to prepare, the same John writes what Jesus says in Jn 14:1-2: Don't let your hearts be troubled, including by loved ones going ahead of you to this place. Jesus in this context is about to die and go to His Father's house, and so will all who die in Christ, and it should comfort us who believe in Him like v. 1. The first application and comforting thought is this is where loved ones go.

2nd application: This is where our daily thoughts should go

Col 3:2 *Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth...*⁵ *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you* [then he speaks of sin] To Paul being heavenly-minded makes us of earthly good, especially as we mortify our earthly nature and all that goes with it, and fortify our minds by lifting our earth-bound thoughts to a glorified future. We are heaven-bound!

How does that practically work? Maybe you think it can't make a difference in the life of someone like you, you believe in heaven, but when it's a place you've never been to and only can imagine, can that really affect your life in the here and now? Here's the deal: that kind of thing already does affect your life when you believe you're going somewhere. Think about when you are going to go on a trip to someplace you've never been but have only read about. You think about it, prepare, study up on it, get excited, look forward.

[if we believe and meditate on v. 2-3 it should have an even greater effect!]

Jesus gave us practical help in our everyday prayer to remember *our Father which art in heaven...Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. He taught *lay up treasure in heaven, as where your treasure is there your heart will be also*, and He said *daily seek first His kingdom of heaven* (that's all in Mt 6). In Mt 25 Jesus describes it as a place of glory in the world to come that's to motivate us in living for Christ in this world in what we do for the least of His people, so He'll say *'you did it for Me ... well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Master.'* Jesus often spoke of rewards in heaven in the future that should affect how we think and live in the present.

In Ephesians 1 Paul begins by drawing our thoughts to every blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, how the Father has adopted us into His home, and Paul prays that we would grasp the riches of the glorious future that we have as a result. Ephesians 2 says in salvation God in a sense has *'seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us ... you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God ... In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God ...*

I, therefore, I urge you...to walk in a manner worthy... (2:6-7, 19, 22, 4:1).
Heavenly blessings are to motivate us to live as a child of the king should.

The hymn 'A Child of the King' applies it: My Father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!
... I once was an outcast stranger on earth,
A sinner by choice, and an alien by birth,
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,
An heir to a mansion, a robe and a crown. I'm a child of the King ...
A tent or a cottage, why should I care?
They're building a palace for me over there;
Though exiled from home, yet still may I sing:
All glory to God, I'm a child of the King.³

The King calls us to live in light of the glory to come, that's point #1, v. 2.
Let's move now from the glory to come, to **#2. The Lord to Come Again**
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.*

Jesus says after He goes to the Father's house to prepare a place for them, '*I will come again...*' Jesus will come again for His bride. Jesus will return, it says, personally, and when He does He will receive His people to Himself so that where He is, His church will be also, they'll be always with the Lord

With God's people in Dt 1, the Lord told them not to be troubled or afraid as it says the Lord '*went before you in the way to seek you out a place...to show you by what way you should go*' (1:29, 33). It even pictures the Lord coming and carrying His people, like a man carries His son, all the way to the place (v. 31). The Lord went ahead of OT Israel to prepare a place in a promised land, and the Lord had to come and carry them through the wilderness to the place He prepared, so they could be with Him where He is to worship Him.

That OT place and pattern was a picture of what He teaches the NT people of God here: the Lord in v. 2 goes first again to a promised place and shows the way by which His people must go in v. 6. And He also knows we need Him to bring us there in v. 3, just like Israel in Dt 1, or we'd never make it.

You can study those parallels more in Heb 11 (how OT Israel pointed to a heavenly country we're citizens of, a city built by God) and Heb 4, where I think the OT Sabbath rest also points to NT salvation rest in Christ and our eternal rest in a place far greater than the land Joshua brought OT Israel to.

But there's also other OT images Jesus may be drawing from. I said earlier in OT times a man would go to prepare a home for his bride-to-be, like v. 2. In the first marriage ever in the original Paradise God prepared the place for the bride and brought her to His son to be with him (Lk 3 calls Adam son of God). This is my Father's world, they could sing and share together forever.

But you know the story wasn't happily ever after as sin entered the Father's world, paradise was lost. Still God's plan and promise there in Gen 3:15 was for another Man to come to reverse the curse, restore the world and redeem a bride from it for the glory of a covenant of redemption. Eph 5 quotes from Genesis to show marriage as created by God between a man and wife was a mysterious picture of the future relationship between Jesus and His people. That's why marriage as biblically defined for man and woman is important, it's ultimately to picture Christ's bride, the church with the Man Christ Jesus

It was in the upper room where Jesus began His new covenant relationship with His people, as the other gospels explain *He explained* as He gave the cup to them. Jewish betrothals at times were entered by the husband-to-be giving a cup of wine to the bride-to-be, and at a covenant meal with family they became officially betrothed, a covenant relationship only broken by divorce or death. But the wedding was still to come in the future, a greater celebration and feast. The church is already His bride, the wedding is future

In Jewish tradition a price would be paid to the Father to redeem a bride to ratify the covenant. In this case Jesus was a kinsman-redeemer who agreed in this covenant to pour out His blood for many, that was the price God the Father required as the Father of the bride. Then in Jewish betrothal tradition the man would typically go back for a time to his father's house to prepare a place for his beloved before the wedding day, which is much like Jn 14:2-3.

Gifts might be given to the bride to show love to her during a long betrothal period to comfort and remind her of what he'd said and promised. Jesus also at this table tells His beloved that He'll give the greatest gift ever, He'll send God's Spirit to comfort and to remind He's coming back to receive His bride to Himself, to the place He's been preparing, so where He is, there she'll be. In western weddings, special music signals a bride going to meet her groom but in Jewish weddings the groom and his friends come to meet the bride to take her back to the father's house for the wedding feast. The special music when the groom was getting near was a trumpet, a shout and a voice of the messenger. She would be changed to bridal clothes when called to meet him

Corinthians calls us the bride betrothed to be presented to Jesus (2 Cor 11:2) and says we'll change for Him *'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet...the trumpet will sound...we will be changed'* (1 Cor 15:52) and then is the resurrection of all who belong to Christ at His coming, v. 23.

[1 John 3 says when we see Christ as He is we'll be made like Him]

But Eph 5 also says the bride is to be washed, holy, pure before the big day. Every bride prepares well in advance of the big day, how are you preparing? In Matthew's gospel Jesus said: *The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son...*[he pictures a ready wedding party that] *went to meet the bridegroom...at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him'...the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast...* Just a few verses earlier, Jesus explained *'they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds ...with a loud trumpet call...will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other'* (22:2, 25:1, 6, 10, 24:30-31 ESV). The Lord's messengers will gather up His chosen beloved to meet Him at His coming.

In John 15:17 Jesus says He chose them. John Jn 14:3 He says He's going to prepare a place, but will come again to receive His elect to Himself, so that they can be with Him forever. In Acts 1 they see Jesus go up to heaven in a cloud, not in a secret rapture or in an invisible private event, it was a public physical visible ascension of the glorified body of Christ. 2 angels then tell the disciples that when Jesus comes again or comes back, it will be the same way as they saw Him go, in like manner, it's a physical visible bodily return

The same John who wrote Jn 14:3 also wrote to the churches this in Rev 1:7 *Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth...*[are you ready to meet?] In Revelation there's many trumpets of judgment but there will be a last one as Corinthians describes in conjunction with the resurrection. Rev 19-20 has the 2nd coming, wedding supper of the bride and 'first resurrection' at that time then Rev 21 pictures the glory of the place Jesus went to prepare for her and it gives a blessing on all who are ready in washed white garments.

1st application of His coming: Be Ready

Jesus gives the analogy in Matthew of having your lamps ready, burning. In our day we could update it to having a flashlight at hand at your house if the power goes out or if you hear a noise and need to see if it's a burglar. Or we could think of family camp and how we need batteries in our lantern or light to safely walk to the bathroom and to ward off bears like thieves in the night

Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians the day of the Lord shouldn't overtake us as a thief in the night, we're to be ready and awake and alert (5:2-6), not ready to face wrath, which we won't (5:9), but ready to face tribulation, which Paul says we will (3:3-4), and eager for His return. 1 Thess 4 I think all agree is the coming of Jn 14:3. Some debate the timing but this truth isn't debatable in 4:16: ***the Lord Himself will descend from heaven*** [Jn 14:3 'I will come again'] *with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.*¹⁷ *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.* [also like Jn 14:3 'I will receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also']¹⁸ *Therefore comfort one another with these words* [like context of Jn 14:1]

Other versions say encourage one another. Paul gives us a 2nd application: **Encourage One Another**. 1st: be ready, 2nd: be encouraging one another

Paul didn't want their hearts to be troubled thinking about the future, so he reminds them what Jesus taught about His coming again to raise the dead in Christ and receive those alive in Christ, to comfort them through tribulation. He writes to encourage them so they can encourage each other in this truth:

Sing the wondrous love of Jesus, Sing His mercy and His grace;

In the mansions bright and blessed, He'll prepare for us a place.

While we walk the pilgrim pathway, Clouds will overspread the sky;

But when trav'ling days are over, Not a shadow, not a sigh.

Let us, then, be true and faithful, Trusting, serving ev'ry day;

Just one glimpse of Him in glory Will the toils of earth repay.

When we all get to heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus...⁴

That takes us to a 3rd application: **Long to see Jesus and be with Him**

The song goes on to say 'Onward to the prize before us, soon His beauty we'll behold.' Jesus goes on to say in Jn 14:3 '*I will receive you to Myself...*' Hendriksen says the sense of *receive* in v. 3 is *welcome* you into His arms. Note Jesus didn't say receive you to *My Father's house*, the highlight of the promise here is being received by Christ, being where He is, seeing Christ. Heaven's glory isn't a big, big house where we can play football, or eternal golf courses. Spurgeon said that would be hell if without Christ. 'Heaven without Christ ... is day without the sun, existing without life, feasting without food, seeing without light ... sea without water, the earth without its fields, the heavens without their stars. There cannot be a heaven without Christ...If you were...the bride, and yet the bridegroom were not there—do not tell me about feasting...Such would a Christless heaven be to the saints'⁵

Fanny Crosby wrote many hymns. She was blind but longed to see Jesus:

She wrote in one: 'O the joy when I shall wake within the palace of King!

And I shall see him face-to-face, and tell the story--saved by grace (2x)

Some day my earthly house will fall, I cannot tell how soon 'twill be;

But this I know-my...a place in heaven for me And I shall see him face-to-face...⁶

That's the glory to come, we've seen also the Lord to come again, last point:

The Savior to Come Through (v. 4-6)

⁴ *And where I go you know, and the way you know.*” ⁵ *Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”*” ⁶ *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*”

Jesus is about to die and go to heaven, and says the only way you can go to heaven when you die is through Him. The only way to the Father's house is through Jesus, through faith in Jesus as v. 1 says, specifically faith in where He's going in v. 2 (death on the cross for us). Saving faith turns from sinful ways to trust Jesus as the way. In Acts Christians are followers of The Way. Jesus didn't just show the way, Jesus is the way, not just *a* way but *The* way. Between God and man there is only one Mediator, or go-between, it's Jesus (1 Tim 2:5). Acts 4:12 says there's salvation in no one else, there is no other name under heaven through which men can be saved, but the name of Jesus.

Proverbs says there's another *way* that seems right to man but leads to death and Jesus says *'the way is broad that leads to destruction and...many enter through it [but] the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it'* (Mt 7:13-14 NASB). If that sounds narrow or unloving, Jesus said it, not us, but listen: nothing is more loving than calling people to the one narrow way of escape. If you were in the 9-11 twin towers and a rescuer called you to a narrow hallway and small fire exit door as the only way out, which he knows because he has the master plan of the tower, is he being narrow or unloving? No! Should you tell him good for you if it works for you, but not for me, to each his own way? No, run to the rescuer!

Jesus said in Jn 10:9 *'I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved...I came that they may have life.'* Jesus is the way, and He's the door at the end of it. He also is the truth in v. 6 here. It's not about what's true for you or true for me, Jesus is *the* truth, and He said if you know the truth then *it will set you free...if the Son sets you free indeed* (8:32, 36). He's the way, the truth, the life, as He said in Jn 11:25: *'I am the resurrection and the life, he who believe in me will live even if he dies. Do you believe this?'* Do you?

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 24*, p. 7-8.

² R. Kent Hughes, *John: That You May Believe* (Crossway Books, 1999), 339–340.

³ Harriet Buell, "A Child of the King."

⁴ Eliza Hewitt, "When We All Get to Heaven."

⁵ C.H. Spurgeon, "For Ever with the Lord," No. 1, 136, MTP, 19:571.

⁶ Fanny Crosby, "Some Day the Silver Cord Will Break."