

Remedy For A Troubled Heart

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[0 : 00] The Guru where our Bible is open at John's Gospel chapter 14. It's always good as a minister to hear pages turning in the Bibles when the preaching is going on.

Because all the minister has done the preparation, we offer responsibility in the hearing and the putting into practice of the Word of God. And as we turn back there, let's seek the Lord's help. When they father your Word as living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, we pray that we would set it the teacher's feet this evening and you would do your business with our souls, making us more like the Lord Jesus Christ and whose name we pray.

Amen. Our focus is in John 14 and really the first four verses or so. And it not your hearts be troubled, believe in God or trust in God, trust also in me and my father's house or many rooms or literally dwelling places.

If it were not so, I would have told you that I go to prepare a place for you. Well there are many high points in life we can think of, things like weddings and graduations and birthdays and family Christmases and holidays.

[1 : 19] These are times that bring us great joy and we can share one with the other. But as we know in life, so often the high points come with many low points.

We can't always have high points. Sometimes we can go so low that we lose a sense of even where we are going. And some people can hit real lows, can think of bereavements and health scares and shattered dreams, frustrated hopes, broken relationships, friendship betrayal.

And I'm sure we could add to that list quite a lot. And in these low points, it almost seems like we are storm buffeted about by waves of emotion, hardly feeling secure at all.

Perhaps we feel like we've had the wind taken out of us, the rug has been taken away from us and we have fallen down. And at these times our hearts get extremely troubled.

We are perplexed, bewildered, desperately seeking hope. Something constant to throw our lives upon and every human being goes through periods like this.

[2 : 29] And it was no different for the followers of Jesus back in his day when he was on earth with them. At times their hearts were deeply troubled as well.

They were troubled at some of the teachings of Jesus which they just didn't understand until the Holy Spirit came later after Jesus returned to heaven. They also had to witness the opposition to Jesus by the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the Sanhedrin and people like that.

Some of them had to even witness Jesus being crucified. That was alien to them. No one thought Messiah would have to be crucified. Others scattered when Jesus died.

Some of them would be martyred for their faith in Christ, others would die in exile at an old age. The disciples of Jesus had wonderful high points.

Remember Peter, James and John and the Mount of Transfiguration when the veil of Jesus' humanity was parted and they saw him shining forth with his own glory, the glory of God.

[3 : 34] They also saw some of the most low points as well, the death of Jesus and they not only served but they loved dearly as well.

And along with that went, what do we do now? We've been following this man for three years and now he's gone. What do we do? Can we return to the jobs we left?

How do we return back to everyday life after following this man? And this is how the disciples are very much feeling in John chapter 14. But just before we dig into that, let's remind ourselves of where John 14 falls within John's Gospel because we should never just jump straight into passage because it comes in a context and the context is very much everything.

And of course John 14 falls in to what we call the farewell discourse where Jesus is in the upper room with his followers. He's preparing them for his departure when he would not be with them

anymore.

And back in chapter 13 verse 1 the scene is set. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and to go to the Father having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

[4 : 47] And then follows of course washing of the feet which today, you know, if I come in here today and said, I'm going to wash your feet, you probably was thinking that's a bit strange.

But in that day it was even worse because Jesus was the master. The master didn't touch feet. The lowly servant did that job. This was alien to them that Jesus was showing them the full extent of his love.

And something similar repeated in verse 3. Jesus knew the Father had put all things under his power and that he had come from God and that he was returning to God. You see in these verses Jesus is preoccupied with what is to come.

The disciples could only glimpse what was to come and even then their glimpse was totally wrong. But Jesus knew exactly what was coming. He knew the future.

He could see the cross. He could look on and think of the experience of being forsaken by his Father. He could look on and see him bearing the sin of the world and the wrath of God.

[5 : 51] Jesus knew this was coming and he's got these things in his mind. If you read earlier in John's Gospel it constantly says the time is not yet. The time is not yet.

The time is not yet. Well now the time is yet and it's come upon Jesus and just a few short hours he would be betrayed by Judas and taken away to six trials.

Three Jewish and three Roman. All of them finding no fault in him and yet they crucify him anyway. Jesus knew all this was to come.

And yet what's instructive for us is if I was feeling like that I probably would be in a corner somewhere just thinking about everything to come. But Jesus is not like that.

Although these things are to happen he can see his followers are troubled. They are perplexed.

They are confused. And what does Jesus do? He doesn't focus on himself and his own troubles.

[6 : 50] He spends the time instructing his followers, teaching his disciples as he had been doing all along, teaching them and preparing them for the time when he would no longer be with them physically.

That's what he does. And in chapter 14 to 17 this teaching of Jesus is to bolster, is to fortify, is to secure his followers when he will not be with them.

They're troubled, bewildered, perplexed. The actual word there for troubled is storm tossed. I've not had much experience of it myself but I know the minge can be quite bad at sometimes.

Well maybe multiply that a wee bit more and you can imagine what it's like to be storm tossed.

That's what the word means. They've got no sense of where they are. The rug has been taken away from under them. They don't know where they are going.

And then to have Jesus doing strange things like washing their feet and saying he's not going to be with them anymore. They didn't understand what he was talking about, especially at this time.

[7 : 51] And in John chapter 14 verses 1 to 4 Jesus starts to teach them. The action came in chapter 13. Now he's going to teach them. He speaks directly into the confusion of the disciples and Jesus speaks with such a tenderness and such a love to them because he knows the things that are soon to happen will be very difficult for them.

And how he speaks into their troubled hearts is very instructive for us today because God always works in the same way. The same method that Jesus used to calm his followers then is the same that he uses now.

And if you're going through low points today as a disciple of Jesus Christ, you can be assured that Jesus will speak into your troubled heart and life also. And if you're not quite going through in a low point by God's mercy, here are some comforting words to boast that is when the next time we do go through a low point, remembering in the lightness so that when we come into the dark, we're prepared for it.

And the first thing Jesus does to these disciples is to diagnose their problem. And that's a troubled heart. And then he gives them a general remedy and then he gives them a more specific remedy to it.

So what's the problem and what's the general remedy? We see that in the first couple of verses or so. Jesus says to them, do not let your heart be troubled.

[9 : 16] Now this is what we've described as the problem for these disciples. The same phrase actually is used of Jesus back in chapter 12 verse 27.

Jesus there is reflecting on his own death while praying to his father. And he says, now my heart is troubled. And what shall I say?

Father, save me from this hour. No, it was for this very reason. I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name. And the word comes straight from heaven.

I have glorified it and I will glorify it again. You see, as we thought this morning, Jesus understands the troubled heart of his disciples.

He gets it. Why? Because he himself was troubled. A lot more than his disciples were. Jesus understands.

[10 : 09] He gets it. And the Father answers Jesus. And that relationship that Jesus has with the Father, he wants his disciples to have that very same relationship.

And at times of difficulty, what does he do? Well the farewell discourse ends in John chapter 17.

From John 13 to 17, what does Jesus do?

What would you do if someone was facing trouble? What would you teach them? What Bible truth would you maybe teach them in heaven? Would you teach them of the resurrection? Would you go and teach them maybe a passage in the Old Testament?

What does Jesus do? He gives them some of the most profound truths concerning God in the entire Bible. Chapters 14 to 17 are an extended teaching session on the Trinity.

He teaches them about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Now which one of us would go to the Trinity if we're facing trouble? We're very like ministers, sometimes struggle to understand how it all works together and we say well, can't understand these things.

[11 : 09] But that's where Jesus takes them. He takes them up out of their own cells and focuses them on God's character and God's work and that's what the church needs today.

It needs to catch again afresh who God is. Who God is. That's what we need. We need to fall in our faces like Isaiah and say away from me, I've got an unclean lips.

How Lord can you send me to do this job? Like the Apostle Peter, we need to say away from me Lord, I am a sinful man. Like the Apostle John to fall down and acknowledge the sovereignty, the holiness, the love, the mercy, the grace of who God is.

And that's what Jesus focuses his disciples on at this time. That's what the church needs to recapture who God is because I think it's so easy to forget and I think we'll forgotten.

I think we'll forgotten just who our God is and what he is capable of and we need to recapture it.

That's what Jesus does here for his disciples. Teaches them afresh who he is because Jesus knows that this is the only way that they could be prepared for what is to come.

[12 : 26] I find this one of the most comforting truths of all. We have a Savior who gets these things. What did Jesus do when he was troubled? He focused on his Father.

He thought of his Father. He thought of his Father's promises. He thought of his Father's word on the cross. He's probably quoting, he's quoting verses in Psalm 119 all the way through. He quotes Psalm 22.

He's focusing on God. And that's what we need to do. As God's people do very much focus on him and that seems so simple to say but so much harder to do.

But that's what we need to do. God never acts towards us in an uncaring manner. He's never put off by the tiniest of our cares but wants to draw close to us, to minister to us.

He's with us in our afflictions because in Jesus he himself was afflicted. And it's this in mind, how does the Lord address these anxious thoughts of his disciples?

[13 : 24] And it would be proved very highly instructive for us because if we're honest, at times we get exactly like these disciples. You know, you've got Peter saying to Jesus, I don't get it.

You've got Philip saying to Jesus, I don't get it. You've got Thomas saying to Jesus, I don't get it.

Have you ever said to the Lord at times, Lord I don't get it. I don't understand what you're doing.

I don't get it. It's okay to say that to the Lord. His disciples did it. And the Lord leads us into deeper truth and understanding. Jesus says, do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God. Trust also in me. And as I said, that word there is used of a sense of a mighty turbulent ocean, anything but a can see. The diagnosis is a troubled heart.

Now when we use the word heart in English, we tend to make a separation between the heart and head. So the head, that's what you do all your thinking. But in your heart, that's what you do all your

feeling.

[14:24] So love poetry doesn't really focus on the head, it focuses on the heart. Whereas when we're thinking academically, we focus on the head. That mindset is alien to the Bible, really.

It's really alien in many ways. When the Hebrew and then the Greek, when they talk about the heart, the heart's really the center of the whole being. It includes the emotions. It includes the thought life.

It includes the soul, everything, the whole package together. And for these disciples, their minds are racing. The word for anxiety means a divided mind.

Their thoughts are racing. They don't understand. They can't quite separate things out. Their emotions are going on a roller coaster ride because of what Jesus is saying to them.

They had left their families. They had left their jobs. And what was it all for? Jesus wasn't going to be there now. They had counted the cost. They had given up everything to follow Jesus and now He was going away.

[15:19] What was going to happen now? Didn't He care about them? And where was He going anyway? That they couldn't follow? There was a rising fear that was placing their heart in their throats and overtaken by a whirlwind of these things.

And you know, let's be absolutely clear. It's okay to have emotions. I don't know whether it's just a Scottish thing. It's on the mainland as well. We don't like emotions really.

You keep your emotions hidden. In a Presbyterian church, we never show joy. We never show joy. You know, a smile is bad. You know, we don't like to do these things.

But you know, Christianity is a religion that has a place for emotions. I'm not talking about singing and dancing in the aisles. Hear me right? But it has an absolute place for emotions.

The Lord wants us to love Him. You can't just do that with your head. You must do that with your heart. He wants us to have joy in the mind and the heart. He wants us to have a deep sorrow over sin that's in the heart and it's also in the head.

[16:21] Christianity has a place for the full range of emotions. How can I say that? Look at the life of Jesus. There was a man who got angry in the temple. It's okay to get angry in the right circumstances.

Jesus was angry in the temple. Jesus laughed in astonishment at the centurion's faith. He laughed in astonishment at the lack of faith shown by the Jews.

Here is a man full of emotion and we have to be fashioned after the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, it's true that some of us are more heart driven. Some of us are more head driven.

But Christianity wants to bring that into balance. That's the teaching of the Bible. A Christian is someone in whom God is working to lead them into all truth. That's her heads. And to properly order our emotions to respond in a correct way to the truth.

Our emotions should be there but they should be subservient to the truth of God. We have to write emotion to the right degree. Jesus goes on to say, trust in God, trust also in me.

[17:23] And in this case, the disciples were in such a state because they had a lack of trust in God. It's not that they didn't believe Jesus. Of course they did. They were following Him.

They continued to follow Him for three whole years. But in their anxiety and their confusion, they started to take their mind off God. They took their eyes away.

A good illustration of that would be Simon Peter. Remember when he was walking, when he was in the boat, he saw Jesus walking towards him. What does he do? He shows tremendous faith.

He stands up on the side of the boat. He walks on the side. He goes onto the water. What one of us has ever tried to walk on water? We can get very far because we would sink. Peter does it. He's the only disciple that gets out the boat.

The others don't. But then what does he do? He takes his eyes from Jesus. He sees the wind. He sees the waves. He sees the storm and says, oh goodness, what am I doing walking on water?

[18:17] And then things start to go wrong and he sinks. And that's what we do at times of confusion. Our work can be tempted to do that when we take our eyes off Jesus. Forget what it's all about and then allow the Lord to minister to us in the heart and minister to us in the anxiety because that's some of the most precious times of the Lord's grace to us.

And what Jesus wants to do with them here is to lead them into a deeper relationship and knowledge with himself. It's not they didn't trust God, but it's more that they needed to trust God even more that Jesus was going away.

Just as he had said to him in many occasions, you have little faith. A little faith will save you. The tiniest amount of faith will save you. But Jesus wants to lead her ever deeper into a relationship with him that's founded upon faith.

He takes them up out of their circumstances and focuses them on his heavenly Father. Jesus is asking them to trust in the goodness of God, the love of God, the purposes of God, the promises of God, a God that promises to work all things together for the good of those who love him.

It's a wonderful verse, you know, that little word all is one of the first words that children learn in primary school because it's so short. All is three letters, but it's a very big word in what it encompasses.

[19 : 41] There's nothing that all doesn't encompass. It includes everything. The little things, the big things and everything in between and God says, I will work everything together for your good.

You're thinking, what Lord, this bereavement, this health scare, this bad time, this confusion, my loss of a job, yes, even then, even then.

That's a promise that God makes to his children. Very precious and his promises never fail. And he was saying to his followers to trust in what they already knew concerning God and he teaches them even more.

The great remedy for the problem of a troubled heart is to saturate ourselves in the truth of God. And that's what Jesus does in John 14 to 16.

He doesn't say to his disciples, here are five methods to deal with their anxiety. He doesn't say, here are 10 methods to get your spiritual walk back on track.

[20 : 40] He says, this is who my father is. This is who I am. And this is who the Holy Spirit who will come after me is. That's what we need. There's a temptation in church to think that theology, that's what they do in Edinburgh Theological Cemetery.

That's the minister's domain. It's only the minister that really deals with theology. And maybe the elders as well. But everybody else, we don't need theology. We just need a personal relationship with Jesus.

I know what people are trying to say by that. But what is theology? Greek word for theo, God. It's a word, study, it's a study of God.

Every Christian is a theologian. Every single Christian, because we want to know our God better. Remember a minister once been asked, and after church fellowship, did you love your wife at first sight?

He said, absolutely not. Because how can I love that which I do not know? I cannot love that which I do not know. It's the same with the Lord Jesus. We should be growing in our love for Him as we grow in the knowledge of who He is.

[21 : 46] And that's what He wants to do here. And it's what we need. We need more of God, more of the Bible in our church services, and certainly not less of it. You can go to a Christian bookshop and you can get good resources and get terrible ones as well.

But what we really desperately need is more of God, more of Jesus, more of the Holy Spirit. That's what we all need. Most of our problems come because we simply do not know our God well enough.

I've not been in the ministry for very long at all, but my own experience personally as a Christian, my own experience in the past of what I've done, all you do as a minister is remind people of what they already know.

Remind them of who their God is, and redirect them from themselves back to their God. And that's what we all need, desperately. We need to remember His Holiness, His love, His promises, and just what He is capable of.

We need to allow our hearts and minds to steep, to saturate, to marinate in the truth. There's a big pot in the man's, and it drives me mental at times, because it doesn't matter what you cook in it, it always gathers the food.

[22 : 56] We don't have a dishwasher, so you need to steep the pot overnight. But as soon as you steep it overnight, it cleans no problem. That's what we need to do as God's children, to steep ourselves in the truth of God, to use every means in our capacity.

Now, it's true, the Lord has given us all different capacities, even in ministers, you know, some are academic theologians, some are not academic theologians, but whatever capacity the Lord has given us, we're to fill it and getting to know Him better, to the best of our ability.

That's what we so desperately need, to trust Him more and more. What we need is more of Jesus, more of His grace, more of His word, more of His love, more of Him on His throne, riches and glory all His own, more of His kingdom sure increase, more of His calming Prince of Peace.

We need more of Jesus, we need to trust in God and also in Him. In our minds, at our finite, we cannot possibly fully grasp how big God is, but we need to pray that God would fill us with a big picture so we can take it in.

And see for this, God to spend time in your Bible. God to spend time in your Bible and more than that, God to spend time in prayer.

[24 : 16] You should never read your Bible without praying, you should never pray without reading your Bible. The two come hand in glove, hand in glove. We want to understand the word of God, we need the light shone on it.

How does the light shine? We ask the Holy Spirit to do that. How do we understand what to pray for? We pray what the Bible says to pray for. The two things come together. How do you grow as a Christian?

You read your Bible, you pray and you meet with the Lord's people. There's other ways of course, but at a very simple level, that's what you do. That seems to be what Jesus is trying to encourage His disciples to do here.

We need to maintain a relationship. You know it's so easy. In the world today, there's such a bombardment of secular thought and it's entering the church constantly.

I think because we just don't know our Bible's well enough and we allow things to creep into our lives instead of saying, but what does the word of God say? What does the word of God say? Because that's what Jesus does here.

[25 : 14] Teaches them solely who God is. You know when people say, well Alan, I don't have time to read my Bible and I'm so busy, I've got not a 95 job, I've got an 8 to 6 job, an 8 to 8 job or whatever, really busy life.

I've got two children to raise, I've got grandchildren to look after, I'm doing school runs, I'm doing whatever else. I don't have time. But you know something, maybe that's true and people are really busy today with modern technology.

We're constantly accessible every minute of the day. But I think it's a matter of priority because it is important, we'll make the time. We'll make the time. We're always this time going about in your car, turn the music off and pray to God.

Use that as a prayer time. Do it with your eyes open, of course, and not close, but pray. Use the car journey to pray to God. Turn off the music, sing Psalms. Sing Psalms.

Go through them. Turn off the music, quote Bible verses to yourself. Turn off the music, put on a Bible version where it reads to you. The internet's full of that. And very good people, celebrities reading out the Bible who are Christians themselves, put on a good sermon.

[26 : 23] There's countless resources there on the internet. There's time if we make it. It's just about finding it and having the priority. And you know, the wonderful thing is about God, sometimes when we struggle and don't know what to pray because of anxiety and the confusion, I think we simply tell God all about it.

Don't have to ask Him anything. You just need to sit there and say, God, I'm really struggling just now. You know, one of the kids is really playing up all the time and I don't know what to do. Please help me.

You know, I'm really struggling with the work just now. My colleague has been very anti-Christian. Would it just tell God? That's prayer. That's prayer. Just telling God as it is.

He knows it, of course, but it releases the weight in ourselves. Let's soak in the Word. Let's bask in it. Let's hunger for it. Let's thirst after it. We need a big picture of God and to pray to Him.

And you know, I remember a lady saying to me, oh, this seems silly telling the minister this, but when I go to a parking, you know, to get parking at a big shopping centre, I pray for a parking space because it really worries me that I'll not get parked.

[27 : 29] And I said, that's not silly at all because that's your trust in your Father, even with the tiniest things in life. Nothing is too small to take to God. Bring it all to Him in prayer.

Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. If it's worrying you, God wants to hear about it.

And the joy is that our God promises to draw near to us when we draw near to Him. He's delighted we want to find out more about Him. He's delighted we want to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ.

To know Him says Jesus is eternal life itself. So let's do these things. The general remedy that Jesus gives his disciples is for a troubled heart.

It's God, it's himself. They need to focus on the truth of God. And that's what we all need to do with the capacities that's God given. As the hymn puts it well, oh, soul, are you weary and troubled?

[28 : 34] No light in the darkness you see. Well, where's the light? There's light for a look at the saviour and life more abundant and free. Burn your eyes upon Jesus.

Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. Through death and to life everlasting, He passed and we follow Him there.

O'er us sin has no more dominion for more than conquerors we are. His word shall not fail you, He promised. Believe Him and all will be well.

Then go to a world that is dying, His perfect salvation to tell. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face.

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. Let's pray. Our great God and Father in heaven, we come before you with many different troubles.

[29 : 42] Some feeling like disciples, confused that Jesus was leaving them. Confused, stormed, toss perplexed. Others Lord may be feeling quite a good time at the moment and have nearness to you.

But Lord we bring ourselves before you and whatever we are feeling. We acknowledge our weakness. We acknowledge that we do not know you as well as we should. We acknowledge that we're not maybe often in Bible studies we should be or in prayer.

Lord we ask that you would help us to get to know you far better. Every day of our life to know you better than the day before in our minds, in our hearts with what we do.

That you would make us so much like the Lord Jesus Christ as it's possible to be in this life. That people will look at our lives however imperfect they are and see in us the hallmarks, the marks of Jesus Christ's work in our lives and be drawn to Him as well.

We thank you that we have somewhere to turn even in the most terrible storms of life because we can turn to you. We can turn to the salvation that is in the Lord Jesus.

[30 : 52] We can turn to your word and the promises. We thank you that that word is an anchor for our souls. The faith that we have is an anchor for our souls both sure and steadfast.

Listen to the rock of Jesus which cannot move grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love. Father God we pray for all those who are struggling at this time that you would show them yourself and your character and your promises and word and fortify them as you did the disciples here in Jesus day.

In His name we pray. Amen. We now close by singing to God's praise in Psalm 91, the Psalm that we read from.

Psalm 91, hear at doth in the secret place of the most high reside under the shade of Him that is the almighty shall abide. It's almost in many ways the Old Testament equivalent in my view of John 14.60 and 17.

Sing this Psalm. It is the almighty shall abide.

[32 : 35] I of the Lord my God will say, He is my refuge still.

I fortress and my God, I live in trust I will.

I should live, He shall we save and give thee with our hands from such a fire.

The noise of pestilence, His feather shall we hide, I trust.

The darkness which shall we, this infallness shall be a shield and block the runs to thee.

[34 : 27] Because of me, He set His love and saved and set Him free.

Because my grief, give me anew, I will insect all night.

He'll call on me, I'll answer Him, I will be with Him still in trouble to deliver Him.

And honour Him, I will. And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all this night and always. Amen.