

## Let not your hearts be troubled

At one time, Jesus said to His disciples, “*Let not your hearts be troubled! Believe in God and believe in Me!*”<sup>2</sup> *In My Father’s house there are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you, because I am going to prepare a place for you.*<sup>3</sup> *If I go to prepare a place for you, I shall also come again and take you to be with Me, so that you also may be where I am,*” (John 14:1). Where is Jesus going? I think when we hear these words, we think that Jesus is going to heaven to prepare a place for us *there*. We think of some large mansion in the clouds, and Jesus is going *there* to fix up a room for us: maybe vacuum up the dust, change the sheets and the linens, and put a vase of flowers on the table, and a mint on your pillow. But context in the Scriptures is so important. This is why we have to know where Jesus is when He says these words. Jesus says these words to His disciples on the night when He was betrayed. When He told His disciples that one of them would betray Him, and they were afraid, saying, “*Is it I, Lord?*” The night they celebrated their last Passover meal together, the same meal where He took bread and said, “*This is My body*” and took wine and said, “*This is My blood, poured out for you.*” It is the same meal where He washed His disciples’ feet to show them what His reign looks like in the world. The night when He said, “*Love one another, as I have loved you.*” He also told them that He was going somewhere where they could not yet follow. Peter then piped up: “*Why can’t I go with You now? I will lay down my life for You.*” Jesus said, “*Will you lay down your life for Me? I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.*” It is into the midst of this turmoil that Jesus says, in the very next words, “*Let not your hearts be troubled!*” He is going to the cross ahead of them, to prepare a place for them with His Father. He is going to heaven, but not at this point. First comes the cross, then the resurrection, then the ascension. He is making them a place with His Father, and heaven is wherever God is, **but He prepares it on the cross, not in heaven.**

The cross is where this all has to end. Death is where sin comes to its goal and end: the wages of sin is death, and if Jesus goes to heaven *apart* from the cross, then we will not be any better off than when He came. We will still be in our sin and death and hell, and we will still be separated from the holy and righteous God. But Jesus refuses to leave us there in our rightful place. So He goes to the cross to carve out in the midst of death a place in life for us. He carves out in the midst of death a place in life for us. The eternal God in flesh fills up death and hell with Himself, so now there is no more place, no more room, for you there. Now there is, instead, a place for you with the Father and the Son in the communion of the Spirit.

It is striking that the word Jesus uses for “rooms” or “dwelling places” is only used twice in the entire Scriptures, both here in this chapter. First when Jesus says that His Father’s house has many rooms, and then toward the end of the chapter, Jesus says, “*If anyone loves Me, He will keep My Word, and My Father will love him and we will come and make our home, our room, our dwelling place with him,*” (14:23). This is the promise of Jesus that John sees in the Revelation. He has a vision where He sees the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And it is in that City that John sees God dwelling with His people. God says, “I will dwell with them, and they will be My people and I will be their God. I will wipe away every tear from every eye, and there will be no more death, or crying or mourning, or pain anymore. And the one seated on the throne said, “Look! I am making all things new!” (rev. 21).

There is a great scene in the movie *The Passion of the Christ*, where Jesus is carrying His cross through the city. It’s a recreation on film of the Stations of the Cross, and one of the Stations is where Jesus encounters His mother. In the movie, when Mary sees Jesus fall, she remembers how He fell when He was a child, and she ran to Him to pick Him up. But when she runs to Him now, He doesn’t need anyone to pick Him up or carry Him. He goes to the cross to prepare a place for Mary and all people, and He says to her these words from Revelation: “*Behold, I am making all things new.*” That’s what Jesus does when He goes to the cross: He makes life out of death, and new out of old. And then He dwells with His people. The word in Revelation for “dwelling” is not the same word as “rooms” in John 14. It’s the word for tent, or tabernacle. It is, not coincidentally, the same word that John uses in chapter one when he says, “The Word was made flesh and *dwelled* among us;” tented, tabernacled. This is the view of heaven that Jesus gives us in His word: not one where we go up to heaven, but where He brings heaven down to us. Heaven, in the Scriptures, is simply the name for where God is. And where God is now is with His people, wherever Jesus is. “*Have I been with you this long, Philip, and you don’t know Me? If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father. I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. The Father who remains in Me is doing His work. I and the Father are one.*” Jesus is

God and people reunited; heaven and earth come together in one Man. Today whenever we eat the body and the blood, we have a place with angels, and archangels and all the company of heaven, as they gather around the throne of God. Here we find our true and proper place, where God is.

So, in the turmoil of your lives, in the fear and the doubt and the death, and the good motives that never quite go anywhere: **do not let your hearts be troubled**. Do not let them be disturbed. Trust God; trust also in Christ. God dwells among His people. Because He makes His home with you, you have a place with Him. This is your Lord. He has spoken and He will do it.