

John 14:6) *Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3) If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. 4) You know the way to where I am going.*" 5) "Lord," Thomas said, "we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way?" 6) Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Every Biblical text must be interpreted in its context. In the previous chapter, John 13, the Apostle John unleashed the last 24 hours in the earthly life of Jesus with a description of the Passover meal – or, as we've come to call it – the Last Supper. As Jesus and His 12 disciples gathered for that last supper together, Jesus took a basin of water and a towel and washed the disciple's feet. It was a tremendous example of servant leadership – the truth verbalized by Jesus when he said to them, "A slave is not greater than his master, and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him." (13:16) Suddenly, Jesus identified Judas Iscariot as a traitor among them. As Judas abruptly left the room, Jesus proceeded to share the painful news that he would be leaving them. Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow Me now, but you will follow later." Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Then Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly I tell you: a rooster will not crow until you have denied Me three times." (33-38)

By this time, we can just imagine the look of shock and confusion on the faces of these loyal disciples. Jesus must have seen the look in their eyes, so he encouraged them: "***Don't let your heart be troubled.***" (John 14:1) ***If only these disciples could read ahead like we can, and hear Jesus say in 16:33 – "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."***

It seems like last week was a month ago. For the past several days, I looked at the statistics every day – the number of COVID cases, the number of deaths, the number of those tested. I took a peek, often several times a day, at the stock market or the price of oil, or which stores and businesses were open. On Thursday, when I finished this sermon, I decided to quit looking, because every day it appears to be getting worse. My heart was troubled. So instead of looking at the stats or the stock market, I looked up, and I personalized the words of Jesus: *I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering during these days of coronavirus. Be courageous! I have conquered coronavirus.*

What causes your heart to be troubled? We need to hear these comforting words from Jesus just as desperately as these disciples needed to hear them. “*Don’t let your heart be troubled.*” The question is HOW? The answer is right here: BELIEF – FAITH -- TRUST! The cure for a troubled heart demands Faith in three dimensions.

1. The Cure for a Troubled Heart requires **Faith in a Person** – Jesus challenged their troubled hearts – “*Believe in God, believe also in Me!*” Faith begins in a person.

- Jesus reminded them that **Belief in God is not enough**. Muslims believe in God. They say that there is no god but Allah. Deists believe in God. They say he created the world, wound it up like a giant clock, and left it to run by itself. Hindus believe in God as a higher power who reincarnates people when they die.

- **Belief in God is one thing, but belief in Jesus is essential for eternal life = God + Jesus.** Here’s the truth – Eternal Life requires belief in God PLUS belief in Jesus. To believe in Jesus is to deposit our faith and trust in the one person who saves us and gives us eternal life. Here is where John 3:16 is crucial – “*God so loved the world, that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in HIM will not perish, but have eternal life.*” Christianity is different from all other world religions. In all other world religions, a person must work their way up to the god they believe in. But in Christianity, Almighty God has reached down from heaven to us. God’s way of reaching down to us is unique – He dispatched Jesus, His one and only Son – who was born as a human being, who lived on Earth as a human being, who died a human death, but who rose from the dead and lives again in resurrection body as proof that He is God. Therefore, we can believe – trust – put our faith in Jesus for our eternal life because we serve a living Savior! Faith in the person of Jesus Christ, the living, reigning, eternal King of Kings and Lord of Lords is a certain cure for a troubled heart! Without faith in Jesus, YOU’RE IN TROUBLE WHEN YOU’RE IN TROUBLE. I cannot imagine navigating these troublesome times without Jesus, and yet, all around us are troubled hearts because they’ve not settled the issue of their eternal life.

2. The cure for a troubled heart involves **Faith in a Place** – “*In my Father’s house are many rooms.*” Every word in this sentence is significant!

- **In my Father’s Oikia – house or residence.** Sixteen times in the Gospels, Jesus referred to God as “*His Father in heaven.*” He taught us to pray like this, “*Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.*” Critics will question, “*If God is a spiritual omnipresence, how can an omnipresent Being reside in one place?*” To believe God’s residence is in heaven does not limit His presence to that place. Heaven is God’s center of operations – His command post.

1100 Lee Avenue is the location address of First Baptist Church Lafayette, but the church is not contained in this one spot on a Google map. We get a chance to prove that first-hand. We say we believe that the church is not this location and these buildings. During these days of COVID 19, the church will reside outside this location.

- ***In my Father's house are Monai – dwelling places. Right here, Jesus Evaporates the all of the myths, untruths, and crazy thinking about heaven. Heaven is not*** state of mind, a fancy, a dream, an idea, wishful thinking, or an abstraction. Heaven is a real place. This same John, recording these words of Jesus, described heaven in Revelation 20 as a holy city of indescribable beauty and radiance, surrounded by a massive wall high, with 12 gates and 12 foundations, adorned with every kind of jewel, with a main street of pure gold, transparent glass. Not a state of mind, not a fancy, not a dream, not an idea, not wishful thinking, not an abstraction, but a real dwelling place.

- ***In my Father's house are Pollai – many dwelling places.*** In any language, many countless or numberless – too many to count and too numerous to identify. Don't worry about heaven having enough occupancy – heaven is plenty big for all of us. This holy city John saw in the Revelation measured 1400 miles cubed long and wide, about the size of two-thirds of the United States, but also high! Mount Everest is our planet's highest mountain – 5 ½ miles high. Heaven is 1400 miles high!

- **Heaven is God's home, with enough rooms for every resident, and Jesus is preparing it for us – “*I am going to prepare a place for you.*” Now Jesus used a different word for place – a topon – a spot or marked space.** We get our word “*topography*” from this word, which means the study of places. No doubt about it – when you deposit your faith in Jesus, your secure a reservation in an eternal place – a heavenly home!

3. Faith in a Promise – “*I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.*” The glimpse of heaven as a real dwelling place would have been incomplete without Jesus' promise that though He was leaving them behind, He would come back a reunite with them. We today, right now, live with the same promise – Jesus is coming back!

Before that great promise settled into their troubled hearts, Jesus then affirmed, “*You know the way to where I'm going.*” They did not know where He was going, but they knew the way! Jesus did not want them to dwell on the *what* and the *where* of heaven, but the *way* of heaven. The most important cure for a troubled heart is to settle with certainty the way to heaven.

Thomas interrupted Jesus with a question: “*Lord, we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way?*” Jesus answered, “*You're looking at Him – I am*

the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. The use of “I” is emphatic – “I and no other always am.” In Greek, the use of the definite article “the” defines “*the one and only.*” So, literally, Jesus set himself apart as “*the one and only way, the one and only truth, and the one and only life.*” (Hobbs, An Exposition of the Gospel of John, p. 220)

- **Jesus is THE Way – No one gets to heaven except through an encounter with Jesus.** Before believers were called Christians in the first century, they were referred to as “people who belonged to the Way”. (Acts 9:2)

- **Jesus is THE Truth – His truth sets us free!** Jesus confirmed in John 8:31 – “*If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*”

- **Jesus is THE Life – the Christian life is abundant!** Again, Jesus’ affirmation in John 10:10 – “*I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.*”

And just to make it clear, with no misunderstanding or debate, Jesus ended his answer adamantly – “*No one comes to the Father except through me.* Jesus is THE way – without Him there is no going. Jesus is THE truth – without Him there is no knowing. Jesus is THE life – without Him there is no living.

Jesus = What you need and All you need! My first Sunday as pastor of my second church, I stood in the church office prior to the worship service, waiting for the deacons to assemble for prayer. The first deacon in the room introduced himself: “Young preacher, I’m Fleet Easley. I’m a deacon here but I’m also the mayor of this town. If you need anything, you come see me first.” That introduction began a wonderful relationship with Fleet and Mildred Easley. About a year later, Fleet was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor, stage 4, and despite all of the available treatments and therapies, in just a few short months, he withered into a shell of the strong man he’d been. One morning Mildred summoned me to come – Fleet wanted to talk to me about his funeral. He was propped up on a day bed. I pulled up a chair right in front of him. He pointed his long, bony finger at me: *I’ve been telling people for years that Jesus is enough. I’m to the place in my life where Jesus is all I’ve got, but I’ve discovered he’s all I need. Young preacher, when you preach my funeral, you tell those who are there that Jesus is what they need and all they need.*” And I did.

Belief in Jesus Christ, His preparation of Heaven for us as our eternal dwelling place, and His promise of returning to Earth to gather us up as His chosen people – is a certain cure for a troubled heart.

