

Sermon for The Heritage Happiness and Hope Service

Date: June 19, 2019

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Isaiah 25:6-9

Epistle Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Gospel Reading: John 14:1-6

Sermon Text: John 14:1-6

Sermon Title: Don't be Troubled



Introit: Psalm 16:8–11; Antiphon: Liturgical Text

Hymns:

LSB 903 – This Is the Day the Lord Has Made (v. 1,2, 4,5)

LSB 461 – I Know That My Redeemer Lives (v. 1,2,7,8)

LSB 781 – We Give Thee But Thine Own (v. 1,2)

LSB 917 – Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise

Distribution:

LSB 618 – I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table

Liturgy:

Divine Service III, p.184



Pastor James Groleau
St. John's Lutheran Church
1200 13th Avenue NW
Austin, MN 55912
Office: (507) 433-2642
Shepherd@JamesPlace.net
StJohnsAustinLCMS.org
FaceBook.com/StJohnsAustin
Twitter.com@StJohnsAustinMN
FaceBook.com/Shepherd.James.Groleau
KAUS 1480 AM Sun. 9:00am



Text: John 14:1-6

[Jesus said,] “Don’t be troubled. Believe in God, and believe in me. My Father’s house has many rooms. If that were not true, would I have told you that I’m going to prepare a place for you? If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again. Then I will bring you into my presence so that you will be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you’re going. So how can we know the way?”

Jesus answered him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

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Grace to you, and peace in Jesus' name. Amen.

In our Gospel lesson we heard the holy Christ of God, Jesus Himself, say these words:

“Don't be troubled. Believe in God, and believe in me...

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one goes to the Father except through me.¹”

The troubles of life are well known to all of us. I'm sure some of you here have endured tough things in life. You know what trouble is, and you faced it head on. You are strong, and you have a heart for Jesus. You can do that because you know what we should all know. Christ is risen.

Perhaps the most troubling trial of life is when we have to say our goodbye's to those we love. Death eventually affects everyone. Yet Jesus says, "Don't be troubled." We might be inclined to wonder why we shouldn't be troubled? From the moment we are born, it's only a matter of time until we die. How could Jesus say, “Don't be troubled”? Doesn't Jesus know what life is like here? Doesn't Jesus understand that the end of life brings pain and heartache?

Yes, Jesus understands. He understands exactly what life is like. He understands that life hurts often. He understands that death's gaping maw is coming for us all. That's why He said, “Don't be troubled.”

Over 200 years ago a poet named Samuel Medley composed a hymn. You know that hymn, we just sang some of it, “I Know That My Redeemer Lives.” It has brought comfort to countless Christians since that time. Samuel Medley knew that the One who had been dead, for three days, is dead no more. That is why he could write:



He lives to silence all my fears.
He lives to wipe away my tears,
He lives to calm my troubled heart,
He lives all blessings to impart.

Perhaps Samuel Medley remembered that when Jesus said, “don't be troubled” He was talking to people whose hearts had every reason to be troubled. Jesus was talking to those whose trusted Mentor was about to die on a cross. Twenty-four hours after Jesus said, “don't be troubled” He was laying in a grave. Jesus knew how deeply His death was going to affect those people. Jesus knew how difficult

1 John 14:1-6

life was going to get for them while He was hanging on that cross. He knew how tough life would be when He rose and sent them out to tell that truth to a world that would hate them. That's why Jesus said, "don't be troubled."

I think we sometimes believe that Jesus couldn't possibly know what it is like to live in this messed up world; that He couldn't possibly understand our concerns about death, or our anxieties in life. Rest assured He knows exactly what it's like.

He has lived here on this Earth. Jesus lived as a man, just like you and me. Jesus had a frustrating family. Jesus had friends who abandoned Him when He needed them the most. Jesus knows what it is like to be mocked; what it is like to be persecuted for doing the right thing. Jesus knows exactly what you are going through, and still He says, "don't be troubled. Believe in God, believe in Me."

We certainly can't believe in ourselves. If we could believe in ourselves, if we could solve our own problems, our hearts wouldn't be troubled. We believe in Jesus because the One who got hung on a cross was hanging there for you. You can trust Him because Jesus could have stopped them from crucifying Him, but He didn't. He cared too much about you, and your salvation. Nothing would stop Him from taking the death penalty for your sin. Believe in Him! Because of all the spiritual figures who have ever lived and died in history, only the One named Jesus brought Himself back from the dead.

In the middle of your hardest trials in life it is the risen Jesus who says to you, "Don't be troubled." It is the risen Jesus who promises, "I've gone to prepare a place for you." Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, the disciples watched Him return to Heaven. That ascension was not Jesus' retirement party. Jesus is not up in Heaven right now sitting in His easy chair relaxing like all of His work is done.



The One who provided just what you needed, with His perfect saving life and death, is still providing just what you need. Only now He's doing it from Heaven. How? He is preparing a place for you. He is making sure that the message of His saving work gets preached to you; making sure that the promises of His forgiveness reaches your Baptized ears; making sure His body and blood that bought your salvation are served, all so that He can hold you in that faith which trusts in Him.

That is not all He does. He is coming again to raise your body from the dead and to bring you to be where He is. Where He is there are no struggles; there are no sorrows; there are no troubled hearts. Where He is, there is no crying or pain.

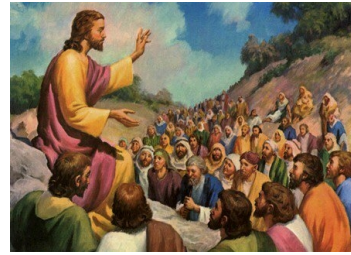


Where He is death does not exist, and where He is there you will be also. That is His promise to every faithful believer.

“You know the way to the place where I am going,” Jesus says. Thomas has the guts to say what I think all of them were thinking, “We don’t know where You’re going. How can we know the way?”

You and I do know where Jesus was going, to Heaven, yet we still ask, “How are we going to get there?” because we sure can’t get there ourselves.

Jesus says to Thomas, and to you and me, “I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.” Jesus is the Way. There is only one way. Jesus makes that clear when He says, “No one comes to the Father, except through Me.”



Since sinners can’t enter Heaven, shouldn’t our hearts be troubled? You’re a sinner, I’m a sinner. We can’t get rid of that sin, and that sin will keep us out of Heaven. Yet Jesus says, even about that, “don’t be troubled.” You see Jesus can get rid of sin. He takes our sin with Him to the cross. Once He has taken your sin to the cross, there is no sin left to keep you out of Heaven. In other words, He has taken your Hell and made it His, so that He can take His Heaven and make it yours. Jesus is the Way. He is the only Way.

Jesus is the Truth. Look at Jesus and you will see the truth: the truth about God, and the truth about His love for you. Look at Jesus and see love that is willing to come down from Heaven; love that is willing to give His life for you; love that is willing to care for you, and to carry you through all of your grief, through all of your sorrows, through every thing that happens to you in this world, no matter how hard it might be. Jesus is the Truth, the Truth that calms your troubled heart.

Jesus is the Life. He did not look like the Life on Good Friday. He looked like death. His body hung limp and bloodied, His head was pierced by thorns, His hands and feet were punctured by nails, His side was stabbed by a spear, that confirmed the reality: there was no life left in Him, the Author of life.



Yet remember, Jesus had said, “The Son of Man must suffer... be rejected... be killed, and after three days rise again.²” What He promised is what happened. They put Jesus in a tomb but He did not stay there. Easter happened. The Resurrection happened. The One who is Life left His

grave behind empty, so that when He Baptizes you into that resurrection, His life becomes your life.³

Do you understand what that means? It means when Jesus comes again, your grave is going to be just as empty as His. In this world, that is filled with death, Jesus' resurrection is what calms our troubled hearts, because Jesus' resurrection is the assurance of ours.



Jesus knows how tough life can be. He knows everything that makes you anxious in life. In your deepest grief, in your toughest times, in your hardest challenges, your Lord, who came out of the tomb alive, says to you, “don’t be troubled.” That doesn’t mean He promises to take of your problems away. It means He promises to carry you through them. It means those problems are only temporary. Even now, He has gone to prepare a place for you. A place where there is no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain, no more problems, and no more sin.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. So as you face death every difficulty, you can confidently believe what Christians have been singing for centuries:

“He lives... to calm my troubled heart.”

In the name of Jesus.

Amen.