

HEART TROUBLE
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John 14:1, 27.

The diagnosis of “Heart Trouble” is so common that it doesn’t really shock us when the doctor tells us that is our problem. He will simply prescribe blood thinners, blood pressure pills, and a low cholesterol food; or he will send us to a major hospital for heart surgery or to have a stint inserted. “Heart Problems” we learn are really most usually circulatory problems related to arteries going to the heart, and stints and bypass surgery usually take care of the problem for a while.

Jesus is here speaking of “Heart Trouble” as the problems we human beings have in our worries and our fears that come with the problems of life. In this case in John 14, Jesus is very soon going to die, Jerusalem is going to finally reject him after all the ‘hosannas’, and the ‘sheep’, the disciples, will be leaderless with no one to guide them to the Kingdom of God that Jesus has promised to deliver to them. And Jesus says, “Let not your heart be troubled....”

A few years ago I was in a chaplaincy program when one of our best students asked the teacher what she thought of John 14:1, which he quoted. In effect she said it was a monstrous thing to tell people not to worry when they were facing tragedies. C.H. Spurgeon answered that question best when he wrote: “I am sure that the tone of voice which He used would prevent them from imagining that He was mocking them...But we must not forget that Jesus Christ was Himself in trouble at the time and yet He was perfectly calm. He was about to bear the brunt of the storm, yet He was not afraid; and, therefore being a fellow-sufferer with His disciples in the trouble, and being Himself the perfect Pattern of sublime patience and dauntless courage, He could most properly say to them, ‘Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’”

Heart Trouble had come to Jesus and His disciples. They were worried and afraid. They trembled at the darkness that had descended upon them. They were ‘sheep’ and they felt as helpless as the temple sheep that were being slaughtered. They were afraid to die; and they felt that death surely awaited them at the hands of the authorities, with whom Jesus had been in strong disagreement that very day. They felt the strong power of evil and of Satan. The light had gone out; the stars had left their sky.

Then Jesus says, “Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.” “Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid.”

Jesus was saying to His disciples, and through them to us, “Face life and death the way I face life and death. Be not afraid. Be not troubled. Be strong hearted.”

I. SINCE ALL OF US HAVE TROUBLES, WE MUST FIND THE CAUSE OF OUR HEART TROUBLE.

A. Pride is one of the root causes of our trouble. We are told to ‘humble ourselves under the hand of God’, but when trouble comes, when heartache visits, when death takes up residence in our homes, we always ask “Why?” or, “Why me?” Christians often wonder why the Heart problem comes. They fail to realize that ‘the sun shines on the just and on the unjust’; they fail to understand that God does not alter the course of

nature because of them. God might or might not save me if I am in the path of an F 5 tornado; but He does give me the mind to stay out of its path, and He does give me the mind to seek the safest available place when the tornado comes. However, where we are, and where we go, have inevitable consequences with them. Good Christian people ride trains, trolleys, automobiles, and airplanes every single day. Some of those cars wreck; some of those planes crash; and sometimes those trains derail.

The interesting thing is, *we don't think it should happen to us because we're Christians*. That is probably one of the most foolish conclusions we can reach. But many people reach such conclusions. I have heard of people who lost loved ones in tragedies and never came back to church again. Spurgeon speaks of a woman who lost her husband, and for nearly twenty years remained embittered over the loss. Finally someone said to her, "Haven't you forgiven God after all these years?" The question changed her life. In her pride she had been holding a grudge against God for letting her husband die.

Search your heart. Perhaps your anger is really directed toward God. You may be disappointed that He let it happen. I preached in a gypsy camp on the edge of the city of Bacau, Romania. As I was witnessing to a woman there, she said to me, "How can you preach about a God of Love. He let my little boy be run over by a large truck." I could only say to her, "I don't know why such things happen; but I do know that the only way you will ever be able to hold that little boy in your arms again will be if you go to Heaven to be with him." God gave me that answer, and the lady repented of her sin and trusted Jesus as her Savior.

B. Doubting the power of God is another reason that many Christians get Heart Trouble. Our God is a Great God, and there is no problem too great for Him. Spurgeon writes; "In many others, perhaps in the majority, the cause of heart trouble lies in mistrust of God. This is true in reference to being afraid. They are afraid that their present trials will crush them, or that some future trial will cause their destruction; but, brethren, you need not be afraid because of the greatness of your trial, for you must be well aware that others have had greater trials, and yet have survived them..." He continues: "The real secret of your being troubled and afraid lies in the fact that you doubt God. Either you do not think that he is equal to the emergency, or else you conceive that he has forgotten you, or is angry with you, or that his mercy is clean gone for ever, and that he will be favorable to you no more."

God is equal to your troubles; but whatever He allows to happen is for His glory. The Bible tells us that "All things work together for good, to them that love God, and to them that are called according to His purpose." We were put on this earth to bring glory and honor to God. The greatest faith we can have is the faith to say, "Not my will but Yours." Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, "Not my will, but Thy will be done." He wanted the cup to pass, but He wanted most of all the God of Glory to get glory from His Life.

I have never had the trials that some have had. I have never suffered the misfortune that many have suffered. I have never carried the heavy burden that many carry. But the martyrs across the ages, and the true Christian heroes have suffered greatly; and in their sufferings have praised and blessed and thanked their God. They knew with Paul that 'the suffering of this present time is not worthy of being compared

with the glory that shall be revealed' in those who claim God as their Father and Jesus as their Savior, Lord, and Brother.

II. THE CURE FOR THE TROUBLED HEART.

A. For the Christian, the cure of the troubled heart comes from **Trust**. The Psalmist put it best when he wrote, "Trust in the Lord and do good. So shall thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord and He will give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord..." Trust goes beyond just faith. Trust, one might say, is faith that is committed. Trust is faith in action. That is why the psalmist used the words trust, delight, and commit. Trust also has within itself the idea of praise, thanksgiving, and delight.

A heart that trusts is a heart that is untroubled. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him, against that day." Paul, who wrote that, is speaking for all committed Christians. They have gone farther than believing; they have fully trusted, fully committed. They are not like the sailor who jumps into his boat and takes a brief cruise. They are more like a Magellan who boards his ship and sails around the world. They are like Pilgrim in Bunyon's Pilgrims Progress, who, when surrounded by danger, cried out, "I will stand in the strength of the Lord God." They persevere because they have committed their lives to God with the trust and the utter intention to persevere. They have the courage to keep going and, as Churchill told an American audience, they will "Never give in! Never give in! Never! Never! Never give in!"

B. The Trusting Christian has another source of power upon which he depends—**The Holy Spirit**. Jesus did not just say "Let not your heart be troubled..." He also said: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." (vss 16-18). Even the very committed Trust comes from the Presence of the Holy Spirit that God has given to the Christian. When the Christian's heart is troubled, He has a Comforter, the Holy Comforter.

III. THE TROUBLED HEART OF THE LOST PERSON.

A. This is a **Normal** condition, and as Jesus said, such a person does not know the Comforter and cannot know Him. In Genesis 6:5, we find these words, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his **heart** was only evil continually." Ecclesiastes 9:3 says, "Also the **heart** of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their **heart** while they live, and after that they go to the dead." Jeremiah 17:9, tells us, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" These verses just reinforce the verse of Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Myriad other verses of Scripture could be added.

B. The sinner cannot know God...unless He has a heart transplant. God promises in Jeremiah 24:7, "And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return to me with a **whole heart**." Ezekiel 11:19, "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within

you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh.” The only way one can be saved is to receive this new heart that God promises. And the condition of this promise is based upon:

C. Repentance and Belief. Do we need to repent? Jesus says we do: “For from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.” (Mark 7:21-23).

Throughout Scripture, God requires of man repentance and faith. In Acts we find that we need Repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We all have heart trouble sometimes. The person without Christ really has severe heart trouble and needs a ‘new heart.’ Only God can give that. We cannot earn it. We don’t deserve it. But if we turn from sin and turn to Christ, the new heart will be ours and we will become new men in Christ and new women in Christ.