

## Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled

### John 14: 1-14

"Do not let your hearts be troubled." This is how our Scripture starts. This section is part of the Farewell Discourses, where Jesus is telling his disciples what to expect over the next few days. He will be tried, killed and crucified. One of his disciples will betray him and another will deny him. Jesus knows what will happen to him yet he offers comfort to his disciples.

Again, I am grateful that the Gospel writers included texts such as this one. It is a reminder that our hope, our comfort, is grounded in the promises of a God who loves us so much that God gave God's only Son so that we might live. These are the promises we turned to in our times of grief and uncertainty. These are the promises which renew us, which lift us up on eagle's wings, these are the promises which help us not become weary.

The beauty of this text is that it does not happen when Jesus is surrounded by a large crowd. Rather instead, Jesus is with his disciples. This moment is personal. It is a private moment between Teacher and students, Master and followers. It is a moment between beloved friends.

This moment is not forced or formal. Jesus doesn't turn to John and say, "John, I need to make sure you get this all written down word for word." Rather instead, Jesus looks around at his disciples, sees the uncertainty on their faces and offers them comfort. He shares stories with them. He encourages them. He promises that they will be together again.

This is the moment the disciples will turn to over and over again as they continue their journey of becoming the people God calls them to be. This will be the scene which comes to mind when the disciples begin to lose hope. This will be the moment the disciples will hold onto when it all becomes too much.

Because when the disciples think back to this personal, private moment with their Teacher, their friend, their Lord and Savior, they remember...They remember Jesus' last words to them. They allow the powerful tool of memory to shape them, to form them, to encourage them, to strengthen them. When the disciples look back to this moment, they now see...see with eyes of faith. They know despite what narrative this world may be sharing, they know that the Light of God will never die away.

The resurrection has changed the disciples just as it has changed us as people of faith. These words of comfort offered to the disciples, offered to us help us to

realize that this world will not have the last word, that a new chapter in our lives is beginning. And that we will not be alone on this journey.

As ones who believe in Jesus, we are invited to abide in him, to ground ourselves in God's love, to root ourselves in God's grace, to sustain ourselves through the comfort and peace given to us by a God who loves us so much that God gave God's only Son so that we might live.

In this given time with all that is happening in our world right now, I know that so many of us are wondering how can we continue...how can we continue the journey, how can we continue to have faith, how can we continue to hold onto the promises when this world is filled with so much darkness and hurt?

Again, please hear me say that I do not pretend to have all the answers. There have been moments during this quarantine which I have felt the darkness seep into my heart and soul. And I will not say coming out of that darkness was easy or quick. But what I do know is that I kept coming back to these words, these word of comfort, these words of hope, these words which reminded me over and over again that God was guiding us, that we are not alone, that we are strengthened through the love and grace of God.

What I know is that we can continue this journey, regardless of the obstacles, regardless of our fears, regardless of anything which might try to hold us

back because we know in our hearts that because of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can trust in the God of compassion. We can hold onto the promises that there is a place for us, and that we can share this compassion with others.

Today, some two thousand years later, these words of comfort and hope which Jesus shared with his disciples still hold power. They still hold mercy. They still hold grace. They have not lost their ability to strengthen us as Jesus' disciples as we continue to make our way during this uncertain time when the world is so full of confusion, so full of hurt, so full of brokenness.

As people of faith, we need to hear these words once more. We need their comfort. We need their hope. We need their ability to inspire us, to encourage us so that we cling to the promises of God's coming Kingdom, so that we hold to them and know that no matter what, the darkness will not have the last word.

Today, we are given these words to strengthen us, to comfort us, to energize us so that we can continue becoming the people God called us to be, the people God created us to be....people of hope, people of grace, people of love. We are given these words as a reminder today and all days that God is with us, that we have the strength to step out in faith, and to let go of our fears.

We are given these words so that we may know the Way, the Truth and the Life. Amen.