

John 14:1-12. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." ⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." ⁹ Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. ¹² I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Jesus prepares his disciples to do great things

- 1. He assures us that he is the way the truth and the life.**
- 2. We get to do what He did: share the message with others.**

Jesus made it clear to his disciples that this was a time of transition, things were about to change. In that upper room he was preparing his disciples for a time that they would have to go out on their own. Soon the disciples would go out and they would do great things, and so Jesus made sure to give that final encouragement because they needed it. They were uncertain. Their hearts were troubled. After all, this was a big change for them. They had been under Jesus care for roughly three years. He had taught them. He had instructed them. They were his friends. He was their teacher, their rabbi, their master. But now something big was about to happen, and because of this event, a change was about to take place for them, a new chapter in their lives was about to begin, and so Jesus spoke to them words of encouragement. ***"Do not let your hearts be troubled."*** He directed his disciples to put their trust in him. He pointed them to their ultimate comfort, a place in heaven where believers will be with their Lord forever. In the face of troubles and uncertainties, in this moment of transition, in anticipation for this new stage in their lives Jesus prepared his disciples, he calmed their troubled hearts with the certainty of life with him in heaven. With these words Jesus was also preparing his disciples to go out into the

world and do great things. He was preparing them to go out and share this certainty, this wonderful gift of forgiveness, and life, and salvation, with the people of this world.

This last Saturday the room was a gymnasium and it was filled with anticipation. There was a certain tension that filled the room, a certain anxiety, a certain excitement. It was a time of transition. A group of students had finished their course of instruction, after years of study under the guidance of professors they were receiving one final word of encouragement before they were sent on their way to do great things for the Lord. Anxiety and excitement seemed to swirl and swell as a gym full of students along with their family and friends and interested onlookers were all waiting for the announcement of the assignments. But before the names were read the preacher gave them the encouragement to go out and share the good news which they had been so graciously given.

On Saturday, May 17, a call service was held at Martin Luther College in the afternoon. And I was reminded of the swirl of emotions that swells up in such a time for those young men and women. What will the future hold? Where is the Lord going to send me?

Feelings of excitement are mixed with enough flashes of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty that a person begins to anxiously tap their foot or wring their hands, some nervously look around others can't seem to move at all. And then the graduate hears his or her name called, and the calling body gets to find out who will be coming to fill their need. At that moment a different series of questions a different rush of emotions floods the mind. Where is this place to which I have been called? How am I going to fair at this place? Am I really ready for all of this?

It is both exciting and nerve wracking. It makes for some very anxious moments, and the emotions swirl. But tensions are eventually calmed because we as Christians know that our Lord Jesus is with his people wherever we go and we know that he sends us out to do great things in his name.

It is exciting to have a call filled; to have a graduate coming our way. As we take this crucial step toward opening an early childhood learning center, this is an exciting time of transition for our congregations. But while these feelings of excitement swell, there may also be a doubts and fears and apprehensions that periodically may kick up and continue to swirl around us, but we are encouraged by the words of Jesus. ***“Do not let your hearts be troubled.*** He says to us today, ***“You trust in God, trust also in me.”***

The trouble facing these first disciples in the upper room was that they couldn't see past the not so distant future. They were looking ahead and they were troubled by the challenges that Jesus was describing. Jesus kept telling them that he was leaving. He spoke to them repeatedly about how he had to suffer and die. They couldn't get past the doubts and the fears and uncertainties and so Jesus offered to them words of encouragement and comfort and counsel. It was as if there were so near-sighted they couldn't see past the tip of their nose. They chose to focus their attention on the uncertainties that surrounded and swirled around them at that moment. What would happen to them? How could they go on? How could they be ready for such a grand transition and a big step to the next stage in their life? Doubts and fears and apprehension swirled around in that upper room and so Jesus spoke to their troubled hearts. Again he encouraged them and he then prepared

them for their wonderful work of sharing the gospel. ***Don't let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God. Trust in me.***

God's Word shows us a faithful God, who is only the true God. The Word tells us that God is the one who created the universe by his almighty word. He spoke and it simply came to be. By faith in God's Word we believe in the one who promised to send a Savior when Adam and Eve fell into temptation and sin. By faith we believe in the God who cleansed the earth by means of a worldwide flood and in his mercy spared one faithful family so that his promise of a Savior would be preserved. By faith we believe in the LORD who sent down fire to burn up Elijah's sacrifice and prove that he was the one true God. By faith we believe in the one true God of the Bible. It is clear in his Word that we have a mighty God who is capable of wonderful things. It is clear in his Word that we can trust God and believe whatever he says.

We have been given this knowledge through faith and time in his Word, but many times we can't see past the doubt, the anxiety, and the fear. And so again and again the Lord encourages us and he speaks to our troubled hearts. Our LORD tells us that we are forgiven. He tells us that we can live in peace and confidence. He tells us that our Savior Jesus is ruling over all things for the good of Church. Jesus tells us that heaven is waiting for us and he will come again to take us there. Jesus gives us all this encouragement in his word and then he invites us to go out and share his message of salvation with others. As he sends us out he tells us that when we proclaim his word and share his message it will produce results.

In that upper room He told the disciples that they would go out and do great things, even greater than Christ himself for their ministry would expand past Jerusalem and Samaria and go out to the ends of the known world. Those lost in spiritual death and scattered throughout the world would be gathered to the father's arms and given eternal life. Jesus says to his believers now as he did then, ***"Don't let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God. Trust in me. In my Father's house are many rooms."*** You have a room reserved for you through faith in him and Jesus also tells us that we get to help him fill those rooms. We get to share this saving message that grants eternal life.

The Lord tells us that we too can do such great things through faith. He begins with that phrase that is meant to grab our attention, ***I tell you the truth***, and then he continues with this remarkable truth, ***anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*** He tells us that we can share the message of salvation with others. We can help our Lord fill the rooms that he has prepared in heaven.

We have every reason to trust him because he is a faithful and powerful God, but sometimes we just can't see past the doubt. Despite all of his promises and assurances we choose to look at the things that cause us fear and distress. We concentrate on the uncertainties. We feed our own anxieties and fears. We are hesitant to go and live and share his message of peace and forgiveness.

Sometimes we might think like Philip did, if only God would make some impressive display. If only he would show us the Father. If only God would thunder down again from Mt. Sinai, or send fire down from heaven like he did on Mt. Carmel. If only God would make some sort of impressive display, then it would be easier.

But the fact is; he already has. Jesus came as the most impressive display of God's powerful love. God became flesh. God became one of us and lived among us to save us. He died as the perfect sacrifice that takes away all our sin. Jesus is the most impressive display of God's power and love. We see God most clearly through the person of Jesus Christ. This is the kind of God that we have. This is the God that rules over us. This is our loving and compassionate Savior. His grace is sufficient for us. He gives us confidence and peace. He has defeated sin, death, and hell for us. He gives us the sure hope of heaven. He died for us in the darkness of Calvary and he assures us that he will one day come back in unmatched glory to bring us to the brilliant light of our home in heaven. He is the biggest thing that could ever happen to our life, and he is the greatest gift that we could share with anyone. And so the Lord reminds us of this truth, he points us to the blessed gift and the ultimate comfort of heaven and then Jesus sends us out to do this great thing that he did: share this saving message with others.

We get to share the good news of Jesus with others! It is not as if we are trying to sell some bland product that is like all the rest and we must convince other people to buy in. No, Jesus is more than just another way to make life better. *Jesus is the life.* Christianity is more than a one way of many; it is more than just one method out there that has been constructed to get through the madness of this life. No, he is more than just a way to get through this life; *Jesus is the way.* To follow Jesus is more than taking in a series of truths that will lead to higher enlightenment. *Jesus is the truth.*

We have been given this priceless gift of Jesus. He came as God's most impressive display of God's power and love. And our Savior gives us these stirring words of encouragement as he sends out his disciples to share the good news. ***I am the way, the truth, and the life.*** With these words our fears subside and the more we recognize what a blessing we have in Jesus, the better prepared we are to go out and share the message with those around us. The more we recognize what a blessing we have in Jesus the more willing we will be to step out in faith and invest in and support the gospel ministry. Sure there will be times of uncertainty, anxiety, doubt and even fear, especially when we start a new ministry or a large program like Little Lambs Learning Center, but we are doing this to share the good news of Jesus. He is the only way that saves and we have him. He is the truth that brings peace and clarity and joy to our lives and we have him. He is what makes our lives full of joy and peace and purpose. He is our life. We have him for our own personal comfort and we have him so that we may share him with others.

We have been prepared by God's Word to do great things, that is, to share the good news that comes through Christ Jesus. Take comfort in the fact that he has prepared a place for you in heaven. Treasure this gift and then let's go out and do great things together. Let us reach out to friends and neighbors and with Christ-like compassion, let us share the good news of salvation and participate in this effort to help fill those rooms in heaven that our Savior has prepared. Let us pray and support those who have been called into the public ministry and continually ask God for more workers so that this saving message continues to be proclaimed in this place and throughout the world.

So dear friends, trust in God, trust in Jesus, and proclaim the good news of eternal life to the glory of his name; for Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.