

The Exclusive, Offensive, and Comforting Gospel – *John 14:1-11*

Introduction – There is one constant discourse from Jesus to His disciples recorded in John 13-17, from the washing of their feet until the end of His intercessory prayer, all on the night of His betrayal. Jesus was troubled (13:21) over this coming betrayal and all that would follow. The other gospels record Jesus seeking the Father and resting in His perfect will despite His troubled spirit (Matt 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:39-46). The theme of this discourse is comfort for the troubled hearts of His disciples (14:1) and if we listen to Jesus, throughout these verses as well as the entire discourse, our hearts will be comforted as well

“Heart trouble is the commonest thing in the world. No rank, or class, or condition is exempt from it. No bars, or bolts, or locks can keep it out. Partly from inward causes and partly from outward causes – partly from the body and partly from the mind – partly from what we love and partly from what we fear, the journey of life is full of trouble. Even the best of Christians have many bitter cups to drink between grace and glory. Even the holiest saints find the world a valley of tears.” – Ryle.

What is Your Only Comfort in Life (vv1-4) – They had followed Jesus for three years. They probably had burned many bridges, probably lost many friends and family to their ruined reputations, and now their leader, rabbi, and Messiah was telling them that He was going to depart, that one of them would betray Him, that Peter would deny Him thrice, and that where He was going they could not follow. Jesus first gives the simple remedy for our troubled souls – *“You believe in God, believe also in Me”* (v1).

Faith is the remedy (v1, Psalm 42:11, Isaiah 26:3). Jesus comforts them regarding His departure and what it will accomplish. They are to be comforted because there are many dwellings in His Father’s house and He is going to prepare a place for each disciple. Finally, He promises He will return for His disciples.

Longing for Home – There are lots of houses in the world, but there is only one place you call home. Except for sinful or other providences, your father’s house was your home. And when we feel lonely or vulnerable, when we are troubled, we want to go home. Home is the place where we are loved for our own sakes and because we are family, and not because we have earned such love. There is an eternal home prepared for every follower of Christ where all troubles will cease. The place is heaven, where God the Father dwells and every believer goes when they die. Jesus prepares the place and we are also prepared for a glorious body for our unclothed souls which we receive at the resurrection (2 Cor 5:1-8). How these are tied together (our dwellings in heaven, a place for our souls that do not wish to be unclothed, and our resurrected bodies later) is not made clear. What is clear is that we will be going there and it will be beyond good. Believe in Jesus, for then you will be going home, and all that means it means to go to the perfect home.

The Bones of our Creed – The articles of our faith are to be the comforts of our heart, something to think about when you memorize and recite our creeds. In these verses we have the mention of God the Father and God the Son, Christ’s ascension, His coming again, and His works that bring us to heaven. Could you use the Apostle’s Creed as a source of comfort? This is also why we take a season to recite the Heidelberg Catechism question one.

The Exclusivity of this Comfort (vv5-6) – The gospel’s offense cannot be avoided because the true offense is none other than Jesus Himself. The gospel is a scandal because it declares the hopelessness of man’s plight due to sin (Rom 3:23, 5:12, 6:23a). It is not that we sin and become sinners. We are condemned sinners and we act out of our bent nature; we sin because we are sinners. That is offensive to unbelieving hearts. But it is true. The truth is offensive. And Jesus is the truth. We are dead in our sins by nature, fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and the mind (Eph 2:1-3), and that is offensive to unbelieving hearts. But in God’s rich mercy, He made us alive in Christ for Jesus is the life. And He is the way, and the only exclusive way, to the Father.

The Comfort of this Exclusivity – We don’t see the comfort of the exclusivity of Jesus when we don’t have a good reformed, Pauline doctrine of our depravity. Jesus is the ONLY way and there is great comfort here. It is a great comfort because it is our only hope. If you are on a sinking ship and there is nothing but water all around, you have all kinds of choices as to what part of the ship you can jump off. If there is one and only one life-raft off to one side, you do not bemoan the exclusivity of the life-raft. You jump in. There are hundreds of ways to sin and destroy ourselves. There is only one way to be saved. There is only one way to the Father and praise God there is any way at all.

The Triune God and the Way to the Father (vv7-11) – The last verse of the Prologue (John 1:1-18) states that “*No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*” Colossians 1:15 says, “*(Jesus) is the image of the invisible God...*” And Jesus says in our passage, “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father...*” These verses (vv7-11) challenge us to understand some of the mystery of the Triune God. The Father is God and the Son is God, and yet they are one in essence though two distinct Persons, ineffably one and yet ineffably distinct.

Jesus is the Way to the Father, the only way. When you believe in God, believe also in Jesus for He is the way to the Father, the way to heaven. Believe according to His teaching; believe according to His works, especially His resurrection from the dead (Rom 10:9-13). But this all means that while we have a great hope to one day be in heaven, Christ in us means that the Father is in us (and both in the Person of the Holy Spirit – to be discussed later in this discourse by Jesus). If you are in Christ then you are on the Way, the Road, the journey to heaven and to the Father. But the Father is not only at some distant end of your journey. Jesus is the journey and the Father is united to Jesus and therefore the end of the journey is also with you right now.

Let not your heart be troubled; that is a command. How? Just as Jesus did. Just as so many disciples have done before you. Fix your eyes on Jesus and you will see the way and you will see the end – and you will be able to run the race (Heb 12:1-2).

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