

For Troubled Hearts John 14:1-4

Jesus says in our lesson for today, **“Do not let your hearts be troubled . . .”** He could have said, “Do not let them be afraid . . .”

Have you ever known anyone with a troubled heart? It’s like the patient in a mental hospital who was holding his ear close to the wall, listening intently. The attendant finally approached.

**“Shh!”** whispered the patient, beckoning him over. The attendant pressed his ear to the wall for a long time. **“I can’t hear a thing,”** he whispered. **“I know,”** replied the patient, **“it’s been like that all day!”**

Charles Schulz, the creator of the Peanuts cartoon series once said, **“Sometimes you lie in bed at night, and you don’t have a single thing to worry about . . .”** Then he added, **“That always worries me!”** Troubled hearts.

In her book, *Real Wealth* Sarah van Gelder said something that I think is interesting. She writes, **“The [United States] is among the wealthiest countries in the world, and yet it is filled with people, rich and poor, who are anxious about their future and who feel that they don’t have enough.”**

Are you among those people who are anxious about your future, fearful that you don’t have enough? **“Do not let your hearts be troubled . . .”** said the Master. Boy, that would be wonderful, wouldn’t it? To be totally untroubled?

If I asked you to describe a troubled heart, what are the words you would use? **Fearful? Angry? Envious? Stressed out? Bitter?** The list could go on and on. A heart may be troubled by many things. My guess is that most of them could be boiled down to one word, though: **fear.**

What is envy, but the fear that we don’t measure up because we do not have what someone else has?

What is greed, but the fear that what we have is not enough, that somehow we are incomplete?

Our basic problem is fear. Think how many times our Lord says to us, **“Don’t be afraid.”** That’s what he is saying to us here: **“Do not let your hearts be afraid. You believe in God; believe also in me . . .”** There are people who say or think **“My life will be completely better if I just change jobs, if I move to a better community, if I just had a different spouse.”** And they find out that nothing really changes.

**Happiness is an inside job. There is nothing on the outside that can ease a troubled heart. Only from within can come the help we need whether we are head of a mighty empire or simply an average person trying to come to grips with an unhappy life.**

Of course, some of us have legitimate problems, including legitimate fears about our health, about our family, about our future. But there are some of us who are troubled far beyond what we need to be. We need to open ourselves to the Great Physician and ask Him to change our attitude toward life. Jesus said to his followers, **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me . . .”**

Let me give you a simple formula for a troubled heart. All of these are contained in the teachings of our Lord. They are simple, but they are powerful.

First of all, ask God for a new perspective. Many of us are blessed beyond our wildest dreams, and yet we have no peace. If only we could step back and look at our lives through the eyes of faith.

Jesus said don’t be like the heathen. They take pride in **“all these things”** and are deeply concerned about them. **But your heavenly Father already knows perfectly well what you truly need, and He will give them to you.**

You and I need to step back from time to time, take a deep breath, and ask ourselves if the things we are concerned about really deserve so much of our time and energy.

If you have a troubled heart, pray that God will give you a new perspective about your life. Let me suggest something else while you are at it.

**Ask God for patience. Sometimes, if you will just be patient, problems often take care of themselves.** We complicate our lives, and lose our joy, because we’re worried all the time. If you will just wait, problems take care of themselves.

J. Arthur Rank had a system for doing that. He was one of the early pioneers of the film industry in Great Britain, and he also happened to be a devout Christian.

Rank found he couldn’t push his worries out of his mind completely; they were always slipping back in. So he finally made a pact with God to limit his worrying to Wednesday. He even made himself a little Wednesday Worry Box and he placed it on his desk. Whenever a worry cropped up, Rank wrote it out and dropped it into the Wednesday Worry Box.

Would you like to know his amazing discovery? When Wednesday rolled around, he would open that box to find that only a third of the items he had written down were still worth worrying about. The rest had managed to resolve themselves.

If you have a troubled heart, ask God to give you a new perspective. Also ask him to give you patience so that you do not jump ahead and worry about a problem that may never come. But most important of all, ask God for more faith. Faith in God is the best remedy for all our problems. Jesus put it plainly, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."

The real reason that many of us have troubled hearts is that we do not really trust God. We are not certain that God really cares about us or even accepts us as we are.

Do you have a troubled heart? Ask God to give you a new perspective about your life. Also ask Him to give you patience so that you are not constantly living in dread of things that may never occur. And finally, ask Him for the greatest gift, the gift of faith. "Do not let your hearts be troubled," said the Master. "You believe in God; believe also in me . . ."