

“Antidote For Heart Trouble”

Message by DD Adams

Providence United Methodist Church

5th Sunday of Easter

May 18, 2014

Today’s gospel lesson is taken from the book of John, chapter 14, verses 1 through 14. I’ll be reading from the New Revised Standard Version. “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

And you know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the

Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it. This is God's word for God's people. Thanks be to God. God of peace, open our ears and hearts to embrace the truth through the power of the Holy Spirit. Move in this place, bless our understanding, and comfort our souls. Amen.

Just recently I was called into the hospital late at night. I went into ICU and found a woman and her friend staring at a man in bed. Their faces were twisted with worry, and they had trouble even noticing that I'd come into the room. I introduced myself as the chaplain on-call for that night. They nodded and responded without expression. They looked numb and anxious. They said they'd been in the hospital for hours. One of the women present in the room looked at me and began to cry. She said, "We were supposed to be home by now. My husband only came in for a simple procedure." I asked her if she wanted to talk about it—and she continued.

"We came into the hospital early in the morning. The attendants prepped Rick for surgery. It was only supposed to be an in and out procedure. The surgeon was about ready to begin and then all of a sudden Rick had a massive heart attack right on the table. Then they immediately put him on life support. He's not doing well at all." So I sat with them for a while. We had some conversation. We talked about the feelings they were having, and then I left telling them they could page me anytime if they needed me. I was on-call until 8am.

If there was ever a time these two women needed hope it was then, and yet it seemed like that was the time they were least able to receive it. They were standing at the man's bedside filled with fear. The burden on their faces expressed unspeakable grief and worry. They'd come into the hospital with the expectation that they would be going home shortly, but now the tables had turned. The unexpected happened. They felt lost and uncertain and wondered if Rick would

make it. It's times like these that Jesus speaks to us and says, don't let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

When that verse of scripture comes to our minds, we feel like saying to God—are you crazy!?? Can't you see what's happened here??! Don't you care!?? You have this numb ache in your heart. You wonder about the future. How will this pan out? Then God says it again. Don't let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. God says to believe. Jesus says to trust him. The bond we have with God and Jesus is one of trust. It's deeper than belief. Belief can be something that's just intellectual assent, but trust is deep. It's personal and warm.

Sometimes I've heard people say to those who are looking right into a terrible tragedy in their lives and say, "It'll be okay." It's not a good thing to say. It sounds like wishful thinking. What if they said, "Don't let your hearts be troubled." That's really no better—unless you end the statement saying, "Believe in God." Having a trust in God points to God's omnipotence—God's all-powerful nature.

There are many troubled hearts in today's world. It seems our western mindset does very little to promote peace in our lives. Most of us have all the food we need. Many of our homes are large and luxurious, yet so many in the world lack food. In Africa a child dies every 60 seconds from Malaria, and health care is almost non-existent. So obviously, having plenty can't be equated with peace. And it's not obtained by our will power or a discipline of the mind.

In this passage, Jesus urges us to have faith in God and also in him. The answer to finding peace is trust. It's a gift of God to be received through faith. Jesus needs to be the object of our faith. Our faith needs to be grounded and anchored so our troubled hearts depend on God and God's greatness.

Literally, the phrase “Have faith in God” means to “Hold God’s faithfulness.” It has nothing to do with our faith and everything to do with God’s faithfulness.

In this passage the disciples are shook up. Jesus tells them he’s leaving, but he also tells them that it’s not going to bring on the disaster in their lives they expect. Because Jesus is leaving, a better thing will follow and great and wonderful blessings will come from it. Many of us here have troubled and grievous hearts. We’re disillusioned with our lives and with the world in general, but in fact we’re called by God in this passage to renew our trust in him and Jesus and to rediscover the gift of peace that’s provided for us. Sometimes our lives and the world just don’t make any sense. We wonder if there’s any plan at all or maybe things just happen randomly.

During times when we question the meaning of life or have to go through unexplained suffering we can recall the words that Jesus spoke here. We cry out from our broken hearts and ask God for **reassurance**. God speaks and says; “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.” It’s a word that makes the crises in our lives a lot less crazy. When we receive and believe it settles our emotions. We may not have the circumstances of our lives the way we want them to be, but we have the **reassurance** of God that he’s with us.

In this passage, God invites us to trust him with our lives— all the confusing horrific circumstances and all the disappointments. Can we offer our whole self to God and put it all in God’s care? To really embrace the truth is to admit that life is not always what we had hoped it would be. The circumstances are often far from what we want them to be too. Maybe we feel we can’t have a sense of security unless things are the way we think they should be. And yet we know that nothing humanity has ever constructed is secure, and it’s always fleeting. Let’s allow

ourselves to live with honesty and truth. **Let's embrace the ultimate insecurity—that there really is no security in life except God.**

Let's trust our lives in the hands of God. In the doing of that we learn that the antidote for a troubled heart is trusting God. Let's pray. Dear God we struggle with so much trouble in this world, yet you say to not let our hearts be troubled, but believe in you. In this moment God, we lay our burdens down, our doubts and cares we lay at your feet. Help us step receive your reassurance and the peace of your presence in an uncertain world. Comfort us to put those most difficult things we struggle with daily into your hands. Mold us into who we want to become through trusting you. In Christ's name we pray, believing, and expecting to receive. Amen.