

May 7, 2023

Texts: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16; John 14:1-14

Title: "Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled"

There's a silly story about a couple who were on their honeymoon. They were staying at the Watergate Hotel, made famous during the Nixon Administration. Remembering what happened there, the bride asked, "What if the place is still bugged?" The groom said, "Hmm...Good point. I'll look for a bug." He looked behind the drapes and the pictures and under the rug and sure enough, under the rug was a small disc shaped plate, with four screws. He got his Swiss army knife, unscrewed the screws, and threw them and the plate out the window. The next morning, the hotel manager asked, "How was your room and the service? The groom said, "Why are you asking?" The manager said, "Well, the room under yours complained of the chandelier falling on them!"

Fear makes us do ridiculous things sometimes. In fact, it's at the heart of most of our problems. If you're not at peace this morning, fear is probably the culprit. That's why I talk about these things and Jesus did too. Before he died on the cross, he said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." "Troubled" and "afraid" are very similar.

Ever known anyone with a troubled heart? There's a story about the Emperor Augustus who was a man with a troubled heart. The roman empire was in a constant state of war and he had political enemies out to get him and he wasn't sleeping well. He heard about a man in Rome who had some serious problems but despite it all was

sleeping peacefully. The emperor went to the man and offered to buy his bed.

Think about that. He thought he'd sleep better if he changed beds. Ever think that? "Things will be better if I just change jobs, if I move to a better community, if I had a different spouse." But we find out quite often that nothing really changes because *happiness is an inside job*. There's very little on the outside that can ease a troubled heart. Only from within can come the help we need. I want to share some simple points that can, if we allow it, point us towards a place of peace in our hearts.

First of all, ask God for a new perspective. 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.

It reminds me of something the late Tug McGraw once said. He had what he called his "frozen snowball" theory. He said, "If I come in to pitch with the bases loaded, and Willy Stargell is at bat, there's no reason I want to throw the ball. But eventually I have to pitch. So I remind myself that in a few billion years the earth will become a frozen snowball hurtling through space, and nobody's going to care what Willie Stargell did with the bases loaded!" It doesn't mean that moment isn't important. It's just not worth destroying yourself from within over it.

If your heart is troubled today in some way, pray that God will give you a new perspective about your life. Our thinking isn't always as it should be. Our minds

often give us fearful and negative messages based on childhood stuff that are often inappropriate and untrue for our present circumstances.

I want to remind us also to ask God for patience. Sometimes, if we would be a little more patient, problems often take care of themselves. Some of us are afraid to relax and stop worrying as if the very act of worrying keeps bad things from happening. In reality, when we accept fears as facts, we end up not doing our best and we lose our joy.

The late Zig Ziglar once told about someone he knew who adopted a policy he called, “Wait to Worry.” Hey, we put off a lot of things don’t we? So why not put off worrying? The guy found out he was doing his worrying before he had all the facts. So he decided that he was free *to wait to worry*. When he had the facts then he’d have all the information he needed to work out a plan. And when you have a plan, he decided, you don’t have anything to worry about, so he’d stopped worrying. I like that. If you wait, sometimes, the issues will take care of themselves.

Ask God to give you a new perspective and patience. **But most important of all, ask God for more faith. Faith is always part of the answer.** “Don’t worry, believe in God, believe also in me,” Jesus said. It’s gonna be all right. Don’t worry if you’re suffering today. Doesn’t mean its going to be that way forever. Don’t worry if the future isn’t laid out before you perfectly in just the way you want it. Do what’s needed but also wait and allow things to fall into place as God would have it. Don’t

worry! Find the joy set before you for this day. Love those around you and appreciate them, even if they have faults, which they do. And listen for God's voice speaking to us in all things. Even in the challenges...it's going to be all right. Much of life and what others do is out of our direct control and the only remedy is to let it go and trust God.

The disciples were troubled because Jesus said he was leaving but he said, "don't be troubled." "I won't forget you." So why do we feel that we're on the edge a disaster, sometimes? Do we really have legitimate reasons to have no hope? We have a path to go in all circumstances and that path is the way, the truth, and the life. So, let's live today as if we were in a partnership with God because we are, if we have faith. He said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." Amen.