**Trust**

John 14:1-11

The disciples had a lot of reasons to be troubled as they gathered with Jesus for the Passover meal and prepared for his departure. So he spoke directly to their fears and worries:

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.” John 14:1

This is our key message today as we start **a new series called ABIDE**. How can we stay closely connected with the Lord Jesus? How can we make HIM our dwelling place, the focal point of our hearts and minds and lives? ***It begins with TRUST.***

And trust is the antidote to fear.

***The disciples were understandably worried*** that Jesus kept saying he was leaving, along with the mysterious line, “Where I am going you cannot come.” Peter protested, why can’t I come with you? I would die for you! To which Jesus replied: “Right there Pete. Before the rooster crows you will deny three times that you even know me.”

Take a minute right now and consider what is troubling YOUR heart right now:

**What is troubling your heart right now?**

* Change, loss, uncertainty, waiting, failure, betrayal, opposition…

Write it down in your worship program or make a note on your phone or in the YouVersion App.

**[1 MINUTE WRITING]**

Just like the disciples, there are plenty of reasons for us to worry and stress, but Jesus says to us today:

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.” John 14:1

Don’t worry. Don’t be afraid. ***Trust in the Lord with all your heart.*** Rest in the love of your Good Shepherd. Fix your confidence in the covenant keeping God of Israel. Trust in your heavenly Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus gives us three reasons to trust in God, three reminders about God’s character that make Him supremely worthy of our trust. Conveniently and memorably, they all relate to verse 6 where Jesus says He is the way, the truth and the life. So that is our summary for today:

| **Jesus is:** | **God is:** | **So we can trust Him to:** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The Way | Gracious | Prepare us for Eternity |
| The Truth | Faithful | Come back for us |
| The Life | Generous | Provide for us |

* **Jesus is the WAY to the Father** - the gracious provision of God to prepare us for eternity by forgiving our sins and reconciling us with the holy God of heaven.
* **Jesus is the TRUTH** - the final and faithful revelation of the goodness and glory of God, so we can trust Him to keep His word and come back for us.
* **And Jesus is the LIFE** - the full provision of God for redeemed sinners like you and me; He came to give us life and abundant life at that, both now and forever.

***How can we grow in our FAITH?*** How can we trust God more deeply? We need to know Him more fully. And we know God by looking at Jesus. We see the fullness of the goodness and mercy and love and beaty of God in the face of Christ. The more we know Jesus, the more we know God and the more we TRUST Him. That is how to be less troubled and more peaceful. So let’s dig into this passage and be reminded of how very trustWORTHY our God is!

Trust in God grows from the **Knowledge** of God

* God is **Gracious** - so trust Him to prepare you for **Eternity**

“In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?” John 14:2

I have preached this passage at a dozen or more funerals and I always remind people of **how the Lord Jesus makes things**. Yes, he was a carpenter on earth, but long before that it was Jesus who made this universe - and how did He do it?

***He spoke. “Let there be light.”*** And there was light. All things were made by Jesus and for Jesus. Nothing in our world came into being apart from Him. It was His glorious voice that spoke those words to begin history, scatter stars and planets and galaxies across the cosmos - with a special focus on this one little blue one over here in the Milky Way.

Jesus didn’t need 2,000 years to prepare a place for His people. He could do that with a snap of His fingers or a word of command. “Let there be heaven.” Boom. There is heaven. No. Jesus did not need 2,000 years to build an elaborate heaven for His people. ***He needed 2,000 years to gather a people for His heaven.***

And as he spoke these words in John 14 he wasn’t thinking about heaven, he was thinking about the cross. ***What was the work of preparation Jesus was about to do?*** What was the place Jesus said he was going to that they could not come with? He was going to the cross. He was going into the full experience of God’s wrath and judgment. That was the whole reason for His arrival on earth, to bear the sin of mankind just so that we would not have to go to that place of punishment, suffering and death.

* God is **Gracious** - so trust Him to prepare you for **Eternity**
  + Jesus is the **Way**

“In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?” John 14:2

So the first truth we see about God here is that **He is so gracious** He sent His only Son to die on a cross to bear your sin and mine. That was the only way to prepare us to spend eternity with Him. That’s why Jesus agonized later that night in the garden of Gethsemane asking the Father if there was some other way - if the cup of suffering could pass from Him. But He knew there was no other way, so He prayed, “Not my will, but yours be done.”

***Feel the force of this wonderful promise*** from the Lord Jesus: “I go to prepare a place for you.” Feel how personal that YOU is. It was for YOU that He came to earth; for you that He went to the cross. It was for YOU that He suffered and died. It was for you that He ascended to the Father to intercede on our behalf.

Jesus has done it all - from that moment on the cross when He said, ***“It is finished,”*** (Jn. 19:30) the way into eternal life was open and the place was prepared. That is the fullness of the mercy and grace of God, culminating in a single moment of time.

Can you trust in God? ***Is God worthy of your trust?***

The best way to answer that question is not to look at the challenges and struggles of your life, but to look instead at the cross of Jesus. Sometimes in our pain we may feel like God is not gracious; we may question His goodness and power and love. But when we look to the cross and see all that Jesus suffered for us, we cannot help but ***see and experience the amazing grace of our God and Savior.*** That is the first truth to help us trust in the Lord. God is gracious. Second:

Trust in God grows from the **Knowledge** of God

* God is **Faithful** - so trust Him to come back for **You**

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.” John 14:3

This is the **language of a wedding**. Jesus, our bridegroom, is going away to prepare a place. That was the task of a young man, often to build an addition onto his parents’ house where he would then live with his bride. This building process might take a month or two or more; but when it was completed - ***at an uncertain time*** - the groom would come back and the wedding party would be watching and waiting, with all the wedding supplies ready to go.

Obviously there were no cell phones; no location tracking; no text messages. News spread at walking pace. Maybe the pace of a camel or horse. So as the wedding party, as the bride, you had to live in a state of constant readiness. ***You had to keep watch.*** You had to keep oil ready for your lamps in case the bridegroom returned at night. And, of course, you had to remain faithful and pure - devoted to your betrothed - even if the time dragged on. You trusted that he was coming for you, and that had to be enough.

Think of the gift it was for the disciples that they had these words from Jesus. As - in their minds - ***time dragged on and he was not yet back.*** The burning question for all of them was WHEN? How soon? That was the question in Matthew 24, before the cross and again in Acts 1, after the resurrection. When? Is it now? Lord, are you going to bring in your kingdom and restore all things NOW? Listen to Jesus’ response in Acts 1:

“It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:7-8

It was not for the disciples to know. ***And it’s still not for us to know.*** The Father has fixed the timing by His own authority. And for now, the Son has given us a mission - to represent Him as His witnesses to His grace and faithfulness. Until the whole world has heard the good news. And let’s be clear - there is still a lot of work to do on that little project.

* God is **Faithful** - so trust Him to come back for **You**
  + Jesus is The **Truth**

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.” John 14:3

We can trust Jesus to come back for us because He not only speaks the truth - He IS the Truth. There are several things that God cannot do - but chief among them is lie. ***It is impossible for God to lie*** because truthfulness, integrity and consistency are rooted in His character.

So when Jesus says, “I will come again,” we can know with certainty that He is coming, and it will be soon. This passage happens to be one of the key texts ***for those who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture*** - meaning that Jesus will come FOR the church before the Great Tribulation when pretty much the whole world comes apart. Then after that seven year time of judgment and purification of Israel, Jesus will come back WITH the church for the final judgment.

The context and imagery of ***a groom returning for his bride***; the idea of imminence and the uncertainty of the timing - all fit with the rapture idea that we will be “caught up with the Lord in the air,” when Jesus comes back. And it could be at any moment.

I’ve said numerous times that I land on the other side of that discussion, believing the simpler interpretation of passages like 1 Thessalonians 4 and Revelation 19 - that describe the return of Christ - is a post-tribulation view. Meaning I think Jesus will come back for us **after the great tribulation** and our job is to persevere through increasing persecution and opposition, even though most of us or all of us who remain in that time will be killed for our faith in Jesus.

If we want to put it to a congregational vote ***I will happily vote with the pre-tribbers*** on this one and we can make our wishes plain to the Lord. But I’m afraid the fact that the dates and times are fixed already by the Father’s authority means this one won’t be decided by a vote.

So the timing of Jesus’ return is uncertain - but **the FACT of His return is definite**. When Jesus comes back He will come for us and we will be with Him forever. Our bridegroom is coming for us. So trust in His faithfulness. Trust in His word. ***Our God is a covenant-making, promise-keeping God.***

***So you can hold on a little bit longer.*** You can endure a little bit more. You can continue to hope and pray even if a world leader emerges who forces Christians into hiding and eventually hunts us down and kills us all. Because NOTHING can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

* God is **Faithful** - so trust Him to come back for **You**
  + Jesus is The **Truth**

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?” Romans 8:35

Notice what is not on this list.

* A pulled muscle from your latest pickleball match.
* A bad night of sleep because you ate too much pizza.
* A fight with your husband or wife over which TV program to watch.
* A time in your career when your work isn’t the most fulfilling.

The things we consider “suffering” and tribulation are nothing compared to what believers in persecuted places and times have faced and continue to face. Don’t misunderstand - ***there are more persecuted Christians RIGHT NOW*** than there ever have been on planet earth. That’s who this passage is for - this reminder that no persecution, no weapon, no torture, no form of execution or deprivation can separate us from the love of Christ. There are people who have authority and power to harm your body, kill your loved ones and kill you. But there is no person or demon who has authority over your soul in order to separate you from Jesus. No one.

So we need not fear any person or spirit; any danger or threat; any opposition or persecution - because Jesus has all the authority, and we belong to Him. We can trust Him to protect what matters most - your eternal soul. Once you belong to Jesus, nothing can really harm you again.

Because God is gracious. God is faithful. And one more truth about God to help us trust Him:

Trust in God grows from the **Knowledge** of God

* God is **Generous** - so trust Him to **Provide** for you

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

Not only is Jesus the Way - the Gracious God of salvation…

Not only is Jesus the Truth - the Faithful God of the covenant…

Jesus is the LIFE - the Generous God of overflowing blessings.

In Christ we have **EVERY spiritual blessing**. Once you taste in Jesus ***the bread of life*** you are filled up and your soul is satisfied with His goodness. Once you experience Jesus as ***the fountain of living water***, you never thirst in the same way because your needs are all met in Christ. Once you discover that Jesus is the pearl of great price, the treasure in the field, the greatest news of all time - you trade everything just to have HIM - and find in Him the deepest joy and and greatest fulfillment.

***Do you BELIEVE that Jesus truly is everything you need?*** Do you believe that Jesus has INFINITE joy just in Himself?

C.S. Lewis said it this way:

“He who has God and everything else has no more than he who has God only.” C.S. Lewis

Stop and think about that statement and whether you really believe it to be true.

* If you have God AND a nice house you have no more than if you had God alone.
* If you have God AND a beautiful wife or an adoring husband you have no more than if you had God alone.
* If you have God AND 2.3 well behaved children you have no more than if you had God alone.
* If you have God AND a well paying, fulfilling job you have no more than if you had God alone.
* If you have God AND a million dollars in savings you have no more than if you had God alone. Or one more:
* If you have God AND a healthy, pain-free body you have no more than if you had God alone.
* God is **Generous** - so trust Him to **Provide** for you
  + Jesus is The **Life**

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

So let’s get this clear. We can trust Jesus to provide for us - He is the ultimate Good Shepherd. He knows what we need before we ask. He will give us each day our daily bread.

But the main thing Jesus gives us - **His primary provision - is HIMSELF**. To be connected with Jesus - the true vine - is to be connected with the life and love of God.

* God is most fully revealed in **Jesus**

“If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” John 14:7

Jesus was sent by the Father ***to reveal the fullness of the Godhead to the world***. Jesus is the final WORD of God, the culmination of all of God’s revelation. And that is what we need: to KNOW GOD.

Philip expresses the confusion of all the disciples when he says, “Ok, show us the Father!” So Jesus responds:

* God is most fully revealed in **Jesus**

“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father… Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?” John 14:9-10

This was the crux of the matter 2,000 years ago: for Jewish monotheists to believe that their Messiah had come and He was the Son of God - meaning FULLY GOD, ONE with God. How is God the Father one with God the Son? In the eternal, loving union of the Holy Spirit.

So here is our summary for today:

**Trust in God grows from the Knowledge of God**

| **Jesus is:** | **God is:** | **So we can trust Him to:** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The Way | Gracious | Prepare us for Eternity |
| The Truth | Faithful | Come back for us |
| The Life | Generous | Provide for us |

How can we trust in God even when 100 things are troubling our hearts? ***We need to KNOW God.*** We need to remember the truth of who God is. And thankfully, we can see clearly the grace, faithfulness and generosity of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

If you are troubled right now - if you are struggling to trust in God - look at Jesus.

* If you are troubled by your sin and failure - ***look to Jesus.*** He is gracious to forgive because ***He is the Way*** of salvation, the doorway to the Father.
* If you are troubled by confusion and uncertainty, ***look to Jesus. He is the truth.*** He is faithful to keep all of His promises and He has promised to prepare a place for us and to come back for us so we can be together forever.
* If you are troubled by the worries of this life, ***look to Jesus. He is the LIFE.*** He is the full and final expression of the goodness and generosity of God who has given us everything we need and more in a relationship with His Son.

***Richard Wurmbrand was a Romanian pastor*** who spent over eight years in prison for his faith in Jesus and three of those years in solitary confinement. Part of the torture of the solitary confinement was absolute silence. Even the guards wore soft slippers so their footsteps made no noise. He documented his tortures in the classic 1967 book, *Tortured for Christ* that became a forerunner for the ministry he founded, The Voice of the Martyrs.

<https://israelmyglory.org/article/the-story-of-richard-wurmbrand/>

Richard was born in 1909 in Bucharest, Romania - and was raised Jewish, but became an atheist. He famously said:

“God, I know surely that You do not exist. But if perchance You exist, which I contest, it is not my duty to believe in You; it is Your duty to reveal Yourself to me.” Richard Wurmbrand

God answered this challenge soon after Richard married Sabina, in 1938. They vacationed in a small village where they met **a German carpenter** who had been praying for years for the opportunity to witness to a Jewish person. The carpenter had previously been sick and the only person around, who cared for him, was a Jewish follower of Jesus. Those years of prayer prepared the carpenter for this apparently spontaneous moment when he met a young Jewish couple and handed a Bible to the defiant atheist who had dared to challenge God.

Richard had heard of the Bible before but had never been interested. Suddenly, inexplicably (to him) he felt stirred by the words. And ***the old carpenter explained the story*** of the Jewish people, God’s love and faithfulness through the generations, and the fulfillment of all of His promises in the coming of Jesus, the Messiah.

Not long after, invited to pray all night with a young pastor, Richard felt led to surrender his whole life to Christ. Confused by all the denominations and separation among believers, ***Wurmbrand committed himself to reaching Jewish people*** with the gospel, whatever it might take.

***Then came the Nazis.*** Romania quickly allied with the Nazi regime and began to deport Jews to concentration camps. Richard’s pastor was taken away and killed. Sabina’s parents, two sisters and brothers were taken away and killed. Again and again Richard and Sabina were arrested and beaten. Undaunted they preached to everyone they met - including soldiers and guards - and many came to faith in Jesus.

***After the war came the communists.*** They took over Romania and had a meeting where all religious leaders were forced to renounce their faith in Jesus. Most did. Richard hesitated, knowing the cost of standing up for his faith. Sabina told him, “I will not have a coward for a husband. Wash this stain from the face of Christ.” So Richard stood up and boldly proclaimed his commitment to Jesus, no matter what.

“Did I believe in God? Now the test had come. I was alone. There was no salary to earn, no golden opinions to consider. God offered me only suffering—would I continue to love Him?” **Richard Wurmbrand,** [***In God's Underground***](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/75829)

He was promptly arrested and spent most of the next ***14 years in prison*** - brutally treated. One time the bottoms of his feet were beaten and beaten until all of the skin was gone. The next day they were beaten again until the bones were exposed. He said words could not describe the pain of that torture. Sabina spent three years in a labor camp and their only child, a 9 year old son, had to survive on the streets by himself.

“It was strictly forbidden to preach to other prisoners. It was understood that whoever was caught doing this received a severe beating. A number of us decided to pay the price for the privilege of preaching, so we accepted their [the communists' ] terms. It was a deal; we preached and they beat us. We were happy preaching. They were happy beating us, so everyone was happy.” **Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ***

So Richard and Sabina endured year after year of separation and suffering - trusting completely in God to provide for them both - the strength for each day. As you struggle to trust God this week, hear these words from Pastor Wurmbrand:

“We can feel unworthy that the King of kings attends to such seemingly insignificant details in our lives. Read Matthew 6:25–34. As you think about your last week, thank Jesus for all the needs that He has met.” **Richard Wurmbrand,** [***The Midnight Bride***](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/19062564)

One of the ways Richard coped with his three years in solitary confinement was by preparing a sermon every day and preaching it to his empty cell. His memory was such that he remembered 350 of these messages and was able to preach them later.

Listen to the pastor’s call to rejoice in the Lord:

“There’s always a good reason to rejoice. There is a God in Heaven and in the heart. I had a piece of bread this morning. It was so good! Look now, the sun is shining! And so many here love me! Every day you do not rejoice is a day lost, my son!” **Richard Wurmbrand,** [***In God's Underground***](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/75829)

If the Wurmbrands could find reasons to rejoice even in terrible persecution, can’t we trust in God and rejoice in Jesus this week? How can we cultivate this kind of trust? It comes from KNOWING GOD.

“My brothers and sisters, you also must believe that your lives are clay in the hands of a wonderful Sculptor. He never makes mistakes. If at times He is hard on you, it is because He sometimes has what we could call negative successes. He loses a pawn in order to win the chess game. He loses a battle in order to win a war. He causes his Son to endure suffering in order to save a world. Just trust. Don’t live on another’s messages, but discover the message for which He is molding you.” **Richard Wurmbrand,** [***If Prison Walls Could Speak***](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/745830)

Do you know God this way? Do you know Him as your gracious Savior? Do you know Jesus as your faithful bridegroom? Do you know Jesus as your generous provider?

“Don’t let your heart be troubled today, brothers and sisters. Believe in God. Believe in Jesus.” He is the way, the truth and the life.

Let’s pray.