



guidelines for living

a 5 minute message

February 1, 2018

COMFORT FOR THE TROUBLED HEART

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. John 14:12:1

When the Dutch woman, Corrie ten Boom was a prisoner of the Germans, confined in a concentration camp where most prisoners were executed, there were times when she would say, "Lord Jesus, I know this problem is way too big for you; I'll have to worry about it myself!" Then she would smile and say, "How foolish!" The reality is that we are often confronted with issues that are troubling and we struggle with them as though there is no help from heaven and the burden is much too great for God to do anything about.

When Jesus met with the disciples in the Upper Room, immediately before He was seized by the Romans and condemned to death, He spoke words of peace and comfort to those who celebrated the Passover with Him. He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled..." Pause for a moment and reflect on why they had every reason to be troubled. First, the tide of public opinion had turned against Jesus. He knew that Judas was about to betray him. He realized that Peter was going to deny him three times before dawn that dark night, yet He says, "Don't let your hearts be troubled."

The word that Jesus used was a Greek word, *tarasso*, that meant to be emotionally stressed, thrown into confusion, disturbed by hostile circumstances. The word was used of Galilee when it was churned to a molten frenzy by the wind that blew through the Jordan Valley. The same word was used of King Herod when he learned that wise men had come from the East seeking to find the baby Jesus, convinced that his was a supernatural birth.

Question. Was Jesus ever troubled by circumstances? Yes, at least on one occasion. Remember the little family that often entertained him when he was at Jerusalem--Mary, Martha, and the elder brother, Lazarus? When Mary and Martha both wept bitterly crying out, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died." This was disturbing to Jesus. John records, "When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled." Same words meaning, he was emotionally moved and shared their pain and grief. Why? Because he was incapacitated and could do nothing?" No, Jesus knew he would raise Lazarus from the dead. He was disturbed because he grieved with them, fully realizing He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead.

Fast forward to life today. Are we ever thrown into confusion, emotionally distraught, disturbed by circumstances, feeling that God is either disinterested in what disturbs us, or else He is too weak to do anything about our pain? Yes, many times.



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The New Testament is very clear that God is both aware of our needs, and more than capable of meeting us at the point of our pain. Peter who was present when Jesus told the disciples not to be troubled, later wrote to Jesus' followers and said, "Cast all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you!"

Joseph Scriven was right. What's driving you to despair will either drive you into the asphalt, or drive you to the feet of Jesus, when you cry, "Lord, I just can't handle this." Like a drowning person who fights the one who is trying to rescue Him, we often hesitate to pour out our hearts in prayer to Him who alone can do anything about our distress. Trust Him who alone can drive back the darkness and give you a hope for tomorrow.

Resource reading: 2 Samuel 22