

139. The Gospel of John—14:28-31

“Final Upper Room Exhortations”

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
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As we have been saying, John Chapters 13 through 16 constitutes Jesus’ final teaching before His crucifixion—His ‘farewell address’ if you will.

In this final address to His disciples,

He wants to comfort their hearts in the moment—but also to prepare their hearts for the future.

So, He opens Chapter 14 with the words, **“Let not your heart be troubled”**—an admonition He repeats again at the end of verse 27— **“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”**

As I said last week, it’s interesting and revealing that the Lord didn’t say to these eleven disciples that were in the upper room that night observing the Passover with Him—**“Let not your hearts (plural) be troubled...”**—rather He said, **“Let not your heart (singular) be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”**

This week at our small group meeting, some in the group said that their Bibles (ESV, NIV and even the Amplified Version) translated it **“hearts”** and not **“heart”**.

This prompted me to check out the Greek in my Bible program and sure enough—it is in the *singular*—**“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”**

As I said last time, the Holy Spirit writing through John had a purpose in using the *singular* instead of the *plural*—and ***I believe it was to communicate to us that God doesn’t love us or minister to us as a group—He loves us and ministers to us as individuals.***

>>> Parents—if your family is made up of 2 or more children, together they make up your one family—but you love each child individually and relate to them as individuals because that’s what they are. There is nothing as special as spending time with and ministering to your children—**one on one** (of course this would also apply to you couples that have only one child as well).

Nothing communicates to them just how special they are to you as when you take them aside personally and individually for a talk or a walk or for some other activity where it is just you and that child—alone. Nothing ministers to a child’s heart how much you love them as when you take the time to treat them as an individual—a special and unique person.

The same is true with God.

Certainly, He loves *all* of His children—and together we all make up the family of God.

But there is something very special and even deeply powerful when He treats us as individuals

—not simply as *“faceless members of the divine collective”*—but as individuals that He died for, saved and now cherishes as individual sons and daughters.

In a small way, on the night before He was to lay down His life for those in that upper room (and for all believers down through the centuries), those who loved Him and whom He loved with all of His heart—He wanted to communicate to each of them that they were special to Him and that He was concerned for their welfare *individually*.

He didn't want any of them to face the future with a heart full of fear—and so He simply said, “**Don't let your heart be filled with anxiety and fear.**”—speaking to them as individuals.

I repeat all of this from last week to say once again that—you are all precious to God separately and personally.

In fact, you are so precious to Him that He takes the time to number the hairs on each of your heads (Matthew 10:30—Elaborate).

His Word says that His thoughts toward you are so many that, like the stars in heavens or the grains of sand on all of the beaches in the world—they cannot be numbered for the magnitude of them.

Now, some of you here this morning might be thinking to yourself—“*Easy for Jesus to say... 'don't let your heart be anxious or fearful'—you don't know what I'm going through—how can I do that.*”

But as we've already said when we first started looking at this Chapter, the statement “**Let not your heart be troubled**”—is a *command* in the Greek.

REFLECTION: In what ways does God demonstrate to us, how precious we are to Him?

As we said when we looked at that Command in verse 1—
God's commandments are God's enablement's.

Jesus prefaced His command to not be fearful with regard to what was coming—with the promise:

John 14:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Last week we devoted an entire message to the subject of peace—entitled “**Jesus Peace!**” based off of John 14:27.

At that time, we looked at Philippians 4:6-7:

Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be

made known to God;⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The ‘**peace of God**’ is the *birthright* of every child of God—but it isn’t automatic once you get saved—we have our part in obtaining it. First of all, **by bringing our anxieties and fears to God is prayer** (Philippians 4:6)—and then:

1 Peter 5:7 (AMP)

⁷ Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns...on Him, for He cares for you affectionately *and* cares about you watchfully.

So, God cares and wants to give us peace—but we must ‘cast’ our anxieties and worries onto to Him and stop trying to carry them on our shoulders.

Isaiah 26:3 (NKJV)

³ You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose mind is stayed on You*, Because he trusts in You.

To experience this peace, you need to have your thoughts (your mind) “*stayed*” (fixed) or **focused on God**—because you trust Him and have absolute confidence in Him and His promises to you.

Hebrews 12:2 (NLT2)

² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith...

The reason Christians sink into hopelessness and despair when confronted with a seemingly impossible problem or circumstance is because—they take their eyes off of Jesus!

If Peter had kept his eyes on the Jesus while walking on the Sea of Galilee instead of taking them off of Jesus and focusing on the storm—he would never have sunk. (Relate to us)

How do we keep our eyes on Jesus during the storms of life?—by continuing to **focus on the promises of God in His Word** (remember Jesus is the Word—John 1:1-2)

John 14:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming *back* to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

One author commented on this verse—

“If the disciples had been more mature in their love for Jesus, they would have been glad for His departure. But their love was still selfish at this point. Jesus was in His humiliation on earth, but by going back to the Father He would be exalted in glory...”

I think of our loved ones who walked with Jesus and are now gone to be with the Lord. Why do we weep? If we love them, we would rejoice because they’ve gone to the Father. That’s what Jesus said, ‘If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced. I told you I’m going to the Father—Why should you weep over that?’

We weep because we’re going to miss them. We weep because they have given such beautiful input into our lives, we’re going to miss that. They’ve loved us. They’ve accepted us. And they’ve added so much to us, enhanced our lives by their love and by their friendship. We’re going to miss that. And thus, we sorrow—but we don’t sorrow as those who have no hope. We sorrow because we’re thinking about ourselves and what we have

lost. And so, when we think of what they've gained there in the presence of the Lord, if we loved them, we would rejoice.

So often when a young person is killed in an accident, we say, 'Oh what a shame. His whole life was in front of him.' If he's walking with Jesus, his whole eternity is in front of him, not in the corruption of this world. He's not going to have to go through the sorrows and the turmoils of this world. If you loved him, you would rejoice.

Again, Jesus assured them that they would see Him again (John 14:28). Why rejoice because He returned to the Father? Because His return made possible His wonderful intercessory ministry on our behalf, our great High Priest in heaven (Hebrews 2:17–18; 4:14–16). We have the Spirit within us, the Savior above us, and the Word before us! What tremendous resources for peace!"

REFLECTION: What must Christians do to experience the Peace of God?

Jesus returning to the Father would have great benefits for Him—but also for us as well (His disciples).

John 14:12 (NKJV)

¹² "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, **the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.**

What did Jesus mean when He said that His disciples would do *greater* works than He did—how is that possible? I mean, Jesus walked on water. He cast out demons. He opened the eyes of the blind and healed the lame. He feed thousands of people with a few scraps of food—He even raised the dead!

- How would it be possible for Jesus' disciples to do greater works than that?!
- How would it be possible for us as His disciples to ever top what Jesus did?!

Well, we aren't going to 'top' what Jesus did—and that's not what He's promising here.

He didn't mean we would do *greater* works in the sense of "more sensational" works (you can't get more sensational than raising the dead!)—He was talking about greater works in the sense of 'scope' or 'magnitude'.

When Jesus said, "**My Father is greater than I.**" (verse 28), there are groups that take Jesus' words to mean—"I am a lesser god than my Father"—this is known as the "Arian Heresy."

Arias taught that Jesus was a created being—that He was greater than a mere mortal man but less than Almighty God (This is the heresy the Jehovah's Witnesses have embraced).

But as we saw when we first started studying John's gospel—he opened his gospel by telling us that the true Jesus—wasn't a created being. John was very clear in telling us that the true Jesus has always and eternally existed as God and that He isn't *less* than God—He is equal with Almighty Jehovah God:

John 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Greek literally says, “...and the Word was toward God”.

The idea being presented is that—the Word (Jesus) was *toward* God in the sense of being “*face to face with; eye to eye with; on the same level with*”—or in other words, equal with God. Jesus is not just a *mighty* god but something less than *Almighty* Jehovah God—He is and always has been equal with Almighty God—after all, He is the Second Person of the Trinity.

Again, this refutes Arian and Jehovah Witness heresy concerning Christ.

Groups like the Jehovah Witnesses try to tell us that Jesus never claimed to be equal with Jehovah God (God the Father as we know Him)—however, that is simply not true.

This was in fact the hallmark of His earthly ministry—going around proclaiming His equality with His Heavenly Father—

John 5:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making [*Gk. is ‘continually making’*] Himself equal with God.

The equality of Jesus with Almighty God is a doctrine that is stated throughout the New Testament.

The Jehovah Witnesses challenge this by bringing up John 14:28—

John 14:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming *back* to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

This they say proves that Jesus is a lesser god and not equal with Jehovah God.

>>> When Jesus said, “*My Father is greater than I*” - He was speaking in terms of His **earthly mission**—

Philippians 2:5-8 (NLT)

⁶ Though he [*Jesus*] was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷ Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross.

Hebrews 2:9 (NLT2)

⁹ What we do see is Jesus, who was given a position “a little lower than the angels”; and because he suffered death for us, he is now “crowned with glory and honor.” Yes, by God’s grace, Jesus tasted death for everyone.

When Jesus said, “*My Father is greater than I*”—He was speaking only in terms of *authority*.

In other words, **He had voluntarily placed Himself under His Father’s authority to fulfill the mission of the redemption of mankind**—the mission the Father had sent Him to earth to accomplish.

The Lord Jesus was not saying that His Father in heaven was *greater* than Him in essence and being—in that regard they are both equal because they are both God (part of the Godhead).

The equality of Jesus with God is an essential doctrine for salvation:

John 8:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

You'll notice that the word "**He**" in verse 24 is in italics—which means it's not there in the Greek but was added by the translators in an effort to help us to understand what Jesus was talking about. Only here it doesn't help to *clarify* Jesus' meaning here—it clouds it!

What Jesus really said was, "**Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins [go to hell]...if you do not believe that I am—you will die in your sins."**

One of **the essential doctrines that a person must believe** if they are going to be forgiven of their sins and go to heaven is that Jesus is Jehovah God (or 'Yahweh')—**the Great I AM!**

John 14:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.

REFLECTION: Explain why it is an "essential" Christian doctrine to believe Jesus is equal to God the Father?

What is the Lord Jesus saying here?—He is talking about **prophecy**—and in this context, He was prophesying of His coming death, resurrection and eventual ascension back to His Father in heaven.

But let me stop here and say this—**prophecy is the single greatest proof that the Bible you have in your lap this morning—is in fact the Word of the Living God!** That is really the *purpose* for prophesy in the Bible—it's one of the strongest apologetics we have that the Bible is inspired by God.

It is proof that the God of the Bible is the transcendent God Who dwells outside of time and space (the physical universe) in the eternal spiritual realm.

To prove this truth about Himself, that He is outside of time, and that His Word is "***an integrated message system that has come to us from outside our time domain***" as one of my all-time favorite Bible teachers, Chuck Missler, used to like to say—**He has filled His Word with prophecy (27%).**

Listen, because God is outside of time—He knows what is coming in the future and has revealed future events in the pages of Scripture to prove He is God, and the Bible is His Word:

Isaiah 42:8-9 (NLT2)

⁸ "I am the LORD; that is my name!...⁹ Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will prophesy again. I will tell you the future before it happens."

Isaiah 46:9-10 (NLT2)

⁹ I am God, and there is none like me. ¹⁰ Only I can tell you the future before it even happens...

Isaiah 41:22-23 (NLT2)

²² "Let them [lifeless idols] try to tell us what happened long ago so that we may consider the evidence. Or let them tell us what the future holds, so we can know what's going to happen. ²³ Yes, tell us what will occur in the days ahead. Then we will know you are gods. In fact, do anything—good or bad! Do something that will amaze and frighten us.

Jesus had predicted His death and resurrection many times (Mark 8:31-32; 9:31)—and yet He is telling His disciples here in John 14:29 one more time what was coming so that—after their initial shock, it would greatly strengthen their faith—

John 2:19-22 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body. ²² **Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.**

REFLECTION: The Bible is 27% "prophecy", explain why Biblical prophecy is so important?

Jesus was no victim, and He wanted His disciples to know and understand that—

John 10:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

John 14:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ **I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.**

His teaching time was now limited because—at this very moment Satan, "**the ruler of this world**" was working through Judas Iscariot to come and arrest Jesus and put Him on trial so as to convict and kill Him.

The statement that Satan has "**nothing in Me**" was Jesus' way of saying that He didn't have a fallen sin nature (passed down to Him from Adam) for Satan to work through to defeat Jesus. Man's fallen nature in all of us

passed down to us through Adam, gives the devil a *beachhead* from which to tempt us, attack us—and ultimately to defeat us.

>>> Because Jesus didn't have an earthly father to pass down to Him a fallen nature—Satan couldn't tempt Him from within, so he had to do it outwardly as he did in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:1-11)

John 14:31 (NKJV)

³¹ But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do...

Jesus showed His love for the Father (and for the world) by voluntarily going to the cross—He did not hide or flee—He willingly laid down His life, as He said in John 10: “No one takes My life from My by force—I lay it down freely for the sheep.”

At this point Jesus and His disciples (minus Judas) got up and left the upper room—“**Arise, let us go from here.**” (John 14:31b)

REFLECTION: What is the significance of believing: Jesus was involuntarily crucified versus voluntarily going to the Cross?

As they are now walking through the streets of Jerusalem towards the Mount of Olives where Jesus will spend several hours in prayer before He is arrested and put on trial—the Lord stops at one point and gives to His disciples that night (and to all His disciples throughout history) one of the greatest discourses He ever taught—the vine and branches discourse!

We will start looking at this incredible discourse starting next week!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).