

“Troubled”

“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this purpose I have come to this hour” John 12:27.

Who in your life concerns you when they look troubled? Which people stand out to you that you know when they’re troubled you should be too? We have indicators in this life of when we should be troubled and many times those indicators are other people we respect and trust. Who are your trouble indicators?

Children may know that the trouble is serious when their parents or teachers can’t hide their troubled looks anymore. I remember being in school on 9/11 and seeing a change in some of my teachers’ faces. I didn’t know what was going on at that time but the change of their complexions indicated that there was real trouble and the lockdown wasn’t a practice drill. Have you ever experienced something like this?

Patients’ loved ones get troubled when their loved ones’ medical staff appear troubled. I’ll never forget the troubling tension in the air surrounding the medical staff that cared for Madeline and Everett the day he was born. Everett’s heart rate kept dropping so much during the delivery that we had to transfer from the Birth Center to the hospital with a NICU team in the room on standby. Can some of you relate to this kind of situation?

Even at work, people take cues from their leaders. If those leaders are concerned, then all the other workers know that something serious is happening. Several years here at Emmanuel, have certainly provided some moments like these for me. When one of our leaders gets the call about a sudden and unexpected family tragedy for a member, you can hear the troubling change in their tone of voice and even sometimes see the troubled look in their eyes. How about for you? Who have been your trouble indicators?

Even for Christians there are trouble indicators too. We might think of pastors or trusted spiritual mentors and counselors. Yet for the Christian, the biggest trouble indicator really is Jesus. If Jesus is troubled shouldn’t His followers be too? Maybe we don’t often think of Jesus as a trouble indicator. He’s our Savior, our Friend and our Brother, but a trouble indicator, perhaps not so much? But as our Savior, Friend, Brother, the one who is truly God and truly man, might we do well to be concerned whenever Jesus talks about being troubled even so many years later?

Once again, we hear Jesus’ words, **“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this purpose I have come to this hour”** (John 12:27). Hearing this statement on the heels of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem even now should stand out to us. Jesus just entered Israel’s capital city as the people’s choice for king! They had the victor palm branches waving. They loudly cheered Hosanna. Trouble seemed like the furthest thing from this scene. Yet trouble was on Jesus’ mind. He could feel it in His soul.

The difference between that joyous crowd and Jesus is noteworthy. The moment when this crowd likely thinks that their earthly troubles are all gone, that Roman oppression is ending and the status of the nation of Israel will be restored is also the same moment that Jesus as true man is deeply troubled. This comparison really serves to show how woefully unaware sinful, fallen human beings are of the real trouble that they truly are in! This wasn’t lost, however, on the perfect man, Jesus.

The trouble Jesus was feeling wasn’t merely because of Roman oppression. Neither was this trouble because Jesus was on the religious leaders’ bad side. Jesus knew that He was going to experience the full weight of humanity’s separation from God. Now was the time for God’s wrath to be unleashed. Now was the time for the full punishment of sin to be felt. Now was the time to be troubled because the God who kills and wounds was getting ready to do just that to Him because He was

bearing the sins of the entire world on His shoulders. Jesus was troubled because He knew the grave state that sin put the world in.

Although we're many years removed from these events, we too, like that Palm Sunday crowd, continue to be woefully unaware of the real trouble that we are in. We're aware of the temporal troubles around us, the sins of others and how they impact and trouble our own lives. Yet, we struggle to see and comprehend the eternal troubles our own sins put us in. We don't start our service confessing the sins of others and the troubles they make for us, we confess our own sins that ought to be troubling us! Our personal sins we say deserve God's temporal and eternal punishment!

The trouble we hear Jesus talk about today, that's our trouble! The way He feels is something we should be relating to because our sins and troubles are the burden He carried. Our actions have earned this soul-shaking trouble before God. Jesus' actions didn't earn this. We should be responsible for bearing the trouble of our own sin, Jesus shouldn't be responsible. The troubles of our sin ought to leave us helpless and hopeless because there's nothing we can do about them. Jesus should have marched right back out of Jerusalem to save Himself all this trouble!

However, Jesus' didn't run in the face of trouble, even trouble that He didn't create. Jesus didn't freeze in despair overwhelmed by the trouble He inherited. Jesus wasn't looking to escape this trouble but instead said, **“And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this purpose I have come to this hour”** (*John 12:27b*). Jesus was determined to move through this trouble for our sake. Yes, He would be marched back outside Jerusalem not to save Himself from all the trouble, but to save us from all the trouble we deserve.

And through Jesus' death and resurrection, we see clearly that the God who troubles comfortable and secure sinners, who kills and wounds, even His only, begotten Son for our sake, is also the God who truly is compassionate toward broken and contrite sinners, who makes alive and heals. In Jesus' death and resurrection, our eternal troubles are eternally removed. In Jesus, we have peace, as He says, **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid”** (*John 14:27*).

My dear friends in Christ as we journey through Holy Week, I won't sugar coat it. Part of the reason we reflect and remember this week is because our sins are a serious matter. They ought to trouble us! They aren't to be ignored, downplayed or excused no matter how insignificant or common the world would like us to claim those sinful actions really are. The weight of our sins troubled our Lord and Savior and this week will be the clearest reminder of the fullness of that weight and the trouble we really are in.

However, thanks be to Jesus, our story doesn't end in the trouble we deserve. This is the other reason we reflect and remember this week because during this week we are most clearly told how Jesus has taken on this trouble for us. In place of our trouble, Jesus has put Easter peace that seriously takes care of sins. May our Holy Week experience this year be troubled as we ponder and lament our own sins and by God's grace through Jesus' death and resurrection may the Holy Spirit grant us tremendous peace and comfort of our own sins forgiven and the personal gift of life eternal, all for Jesus' sake.

As we continue in this Holy Week I invite you to join me in prayer. Almighty God, we ask that in the midst of our failures and weaknesses we may be restored through the passion and intercession of Jesus. By Your grace, allow us to journey through this holy time of our Lord's passion clinging to the forgiveness of our sins won for us by Jesus' suffering and death and with our hearts fixed with steadfast faith in Jesus that we fear not the power of sin, death, and the devil. All this we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor Dan