

Session 1 Cultivating a Vibrant Heart Even In Times of Great Trouble

“Let me drink from the river of Your pleasures as I delight in Your beauty” (Ps. 36:8; 37:4)

I. REVIEW AND OVERVIEW OF JOHN 13-17

- A. John 13-17 is the greatest teaching by the greatest teacher in human history. John 13-17 is a most important passage for God’s people in the generation in which Jesus returns, when so many will be greatly troubled by dark emotions such as fear, shame, bitterness, grief, etc. Jesus made a most amazing statement in John 15:11—He promised to strengthen His people with supernatural joy to enable them to have a vibrant heart that overcomes sin and dark emotions. Receiving His joy includes having a deep sense of well-being and confidence in His good leadership (Rom. 8:28).
¹¹***“These things I have spoken...that My joy may remain in you and...may be full.” (Jn. 15:11)***
- B. My goal in this session is to mention 12 categories of pressure (that Jesus prophesied) in order to stir up urgency to engage with Him in a deep way—with confidence in His promise to strengthen us with His joy. Jesus is returning for a mature Bride that is filled with joy (Rev. 19:7). There will be a generation that walks in joy in the face of the unprecedented pressures in the end times (Mt. 24:21).
²¹***Then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been..., no, nor ever shall be. (Mt. 24:21)***
- C. The overarching theme of John 13-17 is found in John 14:1 where Jesus commanded the disciples *not to allow trouble to dominate their heart*. There are human dynamics involved as indicated by His command to “*let not...*” Jesus promised to release His peace (14:27) and joy (15:11) to any who continue to obey—“*the only 3 commands*” in John 13-17—to *love, serve* (13:14, 34), and *not allow trouble to dominate them* by believing (14:1) and abiding in Him and love (15:4, 9).
¹***Let not your heart be troubled...believe also in Me...²⁷Peace I leave with you... (Jn. 14:1, 27)***
- D. If we do our part in replacing the thoughts that trouble our heart with His truths and promises then Jesus will do His part in imparting His joy and peace that is stronger than our troubled emotions.
- E. The multifaceted message that Jesus taught in John 13-17 will equip His disciples to walk in mature joy (15:11), and peace (16:33), and not stumble or fall away (16:1) even in times of great troubles. He spoke these truths to a young leadership team to prepare them to thrive spiritually even in the face of great pressures—similar pressures will be experienced in the end-time Church (Mt. 24).
³³***“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace...” (Jn. 16:33)***
¹***“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not...stumble [fall away ESV].” (Jn. 16:1)***
- F. In John 13-17, Jesus gives us line-upon-line insight into God’s heart (about 25 truths and promises) that equips us to overcome painful and dangerous emotions that entrap many believers. His joy and peace are promised to us on His terms—by abiding in Him with a spirit of obedience (Jn. 15:5-10). As we obey 14:1, His peace guards our heart (Phil. 4:7). Abiding in Him (talking to God, etc.) includes saying, “*Thank You. Show me more*”—related to each truth and promise in John 13-17.
⁶***Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer...with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God...will guard your hearts and minds... (Phil. 4:6-7)***

II. JESUS' PROPHECY TWO DAYS EARLIER IS PART OF THE CONTEXT OF JOHN 13-17

- A. In John 13 and Matthew 24, Jesus specifically highlighted the increase of *fear* with despair from societal crisis and persecution, *grief* from the death of loved ones, *shame* from personal failure, and *bitterness* from betrayal—as troubles the early apostles and the end-time Church would face.
- B. To better understand what Jesus spoke on Thursday night (Jn. 13-17), we go back to what He said on Tuesday (Mt. 24-25)—two days before the Last Supper (Jn. 13). He prophesied racial conflicts, pestilences, betrayals, martyrdom, the siege of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:2), and more in Matthew 24. Mark 13 and Luke 21 report the same message that Jesus gave in Matthew 24 with more details. Notice that Jesus called them “*to be not troubled*” (Mt. 24:6) and then repeated it in John 14:1.
- ²Jesus said to them, “...not one stone [of the temple] shall be left here upon another...
⁶You will hear of wars and rumors of war. See that you are not troubled...⁷For nation [ethnos] will rise against nation...there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes...⁹They will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you...¹⁰Then many will...betray one another...²¹Then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world... (Mt. 24:2-10, 21)*
- ¹²...delivering you to...prisons...¹⁶You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives...
²⁰Jerusalem [will be] surrounded by armies...²⁴They will...be led away captive... (Lk. 21:12-24)*
- C. Jesus continued in the same conversation in His last two messages—in Matthew 24 and John 13-17. These two messages must be read together to better understand them. The prophetic awareness of the troubles in Matthew 24 is meant to inspire urgency in us to go deep in God and live empowered by His joy as set forth in John 13-17. If we only see the troubles without engaging deeply with Him we may feel hopeless. If we only read John 13-17 we may lack “prophetic urgency” (Mt. 24).
- D. The prophesied trouble that the early Church faced (Mt. 24) is a template for the troubles that the end-time Church will face. God will surely empower the end-time Church to triumph with joy in the face of the troubles seen in Matthew 24 as He did the early Church. God's main purpose in allowing this trouble is to cause the global body of Christ to mature in love as prepared Bride (Rev. 19:7).

III. 12 REASONS WHY THE APOSTLES WERE TROUBLED

- A. Jesus knew about all the troubles that His people would face and boldly promised joy that prevails. Many believers are confused why they do not have joy and vibrant heart but spiritual dullness, etc.
- B. *Trouble #1—grief over the death of Jesus*: Jesus reminded them that He was going to be taken from them in death (13:36). He told that on three other occasions (Mt. 16:21-23; 17:22-23; 20:17-19). He told them on Tuesday that some would be killed (Mt. 24:9). Most of the apostles were martyred.
- ²²...unless those days [Great Tribulation] were shortened, no flesh would be saved... (Mt. 24:22)*
1. There will be unprecedented numbers of martyrs in end times (Dan. 7:21, 25; 11:33-35; Mt. 24:22; Rev. 6:9-11; 13:7, 15; 17:6; 18:24). The end-time saints will overcome Satan spiritually with joy by remaining loyal in their love to Jesus even unto death (Rev. 12:11).
 2. We grieve over the death of loved ones but not as those who have no hope (1 Thes. 4:13).

- C. *Trouble #2—shame over personal failure:* Jesus prophesied that Peter would deny Him (13:38), the very next thing He said was His command that they *not let trouble dominate their heart* (14:1). Later, Jesus prophesied that “all of them” would stumble that night (Mt. 26:31). They all felt the crisis of shame that night. He kindly set up the recovery of Peter even before he faced the crisis. Jesus knew that when people are “troubled by shame” they are hindered in loving and obeying Him.
- ³⁸***Jesus answered him [Peter]...the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.***
¹***“Let not your heart be troubled...believe also in Me. (Jn. 13:38-14:1)***
- ³⁰***... they went to the Mount of Olives.*** ³¹***Jesus said... “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night...³⁴before the rooster crows, [Peter] will deny Me three times.” (Mt. 26:30-34)***
- D. *Trouble #3—the bitterness of betrayal:* Judas betrayed Jesus as well as the close-knit apostolic team that trusted him to be their treasurer (Jn. 12:6). Jesus felt the pain of this betrayal as did the apostles. On Tuesday, Jesus told them that they would be betrayed by loved ones (Mt. 24:10; Lk. 21:16). Betrayal is one of most painful experiences because it occurs in context to trusted relationships.
- ²¹***...He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “...one of you will betray Me.” (Jn. 13:21)***
¹⁶***“You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends...” (Lk. 21:16)***
- E. *Trouble #4—societal crisis:* The first century church endured crises that included ethnic conflicts, pestilence, earthquakes, etc. (Mt. 24:4-12; Lk. 21:8-24). These troubles will be seen in the end times along with deception or destructive false narratives confirmed with miracles (Mt. 24:4, 5, 11, 24).
- ⁷***“Nation [ethnos] will rise against nation...there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes...¹¹Then many false prophets will...deceive many...¹²lawlessness will abound...²⁴False christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive...” (Mt. 24:7-12, 24)***
- F. *Trouble #5—persecution:* The early church experienced physical, social, and economic persecution. Some were killed, beaten, or imprisoned (Mt. 24:9; Lk. 21:12; Jn 16:2). Some endured economic and/or social persecution, being branded as haters, racist, bigots, and religious fanatics who were dangerous to society. The end-time Church worldwide will also endure these types of persecution.
- ⁹***“Then they will...kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.” (Mt. 24:9)***
¹²***“...they will lay their hands on you [beatings]...delivering you to...prisons...” (Lk. 21:12)***
- G. *Trouble #6—a crisis in Jerusalem:* Jerusalem and the temple were burned (Mt. 24:2; Lk. 21:20-24). In end times, the Lord will cause all the nations to “decide” (Joel 3:14) to stand for or against His leadership in context to oppressing Israel (Joel 3:1-8). The end-time Church will stand with Israel even as they are attacked (Zech. 14:2), and thus will provoke Israel to jealousy (Rom. 11:11).
- ²***Jesus said, “...not one stone [of the temple] shall be left here upon another...” (Mt. 24:2)***
²⁰***“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies...²³For there will be great distress...upon this people. ²⁴They will fall by...the sword and be led away captive into all nations.” (Lk. 21:20-24)***
¹***“...when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, ²I will also gather all nations...and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of [oppressing]...Israel...¹⁴Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. (Joel 3:1-2, 14)***

- H. *Trouble #7—military conflicts and civil wars:* In the end times, many nations will be shaken by violent conflicts (Mt. 24:7; Lk. 21:10, 25). This will lead to the breakdown of their government, law enforcement, banking systems, and supply chains resulting in many people being displaced which leads to an increase in sex trafficking, kidnapping, and armed gangs stealing food, etc.
¹⁰*Nation will rise against nation...²⁵...on the earth distress of nations... (Lk. 21:10, 25)*
- I. *Trouble #8—natural disasters:* pestilence, earthquakes, famines, droughts, hurricanes, tsunamis, forest fires, volcanos, floods, etc. (Mt. 24:7; Lk. 21:11, 25). These troubles will increase more as we get closer to Jesus' return. Pressure causes "conversations to change" with God and people, etc.
⁷*"And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places." (Mt. 24:7)*
¹¹*"There will be great earthquakes...famines and pestilences...²⁵the sea and the waves roaring..." (Lk. 21:11, 25)*
- J. *Trouble #9—the delay of God's promises:* There was a delay in the release of the fullness of God's prophetic promises to them personally and nationally. They believed Jesus was the Son of Man who would rule all the nations (Dan. 7:14). On Tuesday, He described "all nations gathering to Him," thus being under His leadership (Mt. 25:32). He just told them that they would sit on thrones ruling Israel with Him (Lk. 22:30). He died without freeing them from the oppression of the Romans.
³¹*"When the Son of Man...will sit on the throne of His glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate [evaluate/judge] them..." (Mt. 25:31-32)*
²⁹*And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, ³⁰that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Lk. 22:29-30)*
- K. *Trouble #10—government oppression:* The government of the Roman Empire oppressed the early Church (Rev 2:10-13) and they also oppressed Israel especially from AD 66-70 (Lk. 19:44). The end-time Church will face oppression from the Antichrist's government (Rev. 13:7, 15-16).
¹⁰*"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. The devil is about to throw some of you into prison...be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life..." (Rev 2:10)*
⁷*It was granted to him [the Antichrist] to make war with the saints and to overcome [kill] them...*
¹⁵*that the image of the beast should...cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed...¹⁷that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark... (Rev. 13:7, 15-16)*
- L. *Trouble #11—fearful cosmic sights:* There will be signs in the heavens, etc. The Lord will shake the nations knowing that trouble causes conversations to change. People ask God different questions—they pray and plan differently, and have different conversations in their family gatherings, etc.
¹¹*"...there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven...²⁵There will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars...with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring..." (Lk. 21:11, 25)*
⁶*"...I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; ⁷and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations [Jesus]..." says the LORD.... (Hag. 2:6-7)*

M. *Trouble #12—greatly heightened workload* (Mt. 24:7; Jn. 14:12): Jesus was wearied by the crowds that pressed Him for healing (Mt. 8:16-24; Lk 5:18-20). Paul wrote of his weariness (2 Cor. 11:27). There is a much greater demand on God's servants in seasons when God's power is manifest in greater ways. In revivals throughout history, the primary vessels who were used by God commonly struggled with exhaustion—this also true of those who help in times of natural, civil, or military crisis when the social infrastructure breaks down (Mt. 24:7, earthquakes, wars, etc.). Some who have had a strong healing ministry have testified that crowds pursuing them in front of their home, in hotel lobbies, or at airports, etc. They needed to be strengthened by God and His joy (Neh. 8:10).

⁶*Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well [in Samaria]. (Jn. 4:6)*

²³*“...I...in labors more abundant...²⁷in weariness...in sleeplessness often...” (2 Cor. 11:23, 27)*

IV. RECEIVING GOD'S JOY & PEACE—7 TRUTHS THAT JESUS EMPHASIZED

A. We can cultivate a vibrant heart filled with God's joy and peace even in times of great trouble. We obey the command “to not allow trouble to dominate our heart” by engaging in conversation with Jesus saying, “*Thank You, show me more!*” specifically related to each promise and truth in John 13-17, etc. This command in 14:1 is not a reference to the initial faith we exercise to become born again. The disciples were already saved. They were already “clean” or forgiven (13:10; 15:3).

¹*“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God [a fact], believe also in Me [a command].” (Jn. 14:1)*

1. Many in Israel including the Pharisees believed in the *God of Moses* without having ever seen Him (Jn. 5:37). They had *faith in an invisible God* (1 Tim. 6:16).
2. Jesus called them to also believe in Him *in this way*—knowing that, after He died, He would be invisible to His people. He was calling the disciples to believe in Him when they could no longer see Him with their physical eyes similarly to the way they had believed in the Father.

B. What do we do when our heart is troubled? We must realign our mind to agree with God's Word. Our emotions (and thus our character) are transformed as we bring our mind into agreement with biblical truths and promises. We can change our mind, but only God can change our emotions.

²*“...be transformed [emotionally] by the renewing of your mind...” (Rom. 12:2)*

C. *Truth #1—Jesus will return to be with us in the Father's house forever* (14:2-3). This was His first promise. The Father's house speaks of the New Jerusalem (heaven). This promise gave them a new perspective of life. Few approach overcoming a troubled heart by focusing on the New Jerusalem.

²*In My Father's house are many mansions...³I will come again and receive you to Myself...” (Jn. 14:2-3)*

1. He will come back to bring us the Father's house—this highlights how dear we are to Him.
2. In John 13-17, Jesus applied His promise to “come to them” in three ways. First, in speaking of His second coming (14:3), next by dwelling in them through the Spirit who was given to them at Pentecost (14:18, 23, 26), and in appearing to them after His resurrection (16:16-17).

- D. *Truth #2—God’s love for God and His people.* From all eternity the Father has loved the Son and the Spirit, and They have loved Him. They have great pleasure in Their relationship with One Another and with their redeemed family—this makes God’s family secure forever.
⁹***“As the Father loved Me, I have loved you; abide in [live in and focus on] My love.” (Jn. 15:9)***
²³***“...that the world may know that You...have loved them as You have loved Me.” (Jn. 17:23)***
- E. *Truth #3—We can engage in a deep relationship with God in this age (14:23; 15:5).* We are called to abide in Him or participate in the Trinitarian conversation as highlighted in 14:7-27 and 15:1-10.
⁵***“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me...bears much fruit...” (Jn. 15:5)***
²³***“If anyone loves Me...We will come to him and make Our home with him.” (Jn. 14:23)***
- F. *Truth #4—He supernaturally empowers us now by the indwelling Spirit (Jn. 14:16, 26; 16:13-15).* Jesus gave us the Spirit to teach and direct us, and to anoint our words and hands to impact others.
- G. *Truth #5—Access to supernatural resources through Spirit-led prayer as God supplies our needs.* We are urged to ask God for provision, to change our circumstances, to open doors of blessing, etc.
¹³***“Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified...” (Jn. 14:13)***
¹⁹***“My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ...” (Phil. 4:19)***
- H. *Truth #6—How Jesus responded to the apostles when they stumbled.* On the night that Peter and the others stumbled (Mt. 26:31), He called them clean (13:10; 15:3), He prayed for them and assured Peter that he would recover and be used by God (Lk. 22:31-32); He affirmed His love for them (15:9), encouraged them (15:8), and called them His friends (15:15). In Jesus’ third appearance to them (Jn. 20:26; 21:1, 14) He confirmed Peter’s calling to leadership—to feed the flock (Jn. 21:17).
³¹***The Lord said, “Simon...Satan has asked for you...³²I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” (Lk. 22:31-32)***
⁸***“...that you bear much fruit...⁹I have loved you...¹⁵I have called you friends...” (Jn. 15:8-9, 15)***
¹⁷***He [Jesus] said to him [Peter] the third time...“Feed My sheep.” (Jn. 21:17)***
- I. *Truth #7—The joy of eternal rewards for being faithful to Jesus and enduring persecution.* It is glorious that weak human beings—by grace—can bear fruit that remains forever (15:16). It strengthens us with joy to know that we can do small things that God remembers and rewards. Rewards are about how Jesus feels about how we loved Him in small ways throughout this life.
¹⁶***“...I appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain...” (Jn. 15:16)***
²¹***His Lord said...‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.’ (Mt. 25:21)***
⁴²***“Whoever gives one...a cup of cold water...he shall by no means lose his reward. (Mt. 10:42)***
²²***“Blessed are you when men hate you...and revile you...for the Son of Man’s sake.***
²³***Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For your reward is great in heaven...” (Lk. 6:22-23)***