

We are examining seven bold claims of Jesus Christ which begin with the words, "I Am." Today I want to take you to an upper room where Jesus is huddled with his discouraged disciples who were suffering from a condition known as spiritual myocardial infarction. They are having an attack of the heart. Today we are going to learn how to survive a heart attack. John 14 begins with the famous words of Jesus - you remember them, "Let not your cardiac ischemia lead to myocardial infarction." Or in non-medical terms, "Let not your heart be troubled." The word "troubled," is literally "stirred up." Like the water in the pool of Bethesda (5:4). There is no doubt the disciples were stirred up.

1. They were troubled by feelings of betrayal... 13:21. The betrayal of Judas was exposed right there at the table...tension. Someone sharing a meal will turn Him over to His executioners. Who?

2. They were troubled by feelings of abandonment... 13:33. I wonder if the disciples felt betrayed by Jesus. "I thought we could count on you. Some Messiah you turned out to be. Now you're leaving us?" We have all experienced the pain of a relationship that has come to an end. For some, it is the loneliness of widowhood. For others, the death of a spouse would be easier to bear than the divorce you have experienced. You never contemplated a future without that person and now you feel abandoned. That's how the disciples must have felt. But if that's not enough...

3. They were troubled by feelings of inadequacy. At least Peter was... 13:36-38. Peter's confident assertion is dealt a serious blow by Jesus' stern rebuke. Peter is blissfully ignorant of his own weakness. (Mk. 14:29 he does it again after this).

We are all painfully aware of our inadequacies. In 2004, Bill Counts passed the baton with these words, "Gary, don't screw up," That's like saying, "Don't breathe." Impossible. We are painfully aware of our inconsistencies or at least we should be. Have you ever felt like a fraud? Do you confront your failures or do you just try to forget about them and move on? The real test of a disciple is not how well we keep the rules or how much scripture we memorize. Discipleship is measured by our recognition and recovery rate. The more mature the disciple the faster we recognize our sin and recover from it through confession. Like Peter, all of us have noble intentions but, like Peter, we also have feet of clay.

What troubles you? What "stirs you up?" Fear of the future? Addiction? Tension in your family or at work? More importantly, what do you do about it? Jesus doesn't tell these guys, "Don't worry, be happy." He doesn't pat them on the head and say,

“There, there now, it will be all right.” He props up their sagging spirits with some triumphant truths. We can recover from a heart attack and strengthen our troubled hearts if we take His advice.

1. Trust confidently. (v. 1) To believe is to transfer your trust from yourself to Jesus. No amount of human self-effort will calm your troubled heart. That is why Jesus was so firm with Peter. It is also why He washed Peter’s feet... 13:6-8. Trusting in your own self effort is a serious matter. Your own self-assurance can keep you out of heaven. If I can get to heaven on my own efforts, I will never surrender completely to Christ. “Believe in God” because He is trustworthy. God’s word was right about Jesus’ coming, about His betrayal, His life, death, and resurrection. God’s word is right about how we get home. “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” John 5:24.

2. Pack lightly. (vv. 2-4) Jesus is preparing a place for you and this ain’t it! Everything you and I have ever wanted escapes us in this life because it is waiting for us in another place. While He is preparing a place for you He is preparing you for that place. He will allow us to experience the disappointment of not getting what we want or of getting what we want only to find it isn’t really what we want. Our earthly desires serve as sign posts pointing us toward another world. heaven

“Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not mean the universe is a fraud...earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it, but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing.” C. S. Lewis

How long has he been preparing a place for us? A couple thousand years? If you can create the universe in 6 days, what can you create in 2,000 years? This must be some place! My Great Uncle Paul who had nothing in this life, looked forward to heaven. He liked to demonstrate the superiority of his translation of the Bible to mine. My translation said, “In my Father’s house are many rooms.” His said “mansions.” He used to say, “See, when you die you’re going to get a room. When I die, I’m going to get a mansion.” It’s hard to argue with such airtight logic! My

Uncle Paul could be satisfied with a room in this life because he knew a mansion awaited him in the next.

3. Follow closely. (vv. 5-6). Thomas represents an earth-bound perspective. He may have been wondering if Jesus was going into hiding. Maybe He has a stealthy palace somewhere like Herod the Great. “We don’t even know the destination. How can we know how to get there?”

Jesus says, “I am the way.” My dad loved road trips. Every other year we drove from the west coast to the east coast. Imagine my father handing me the keys and saying, “Son, here are the keys. You get us there.” I would have said, “But dad, I don’t know the way. How will we get there?” We got in the car and we were not worried because we knew that dad knew the way. We never even wondered if we would really get there. He had come from there and he knew the way back. Your Father knows the way home. Jesus said, “I am the way.”

He also says, “I am the truth.” Talk about politically incorrect statements! Suggest that Jesus is THE way and THE truth and you will be accused of being “intolerant,” narrow-minded,” “arrogant,” “hateful,” and “bigoted.” It seems like the greatest atrocity in today’s culture is to suggest that truth is absolute. People are willing to tolerate any viewpoint, except one that claims to be uniquely true. I recently read that only 12% of Americans claim that their religion is the only true faith? We are told to keep an open mind. Truth is a matter of opinion. I am so glad that when I had my heart attack the doctor didn’t hand me a menu of treatment options – “we have chemo, radiation, and a whole range of pain relievers. We can give you a massage or put you in traction. We don’t want to impose our views on you or ‘shove our views down your throat.’ Tell us what you think we should do.” I would be dead! And there are people dying every day because they don’t know THE way and they are not told THE truth.

4. Pray boldly. Philip’s request in v. 8 demonstrates a common confusion about the nature of our triune God...vv. 7-8. One of the most difficult doctrines in the Bible is the trinity. Many reject the idea of God in three persons because they say the word “trinity” is not in the Bible. There are a lot of words that are not in the Bible, “atheism, incarnation, monotheism.” These words are not in the Bible either but no one would dispute that the concepts are there. Let me just say a couple of things about the nature of God that are important to remember:

a. A Trinitarian view of God is foundational to historic orthodox Christianity. Any sect that claims to be “Christian” but denies the trinity is not in agreement with historic orthodox Christianity and should be rejected as such.

b. The use of “Father” and “Son” is accommodated language. Since we have no frame of reference for one God in three persons Jesus used terms that we are familiar with to help us grasp the relationship between the persons of the godhead. God the Father revealed Himself in Jesus the Son so that we could know Him more fully. Jesus is the exact representation of God. Use of the term “abide” or “dwell” in v. 10 conveys a mutual indwelling between God and Jesus.

e. Jesus proved His oneness with the Father by His works...vv. 9-12. No mere man could do the things Jesus did. God the Father did these works through Jesus the Son. Jesus promised that His disciples would do “greater works” than He did. Later in this chapter He promises to send the Holy Spirit to be in His disciples. The Holy Spirit will extend the work of Jesus through His followers. The book of Acts is a record of how these works took place through the apostles. Church history shows that these apostolic miracles died with the apostles after the church was established.

We can pray boldly in Jesus’ name because God wants to glorify Himself...vv. 13-14. Jesus did not say, “Ask for anything and it will be given to you.” He did not issue a blank check to the disciples. When He says, “Ask in Jesus’ name” He means that we are to ask with an awareness of God’s nature and purpose. Whatever we ask for should be consistent with what Jesus would ask for.

As we come to the Lord’s table, let’s pray boldly in Jesus’ name.

Are you lost? Jesus is the way.

Are you confused? Jesus is the truth.

Are you walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Jesus is the life.