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Series: The Gospel of John
Message: Blessed Assurance

Transcribed Message
October 4, 2026
John 14:1-3

Well, there are two men that you may or may not be familiar with. The first one's name is Stephen Langston, and the second one is Robert Esteny. Stephen and Robert have an impact on you every day when you read your Bible. In 1227, Stephen Langston decided that it would be helpful to add chapters to the Bible. And so, he went through the entire Bible, and he added chapter divisions throughout all of Scripture. That was published as the English Wycliffe Bible. It was the first Bible to have chapters. Well, then Robert Esteny came along, and in 1555 he said, hey, we've got chapters, I'm going to add verses to these chapters. And so the Geneva Bible, published a little bit after that, was the first English Bible that had chapters and verses. Now, what that means to us this morning and what that means to us every day is when I say, let's turn to John 14, you know where to go. It would take us 10 or 15 minutes to find our way around some of the places that we would be going to in Scripture, perhaps, if we didn't have any chapters and verses.

So, first of all, we're thankful that these guys did this amazing work. But then we're also going to say, and we're going to say this about Stephen, we're going to say, Stephen Langston, what in the world were you thinking when you made a chapter division between John 13:38 and John 14:1? Because the reality is, there is just a continuing flow of conversation that carries on between John 13:38 and on into 14:1. So, let's look there and turn there this morning again. This conversation that really begins in the 13th chapter, goes all the way through to the end of that chapter, and then picks up in chapter 14 and verse 1 is really a conversation for anybody who ever has an anxious heart. Anybody who ever has an anxious, troubled heart, these verses are going to speak to us this morning. I'm pretty sure that's all of us, isn't it? So, this, I think, will be helpful. John 14-1-3 this morning, we want to see that trusting God is the divine antidote for a troubled heart. If you're discouraged, this is the prescription that God has for you and for me this morning.

The setting, we do see, this just is a continuation of chapter 13, right? We see it in the disciple's emotional state. Just go back with me and review this week, this passion week. We're on Thursday night in the upper room, but it started, remember, on Sunday, and it started in the most dramatic of ways possible, right? It starts with the triumphal entry, and so this week starts on as high a note as it could possibly begin, with the crowds thronging and lifting Hosanna and praising God and proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah. So, it starts on the highest note possible. Somewhere along the way in this week, we come to Thursday, and we know as the disciples were making their way to the upper room, John doesn't tell us this, but the other gospel writers do, that they got into this conversation about who's the greatest. So, they've just seen Jesus as the greatest, right, in the triumphal entry. Now, they start talking about, well, okay, if Jesus is number one, who's number two among all of us?

And then, of course, we had that remarkable experience of the washing of their feet by Jesus, something that had to be such a contrast between their conversation and the display of the great love and service of Jesus to them. Jesus then steps into the conversation about a betrayal, a betrayal. They can't even comprehend this. They don't even know who it is. He's one of them, but they don't have a sense of who that might be.

And then, Jesus ends that conversation by talking about Peter, the leader among them, their spokesman. He's going to deny Jesus not once, not twice, but three times. So, that gives us something of the sense of where these men are. Remember, they are the ones who decided three years ago that they were going to leave everything behind and go and follow Jesus. And so, for three years, they have been dependent upon Him, and they've been with Him nearly every moment of every day. To make all this even as bad as it could possibly be, He's announced to them that He's leaving, and they're staying. So, that's this context.

When we come to the 14th chapter, it isn't a new beginning. It's a continuing thing, and the emotional state of these men is nothing less than just being shattered. What do we see then? We come to the words of Jesus, and Jesus starts off this 14th chapter, let not your hearts be troubled. Just think about that for a minute. And the first thing I would want us to

understand and realize is that Jesus knew trouble. Jesus knew trouble. We know that. We saw that back in chapter 11. As He stood outside of the tomb of Lazarus, John tells us that His heart was troubled with all that He was dealing with. He said it Himself in the 12th chapter and the 27th verse. As He contemplated the cross, Jesus spoke of His heart being troubled. So, now we have this before us, don't we?

How do we differentiate between Jesus saying to the 11, how do we differentiate between Jesus saying to the 11 to decide, let not your heart be troubled? When John has already told us on several occasions that Jesus' own heart has been troubled. And I think the answer, of course, is that we live in a fallen world. And Jesus chose, as the Son of God, to enter this fallen world. He chose to become the God-Man. He chose to experience in His humanity what the writer of Hebrews says all of us experience, and yet He, of course, experienced all those things without sin. But still, He chose to come to this fallen world, and He chose to interact with fallen people, and He chose to see every day of His life the effects and the impact of sin on the lives of people.

And He's moved, and He's troubled in His heart about all those things, isn't He? But here's the thing. It's what you do with the trouble, isn't it? It's what you do with the anxiety. Here's the reality. We live in a fallen world. We're all going to experience anxiety of heart probably every day of our life. There's going to be something that we read, something that we hear, something that we watch on the news, something that comes into our life that's going to disturb us, it's going to trouble us, it's going to cause us potentially to be anxious. That's just the reality. We don't need to apologize for that. That's not sin, but it's what we do with those anxious thoughts then, right? It's what we do in response to those realities and those circumstances, and that's exactly what we're going to see here. If they lead us to worry, and if they lead us to fear, and if they lead us to discouragement, and if they lead us to despair, well, then we've chosen the wrong path. But if they, in fact, move us in triumphant faith to trust God and walk with God, then that's the totally different response, and so look at the second point.

How we think determines how we act. How we think determines how we act. Jesus says to them, stop being troubled. That is a present tense imperative. That's a command,

right? He's telling them, I know you're troubled. All the things we just listed out were all sources of anxiety and fear and worry. They were making that choice, weren't they? But Jesus is saying to them now, stop that.

Let not your heart be troubled. The word "heart" in the Bible is the most general word for all our immaterial being. That is to say, the heart can refer to our will. The heart can refer to our emotions. The heart can refer to our mind. So, it's a very broad general word. It just kind of captures all of it, right? I'm troubled in my heart. I'm troubled in my mind. I'm troubled in my emotions. That's what Jesus is speaking to here. It's the same thing the writer of Proverbs says in the 23rd chapter in verse 7 when he says, as a person thinks in their heart, so they are. So, if you are anxious of heart, you're going to be an anxious person. If you're fearful, that's just the reality. When we think those ways, and we think those ways, we act those ways.

When God gives a command, He gives us a way to obey that command, doesn't He? How we think determines how we act. And this isn't positive thinking. This isn't just looking at life through a multi-colored lens so that the world looks beautiful all the time. That's not what this is about. This is a call to think so that we can act in the right way. And the only way we can think the right way is when we are thinking the right thoughts about God. And that's how God would have us see this work out in our life.

So, the solution to a troubled heart, let's look at that together. We know, first of all, and He's going to give us three things to hold on to. Three things that we can walk out of here and remember today and every day of this coming week when those anxious thoughts come, when those troublesome thoughts come, three things that we can hold on to. The first one is we know Jesus, and Jesus is God. Look at verse 1. Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me. That's a pretty good way to start, isn't it? You've got an anxious heart. You know Jesus, and Jesus is God. That's the start here that Jesus gives to us.

Now, what does that mean? Here's the kind of fascinating thing. This phrase, believe in God, believe also in Me. Now, obviously the word "believe" is used two times, and it's used two times in such a way that it can be understood, get this, in four different

ways. The Greek text doesn't give us a clear sense of whether these verbs are indicatives, whether they're declarations, whether they're facts, or whether they're commands and imperatives.

So, look at this with me, just quickly, look at these four ways we could understand this. We could understand this, first of all, as Jesus giving a command and then stating a fact. And if that were the case, it would be, I command you to believe in God, because I know you believe in Me. Now, that would be an odd thing for Jesus to say to these 11 men who grew up within Judaism, who clearly believed in God. So, I don't think that doesn't seem like a good choice, does it?

The second one could be, there's two commands here. There's a command to believe in God, and a command to believe in Him, and that could make sense. Probably, again, not as strong, because these men did believe in God. They were raised in Judaism, and they understood Jehovah God as the God who created the world.

The third way to say it is, it could be a fact and a fact, just a declaration. Just Jesus saying, you are believing in God, and you are believing in Me. I don't think that fits the context as well as this fourth one.

When you look at this fourth one, I think it's likely that Jesus is saying to them, believe in God, believe also in Me. I think He is saying, yes, in fact, you believe in God. That's a great starting point, right? You believe in God, now here's the command. You're believing in God, now I want you to also believe in Me.

Now, understand, He's not calling them to a belief regarding salvation. He's already said in this 13th chapter you are all clean, except one of you. So, He already acknowledged that they had believed in Him as their Savior. They were trusting the words that He said, and who He was. But now, of course, He's focused in on what we would call sanctification. They need to believe Him every day, in the sense of trusting Him every day. It's the very same thing that Paul does in Philippians chapter 2 and verse 12, when he says work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. He doesn't mean that you work out your salvation so you can get to heaven. No, he's talking about work out your daily deliverance from anxiety, in our passage, right? From a troubled heart. That's what we have to do.

Every day we have to step into the truth of sanctification, of living out who we are in Christ, right? So, that's what He's challenging them to here. You believe in God, we know that. But you know what? You need to take the next step, and you need to trust Me for all the things that you're worried about, things that are very valid, very real, right? Troubles that we have are very real. Sometimes they're not real, but most of the time they're real, aren't they? We face real challenges, we face real difficulties, we face real worries. That's the case, right? So, it's what Paul says in 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 12, I know who I have believed, and I'm convinced that He's able to keep what I have entrusted to Him, waiting, knowing that He will do that all the way to the very end. It's just the continuing refrain of Scripture. We know all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purposes. That's, I think, what Jesus is saying here. Here is a fact, you believe in God. I want you now to transfer that over to Me in that same way.

So, secondly, what does Jesus affirm in this? Well, He's affirming His deity. Again, here is one of the most consequential statements that Jesus makes, right? It's an affirmation that He is God. You can't say to somebody, you believe in God, now believe in Me in the same way. That's blasphemy. Of course not. Only Jesus could lay claim to this. I am one, He is saying, with God. I am God.

You know, critics of the Bible and skeptics will often say, show me a verse in the Bible where Jesus says, I am God. And, of course, we can't turn to a verse in which Jesus says, quote, I am God, unquote. But we've got the whole Gospel of John that's written to convince us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, right? And we have these kinds of statements where Jesus says, you believe in God? Great. He is the one true God. When you believe in Me, you are also believing in God. It's a declaration of His deity. It's an affirmation of that. To believe and to trust in Him is the same thing as trusting in God. You know Him. You know God. God is sovereign. Jesus is sovereign. God is righteous. Jesus is righteous. God is holy. Jesus is holy. God is omnipotent. Jesus is omnipotent. God is omniscient. Jesus is omniscient. God is omnipresent. Jesus is omnipresent. All of it. Just go down the list, right? God is faithful. Jesus is faithful. All these attributes simply point us to the fact

that to trust in God is to trust in Jesus as God. It's this reciprocating glory that we've seen all the way through John's Gospel between the Father and the Son.

Someone said it like this, trust stops tension. Trust stops tension. Faith checks fear. Faith checks fear. Worship turns our minds from worry. That's one of the beautiful things that we do when we come together, and we lift our voices in praise to God. You can't be worshipping and worrying at the same time. You can't be walking in faith and walking in fear. You can't be trusting and at the same time be all tense and stressed out. So, first thing we do, we know who God is. We know who Jesus is. Jesus is God. That's what we hold on to. When anxious thoughts come, we know Jesus, and we know Jesus is God, and He's in control.

The second thing, Jesus says, we know that Jesus is preparing a place for us. Look at this, verse 2. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go prepare a place for you? So, now He's answering the question, where are you going? That's what they wanted to know, right? I'm leaving you, you're staying. It's going to be okay. Really? We've left all to follow you, and now you're leaving us? Where are you going? And now He tells them, I'm going to prepare a place for you. He calls it his Father's house. His Father's house. What's Jesus talking about? Well, He's talking about heaven. When He taught the disciples to pray, He said, pray like this, our Father who art in heaven. And so, He's simply referencing heaven, isn't He?

The word for "house" is a unique word. It's only used here and in the 14th chapter, just two times in all the Bible. This word "house" is used of heaven. Oftentimes, when the Bible talks about heaven, it talks about heaven as a country. It talks about it as a city. It talks about it as paradise. It talks about it as a place of rest. There are all different kinds of metaphors and imagery for heaven. Here's one that Jesus uses. He says, it's my Father's house.

Here's the reality. We live right now on planet earth as foreigners, right? That's the contrast that I want you to see. We live as foreigners. We live as pilgrims. We live as strangers in this land. That's why we experience trouble. And so, that's why we don't need to be upset with the reality that our lives oftentimes involve difficulty, and involve struggle,

and involve hardship. That's the way it should be, because this isn't our home. We don't belong here. All those things remind us of that, don't they? In sometimes very powerful ways. We're literally living in enemy territory right now, and we need to remember the world isn't our home.

So, for Jesus, what He's saying in this regard, I'm going to prepare a place for you in my Father's house. Jesus sees heaven as a very real place. He sees it as a locality. He sees it as having physicality. It's that real. It's that important to Him that we see it that way. Heaven is not some ethereal, mystic, unknown, you know, whatever out there. No. Jesus says it's real. It's a place. It has a locality, and it has physicality.

So, look at what He says. This place has many rooms, many dwelling places, different translations for this. The King James Version back in 1611 introduced the word mansions. It took the Greek word *monē* here and translated it as mansions. And, of course, that stuck, didn't it? Because we have a lot of songs like, I've got a mansion just over the hillside, right? They're building a mansion for me over there. I almost asked Jeff to have us break out the Audio Adrenaline, *The Big House*, right? With the big, big yard where we play football and all that other stuff.

So, we're seeing this, of course, all through Western eyes, aren't we? I often tease Bonnie, and I say, honey, are you going to let me come and visit you in your big house up in heaven, your mansion? I'll be on the other side of the tracks over there in that little place with one room, and can I come to your mansion? And, of course, she's going to have a mansion because when she gets to heaven, God's going to say to her, oh, Bonnie, you're the one that was married to him. Honey, let me show you this beautiful place I've got ready for you. But it's all through Western eyes, isn't it? We're drawn to these pictures, these images, and here's the reality.

This is to be understood through the Middle Eastern eyes. In the Middle Eastern culture, what would happen is a family would simply add on to their dwelling place. So, as their children grew to adulthood and got married, they would add on to their house. And then another child married, they would add on to their house. I know, again, Bonnie and I, we longed for that opportunity when our adult children would grow and start families that

we would just add on to our home, and all of our children and 16 of our grandchildren, we would all live together in a big, big house. But, you know, city codes just wouldn't allow that.

So, this is the picture. It's not probably so much that this is going to be individual mansions that we're all going to have, but it's probably more of a picture of this huge, expansive place where God just has added on all these rooms. The idea, of course, is there will certainly be room for everyone, but ultimately, as we'll see again in just a little bit, it's not going to be about the place as much as it is about the presence of Christ.

But look at the second part of this. What's Jesus doing? What's Jesus doing? And I probably should rephrase that. I wish later I would have just said, what Jesus has done. Because He says, in my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? I go to prepare a place for you. What does that mean?

Let me suggest a couple things. I don't think it's Jesus working in heaven. I mean, the universe was created in six days. What in the world could Jesus be doing for 2000 plus years adding on rooms to a mansion? In Genesis 1:1 God spoke the world into existence in just the spoken word. I think that the idea that has sometimes been put forward that Jesus has been in heaven for 2000 years working away adding on rooms, I don't know that that's what it is.

I think what he might be saying here instead is this. I'm not going to return when I get finished with all the carpentry work in heaven. Some people actually said, you know when Jesus was a carpenter on earth, of course, it makes sense. He's a carpenter in heaven. No, I don't think that's quite the way it works. But I think maybe it's this. Jesus is working so that we can be in heaven. Or maybe better yet, Jesus has worked so we can be in heaven. I'm returning to my Father's house. I think in this imagery He is taking us to the redemptive journey of the cross. How is it that we get to go to heaven? Because Jesus, God's Son, has prepared the way for us to go. He went to the cross and he did his work on the cross. He made it possible for us to have our sins forgiven. The obstacle for us to get to heaven was sin and Jesus did the work on the cross through his death, through his resurrection,

through his ascension. He prepared the way for us because he's the only way that we could get there. His work on the cross did all that needed to be done. So I like to think of it that way.

Thirdly, we have this. We know Jesus is coming back for us. Jesus is God. We have anxious thoughts. We remind ourselves Jesus is God. I know Jesus and Jesus is God. He's prepared a way for me to be with him forever. Now we know Jesus is coming back for us. Verse three. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. So, the first thing we know is his absence, his departure is not permanent. That had to be a reassuring word to these men. They didn't fully understand I don't think all that was going on there but at least they could hear as they thought back on these words later that his absence was not permanent.

I will come again. Now there's a lot of differing ideas about what that means. I think there's only one that's really viable. Some people say he came back after his resurrection. Well, he did for 50 days, but then he left again. So that doesn't seem to fit. Some said his coming back is the sending of the holy spirit. And of course that is true, but I think there's more here than that. I think it's almost certainly a reference to his coming again. He's going to come again. That's the blessed hope of the believer, isn't it?

We think of that second coming of our Lord and depending on your eschatology, it divides into two parts with first the rapture of the church, which is very likely in view here. And then of course his second coming when he returns to the earth in judgment to bring judgment upon the earth. But in either case he's coming back. And that is the blessed hope that we have, isn't it? The blessed hope that we have is his coming back. The church has looked to that hope for 2000 years now. The church has longed for our Lord's return for some 2000 years. The disciples surely did not understand all of that as Jesus spoke to them that night. But they knew this as they thought about these things later. They knew he promised to come back and that had to be a blessed hope for sure. We know that it was a word of comfort because when Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and he goes through the promise that Jesus is coming again, he says specifically to them (and they were by the way troubled in their heart because their eschatology was kind of messed up) and

he says to them in light of the fact that Jesus is coming again and he's going to catch you up and meet you in the air. He said comfort one another with these words So it's a blessed hope.

But it's also a source of great comfort. It isn't just that it's a motivation, too because in 1 Corinthians 15, the great resurrection chapter when Paul recounts all the truth about the resurrection and all that is going to be involved, he comes to the end of that chapter remember and he says in light of all of this truth let your heart be steadfast. Immovable. Always abounding in the work of the Lord. And then John adds to it and says oh by the way, not only is it the blessed hope, not only do we have this word of comfort, not only is it to motivate us, John says in 1 John chapter 2 that it is to purify us. It purifies us because let me tell you something.

Nothing will purify, nothing will sanctify you more than you thinking about the fact that Jesus could come back today. Every day we live in the light of his presence and every day we live in the light of the possibility of his return. What does that do to you in your walk with God? Well as he says here, it's a hope. It's an encouragement. It's a comfort. It's a motivation and it's a purifier We want to be ready because John says in that same passage in 1 John 2 at the end of that in verse 28, we don't want to be those who shrink at his appearing. Why would we shrink at his appearing? Because we're not walking with him in the way we know we are to be walking with him. We're not walking in obedience. We're not walking in light of the blessed hope. We're not walking in light of the encouraging word. We're not walking in the motivation of living a life for his glory. So all those things of course come into play.

Here's the last thing. We know we will be with Jesus forever. We know we will be with Jesus forever. As great and as indescribable, as incomprehensible as heaven is, and all you have to do is read Revelation 21, right? It just kind of blows our mind to try to take in everything that is being described there. I think that's the whole point. it can't be comprehended. But the greatest thing about heaven isn't going to be the mansions and the rooms and the streets of gold and all of that – which is incredible, right? But it's going to be that we will be in the presence of our Lord, that we will be with Jesus. As has often been

said, heaven is to be in the presence of our Savior. That's certainly true here when Jesus speaks of our eternal destiny. He speaks of a place and he speaks of a person, and he does so to calm our troubled heart.

Let not your heart be troubled. Why not? How not? We live in a world where trouble, just as Jesus is going to say later in this in this Upper Room Discourse, in this world you will have trouble. He tells us that, doesn't he? But when we remember in the light of those troubles that we know Jesus and Jesus is God. He's literally prepared a place a way for us to be with him forever That's God's prescription for a troubled heart and it works every time.

Look at this last thing. What we take away. Nothing will stabilize your faith like believing the promises of God. Nothing will stabilize your faith like receiving, listening to, studying the doctrines of scripture. That's the promise that God has given to us. Read them. Meditate on them. Memorize them. They were given to you by your heavenly Father. God has certainly given us great hope in the midst of the troubles that we face.

It all begins back at verse one. Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. This prescription only works If that in fact is true in your life. If you have believed that Jesus is who he says he is, that he's the Son of God, If you have believed that what he did on the cross he did for you and he did for me. If you believe that, that's all that needed to be done, that there isn't anything else for you and I to do. It doesn't matter how many times we go to church. It doesn't matter how many times we get baptized. It doesn't matter how much money we give to the church. It doesn't matter how kind we are to our neighbor. All those things and many others are so good but when Jesus said on the cross it is finished He meant it's finished. He doesn't want us to try to add anything to what he did. But what he wants from us, what he wants from you, what he wants from me Is that we would simply believe. Trust. Put our faith in him. Turn away from trusting ourselves and trusting our works. Believe that Jesus did everything that needed to be done. When you do that, God forgives your sins and he gives you eternal life with him forever in heaven. My friends, it doesn't get any better than that.

Let's pray. Gracious Father, how we thank you for the word. How we thank you that in the midst of our troubles we have a God who has shown us the prescription for a troubled heart. Lord, we want to hold on to these truths. We want to trust you in the midst of all the things that come into our lives. Father, we want to ask again this morning as we come to this wonderful occasion of baptism that if there is someone listening this morning who has never put their trust in Jesus as their savior, never believed that what Jesus did was enough, Holy Spirit of God, would you open their hearts right now in the quietness of this moment? Give to them faith to believe that what Jesus said is true – true about them that all of us have sinned and come short of your glory. And true about Jesus that he's your Son and that what he did is all that you need to have done. We thank you for your work. In Jesus's name, amen.