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Series: Power of Moments  
Title: The Way Back Home  
Text: John 14:1-6, 16:33; Matthew 11:28, Genesis 3

What are you so anxious about? If I gave you a pen and piece of paper, what would you put down as your top three worries?

Most argue we are living in the most anxious time in U.S. history. Thanks to COVID, an economic collapse, political and social unrest, and threats of existential crisis, 2020 to present-day has been categorized as the most anxious time in U.S. history, followed by the Great Depression of the 1930s. In addition, Gen Z, those who were born between the years of 1997-2012 are described as the most anxious generation in U.S. history.

Take a look at this chart. I found it to be pretty interesting. (*see attachment*)

What do you notice? While we seem to be progressing in our current age, it also seems that our anxiety levels continue to increase with it. Why is that? I am sure we all have our own assumptions for why; but the reality is, whether we like it or not, it's not going to get any better. History is our greatest indicator of the future.

So, what are we to do?

Pick up with me in John 14:1. Let's read it together. *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me."*

The disciples have reached a critical point in their journey. For most of them, they made a risky decision to follow Jesus about three years ago. That meant leaving their jobs, their families, their comfort, and way of life behind to follow the man they believed to be the Jewish Messiah. They invested their entire lives in Jesus, and now He is leaving. I am sure this gave way to some important questions: "Jesus, why are you leaving now? After all we have been through together, why are You abandoning us now? What are we supposed to do next?"

Clearly, from John 14:1, there must have been an anxious weight in the room. Jesus tells them, *"Let not your hearts be troubled."* It would be easy for us, in our English language, to see this as a suggestion; but the way they heard it was not in the form of a suggestion, but as a command. In that room, Jesus tells the disciples He is leaving and then quickly follows it up with the command: "Do not let your hearts be troubled."

This is important, right? Because it seems to indicate that the disciples have a choice. They can either cower in fear and anxiety at His departure, or they can choose to follow His command by refusing to allow their hearts to be intimidated by the situation or to be overcome with turmoil and anxiety.

The antidote? Trust. Again, Jesus commands them to, *"Believe in God; believe also in me."* Virtually all commentators agree that what Jesus is saying here is that we are to fight the worries of the world with trust in God. In this situation, Jesus is saying to His followers, "Don't let your hearts be intimidated by the situation, rather, trust Me. It may not seem like it, you may not be able to see it now, but I have this."

This morning, what are you worried about? Why are you worried about it? What is the core of your worry? Generally speaking, the source of most our worries is loss of control, loss of approval, loss of comfort, or loss of power/authority.

What do all of these have in common? *Me.*

Understand this morning that Jesus' doesn't dismiss the cares and worries of the world, in fact, He promises that we will have them in John 16:33. What Jesus does do, however, is tell us that we fight the cares and worries of the world by trusting that He is in the middle of it, He is in control of it, and He has our back. He writes, *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation. But take heart, I have overcome the world."*

To prove it, He tells them in (John 14) v.2, *"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? And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am going you may be also."*

Of this, DA Carson said, *"Jesus was not in the construction business building buildings and renovating rooms as we might like to picture. Rather, Jesus was in the business of leading people to God."*

Jesus' departure was for the purpose of securing their future. That, while they could not come with Him at that moment, no matter what they were facing in that moment or in the days ahead, their future *with* Him is secure.

This morning, I need you to look right at me. We all have concerns and worries and they are real. Nevertheless, because Jesus left the disciples that night and went to the cross, died, and rose again, no matter what we face on this earth, our future with Him is secure. While it may seem like Jesus abandoned the disciples in their greatest need, He left them to conquer sin

and the grave, thereby winning us ultimate victory and a future, free from all concerns and worries.

I love history. I am fascinated by how different people lived and thought over the course of history. One theme that seems to run through the course of time is our pursuit of one thing: peace. An inner rest of the soul.

I would argue that, at one point in history, humans enjoyed this peace and inner rest of the soul. However, not appreciating what they had, they sought more. Rather than being content with God, trusting Him for every need, they wanted more, and their decision to go their own way not only separated them from God, but separated them from true peace and inner rest they had in God. Genesis 3 tells us that, for the first time, work would be hard, relationships would be difficult, and pain would be a reality.

We don't need to read history books or study world history to know that this is true, that something is off. We see it, we feel it, we experience this separation caused by sin. This is a kind of brokenness that leads to war, disease, natural disasters, pain, death, shame, guilt and inner turmoil that carries a crushing weight. A weight that leaves us empty with no hope for today or tomorrow.

So, what is the answer? We must get back to that place of peace and rest that our souls were designed to enjoy.

Over the course of history, humans have a track record of being creative and innovative. Since the moment we were kicked out of the Garden, humans have been on a conquest to get back to that place of peace and rest. Whether we realize it or not, will admit it or not, this conquest for peace and rest is really a desire to get back to God.

Look at this chart. This chart reveals all the ways we answer the question "How do I find peace and rest in this life?"

Everything listed on this chart, whether good or bad, are things we create or pursue, believing in the end they will bring about peace and rest for our souls. And crazy enough, many of these things have a way of providing peace and rest, *for a time*. Even the good pursuits offer peace and rest, *for a time*. But what we all know to be true is you can have it all and still not be at peace and rest. We know from experience that looking for peace in these things is like a bungee cord - it offers a temporary resemblance of rest and peace, but then pulls you right back to where you started.

In contrast, Jesus tells the disciples that what He is up to is far bigger and greater than they could ever imagine. By His leaving, He is preparing the way back to God, where one day they would return to the Garden, so to speak, a place of eternal peace and inner rest.

To this, Thomas asks a great question in (John 14) v. 5, *“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”* Jesus said to him, *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

Jesus’ answer is profound. He is the ONLY way to God, the truth about God, and offers life in God. The only way back to true peace and inner rest is through Jesus. There is no other way.

Now, this presents a bit of a problem for us, doesn’t it? The problem is that, for a world influenced by relativism, Jesus’ answer doesn’t give an ounce to relativity. He says, “I am THE way, THE truth, and THE life”; NO ONE comes to the Father except through Him.

I find it interesting that people use absolutes statements all the time. We say, “I always...” or “I would never...” but when it comes to answering this question, we reject it. Why is that? Well, it’s simple...

Jesus’ answer to this question is an assault to human pride. His statement contradicts popular opinion that there are multiple ways to God. It contradicts the claim that truth is relative and different for each person. His statement claims truth is not subjective, but there is one objective truth. There is no such thing as your truth vs. my truth. Jesus’ claim rejects the idea that I can get to peace and rest through human empowerment, self-discovery, or reasoning. His statement is a declaration that all other religions or belief systems are false. In a world where relativism allows people to be comfortable without committing to a single belief system, Jesus’ statement forces a decision to either accept Him as the only way or reject His claim entirely.

This is a problem for a prideful heart, because Jesus’ answer rejects the idea that there is anything we can do to gain peace and rest. It can only be attained by surrendering our lives to Jesus – including our concerns and worries - and trusting in Him.

Mathew records this invitation beautifully in Matthew 11:28. He writes, *“Come to me* (Invitation), *all who labor and are heavy laden* (Invite List), *and I will give you rest* (Promise).”

This morning, whether you find yourself in a place where you have never known the peace of Christ, or if you’ve found yourself wandering away into self-made forms of peace, there is a way back to God, but it only goes through Jesus. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is our way back home.

