

Easter V: John 14:1-12: Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled

1. Ylvisaker: "In a series of sermons from the year 1538, Luther has given an exposition of these farewell discourses which is invaluable and which cannot be too highly recommended." They are found in vol. 24 of the American Edition of Luther.
2. The 26th edition of Nestle is preferable to the 25th, especially with reference to vss. 2 and 7.
3. Read Jn. 13:31-38 before you begin working on the text. Jesus had just told them that the Son of Man was about to be glorified in His suffering, death and resurrection and that the disciples would not be able to go where He was going, namely, His suffering and death. He is preparing them. Hitherto they had enjoyed His physical presence but that was coming to an end. He tells them not to be shaken but to love one another as He had loved them. Then Peter asked: "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered that they could not follow now but would do so later. Then Peter promised to follow, but it was a rash promise. And then Jesus predicted Peter's denial.
4. Both Kretzmann and Stoeckhardt quote an ancient commentator who aptly said: "The disciples knew it well, but on this occasion they did not know that they knew it." True. The questions and observations by Peter, 13:36-37, Thomas, 14:5, Philip, 14:8, and Judas, 14:22, seem so silly. But, in moments of great sorrow and stress, we all ask the same questions, make rash promises, and need the comfort of Christ very much.
5. The calmness of Jesus in chapters 14-17 is truly remarkable. He knew precisely what was about to happen. But He shielded His disciples. His words are like placid waters.
6. Vs. 1: The innermost being of the disciples was troubled, more than they really knew, as became evident in the Garden of Gethsemane later. Therefore, Jesus begins by saying: "Quit letting your innermost being be troubled." Then He gives the cure. We take both verbs as imperatives: "Believe --believe." The two verbs do not mean that there are two beliefs, but that they are identical. καὶ means "also". Jesus is saying: "If you bypass Me, you bypass God." The disciples are told not to think of God apart from this man Who is God. At the same time He is saying that He is Very God of Very God. Belief and trust in this man Jesus is belief and trust in God. That is the cure for all worry and trouble. That is the theme for Jesus' entire farewell discourse, chapters 14-16.
7. Vs. 2: Jesus immediately speaks about heaven and eternal life, the goal of faith in Jesus. Heaven is pictured as a house, protection from the elements, a place of rescue, a place necessary for all children. τοῦ πατρὸς is both adjectival, telling us what kind, and possessive, belonging to the Father. μου, genitive of relation, reminds us that Jesus is our Brother. μοναῖ, mansions, staying places. πολλαί, adequate in number. Whether this means that they are also of different kinds, as some have suggested, we know not. εἶσιν, "are", a great certainty. All things of this life will cease to exist. But, forever, there ARE many mansions in the Father's House. Beginning with the words εἰ δὲ μή we have a problem reflected in the Greek text and translations: 1) The punctuation in Nestle 25th without ὅτι is read by AV, NKJV and NIV: "If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." 2) The punctuation in Nestle 25th with ὅτι is read by NEB, AAT and NASB: "If it were not so I should have told you; for I am going there on purpose to prepare a place for you." 3) The punctuation in Nestle 26th is read by RSV and Phillips: "If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" 4) The variant punctuation in Nestle 26th (period, not question mark) is followed by Lenski: "If you had not believed this about the many mansions (as, however, I know that you have), I would have told you (as, however, I have not needed to) that I am going to

prepare a place in these mansions not only for others but in particular also for you." Of these four possibilities, these notes suggest #3 as the correct one: "If there were not many mansions in my Father's house, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" Implied answer: "Of course I would not." Going to the Father to prepare a place for them means His suffering and death. His suffering, death and resurrection is identical to preparing a place for them. Therefore, to deny that there are many mansions in the Father's house would amount to a denial of the efficacy of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. The disciples believed, but sorrow, like tears in the eyes, had clouded their spiritual vision. πορεύομαι means "I am on my way." ἐτοιμάσαι is an effective aorist denoting purpose. τόπον, Jesus uses earthly language to assure each of a portion and place. ὑμῖν is dative of advantage. Jesus is introducing the subject of His suffering and death. Its great and grand purpose is the individual and personal assurance of everlasting life.

8. Vs. 3: καὶ means "furthermore". Jesus elaborates. As Bengel points out, ἔδν does not denote uncertainty. It practically means "when". The truth in the protasis leads to the truth in the apodosis. His going, His suffering and death, amount to preparing a place for each of them. "I am coming again," another futuristic present. καὶ denotes purpose "In order that I will take." Jesus will not abandon His disciples between the crucifixion and everlasting life. He personally will come back and personally take them to Himself. Now comes a ἵνα purpose clause. ὅπου and καὶ "where-also" are correlative and practically means "where-there". The Christian's certainty of spending eternity in the Father's house is no less certain than the fact that Jesus will spend eternity there. Note emphatic ἐγώ. Jesus mentions Himself no less than eighty times in this chapter, all in the interest of His disciples, you and me included. Note emphatic ὑμεῖς. Put your own name there.
9. Vs. 4: ὁδός does not mean Jesus' suffering and death but the Way to the mansions in the Father's house. They had been told time and again. οἴδατε means to know without further information or approval.
10. Vs. 5: Hendriksen says: "Thomas imagined that the Lord was speaking about the way which HE was about to take, whereas Jesus was actually referring to the way THE DISCIPLES must take to reach their destination, as is evident from vs. 6b." Thomas was trying to comprehend the atonement. Because he could not do that, he was befuddled about the way to heaven.
11. Vs. 6: Bengel remarks: "The text has greater force, comprising the sum of the doctrine concerning Jesus Christ. For to the question concerning the way, He answers this, I AM THE WAY; to the question concerning knowledge He answers I AM THE TRUTH; to the question whither, He makes that answer I AM THE LIFE." One of the great "I AM" sentences. ὁδός is used metaphorically, the way to the Father. "Truth" and "life" are literal. Take Jesus away and there is no way to the Father. Take away Jesus and there is no saving truth. Take away Jesus and there is no spiritual life. Natural man is aimless and always on a way of ignorance and total waylessness. He is blind to spiritual saving truth. He is dead in his trespasses and sin. Natural man is a pitiful, miserable, helpless creature. οὐδεὶς rules out all works, worthiness and endeavors of natural man. He cannot approach the Father except through Christ. It is a matter of faith, not reason; it is a matter of what Christ did, not what we do. He is everything. F.C., S.D., Art. XI, Election, paragraphs 66-67, Tappert 627: "We should accordingly consider God's eternal election in Christ, and not outside of or apart from Christ. . . . Thus the entire holy Trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, directs all men to Christ as to the book of life in whom they are to seek the Father's eternal election. For the Father has decreed from eternity that whomever he would save he would save through Christ, as Christ himself says, 'No one comes to the Father but by me'" In other words, if a person wants to know whether or not he is one of God's elect, read Jn. 14:6 to him. If he believes this verse, assure him that he IS a member

of the elect only because of God's grace and mercy in Christ Jesus. However, if he believes he can come to the Father by his own commitment or worthiness, he should plainly be told that he has no assurance.

12. Vs. 7: The reading in Nestle 26th ed. is surely to be preferred to the reading in the 25th ed. The 25th ed. reads: "If you would have known Me, you would know also the Father." This makes no sense and amounts to a reprimand. The 26th ed. reads: "If you have known me, you will know also the Father." The reading in 25th makes it a contrary-to-fact condition. In 26th it is a fact condition. They are to ask themselves whether they have known Jesus. Of course they have. Knowledge of Jesus leads to knowledge of Father. Jesus surely does not mean that there is a gap of time between protasis and apodosis. Note that forms of γινώσκω are used twice. It means "to know with approval from an outside source." Jesus revealed the Father by revealing Himself. Cf. Lk. 10:22. The divinity of Jesus is implicit in this vs. If to know Jesus is to know His Father, Jesus is divine. Look for God nowhere else than in the Person of Christ. Jesus continues: "And from henceforth you know Him (the Father) and have known Him." Jesus looks backwards and forwards. Knowledge of God in Christ is a changeless thing.
13. Vs. 8: Note that Peter (13:36), Thomas (14:5) and Philip, here, begin with Κύριε, Lord. In view of what Jesus had said in vss. 6 and 7, this question staggers us. How could he ask such a question? We make several observations: 1) The disciples were not afraid to admit their ignorance to Jesus. So should we. 2) Knowledge of God does not arise out of man's own reason and strength. We are no better. 3) Evidently Philip was looking for something more tangible than what Jesus had given them in the Word. Are we any better? Philip is saying: "I'll be satisfied if you'll DEMONSTRATE the Father to us."
14. Vs. 9: Now comes a gentle reprimand. τρισούτῳ χρόνῳ, at least three years. If the dative is the correct reading it denotes both extent of time and stresses the time in between. εἶμι means "I have been and still am." καὶ "and yet". Christ is saying: "Haven't I revealed Myself to you?" Of course He had. Jesus adds: "The one who has seen me, has seen the Father." He is not speaking of mere physical sight. He is speaking of the seeing of eye and soul which leads to true spiritual sight. Jesus' enemies remained spiritually blind. Jn. 9:39-41. Jesus says: "How can you say: Show to us the Father?" Does this happen today? Sure does. Christians have flesh. There are times when they think that having Jesus is not sufficient.
15. Vs. 10: An οὐ question which expects an affirmative answer. Note emphatic ἐγὼ. ἐν, used twice, denotes identity of essence. They are two persons in one essence. Now comes a compound sentence. The first speaks of Jesus' utterances. The second speaks of His works, His miracles. Note emphatic ἐγὼ again. λέγω denotes formal speech, λαλῶ denotes characteristic speech. Jesus is identifying His utterances, spoken in His own characteristic way as a human being, with the very utterances of God. δὲ means "furthermore". If ὁ be read after πατῆρ, μένων is substantival and means "who remains in me". If we read as does Nestle, μένων is circumstantial and means: "by remaining in me". The difference is not great. He is again speaking of two persons in one essence. "Performs His works" i.e. His miracles. When Jesus spoke to outsiders He spoke of signs and miracles but when He spoke to His disciples He spoke of His works, things which He would ordinarily and commonly do. Jesus and the Father do not work apart from each other. They have identity of essence, utterances and works.
16. Vs. 11: Note importance of μοι. Note emphatic ἐγὼ again. And note ἐν twice again. Jesus is not putting Philip down. He states and restates. εἰ δὲ μή implies that Philip might still be having doubts.

Jesus is stooping to the problems and doubts of Philip. Note that πιστεύετε is placed at the very beginning and at the very end of this sentence. "If nothing else, look at the very works themselves." They prove the divine character of Jesus. This leads to faith in His utterances. Jesus is not separating faith in His miracles and utterances. He is practically saying: "If you have difficulty believing that I am true God with the Father, look at my miracles. They prove that I am in the Father and that the Father is in Me."

17. Vs. 12: The first four words are a very strong asseveration, frequent in the Gospel of John. "Everyone who believes in Me" allows no exceptions. It includes all believers in Christ Jesus. Jesus is not talking about speaking in tongues or healing the sick because He says "everyone who believes in Me." The charismatics limit it to certain people. Note emphatic ἐγὼ again. The καί in ἐκεῖνος means "also". Note that forms of ποιέω occur three times. It means "perform". καὶ means "and furthermore". "Greater than these works". The ordinary believer in Christ is promised that he will perform works greater than Jesus performed. Can that be? Yes. Jesus worked almost entirely among the Covenant people. Since Pentecost believers have been privileged to send out the message of eternal life in great streams. These are the greater works. Jesus does not say that ordinary believers are greater than He is. He is speaking of their great privilege. Actually, this verse directs us right back to Christ Who has made all this possible by sending the Holy Spirit. ὅτι means "because". It gives the reason of the greater works. Emphatic ἐγὼ again. πρὸς τὸν πατέρα denotes the completion of Jesus' great work, His suffering, death and resurrection. πορεύομαι is futuristic present "I am on my way". The cross and His death are imminent.