

John 14:1-3

Introduction

These verses are rich in precious truth. For centuries they have been dear to Christ's servants in every part of the world. Especially treasured in times of trouble. Brought light to many sick rooms. Cheered many a deathbed. Comforted the mourning. Frequently read at funeral services. When Sir Walter Scott was dying he asked his friend Lockhart to read to him. The reader surveyed the 20,000 volumes along the walls of Scott's costly library. "Which book?" "Need you ask?" The Bible was brought down, and he read to him John 14.

Call to trust

Solemn circumstances under which these words were said. Spoken within 24 hours of the Cross. Christ had given repeated warnings about His death over the preceding months. Then at the Last Supper, He had said that one would betray Him and another would deny Him. Jesus was going to leave them. Where He was going, they were unable to come. Imagine the atmosphere of sorrow, perplexity, confusion, fear and uncertainty gripping their hearts. Therefore Jesus gives these words of assurance.

Trust in God; trust also in me (John 14:1). Despite all appearances, He was not going to fail them or let them down. Things were taking the best course, though they did not understand it now. But one day they would look back and see that what happened was for the best. They could not understand about the Cross and resurrection with ensuing salvation. It may be hard to believe, but they must do so. Trust the Father and trust the Son. Commit the situation and yield themselves to Him. Count on God. They had already done so in the past, and now they needed to go deeper, and have even greater confidence. Instead of being troubled, and quarrelling, Jesus says, "Trust me".

Is there anything better to say to people in trouble, darkness, despair and confusion? Not just to tell them to believe certain facts and doctrines, but yield their will and heart to a living person, and trust Him with the situation, needs, anxieties. Rest in what He is. Make Him their anchor in the storm. Secret of a quiet heart – to cast burden off own shoulders and put it on Him. Submission brings repose. "Trust brings Christ to our side in all His tenderness, greatness and sweetness."

Christ's words are always applicable each year of our lives. We will never reach a point when we are trouble free. No one is exempt. The journey of life will have its ups and downs. "Even the best of Christians may have bitter cups to drink between grace and glory." "Faith in the Lord Jesus is the only sure medicine for the troubled heart... need to be like Peter and look more steadily at Jesus, and less at the winds and waves."

Assurance about heaven

Christ's going away did not mark permanent separation, but preparation for wonderful reunion in better circumstances. Therefore what appeared a calamity was actually a blessing. He stated a general principle, and now He gives assurance about their particular problem, explaining where He is going and what He will be doing there.

In my Father's house are many rooms (John 14:2). Heaven is the Father's house. This Father's home is a place of warmth, security, provision, freedom from care, safety, a place where we are loved for our own sake and not for what people can get out of us, where we are always welcome and never forgotten. The Father's home has many rooms – it is not a place of creeds and religion, or stages of development. But a beautiful and ample dwelling place for all who believe. Not a tenement house with one family to one room, but a beautiful apartment building with ever so many furnished and spacious dwelling places and no over-crowding. No one will be excluded. The weakest and the feeblest can be sure of a welcome. No one will be turned away.

Christ gives us His word this is so. **If it were not so, I would have told you.** He is being absolutely honest; He stakes His honour on what He says. He speaks to us as we would speak to children in reassuring them. He pledges His word.

He is going ahead to get the place prepared. Prepared by His death and His intercession for His people. Everything else will be got ready for our arrival. Nothing will be out of place. It will be all ready for us to take occupation when we arrive. "Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people."

C.f. **The inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf** (Hebrews 6:20). The Greek word used in this verse, προδρομος, is almost the same word used for reconnaissance troops in the Roman army, προδρομοι. They went ahead of everybody else to blaze the trail and ensure it was safe for the rest of the troops to follow. Jesus has gone on ahead, blazed the way to heaven and to God. He is getting ready, therefore it is safe for us to follow in His steps.

There is much we do not know about heaven. There is much we would like to know. But we do know all that we need to know. It is a place, and not just a condition. It is the place where Christ is glorified, where His body is, and where our glorified bodies will be. Many will be there, and there will be more than enough room for those who want to be there. Only the unbeliever and impenitent will be excluded. It will be a permanent place, our eternal abode, and a home of security, happiness and contentment. All of us will be known and expected on arrival. All the family will be there; all the Father's children reunited under one roof, so to speak.

It is the place where God is and where Christ is. **You also may be where I am** (John 14:3). Our Father who loved us and cared for us will be there. Our elder brother who died for us will be there. Many glorious things are beyond our understanding or imagination, but the most important and thrilling thing is that Christ is there, the centre of all, and we will see Him.

*"My knowledge of that life is small;
The eye of faith is dim,*

*But tis enough that Christ knows all
And I shall be with Him.”*

This is a wonderfully reassuring picture. Beyond this life for those who have gone before us in Christ, and for ourselves, is glory, rest, reunion, contentment and, above all, Christ.

Promise of His return

He who is the forerunner and Saviour is going to return as king. **I will come back and take you to be with me** (John 14:3). When will He come back? He comes at great crises of history, and of our own lives; He comes also at death. (Early Christians applied this passage to the death of dear ones, and this verse was often quoted in ancient letters of consolation.) Yet beyond all this, we have the promise of His glorious second coming and return. He is going to come personally to gather all His people. It will be a marriage day, when the bridegroom comes for his bride.

At His return, the dead in Christ will rise, and the living will be wonderfully transformed – being delivered from the frailties of their mortal bodies. Going to be with Christ, to see Him, speak to Him, commune with Him and never be divided from Him. Eternally in His presence, beholding His glory. So we shall be forever with the Lord.

Hold firm to the promise of the Lord’s return. History is going somewhere. It is going to end and climax. He will return to consummate history, wind up affairs of a bankrupt world, hold last assize, and take all His children, the alive and the dead, into the glory of His presence - ransomed, redeemed and resurrected in their bodies.

This is the object of our hope and excitement. **You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand** (Psalm 16:11). We ought to be heavenly-minded, for that is the key to our earthly usefulness. Our hope shall affect all we do and how we do it. Samuel Rutherford was described as a man who had his feet on the ground, his hand to the plough, and his heart in heaven.

Conclusion

There needs to be serious self-examination. How much people miss in this dying world when they do not know God as Father, and Christ as Saviour. How much the believer possesses, even with all weaknesses and crosses we have to bear, we have what the world cannot give or take away. We have a true friend while we live, and a true home when we die.