

John

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Preacher: Delves, Stanley (1897-1978)

- [0 : 00] With the Lord's help and blessing, I will speak from the 14th chapter of the Gospel by John, the first verse.
- Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me.
- The 14th chapter of the Gospel by John, the first verse. Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me.
- This is one of those very tender, affectionate and sympathetic and altogether precious things that the Lord Jesus said to the disciples that same night in which he was betrayed.
- Both the occasion and the spirit in which the Lord spoke these and these other words to his disciples clothed them with a somewhat special sense of sacredness.
- [1 : 31] And this word came to me very sweetly. And perhaps I might just take a minute to speak about it.
- For I take it that you who listen to me and who listen to the Lord's servants constantly must wonder how we get our texts.
- And how we are enabled to be continually speaking before you and other congregations without really running out of anything to say.
- Well, the other night I was reduced very much in my spirit. I had been looking at this word and pondering over it, but I just could not seem to see any way into it.
- And my own spirit became so impoverished, it really seemed as though every spiritual thought and feeling was dried out of me.
- [2 : 40] And I honestly felt that at long last my ministry is drying up. And I went to bed like that. But early the next morning I woke up, my mind being distressed in this way, and this word came to me.
- Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. And without any effort of mine, it began to open up to my understanding.
- And I sensitively felt as though my empty vessel was filling up again. And that there was a springing up in my own heart of life and faith and feeling in this world.
- And I felt, well, perhaps this isn't only for me. Perhaps this is for others as well. And I felt what a good hearing it would be today if this word would cause your hearts to be replenished again with gracious feeling and living faith and spiritual understanding and holy and heavenly comfort.
- And it has encouraged me sometimes, and especially lately, when it has appeared that a word that has been given to me to speak has been intended and conveyed to someone, especially in a special way.
- [4 : 23] Well, I pray the Lord will use my mind and my heart and my voice today to speak this word.
- To speak this word, perhaps, to someone to whom it is especially suitable. Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me.

There are three things, my friends, that make the word of God and of truth invaluable to us and very precious.

And they are these. First of all, the essential truth in the word itself. For there is a depth, a very great depth of truth and meaning and holy substance.

I cannot express it any other way. There is a real substance in the word. And it is, as this is opened up to us and we are led into it believingly, that we feel, well, how invaluable the word of God is to us.

[5 : 51] There is such a certainty, such a fullness, such a reality, such a holiness in the word. It is no light matter, isn't the word of God.

There is nothing superficial in it. Nothing shifty about it. Nothing uncertain. Nothing shallow. It is first, the fullness of truth that there is in the word itself that makes it so invaluable.

And then secondly, there is the suitability of it to our varied cases in varied times of our experience.

For, take this congregation this morning. There may be very varied conditions and feelings of heart and mind.

And also, in our own experience, we come into very varied conditions of mind. Now, the word of God is so good to us because it is suitable.

[7 : 07] A word spoken in due season, how good is it? It isn't only that the word itself is good, but it is good because it is a word in season to us.

It is just the word that we need at that particular time. Because of the condition, we are in different ways then.

The word may be good to others, but it is not so good to us if it does not come where we are. And then, the third thing about the word that makes it so precious to us is not only its essential truth and its suitability to us, but its effectiveness.

Now, if the word is not effective in us, however true it is, and however suitable it is, it still doesn't really do us any good.

You know how it was when Job's comforters tried to help him. They said some very good things, but then they couldn't make them to have any comforting effect upon Job's sorrowful spirit.

[8 : 28] They rather stirred him up than otherwise. Well now, give an application. Then the word conveys what it speaks. And when it conveys what it speaks, then we can say, in very truth, oh what a good, what a blessed word this has been made to me.

Now you'll see how this applies to the text and the circumstances that I've read this morning.

It is in itself a very precious word. And all that follows, for of course it is joined to all that follows, what deep, sacred, holy teaching there is in these words of Jesus Christ.

And you see how suitable it was to the disciples just then. Their hearts were troubled, deeply troubled, and they knew not how they could face the future with the near prospect of the Saviour leaving them.

They were deeply troubled. If the Lord had spoken to them about some things that he had spoken to them before in his ministry, that wouldn't have been suitable that sad night.

[10 : 03] It was comfort then. It was comfort then. Nothing was suitable to them when their hearts were so troubled, but something that would comfort them.

However the Lord might have spoken many great and gracious truths to them that night. It was comfort then. Let not your heart be troubled.

And then there is the application and effect of the word. Now it is true of course that in their case this word does not appear to have immediately given them the comfort.

for their hearts were very much troubled during the next three days. Very much troubled. But the Lord anticipated that the word that he was speaking to them then would not comfort them very much.

Not then. But he said the comforter will come the Holy Spirit he will come when I am gone and he will bring to your remembrance these things that I have spoken to you and that I am speaking to you now.

[11 : 24] He will bring them to your remembrance and then you will feel the comfort. Then you will feel the comfort. And so it was when the Holy Spirit came he did bring these things to their remembrance and he did lead their hearts into the truth of them and he did give them to feel the comfort of them as you may see throughout the rest of their lives and ministry and sufferings and death.

Now the Lord engaged our hearts than to this word this morning. And we may take it along these lines.

First there is the condition their hearts were troubled. I won't just now go into the various things that constitute this trouble of heart.

I will leave that till later. But first you will observe their heart was troubled. Now there is no trouble like heart trouble.

Our minds may have some difficulty over this or that perhaps that may trouble our minds and that's as far as it goes.

[12 : 57] But when trouble gets into the heart when trouble engages the deepest tenderest and most sensitive feelings of which we are capable are that that's trouble that's trouble that's heart trouble and it would be true for me to say that heart trouble is the heart of trouble.

If trouble gets into our heart then it gets into us. As I have said sometimes a storm outside the house the wind and the rain it was outside the house you can hear it you can almost feel it but still you're quiet inside but it's when the wind gets in and the storm then that's another matter.

Now when trouble gets into our heart it's right into us. Now it was like that with the disciples their heart was very troubled.

But then again the Lord Jesus Christ was very understanding and very careful that their hearts although they were so troubled should be comforted.

Now it is a remarkable indication of the exceeding tenderness of his own heart that he should have been so concerned about theirs.

[14 : 44] Because look if their heart was troubled what about his own? What about his own? if the thought of his leaving them filled them with distress what about the garden and its agony?

What about the cross and its curse and pain and shame? What about the cut and all its bitter bitter contents?

that was a heart of trouble to Jesus Christ wasn't it? And yet you see although there was so much more cause of trouble to his heart than there was to theirs yet his heart was for their comfort.

It is not the Lord's will that his dear people should be without comfort. It is not the Lord's will that his people should be without trouble because if it was they wouldn't have any.

The Lord has not so appointed it that his people in following him should pass through this world of sin and sorrow exempted from its troubles.

[16 : 08] He doesn't wall their hearts round with such protection that no trouble can get through into their tender nature. It is the Lord's will that his people should be troubled but it is also his will that they should be comforted.

He is very concerned still for our comfort my friends. From heaven his heart is towards his people on earth with all that fullness of sympathy tenderness understanding compassion and love that ever it was when he walked this sinful this sad world as a man of sorrows in it and he has provided comfort.

What comfort there is for instance in the promise of the Holy Spirit for it is so much the work of the Holy Spirit to comfort that he bears that very designation the comforter when the comforter who is the Holy Spirit will come unto you in my name.

The Holy Spirit is a comforter to us in our troubles. Nothing could comfort us if it was not that the Holy Spirit makes it to have a comforting effect upon our hearts.

And if you look through the epistles carefully you will find how many indications there are that the apostles and disciples were greatly comforted in their afflictions and persecutions.

[18 : 07] And these things are balanced. We might read or think of some who have suffered and that matter living instances of it who have suffered long imprisonments and torture and the like and you might say how ever could I bear such a trial as that.

Then my friends you could bear it just as well as they do if you had the measure of comfort under it that they have. We think of trial without measuring the comfort that the Lord gives under it.

It is the Lord's will that his people should be comforted. And then again looking at this text somewhat first on the surface of it as there is great need of comfort in trouble and as it is the Lord's will that his people should enjoy that comfort so this comfort comes from believing.

Ye believe in God believe also in me and it comes as you perceive more especially through believing in him.

for whatever faith we may have in God abstractly considered as God cannot comfort us to the same degree and in the same way as faith in the Lord Jesus Christ comforts us or at least it is through believing in him that our hearts are comforted if the disciples that sad night could have felt more belief in Jesus Christ although such a heavy trial was about to come on their faith they wouldn't have been so troubled believe in me Jesus said and then your hearts will become fatigued it is certain my friends that unbelief will never be any comfort to anybody how can it be whoever has felt the least degree of consolation through not believing why it necessarily robs them of any possible consolation unbelief adds gloom to the clouds of sorrow always it makes them heavier darker more impenetrable you can never feel a least vestige of comfort if unbelief prevails in your heart and your mind trouble you will have but no comfort under it trial but no support under it distress but no consolation in it if unbelief prevails in the heart you show clearly it is in the text don't you the comfort that the

[21 : 38] Lord would have the disciples to feel must come to them through believing ye believe in God believe also in me it is not of course to be supposed that they had no faith in Jesus Christ they evidently had when the apostle Peter said in those very well known words we believe and are sure that Christ the son of the living God if they didn't believe in Jesus Christ why however could they have spoken in that way for Peter spoke to the rest of them but now I tell you how it is brethren it's one thing to believe when the skies are clear and the mind is not under pressure and darkness and sorrow does not fill one's heart heart is comparatively easy then to believe but when the clouds gather and the sorrows come and the trials press and the future looks so uncertain and so dark ah then it's another matter to believe as the

Lord Jesus said to the disciples when they were so ready to profess their belief in him he said do ye now believe behold the hour cometh when ye shall be scattered and I shall be alone will you believe then you believe now and the Lord knew that their faith was genuine but he said will you believe when you see me forsaken when you see me apprehended when you see me scourged when you see me hung on hang on the cross will you believe me then that's what he may you believe in God believe also in me he would encourage them to believe in their darkest hours it isn't that we have less faith when we seem not able to believe not really it's only that our faith is subjected to tests and trials the plain truth is this my brethren when things are fairly easy with us we haven't got as much faith as we think we have and when things are very heavy and it seems hard to believe we've got more faith than we think we have when our faith is not subject to tests and trials we seem to believe strongly enough ah do we now believe have you as much faith as you think you have and then when it all seems at its lowest edge well then Lord you might say if only I could believe if only I could believe and you've got more faith than you think you have now I must really try to come more into the substance of the text let not your heart be troubled ye believe in God believe also in me

I haven't much time left this morning now but we will take this first point first ye believe in God well now that was the foundation of things with them ye believe in God now to believe in God is of course the first and fundamental principle in our faith at all if a man doesn't believe in God how can he believe in anything else how can he believe in Jesus Christ how can he believe in the gospel if he doesn't first believe in God that's fundamental ye believe in God the Lord Jesus could then speak to them not as unbelievers but as believers in God but direct their faith to a distinct exercise of it with regard to himself you believe in God already well then believe in me for it is not believing in God as such that will give you comfort believe in me and it's a great thing to believe in God really with a real faith a nominal faith perhaps maybe even in these days more prevalent than we realise

I believe there is with many a nominal belief that there is a God they're not wholly given up to atheism but to believe in God from the heart is another matter for such a belief in God will really affect a person's spirit and life and conduct I'm afraid there are not all that many then that really believe in God though they nominally do and their state and the state of all unbelievers is very sad and solemn for not to believe in God is inexcusable no person has any excuse to not believing in God for one thing take the evidence of God's being in creation as Paul writes to the Romans the invisible things of him that is the invisible perfection power and wisdom of God from the beginning of the world are evident in the things which are made and seen so that they are without excuse there are many ways in which

God has made it evident to men that he is really God well then if men turn aside these evidences or if they busy themselves to find other explanations of them that will leave God out of account they are inexcusable for that God has given evidence of his being to every man and it should be understood too that not to believe in God is exceedingly injurious to the soul of man any kind of belief in God but especially a real genuine belief in God must affect a person for the good for good it must do so far as it has any effect upon him at all whereas unbelief hardens the heart embitters the spirit blinds the understanding deadens the conscience and renders a man entirely subject to the power of sin and that isn't all it must essentially ruin his soul and unbelief is the greatest of sins people do not understand that unbelief is sin when the

[30 : 52] Holy Spirit convinces men of sin he convinces men of their unbelief a young man went to a good minister many years ago under some concern of mind about his state and made some confession to him it was to that eminent man Dr.

Owen and he records it that this young man made confession to him about certain things that burdened his conscience and Dr.

Owen said yes and you haven't mentioned your worst sin yet and he said well what's that he said the sin of unbelief the sin of unbelief unbelief is man's worst sin well now before I close this morning I'll be sorry to close on this rather heavy note let us look at the other side of this ye believe in God ye believe in God now what is it to believe in God and how do men come to believe in God at all when naturally speaking unbelief is the prevailing influence in their heart and mind well of course faith in any case if it's genuine faith is something that God imparts to men you can't explain it any other way it's something that God himself imparts to men to believe in God is because

God has given us faith to believe in him unbelief is our sin we're entirely responsible to God for our unbelief entirely but faith is God's gift and to believe in God is to have that persuasion in our heart and mind that God really is that he is and it is such a persuasion as doesn't rest upon arguments and the life it is really such a belief that God is as is wrought in our heart by the Holy Spirit of truth to believe that God is is to have a spiritual understanding of God's name and nature it implies knowledge as well as feeling you know how it was over at Athens when

Paul went to that idolatrous city not really apparently intending to have much to do there he was really just waiting at Athens for others to come but when he saw the condition of things and the idolatries that prevailed it so worked upon his spirit that he could not hold his peace that he must speak to them about their condition and one thing that struck the apostle's mind especially was this he said as I beheld your superstitions I saw an altar to the unknown God whom therefore he ignorantly worship him declare I unto you the unknown God may the faith that there is a God and yet an unknown God is not the faith of my text this morning he is not an unknown

[35 : 02] God to us bless his name for that when we think of him we think of that blessed and glorious being who is holy just pure wise powerful but who above all that is in his essential nature love and when we worship that God we worship holiness and we worship love and we worship wisdom because we know our God is that God he's not a God of whom we know nothing he believe in God it means you really in your heart have that faith that

God has given for just as the knowledge of God must come from God as much as the light of the sun must come from the sun the knowledge of God must come from God and it must come by his teaching through the Holy Spirit in our hearts and that teaching gives us an inward impression so far as it is deep in our hearts of his name and nature we come to believe in God but there's very much in the other part of my text that now I must leave for this evening ye believe in God so far that you won't feel very much comfort in fact you may feel very much distress unless you believe in me let not your heart be troubled ye believe in

God believe also in me you you