

John 14 – I am the way, the truth and the life

Have you ever had one of those days when everything goes wrong? It doesn't make any difference how hard you try, it just seems that everything backfires on you? The harder you try, the worse it gets. I'm convinced that all of us have had days like that. There is this story about a lady at the airport who stopped in the concourse to buy a Kit Kat to eat while she was waiting for her plane.

In the crowded waiting area she spied an empty seat at the end of one of the rows. Rushing to get it, she quickly leaned her back-pack against it, placed her hand-bag and several other small items on the table between her and a rather large man seated there, and then turned to straighten her back-pack.

With everything finally in order, she was ready to eat her Kit Kat. But to her surprise, as she started to reach for it, she saw the man in the next seat unwrapping her Kit Kat, and she watched in utter amazement as he broke off a section and ate it.

She thought, "Well, my goodness, I've never seen such gall." She glared at him, and he looked at her, but no words were exchanged. She was so furious at what he had done that she decided that if he was going to be that brazen about it, she could be brazen, too. So she reached over to him, broke off a piece and ate it herself. Then he broke off another piece and ate it. It became almost a duel between the two of them to see who would get the most. Quickly the Kit Kat was consumed, and she sat there just boiling that someone would be so rude and so presumptuous as to eat half of her chocolate bar.

Well, after a few minutes of silence, the man got up and left and then came back with another Kit Kat. He unwrapped it, broke off a piece and started eating. She thought, "Well, since he ate half of mine, I'm going to eat half of his." So she reached over and broke off another piece and ate it.

Once again the same scenario was repeated until the whole bar was gone. She sat there thinking, "This is the most ridiculous thing that has happened to me in all my life." She continued to glare at him, and he looked at her, with neither one saying a word. Just then, over the intercom came the announcement that her plane was ready for boarding. So she opened her bag to get her boarding pass and, to her utter embarrassment, there was her Kit Kat. She had eaten half of 2 of his chocolate bars, and hers was still in her bag!

There are times, I suppose, when things really start to go wrong. Your whole world seems to be crumbling around you and you wonder what is going on.

That is kind of the way the apostles are feeling as we come to the 14th chapter of John. They have been on a roller-coaster of emotions. Their week had begun gloriously with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and people waving palm branches and shouting, "Hosanna to the King!" Even the chief priests who had been plotting against Jesus cried out in despair, "What can we do? The whole world has gone out after Him!"

But Jesus had not come to establish an earthly kingdom, and He refused the crown. Disappointed and thwarted in their dreams of a Jewish kingdom with Jesus as their miracle-working king, the fickle crowd began to change. And soon the priests were once again seeking someone to betray Jesus into their hands.

So as the 14th chapter of John opens, we see Jesus and His apostles in the upper room where they have eaten the Passover meal together. Jesus knew exactly what the next few hours would bring. He knew that Judas would betray Him. He knew about the illegal trials of the night, and how troubled the apostles would be. He knew of the cross and the borrowed

tomb. And He tried to prepare the apostles for all of that. So He begins to comfort them.

Is there anyone who needs comfort here this morning? I know that there are. We lose loved ones. People lose jobs. Some have physical problems. Others are lonely and depressed. We experience all kinds of troubles.

But Jesus says that part of the solution to a troubled heart is trust, and He tells His apostles to trust in 3 things. "First of all, trust in My presence. Secondly, trust in My promises. Thirdly, trust in My person."

I. TRUST IN MY PRESENCE - Listen to Jesus' words in vs. 1. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in Me."

What is Jesus saying there? Is He saying, "You trust in God, now it's time to trust also in Me?" Or is He saying, "I know you trust in God, and you also trust in Me. Now remember, when you can no longer see Me, don't stop trusting in Me."

You see, we have always found it easier to trust in things that we can see and touch. We have a little bit of Thomas in us, don't we? Remember, Thomas said, "Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my fingers where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it."

So Jesus shows him and he believes. Jesus then said, "Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The Bible teaches us that the things we can see are only temporary. This building, the pews on which you are sitting, this lectern, all are temporary. All are subject to decay.

The story is told about a busy mother who put her two children to bed. After tucking them in and listening to their prayers, she bid them good night and heaved a sigh of relief saying, "At last, I can have some time to myself."

So she went into the bathroom, took a nice warm shower, and washed her hair. Stepping out of the shower, she put on her old robe, wrapped her head in a towel, applied a thick layer of white moisturizer to her face, and then headed for the lounge.

But just then she heard sounds of commotion and a pillow fight going on in the boy's bedroom. Irritated, she threw open their door, said, "You boys get right back in bed and don't make another sound." Then she turned off the light and slammed the door. The two boys turned to each other and said, "Who was that?"

We look in the mirror and see our aging bodies, and realize that they are temporary, too. All the things you can see and touch, are only here for a little while and then are gone. But the things you can't see last forever.

This is a hard lesson for us to learn, isn't it? Yet it is an important lesson, because when we face troubles and difficulties in life, we need to remember as Christians that Jesus has promised, "Lo, I am with you always. I will never leave you nor forsake you. Trust in My presence."

II. TRUST IN MY PROMISES

Then vs. 2 begins some of the most beautiful verses in the Bible. Jesus says, "In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come back and take you to be with Me, that where I am you may be also."

God gave many promises both in the Old and the New Testaments. He promised the children of Israel a land where there would be milk and honey. It took a while for the promise to be fulfilled, but finally it was fulfilled.

He promised a Messiah, and that took a long time. But it, too,

was fulfilled. Jesus the Saviour was born.

Now God promises that He is coming back for us. Someday we'll be with Him forever and ever. Sometimes we grow impatient, but the scripture says, "You can trust in the promises of God. This promise will be fulfilled, too."

The Bible uses a lot of different words to describe heaven. In one place it is called "a country" indicating the vastness of heaven. In another it is called "a city" indicating the number of inhabitants.

It is called "a kingdom" indicating that there is a governmental structure to it all. It is called "paradise" indicating its beauty and desirability. But here it is called, "My Father's house," and that is another way of saying, "It is home."

Home is a place where you can be yourself. Home is where you can take off your tie and kick off your shoes. Home is where you can say what you are thinking. Home is where you're always accepted and loved. You're not just a guest. You are a resident. You live there. That is home.

Jesus is saying, "I'm going to take you to My Father's house, and it will be your home, too. You'll be a part of the family. You'll be home where you belong."

He says, "In My Father's house are many rooms." The KJ version says, "many mansions." We like that word. But "mansion" is not the best translation of the Greek word Jesus used. Probably the best is "dwelling place" or "rooms."

You see, the word that Jesus used comes from the eastern custom that when a son grows up and gets married, he brings his bride back home again. And the father adds another room onto His house for them. Then when another son grows up and gets married, they add another room. The house just keeps getting bigger and bigger, as the family stays together.

"In My Father's house," Jesus said, "there are many rooms. I am

going to prepare them for you. I'm coming back to take you so that you may be where I am." We're almost there. Don't become discouraged. Don't become fainthearted. We're almost there.

Marian Anderson, the great black American singer, was once asked, "What is the most memorable moment of your life?" When she answered, she didn't mention the time she sang before the president. She didn't mention the time that she was commanded to sing before the queen of England. She didn't mention when she sang before 76,000 people on Easter morning in Washington, D.C.

She said, "The most memorable moment of my life was when I came home to my mother and said, 'Mama, you don't have to take in laundry anymore.' That's the most memorable moment of my life."

Stop and think about it. Most of me is already there. My name is written there. My citizenship is there. My God is there. My Saviour is there. My inheritance is there. My grandparents are there. So much of me is already there.

Soon it will all be fulfilled, and we'll be in our Father's house. We'll get new bodies, and we won't have to worry about getting old and sick and all the other things that plague us here. "Trust My promises," He says.

III. TRUST MY PERSON

In vs. 4 Jesus says, "'You know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"

What a wonderful promise! He is saying, "I'm not just going to show you the way, or tell you the way, or write out the instructions on how to get there. I'm going to come and take you by the hand to My Father's house. Then you'll be home."

CONCL. Do you have burdens this morning that you think you cannot bear? Are you troubled? Are you worried or anxious? Do you feel empty inside? Do you feel lonely? Do you feel lost? Confused?

Story told of a soldier who had just returned from Viet Nam. His parents were socialites, very well-to-do. It was near Christmas, and they were getting ready to go out to the first of the round of parties of the Christmas season.

Just then the phone rang, and it was their son on the phone. "Mom," he said, "I'm back in the States." She said, "That's wonderful! Where are you? Will you be home for Christmas? Can you get here in time for the parties? Everybody will just love to see you."

He answered, "Yes, I can be home for Christmas, but I want to ask you something first." "What is it?" she asked. "Well, I have a friend with me from Viet Nam. Can he come?"

"Oh, of course," she answered. "Bring him along. He'll enjoy the parties, too." "Wait a moment, mom," he said, "I need to explain something about him. He was terribly wounded, and lost both legs and one arm. His face is disfigured, too."

There was silence on the phone for awhile. Then the mother said, "That's all right. Bring him home for a few days." "No, mom, you don't understand. He has nowhere to live. He has no one else. I want to bring him home and to let our home be his home."

The mother was quiet again. Then she said, "Son, that just wouldn't do. What you're asking would be very unfair to us. Why,

it would disrupt all our lives. I'm sure there are government agencies that would be more than glad to take charge of him. Look, just you hurry home for Christmas now, and then maybe you can visit him once in a while."

"Darling, I'm sorry, but we've got to rush or we'll be late for the party. Call us again as soon as you know when you'll be home. Goodbye."

When the parents returned home from the party that night, there was an urgent message from the California police asking them to call. They telephoned, and the officer said, "I'm very sorry to have to call you, but we just found a young soldier dead in a motel room. His face is disfigured, and he has lost both legs and one arm. From the documents on him it would appear that he is your son."

Whatever your burdens are this morning, the solution to a troubled heart is still the same, to trust, to trust in His presence. "I'll never leave you," He said. "I'll always be beside you. Don't forget My presence.

Secondly, "Trust My promises. When everything seems dark and gloomy, when everything seems to be falling apart, remember My promises."

"Then trust My person. You won't get lost. You won't go astray. I'm the way, and I'll take you by the hand and lead you to My Father's house."

Jesus invites us this morning, and He waits for you to respond to His invitation, all we have to do is TRUST.