

I go to Prepare a place for You

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[0 : 00] The Lord says we will turn back to the portion of scripture that we have read together in the gospel according to John chapter 14 and we shall read from the beginning.

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many wounds. If it were not so would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am you may be also.

A few thoughts upon these words. This is part of the discourse that took place in the upper room where Christ has assembled his disciples with him where they are going to keep the Passover and also where they are going to institute the Lord's Supper.

And here he is identifying to them the one who is going to betray him.

[1 : 24] In fact, by the time the words that we have taken this morning, Judas Iscariot has left the room. And he has also identified that there is one of them going to deny him.

Then he tells them that he is going to leave him. And so the disciples really were in great distress for all that Christ had indicated to them in the upper room regarding the one who was to betray him, the one who was going to deny him, and the fact that he was also going to leave them.

Their world was beginning to collapse around them. They were undoubtedly bewildered, perplexed, confused, and filled with anxiety.

Their expectation of the messianic kingdom was shattered. Their expectation was a messiah who would be a conqueror, a kind of superhero who would set up his kingdom and who would rule from Jerusalem.

But instead Jesus was talking to them about dying, and dying in the most horrific way. How could the disciples reconcile that with their expectation?

[2 : 57] And what also about themselves? Was he going to leave them among those who hated him and who also hated them? Was he going to leave them in the midst of this hostile environment?

Because it was certainly a dangerous time. And a dangerous time to show any loyalty towards Jesus. Perhaps Jesus was seeing this concern on their faces.

And because he loved them, he proceeds here to comfort them. He says to them, let not your hearts be troubled.

Here is Jesus, and he is totally absorbed with the needs of his eleven disciples. Because Judas has now left them. There is just himself and the eleven.

And one would say, well, how could they not be troubled? By what he has disclosed to them. Jesus says to them, believe in God.

[4 : 14] Believe also in me. He is urging them to continue to believe in God and to continue to believe also in him.

He is not out to trick them or to deceive them. He will fulfil all that he has promised to them.

And although the disciples, these were looking so daft and so confusing and so perplexing, yet they were to continue believing in him.

Then he goes on to tell them or give reasons why they should calm their hearts. He spells that out to them in verse 2 and 3, which is going to be a main focus this morning.

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.

[5 : 18] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also.

He tells them that whose divine purpose of leaving them involved their arrival in heaven.

He was reassuring them that his death and leaving them would not derail their hope of being in his kingdom with him, and being in heaven with him.

In fact, he tells them that his leaving them would be only to make heaven ready for them. I go, he says, to prepare a place for you.

Well, what is your own view of heaven? How do you imagine heaven? There are some who think that it is just a pie-in-the-sky philosophy, where a person, in face of trials, turns his back upon the world and imagines this paradise, this place of delights.

[6 : 40] Some would say that it's only a figment of the imagination. Others would say that in our scientific age, to have any thoughts about heaven is absolute nonsense.

Our secular nation calls heaven just a speculation. For some, especially those of us who are older, perhaps our thoughts and interest in heaven is intensified, because so many of those whom we met and loved and knew are now there.

They are no longer with us here in our earthly pilgrimage. They have been taken home. They are in heaven. Dear Moody speaks of a man who testified near the end of his life that sometimes it seemed to him that he knew more persons in heaven than he did on earth.

However, there are many pictures given to us in the Bible of heaven. It is likened to a city.

It is likened to a better country, to a place of rest. Jesus on the cross, he called heaven, he called it paradise.

[8 : 06] The place of true delights. It is the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness will prevail. But here, Jesus employs a title for heaven that is only used by him.

He calls it the Father's house. And that very title itself that Jesus gives to heaven brings along with it great comfort.

You can recall yourself when you're away, whether it be at work or at college or whatever, how it was such a wonderful opportunity to come back home.

And that is the way Jesus is speaking to them. He is telling them that he is actually going back home. He is going back to the Father's house.

He is going back to where he came from. And he is going there to prepare a place for them. That they also will be with him.

[9 : 25] That is his great desire. That his people be with him where he is. Later on, when he brings this discourse to conclusion, by praying to the Father, he says to the Father, that I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, the glory that you have given to me.

Jesus himself is filled with joy at returning to the Father. And his great desire is that all his disciples in all ages will be with him where he is.

There is an old song that goes, This world is not my home. I am just a passing through. How true for the person who has put his trust in Christ.

He is a stranger and a pilgrim in this world. For heaven is his home. We are journeying on towards our Father's walk.

We are all on a journey to our own home. But for the believer, for the person who trusts in Christ, he is on his way to a salvage home.

[10 : 51] We are told regarding Abraham that he looked for a city which had foundations to build it and make it as God.

In the authorised verse then, it says, In my Father's house are many mansions. We may wonder why the word mansion was used by the translators of the AV.

Because it is evident that it is impossible to have many mansions inside a house. In my Father's house are many mansions.

I think that the Lord Jesus is here using what was in the culture of his own day, in the culture of Palestine. And he is bringing that tradition that was there and he is bringing it here before the disciples.

Because in that culture, in that tradition, in the time of Jesus, when a person would be betrothed, the man would go back to his father's house.

[12 : 15] And there he would build an extension on to his father's house. When that extension was ready, he would come back and he would receive his bride and he would take the bride along with him to the extension that he had built.

to his father's home. We know that Jesus uses that image time and time again in the parable of the ten virgins we have that image brought before us.

And I think he is using that imagery here when he is comforting his disciples regarding the fact that he is going to leave them and that they are going to be in a hostile environment but they are to be comforted in the fact that he has left them in order to prepare a place for them.

That is, he left them physically. He was no longer going to be walking with them as he had done for around three years. There is a sense in which, as this chapter itself says, he was not going to leave them as otherwise.

He was going to come and dwell with them to the Holy Spirit. His Spirit was going to come and dwell in them. But physically he was going to leave them.

[13 : 43] Their knowledge of them was going to be somewhat different from now on. They would have to live by faith. And he was going to leave them in order to prepare a place for them.

in my Father's house there are many homes. Jesus is here talking of heaven as a single glorious home with enough dwelling places to take the complete family of God.

Jesus is here urging upon them not to confine their attention to the visible and the temporal but to think of heaven.

In the midst of all the troubles and all the testings from a hostile world they were to be heavenly centred. In the midst of all the upheaval and turmoil of our own present day the believer the Christian should not be alarmed for he knows that God is working out his own purpose and that includes bringing his children home to himself.

We should not be alarmed at the hostility of the world to us. That hostility will remain and it will be there to the end.

[15 : 25] With all the confusion and turmoil of our world yet this we know and in here we rest and in here we calm our hearts that we know that God is working out his own purpose and in the midst of all that is happening you are involved and I am involved because he is working out his purpose and that includes bringing me home to himself.

Let not your hearts be troubled. However the Bible exhorts us to be heavenly mindedness Paul says if he then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sit on the right hand of God set your affection on the things above and not on the things on earth and again he says for all conversation is in heaven from whence also we look for the saviour the Lord Jesus Christ we've told that to be heavenly minded is to be spiritually minded or to be kindly minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace is it wrong for us to decide heaven we sometimes use the phrase that a person is so heavily minded that they are of no earthly use well I don't think that that is a measurement at all of a person's spirituality the apostle

Paul was in prison in Rome and he wrote a letter to the church at Philippi who and he was the church they were so concerned for Paul and in his letter he told them to rejoice and he went down to say Christ shall be magnified in my body whether by life or death for me to live is Christ and to die is gain but if I live in the flesh this is the fruit of my labour yet what shall I choose I won't not for I am straight between two having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you and I think that is the attitude that we should always show Paul loved the Lord and he yearned for the Lord's company and he knew that for his own personal enrichment to be with

Christ was far better but then there was a church at Philippa which as far as he could see still needed his ministry and Paul believes that it could be the will of the Lord that this need should be considered paramount such as Paul's love for his hell of believers shall decide for the spiritual advantage that he is willing to abide in the flesh and to postpone heavenly glories and I think that our attitude should be to have a desire indeed to be in heaven but at the same time as the Lord wants to be of usefulness and serving here on earth yes we have a desire to be with Christ yet we must not forget our usefulness in serving the

Lord here on earth the desire for heaven should not distract us from serving the Lord here on earth in fact if anything it ought to be a motivation for us for more service to the Lord to do more for the Lord it ought to be a great motive for our evangelism for there is heaven to gain and a hell to shun we should go out more and we should witness more if we believe that there is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun we should be the more earnest in serving the Lord to a lost world one of the commentators says the need of the church weighs heavier with them than the desire of his own soul that was his attitude the need of the church weighs heavier with him than the desire of his own

soul in my father's house are many votes of course this also points to the eternal reunion of [20 : 42] Jesus and his people it is customary for family members to meet together in the family house on special occasions we come together as families similarly the father's house will be the place where all the children of the Lord will meet where all the family will meet there's a phrase used in the Old Testament in conjunction with the death of the patriarchs we find this phrase and he was gathered to his people for instance in Abraham it says of Abraham that Abraham gave up the ghost and died in a good old age an old man and full of years and was gathered to his people the same is said of Isaac and Isaac gave up the ghost and died and was gathered unto his people been old and full of days and his sons

Esau and Jacob buried the same is said of Jacob and when Jacob made an end of commanding his sons he gathered up his feet into the bed and yielded up the ghost and was gathered unto his people the same regarding the first Aaron shall be gathered into his people for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel because he rebelled against my word at the water of Mehba and regarding Moses the Lord said unto Moses get thee up into this mountain and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel and when thou hast seen it thou also shall be gathered unto thy people as Aaron thy brother was gathered now some Old Testament scholars say that this phrase is nothing more than just a conventional way of saying that they died remember how

David in losing his son said I will go to him but he cannot come to me I will go to him but he cannot come to me the saints gathered to their people in heaven all the children of God shall meet together and all the children of God shall recognise each other we shall see each other not as we are now or as we have been but as we were meant to be we shall all be in his likeness Paul says regarding the church of the Thessalonians for what is our hope of joy or of rejoicing are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming for ye are our glory and joy

I can only take from that he would know the Thessalonians among whom he had laboured he would be able to recognise them in my father's house are many rooms the family will be gathered together in Revelation 21 John says and I John saw the holy city New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband and I heard a great voice out of heaven saying behold the tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself shall be with them and be their God who is this tabernacle of God who is with men it is Jesus the one made flesh and to be in heaven is to be forever with the Lord at one stage there were no residents from the earth in heaven but the day arrived when Abel reached the father's house and since he entered many others have joined with him there is of course Enoch and Elijah and came in a unique manner without having to taste it but they all discovered that there was a personal room for each of them a personal place for each of them the bible says that there is a place reserved you know when you go into a restaurant you've booked a table and they put a reserved ticket on the table it's kept there for you and if you are a child of God today there is a place with a reserved ticket on it in heaven and it's reserved for you it is reserved for you so here

[25 : 58] Jesus turns to his disciples and says that one of the reasons he's leaving them to go is to prepare a place for them and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again I go to prepare a place for you well this statement has often been taken as a reference to the work done by the saviour of the cross that he was indicating he going to the cross in order to prepare a place for them and that is true the cross was something that had to take place as part of the preparation there are others you think there is some form of heavenly activity which is engaged in preparing a particular place for each of his disciples or each of his people in the

Father's cross well we know that heaven already existed when Jesus spoke these words so he wasn't going away to create heaven for them heaven was there but rather everything he would do from his death from his cross to his second return would constitute the preparations that were to be put in place for his people to join him there was his own presence in heaven as he returned to the father's house he brought something into heaven with him he brought that nature that he took to himself he brought human nature into heaven with him and that was part of the preparation his own presence in heaven in our nature and he said that nature in the midst of the throne of

God and it wasn't out of place and because that nature is there in the midst of the throne we have now boldness and confidence to come and to seek mercy and grace in time because that majestic throne has become a throne of grace for us but I think part of the preparation was not only in

regards to the place heaven but it is also connected with the earth and what do I mean by that well he sent his spirit to indwell in us and what is the spirit doing the spirit is preparing us for our heavenly home preparing us for our heavenly home the spirit is molding us and forming us and remaking us to be fit for our heavenly home and that is part of the preparation he says it is good for you that I go now the disciples how could they understand that because it is only by leaving you that I will send the spirit who will take of my things and show it unto you who will glorify me who will prepare you for the heavenly home I go to prepare a place for you sometimes we perhaps focus too much upon the word prepare when we perhaps should focus more upon the word for you I go to prepare a place for you the emphasis is on the fact that there is a place in the house home for you one reason why those who believe in Jesus should not be troubled by adverse circumstances or when the future is uncertain is that they personally have a home in heaven

I go to prepare a place for you it is personal Jesus tells his disciples that when he has finished preparing a place for them he will come and he will take them there I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am you may be also Jesus spoke of several returns during this discourse he spoke of his return after his resurrection and before his ascension to heaven other times he spoke of his coming to them as we already spoken of through the Holy Spirit after his ascension and before his second coming but other times he spoke to them of his second coming which of these is in you here well I think this promise has two fulfilments or perhaps three he comes to us through the

[31 : 58] Holy Spirit and he dwells in us and he comes to us at our death and he comes to us at his second cup do you ever thank God for the great promise you have that he is going to return when you go through hard times when everything seems so confusing and perplexing that you know he is coming for me he is coming for me and on every occasion Jesus will welcome because he will receive them unto himself I think it's beautiful the way the Bible speaks of what Stephen saw as being stoned in the book of

Acts we very often speak of Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Father as a symbolic of his finished work that the work is complete the high priest and the tabernacle never sat down there's no chairs there they never sat down they were all standing and serving but Jesus our great high priest when he finished his work when he made the atonement he sat down because the work was complete let's see when Stephen sees him is he sitting down no he's not he's standing to receive and we know that when somebody comes into our company it is good manners is it not to stand to greet them and we're really honouring them when we stand to greet them and that's the way Jesus will meet his people he will honour them he will stand and he will greet them into the family's home their home the family home the family home the saviour welcome to be permanently forever in his presence to be his eternal compliance enjoying his tenorship experiencing his provision sharing the inheritance with him and he says if it were not so

I would have told you what he is saying to them is trust my promises let not your heart be troubled trust my promises what a reassurance those words must have been to the frightened disciples that dark night as surely as Jesus was leaving he would come again in person to receive them personally into the place that he has prepared for them what a prospect for poor sinful weak creatures remember how we read that Jesus let his disciples as far as Bethany and then he lifted up his hands and blessed them and while he was blessing them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven until a cloud received him out of their sight and while they looked steadfastly to heaven as he went up before two men stood by them in white a power which said ye men of Galilee why stand ye gazing up to heaven this same

Jesus which is taking earth from you to heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen him going to heaven and we are told that the return to Jerusalem was great joy and my friends that ought to be our joy he is coming back he is coming back and he's coming back to be forever with the Lord Paul writing to Titus says looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify himself a peculiar people sell us of good works well do you have a home are you one for whom Jesus has gone to prepare a place in heaven we are all on the journey to our home but where will that be depends on our relationship with

God if we are in a reconciled relationship with God to our Lord Jesus Christ then we have this living hope we have this great promise we trust in the finished work of Christ in the cross we trust that he has gone to prepare a place for us Paul says we rejoice in the midst of all our troubles and

problems and burdens and hard times we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God we spoke there of the tradition in Palestine of when two became betrothed and betrothal was something similar to our engagement but it was far deeper than that in fact they were looked upon as being married the only difference is they were not living together because when they became betrothed the man would go back as

[37 : 42] I would be said to his father's house and he would begin building an extension on to the family home an extension for himself and for his bride and the bride would stay at her own home but we were told that she always had a lamp by her side the lamp was there ready in case he would come during the night and the bride would go out the bride groom come and so she would light up the lamp and go out to meet her you see that image in the parable of the virgins but then when the extension was complete he would come back to receive the bride and he would take his bride with him to the place that he had prepared and there was the marriage supper of the lamp my friends if you're in

Christ today we have been betrothed to him we are betrothed to him we are betrothed to the beloved yes he is preparing a place for us and when that is ready he will come and he will receive us and will go into the marriage supper of the lamp the marriage there the marriage supper of the lamp to be partakers of the great provision that he has made for us so he says to me and you today as we perhaps are filled perhaps with fear perhaps or anxiety or our minds as well that these days were good that was a pleasant joyful wonderful weekend situations and

I am afraid that I might fall into a world that is so full of troubles and confusion and what not well he says let not your heart be troubled you believe in God believe also in me what I have promised I will fulfil and I am telling you that in my father's house there are many rooms if it were not so I would have told you I am not to treat or deceive you and I am going to prepare a place for you for you personally I am going to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare I am coming back again yes he's coming back again he's coming back for his bride and he's going to receive her and he's going to take her to where he is I will that they who know still be with me where

I am that is desire in heaven you know it's not a wonderful thought to think that there is a desire in heaven today that's concerned with you and me and that desire is in the heart of the God man Jesus Christ and it concerns me and you because he wants you and me to be where he is the tradition says that when the son would be building the extension to the home of his father who was still living his father would have to come and approve of the work that was done and only then could the son go to receive his bride but at the father's appointed time the son will come to receive his bride and to take his bride to be with him where he is

I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am you may be also let not your hearts be troubled may it all bless our thoughts in his heart and turn around to us have a blessed God you give us to thee for all the promises that thou hast sent to thy church to thy bride that we give thanks unto thee for the faith we have been betrothed to thee and that thou art preparing a place for us and at the appointed time that thou shall come to receive us to be with thyself so that the same shall be forever with the Lord O Lord did you know that we are going out into a hostile world but let not our hearts be troubled let us lean upon thine own promises that thou art coming back that thou art returning and coming back to receive thy know

[43 : 28] O Lord we give thanks that we can have that living hope and that we can rejoice in the glory of God we ask O Lord that thou would continue with us that thou would bless us in the days that lie ahead that thou bless our time of fellowship and coming and may it indeed be a time of encouragement for us we sit and pray to them on what has been and to know that thou was with us he has faced things with the forgiveness of our sins in Jesus name for his sake amen we shall conclude our service by singing to the Lord's praise from the 21st psalm psalm 23 the Lord's my shepherd I not want he makes me down to lie and pastor scream he get me the quiet water my soul he does restore again and me to walk get me within the paths of righteousness even for the soul you see yet though

I walk and did that fail yet will I fear in him for thou are with me and I walk and staff me comfort still my table thou hast punished in presence of my foes my head thou dust with oil annoyed and my cup both froze goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be we shall sing the whole psalm to the Lord's praise the Lord's my shepherd I not want he makes me down to life the Lord's morning shepherd I not want he makes me down to life in passion he leases me the quiet water mine my soul he done restore again and

me to walk the thing within the paths of righteousness in what his own name save grace he though i
walk in dress are filled yet will i fear nigh for thou art with me and thy rod and shall me come for still
my take my take love has furnished in presence of my hope my hand heart my head the just with oil
and noise and my cup over close and over close goodness and mercy of my life shall surely follow
me and in the times for me and the love of the love of the love of the love of the holy spirit be with
you all now and in the love of god and the
fellowship of now and forever more amen