

Guest Preacher - Rev. Kenny I Macleod

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 October 2023

Preacher: Rev. Kenny I Macleod

[0 : 00] I want this this morning, and again, the very well-known words we're all so familiar with. These words as we section at the beginning of the chapter, I'm not going to read it again because we've just read it, really looking at from the beginning of the chapter to verse 8, and Jesus says, let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me.

Down to Philip's question in verse 8, Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough. For us. Now, as you and I know, we live in a world that hurts.

There's so many problems and so many troubles and so many upsets, so many difficulties, and every single one of us at different times and points in our life experience these things. Maybe today, for you, life is smooth, it's gentle, and everything is going reasonably well, but maybe it's not. Maybe for some of you, you have problems, you have trials, you have pains, you have bereavements, you've got sorrows, there are things that you're carrying in your heart, and life right now, just now, is difficult for you.

It's the nature of life. It's the nature of life. We all go through these times of difficulties and sorrows and trials. But we find wonderful words at the beginning of this chapter where Jesus says, let not your heart be troubled.

[1 : 28] Now, quite often, if we're going through a difficult time or a worrying time, people might say to you, oh, don't worry, it'll be all right. Everything will work out fine.

Now, that's very nice of them to say that, and very encouraging. But you might say to yourself, it's all very well for you to say that.

How do you know that everything's going to work out fine? Because sometimes people are just trying to encourage you. If somebody says to you, oh, look, don't worry, and they give you a reason why you shouldn't worry, and they say to you, well, and they spell out reasons why you shouldn't worry, that's different.

But when people just say, oh, just don't worry, it'll be all right, you say to yourself, well, I need to have a reason as to why I shouldn't worry or why I shouldn't be troubled.

And so we find that that is what we have here, because Jesus is the one who is speaking. And when Jesus, of course, is the one who is speaking, we always ought to listen and know that He knows.

[2 : 33] If Jesus is saying to us, let not your heart be troubled, we've always got to remember that He's got the big picture in view. We don't. We only see where we're at right now. We don't see beyond the situation we're in.

Jesus sees a whole picture, and that makes a huge difference. Now, of course, it was a troubling time for the disciples, because Jesus has just announced to them that He's going away.

That's what's their major concern. That's what's troubling them. Jesus said to them He was leaving them. And they couldn't imagine life without the living human Jesus with them, because for three years they had been everywhere with Him.

They had given up their work to follow Him. He was at the center of their lives. And they just couldn't imagine what on earth is life going to be like? Jesus is going away.

And, you know, if you look at your own life today, you will know very simply where you are, whether you are following Jesus or not, because this is a very clear evidence and mark of where we are.

[3 : 46] By and large, so many people in this world have no concern for Jesus. They have no desire for God. In fact, it's the very reverse. They would actually want God out of the picture.

There are many people who just don't dismiss the very idea of God. Many people want the Bible ban. They want any influence in schools or in government or any places of authority, gospel influence, eradicated.

People don't want. If you today, if you were told the Lord has abandoned you, you are on your own, how would you feel?

Well, if you're a believer, that would be the worst news that you could ever get. You would say to your life, my life's over. I can't go through life without the Lord. The Lord is my strength.

He is my portion. He is the one who gives me a purpose. He is the one who gives me a hope in life. I cannot bear the thought of not having Jesus in my life.

[4 : 52] Well, if that's the way you think, only a Christian will speak like that. But if today you're saying to yourself, well, it's no big deal. I'm all right.

Yeah, I think about the Lord now and again. And I know I come to church and I'm interested in these things. But I hope one day, yeah, I hope one day to get that all sorted.

But right now, no. But, well, this tells very clearly where we're at. If we felt for a moment that we were to be on our own, which won't happen, because Jesus has promised to his people that he will never, ever leave them or never, ever forsake them.

So, this tells us very much about where we are. So, Jesus says to them that they were not to be troubled. Now, again, when somebody comes to you when you're in difficulties and tries to encourage you and help you, it makes a world of difference if you know that this person understands.

If they've maybe gone through similar experiences to what you're going through. You say to Jesus, oh, this person really understands where I'm at. He or she has been through what I've gone through.

[6 : 08] So, you know that they understand. So, when Jesus says, let not your hearts be troubled, Jesus, remember, knows what it is to have a troubled spirit.

And that's one of the wonderful things, because in the previous chapter, in verse 21, Jesus tells us, in chapter 13, verse 21, after saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit and testified, truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.

Judas' coming betrayal was troubling the spirit of Jesus. He was in our nature. He was human.

So, it's wonderful to know that the one who says, let not your heart be troubled, understands what it is to be troubled themselves.

And that's the wonderful thing about our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, because it tells us he's been touched with the feeling of our infirmities or our weaknesses.

[7 : 09] All the different things. He was tempted. It's one of the verses that I often think about, and I can't always get my head around it. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

And when you think of the multitude of temptations that come our way, and you think throughout the day, if we stop to analyze all the different, wide variety of temptations that come our way, and the Bible tells us that Jesus was tempted in all points.

Like, he understands. He understands better than any person, any other person in this world can never understand where you are or what you're going through like Jesus, because he's been there.

And that's why he's saying here, let not your heart be troubled. And again, as has often been highlighted, one of the wonderful things about Jesus as he's seeking to comfort his disciples is that if there's one person in the world that's needing comfort at this time, it is Jesus.

Because he has an idea of what's ahead of him. There was an unfolding awareness of the horrors that lay ahead of him all the time.

[8 : 27] These horrors intensified when he came to Gethsemane, where it tells us that he was sweating, as it were, drops of blood. But at that point, the disciples couldn't comfort him.

You know, the disciples didn't understand the mission of Jesus at that point. They believed he was the Savior. They believed he was the Messiah. But their idea of the Messiah was going down the route of what so many of the rabbis had taught of this great deliverer.

Which Jesus is, but they didn't realize, they weren't grasping that it was by way of death. That this is the way he was going to deliver them. And it was left to an angel from heaven to come to comfort and strengthen Jesus.

You know, there was only one, one follower of Jesus that really encouraged him prior to his death. And that was Mary of Bethany. Mary was the most perceptive and the most spiritually minded follower that Jesus had.

She was way ahead of John or Peter or James or any of them. Because you remember when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus. You read about it in John's Gospel back in chapter 12.

[9 : 42] And there were people who were finding fault with the expense, with the box of really precious ointment that she used. And Jesus said, in light of my burial, has she done this?

Mary understood the nature of Jesus' mission in a way that the others hadn't. Because we find that even after the death of Jesus, the disciples are huddled together in a room that's locked. They're filled still with fear. And it was when John, remember when John and Peter ran to the grave with the news that he had risen. That it said, it tells us these words, when John saw and he believed.

In other words, it all, the whole picture fitted together. All Jesus' teachings, it just, all of a sudden, it was a grasping of everything. Yes, he trusted his life to Jesus.

He believed in Jesus. But an understanding of what Jesus, who he is and what he was about, that's when John really got it. But Mary got it before. Maybe her understanding wasn't fully complete.

[10 : 50] But she grasped. Why did she grasp? Because every time we meet Mary, she's at the feet of Jesus. The place of learning. The place of understanding.

And so it is for you and for me. If we want to grow as Christians, if we want to develop, if we want our faith to be strengthened and our knowledge to be increased, then we must be at the humbly before Jesus in his word.

This is where we discover more and more. Well, that's the type of person Mary was. She was way ahead of them all. So we find, then Jesus says, let not your heart be troubled. And he says, I have to have faith in God.

Believe in God. Believe also in me. And so that's the all-important statement that Jesus is giving to us. That we are to have faith in him.

Because, and I've got to say to anybody in here today, if you don't have faith in the Lord, you're in a lonely place. You're in an empty place.

[11 : 52] You may think that life is going well and life is working out. Maybe at the moment it is. But it won't stay like that. There is an emptiness that only Christ can fill.

And if you don't see that, ask the Lord to show you that today. Because without Christ, life at the end of the day is meaningless.

And so you've got to have this. So it's vital that we get this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the wonderful thing is that as Jesus has come into this world, come to die for us, he is also preparing us at the same time.

Now, when Jesus said, let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you that I go to prepare a place for you.

Now, the wonderful thing is that Jesus, in preparing that place, that place is being prepared through his death on the cross. Jesus is talking, I go to prepare a place for you.

[13 : 02] And that looks lovely when Jesus says, oh, he's going to prepare a place. But in order to prepare that place, the bulk of the preparation has been going to be ahead of him on the cross.

Where he had to pay the price of our sins. Where he had to take all the wrath and curse of God. All the condemnation of God for us on himself.

That is how Jesus was preparing the place for us. And then Jesus tells us that all those who believe in him, he is going to take to be with himself.

And it's wonderful the way that this works out. Because Jesus tells us, in my Father's house are many rooms. Sometimes it's translated many mansions, many rooms.

And, you know, it's talking about a dwelling place, an abiding place. This world is a world that is transient. We're always moving from place to place.

[14 : 06] There's nothing that's fixed. There's nothing that remains brand new. There's nothing that is always the same. It's always a world of change. Heaven is our dwelling place.

It's our place of permanence. Permanent residence forevermore. And Jesus is telling us that he's going to provide a house of many rooms, which indicates a place where there is plenty room.

And, you know, that's what it tells us in the gospel. With regard to the invitation of the gospel, that there is plenty room in order. Remember when Jesus talks about the great feast and invitations were given out.

And one after another was refusing. And Jesus then said to the sermons, the Lord of the feast said to the sermons, Right, go out. Go out into the highways and into the hedges.

Compel them to come in. That my house may be filled. For yet there is room. You take hold of these words today.

[15:15] If you're outside Christ, take hold of these words. Yet there is room. In that house, that heavenly abode, where there are many rooms, a house, it's to be filled.

And today there's still room. Don't exclude yourself. Don't say to yourself, what if there's no room for me? The Bible is telling us today, yet there is room.

Room for you. Doesn't matter what you've been. Doesn't matter what you've done. Doesn't matter. You know, some people exclude themselves from heaven because they think they're too good.

They don't need Jesus. Well, that doesn't work. Some people exclude themselves because they think they're too bad. And they look at things they've done in their life and they say, boy, because maybe you're here today and you can't forgive yourself some of the things you've done.

Well, God can. God is able to forgive in the most amazing way. That's the great work of Jesus. That there is no sin, apart from the unpardonable, but can find forgiveness.

[16:21] So you go to Him today irrespective of how old you are, how young you are, what your past is like, what your present is like. For you today, yet there is room.

And the great command given to us is to compel people to come in. And so there's this wonderful, eternal dwelling place.

And the Lord is saying, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself. And as the Lord has gone to prepare the place, part of the preparation, yes, He has done all the preparing at one sense.

But part of getting ready for you and for me to get there is He's preparing us for the place. And that's what's happening every single day in our lives.

God is at work in your life. And He's doing things in your life. And He's everything that's happening to you is a preparation for the glory that is to come.

[17:28] And often it's through the hard knocks. It's through the difficulties. It's through the pains. It's through things that, oh, you're saying, what on earth is going on in my life? Well, if we could see the big picture, God is saying, I know this is not nice.

But actually, through me and by the work of my Spirit in your life, this is going to be part of the preparation for the glory that is to come.

We're told our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works in us. That's what the Lord is saying. It's working in us for this wonderful weight of glory that is yet to be revealed.

And so the Lord says, I will come, and I will go and prepare a place for you. I will come again and will take you to myself. Now, 100% we mourn when our loved ones are taken away.

It's natural. There's nothing else we can do about it. But if we could see the other side. You see, before Jesus went to the cross, He prayed a prayer. Because we call it, we read about it in John 17, the high priestly prayer.

[18:35] And part of what He said in that prayer was, Father, I will that all those that you've given me be with me where I am that they may behold my glory.

Jesus is looking ahead to the day when the house is full. And they're all there. Today in glory, Jesus is longing for that day. And although we mourn when Jesus takes home, if we could see the glory, if we could see what heaven is, this is part of the great moment where Jesus went to the cross.

This is what He was seeing when He prayed that prayer. Here's another one. Another who's going to behold my glory. Another one now who's going to share with me forever. Who's going to be fed by me eternally.

We mourn. But this is part of what Jesus is doing. He's coming. He is. We don't know. We are not in control of these things. He is. And He takes us one by one.

He takes home. But then, move on very quickly. We find, and He says in verse 4, And you know the way to where I'm going. And we're just looking at this very briefly.

[19:47] Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where you're going. How can we know the way? You know, we're always very thankful for the Thomases in the Bible.

Because Thomas was one of these Christians who was very slow at grasping things. He was one of those who just didn't, he often didn't get the big picture or understand what things were about.

And I think it's important to say that because, you know, we sometimes think that every Christian follower, that every disciple of the Lord, that they should have 100% pass in everything.

Well, let's remember Jesus said that the fruit bearing is some with 30-fold, some 60-fold, some are 100-fold. There are some Christians and they are up there.

They are so bright, they're so full of knowledge and understanding and experience. But there are other Christians and they're 30-fold. And we've got to understand that that's how it is in the church.

[20 : 50] Well, here's Thomas and he was very slow on the pickup. And he was also a very pessimistic Christian. So always looking on the dark side. Very gloomy. There's an instance when Jesus, when word came to Jesus that Lazarus was sick.

And Jesus was talking about going up to Jerusalem. And Lazarus, oh, he says, last time you were in Jerusalem, they were talking about stoning you. And then he comes out with the words, well, we better all go so that we will all die.

So Thomas already has a picture. Yeah, Jesus going to Jerusalem. We're going with him. They're going to kill Jesus and they're going to kill us as well. Straight away, that was the pessimistic view. The glass was always half empty with Thomas. The disciples, Thomas wasn't present when Jesus appeared to the disciples. They're full of joy. Thomas, Jesus is risen.

Oh, I don't believe it. Thomas wouldn't accept it. He said, not unless I put my fingers into the print, I will not believe. Remember when Jesus then appeared to Thomas.

[21 : 59] Thomas, reach out your hand. Oh, Thomas then said, Lord, I believe. He didn't need to reach out his hand. But that's the kind of person Thomas was.

He was slow on the uptake. He was a gloomy, pessimistic Christian. And some Christians are like that. And we've got to understand. We're not clones of one another. If we're a clone, we should be a clone, of course, of Jesus.

We're being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. That's the ongoing work. But we all have our own identity, personalities, characteristics. And they remain with us.

And so we find Thomas. But you know this, we're very thankful that Thomas asked that question.

Because Jesus gives us this wonderful reply. When he says, how can we know the way?

Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.

[22 : 58] So, now, Jesus' response, of course, is one of the great I am or the triple I am statements. And you know, in this day of so much focus on diversity and all the rest of it, people will say, you can't say that, that Jesus is the only way.

Because Jesus says, no one comes to the Father except through me. People will say today, you can't say that. Well, it's not us who's saying it. It's not any particular church that it's taken upon themselves to say that.

It's Jesus, the Son of God, the one by whom all things were made, the creator of this universe, the one who upholds all things in the hollow of his hand, the one who made the way, the one who is the way.

He's saying, I am the way. And you notice that before each statement of the way, the truth, and the life, there's the definite article. And Jesus is saying here, I'm not a way, like there's various ways.

I am the way. In other words, the only way. And Jesus says also, I am the truth. We live in a world that's full of disinformation and fake news, and people haven't a clue what's right, what's wrong.

[24 : 17] It's a world that we're often confused. Politicians tell us one thing one day, then something totally different the other day. And there's all this confusion, and we pick up papers, and we don't know, is this true?

Is it not? That's the kind of society we're living in. Well, here's truth. What is truth? Pilate asked. Well, Jesus is truth.

He is truth personified. And every word that comes out of Jesus is absolute truth, and he is life. There is no other life, ultimately, apart from him.

And then, in conclusion, there's one more question. And here's Philip again, and here's another disciple that is maybe a wee bit slow on the uptake. Philip said to him, Lord, show us a father, and it's enough for us.

And Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father. Here's Philip.

[25 : 16] He hasn't grasped things properly either. The great thing is, this man, Philip, is a really bright disciple of Jesus.

And that shows us that we don't need to have the best knowledge to be a good witness. We don't need to have the greatest understanding of Scripture to lead people to Christ. Because this man, Philip, was a great witness for Jesus. Remember when Jesus called Philip, revealed himself to Philip? And Philip was so, he said, What was the first thing that Philip did? He went off to get his pal, Nathaniel. And he says to Nathaniel, Come on. I found Jesus. I found the Messiah. Come with me. Jesus of Nazareth. And when Nathaniel heard the name Nazareth, the word Nazareth, he said, There's nothing good that comes out of Nazareth. No. Nathaniel was ready to dismiss it. And Philip did one of the best things possible. He didn't decide to try and argue the point. He just said very simply, Come and see. [26 : 22] Come and see for yourself. If you don't believe me, come and see for yourself. And you know, that's what we should do with people. Because people will always start arguing with us. They'll start bringing up points of division.

And it's like the woman of Samaria. When Jesus was beginning to home in and making her feel uncomfortable, she turned the argument straight into religious division. She said, Oh, we worship in Samaria, but you worship in Jerusalem. And Jesus is saying the time is coming where it's neither in Samaria or in Jerusalem. But it's worshiping the living and through God. And people always try and bring up religious divisions and all these kind of things. Forget that. Just say to them, Look, focus on Jesus. Go to the gospel. Say to people, Right, start reading through. Go to the gospel of Luke. Go to the gospel of John. [27 : 20] Read through for yourself. Before you have any more arguments, read the life of Jesus. Then come back to me. But go and read. And then come to a conclusion.

Because people don't know. They dismiss without knowing. Well, that's exactly what Nathaniel did. Wasn't the brightest student of Jesus. The best understanding in his mind following Jesus. But he knew who Jesus was. And he witnessed for Jesus. And he brought people to Christ for Jesus. And later on, he was mightily used by Jesus. So you see, it's important for us to grasp this. Don't put yourself down and say, Oh, I'm too young to witness. I'm too, I'm not, I'm not an elder. I'm not a deacon. I don't, I don't have all. Yes, you have. If you love the Lord Jesus, that's enough. That's enough to share with somebody else. To witness to somebody else. To point somebody else to the Lord Jesus. And then, just in conclusion, we see Jesus says, Have I been with you so long? [28 : 25] And you still do not know me, Philip. And you know, sometimes I feel that the Lord says the same thing to ourselves. Particularly when we're tempted.

That so often comes into our mind. To slacken our zeal and slacken our following. You know, sometimes the world is a huge pool. And you say to Israel, Oh, the world doesn't affect me in the way it used to. That might be true. It might be certain parts of the world don't affect you the way they used to. But you know, the world is still very powerful. You look at the history of Israel going through the wilderness. And you have a picture there of sin and the world and Satan. They were delivered from the worst slavery. And they so enjoyed their freedom. But it wasn't long until they were hankering back. Not necessarily for the slavery. But for some of the things that they enjoyed. For the food that they were having. And some of these things. And they were saying, Oh, it wasn't so bad in Egypt after all. [29 : 25] And you know, sometimes as Christians, we can be tempted like that. And Jesus is saying to us, Have I been so long with you? And you still don't know me. Why is it you're looking back?

And maybe Jesus is saying to somebody in here today, Have I been so long with you in your presence? You come here on Sunday. You hear my word. You've got my word. You sing my word. You still don't know me. Well, if that's the case, ask Jesus today. To make himself known to you. So that you will take him into your heart. And you will discover that truly he is the way and the truth and the life. Let us pray. Lord, our God, we give thanks for your word. And for the simplicity of it. And yet the directness of it. And the power of it. Lord, we pray that you will help every single one of us to follow you with all our hearts.

[30 : 28] We're often so hesitant. We're often so slow. We're often so fearful. Lord, take us above ourselves. Grant us the humility that is necessary to bow before you and the open heart to receive you.

Help us to follow you wholeheartedly. Take away from us our every sin. Take us to our home safely, we pray. Forgiving us in Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

We're going to conclude singing in Psalm 23. The 23rd Psalm. This is from the Scottish Psalter.

And we're going to sing the whole Psalm. Psalm 23.

That's on page 229 in the blue book. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

He makes me down to lie. In pastures green he leadeth me, the quiet waters by. My soul he doth restore again, and he to walk doth make. Within the paths of righteousness, even for his own name's sake.

[31 : 32] Down to the last verse. Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me. And in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be. The whole Psalm 23.

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

He makes me down to lie. In pastures green he leadeth me.

The quiet waters by. My soul he doth restore again, And he to walk doth make.

Within the paths of righteousness, In forest, O name's sake.

[33 : 00] The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

Hear, I'll not want. Hear, I'll not want. For thou art with me, And I hope, And thou have become for still.

My table of love, Thou art with me, In presence of my host, My heaven's love, And thou art with my light, And I have been for close.

Goodness unmerced me all my life, Shall surely follow me, And in your sight forevermore, My dwelling place shall be.

And with the grace, And mercy and peace of God, The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Rest and abide upon each one of you now And forevermore. Amen.