

Yes, It's Going to Be Ok 2023  
John 13:36, 14:1-11

John 13:36, 14:1-11 (New Revised Standard Version)

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward."

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. 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, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. 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 know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

Over the years I have tried to envision what it was like  
that night in the Upper Room with Jesus and his disciples.  
I've seen lots of paintings, movies and videos depicting the scene,  
but I've never really lived or experienced anything quite like it.  
**It must have been so much more than my imagination can imagine.**

Our text describes that Thursday night before the crucifixion.  
They were gathered in the Upper Room, and Jesus has told them,  
he'll be betrayed, and all of them will flee and abandon him.

For three years his disciples have shared the journey with Jesus.  
They got to hear his wonderful wisdom, parables and teaching.  
They have seen his miracles happen right in front of them,  
healing the blind, walking on water, raising the dead,  
**but mostly, they've felt his love and sense of God's mission.**

Can you imagine, what an amazing and powerful experience,  
and what an adventure being a disciple of Jesus must have been,  
to have spent those three years instructed and blessed  
in the very presence and inspiration of Jesus Christ?

But that night Jesus had told them that he was leaving them,  
that he would be betrayed into the hands of sinners to die.  
**That wasn't your usual dinner party conversation, and the room  
was tense with their distress, confusion and troubled hearts...**

**... yet in spite of their fear, their doubt and imperfect faith,**  
Jesus offers promise and hope and grace, and reassurance

that it's going to be ok, everything exactly as God intends.  
Jesus was praying for his followers, for the coming crisis & beyond,  
preparing them to be the Church, and for us believers yet to come.

The message and assurance that Jesus gave the disciples that night,  
was that though he's leaving them, yet they weren't being abandoned.  
them, wherever they went

He would still be with

to see them through all of life's trials and storms.

Jesus responds to their anxiety and fear

with comfort and assurance before the coming storm, vs. 1

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

In the Greek, the form of the verbs specifically stresses this focus:

"You don't you continue to let your hearts be troubles.

You do believe in God ... so also trust and rely, believe into me."

And notice, there is nothing being said about mitigating the storm,  
or about Jesus making the circumstance change or go away.

The crucifixion would happen. He was preparing them for later,  
after the resurrection when it would all begin to make more sense.

**Believe in God believe also in me.** In this case, the Greek word for believe,  
is more than just accepting intellectual facts or ideas,

but means an active trust, certain & knowing you can count on me.

It means that we are connected, bound and tied by grace to Jesus  
through that relationship we **believe enough to respond in trust.**

One time a commercial flight was caught in a scary & turbulent storm.

Passengers and flight crew were instructed to buckle up  
while they endured as the aircraft was shaken and twisted,  
and most of the passengers were visibly upset and terrified.

Clearly almost everyone was frightened, worried and tense,  
except for one little girl who sat calmly reading her book.

Her seatmate asked how she could be so calm and peaceful,  
and she replied, "Because my it's daddy who's flying this plane,  
and I know he'll always bring me safely home."

**Jesus is offering his disciples that same sort of comfort and to us.**

Jesus then offers another image of hope and comfort, vs. 2-4

In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. 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, so that where I am, there you may be also.

I read that passage from John at almost every funeral I officiate  
because it's such a clear promise and comforting message of hope.

In such times of deepest grief, sadness, discouragement & loss,

it is the assurance that we will see our loved ones again,  
and be with the Lord our God who loves us and created us.

At one level, clearly Jesus is speaking about the Kingdom of Heaven,  
but he is also talking about way more than just a physical location.  
By grace, preparing a place for us, and **preparing us** for that dwelling place.  
I'm getting you and your place ready for you to dwell with the Lord God.

"I'm going to prepare a dwelling place for you, where you will abide with me".  
**Jesus talking about a relationship with the Lord, promising,  
there is a place for all of us in the heart of God for all time.**

But the ever-pragmatic Philip wants more of an explanation. vs. 8  
Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

**The irony of that statement and misunderstanding is amazing.**

The whole point of the incarnation,  
the birth, life, ministry, teaching and example of Jesus  
had always been to reveal the heart and character of God.

**How did you miss this? vs. 9**

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me?"

Jesus is not just a miracle-worker or wise teacher sent by God.  
But, God the Father, is present in Jesus, the Son, vs. 11.

**Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me**

**The whole mission of Jesus had always been to make known the Father,  
to reveal who God is, in a manner that was never possible before...  
... for Jesus is uniquely the physical presence of God in the world.**

**Jesus alone is uniquely the true way to life with God. vs. 6-7**

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 know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Speaking specifically to Thomas and the disciples that night,  
this was a powerful word of promise, reassurance and comfort,  
**that Jesus himself was all they will ever need.**

**Believe in God, believe in me also. I've got this and it's going to be OK!**

John's Gospel was probably written 70-75 years after the ascension  
and by this time, most of the disciples and followers  
who had actually known and walked with Jesus, had died.

The earliest Christians, especially the original disciples  
had expected Jesus to return again within their lifetimes,  
and so, where is Jesus amid this suffering and persecution?

**Some were feeling discouraged, confused, anxious and fearful.**

The writer of John recognized

that the same encouraging, hopeful and reassuring words of Jesus,  
that were spoken that night on which he was betrayed,  
would speak clearly to their fear and trepidation ...

**... the same message of hope, do not fear for you are going to be OK,  
don't be anxious or give up for wherever you go I will be with you.**

This passage is about hope, about God's power, promise and purpose.

**The message is that even though you don't fully understand,  
at least believe, trust and know you can rely on me,  
from what you have seen, heard and experienced... vs. 10**

Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me  
because of the works themselves.

**Jesus is going to the cross to reveal-** to show us God,

-to show us God's grace and mercy, just how much God loves us,  
who truly wants to walk with us, heal us, save us & bless us,

- and to show us how far God will go to communicate that love to us,  
so that we believe, and by believing live in joyful abundance.

**Jesus came as the tangible presence of God's gracious & healing love.**

Finally, perhaps the most important & critical part of this passage,  
is that Jesus is not addressing this to individual Christians,

**and it's not about just me & my Jesus apart from everyone else,**  
because growing in Christ is not something we do all on our own.

The Greek is explicit, that the word "you" used in this passage,  
is always very deliberately plural ---- "all of you together".

Jesus is addressing the Church, the full body of Christ,  
with promises that are meant for all of us gathered together...

**... and if interpreted individually we may miss the point.**

**By grace and faith we have all been grafted into the body of Christ,**  
which is the church, our faith-community and family,

**where we develop and live out our faith** as we participate  
actively & usefully in the life & mission of the Church  
as an expression of our shared faith and commitments.

**That is the shared and meaningful life together that our Lord  
intends and desires for his beloved, precious and blessed people.**

The Church of Jesus Christ is uniquely where we grow in God's grace,  
where we're equipped us to serve the Church's mission and purpose,  
so that together, we bless and make a difference in this world.

Although we are different and diverse in many wonderful & unique ways

**yet the faith we share in Jesus Christ and God's gracious love,  
inseparably binds us together through Christ who makes us one  
both now & forever, which is the hope & truth that we all share.**

As we read during our call to worship today from Psalm 121,  
whatever the troubles or issues going on in our lives today, vs. 1-2

I lift up my eyes to the hills— from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

When we are facing an uncertain future, illness or disappointment,

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

Though troubles threaten to overwhelm, and there seems no way out,

The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

All through Scripture we are reminded again and again,

that God's power and presence, these provide our certain hope...so,

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.