

Session 3 Confidence in Love: Overcoming Shame (Jn. 14:2-3)

I. REVIEW: JESUS' COMMAND NOT TO ALLOW TROUBLE TO DOMINATE OUR HEART

- A. Jesus commanded the disciples not to let trouble dominate their hearts (Jn. 14:1). There are human dynamics involved as indicated by His command to “let not...” He responds by giving us peace. In this session we focus on having confidence in God’s love as the way not to be troubled by shame.

³⁸*Jesus answered him [Peter], “...the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.”*

¹*“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God [a fact], believe also in Me [a command].”*

²⁷*My peace I give to you... Let not your heart be troubled... (Jn. 13:38-14:1, 27)*

1. In session one, I identified 7 pressures that would naturally cause 4 emotions or mindsets that would trouble them—*grief* from the death of a loved one, *fear* with despair from the crisis in the culture and persecution, *shame* from personal failure, and *bitterness* from betrayal.

I want to give a 5-minute review of last week’s teaching. In 14:1, Jesus commanded His people not to allow trouble to dominate their heart or mind. In 14:1, “Let not your heart be troubled.” That is a command. Then He said, in effect, in 14:27, “I will give you supernatural peace, but you must do your part. You must resist negative thoughts and emotions and align them with what the Word of God says. You must resist allowing trouble to just run rampant in your mind and emotions.” You have to say, “No!” Line your mind up in agreement with what the Word of God says. There are human dynamics involved—not to let trouble dominate our heart. Jesus will do His part by giving us peace supernaturally (14:27) when we do our part by resisting negative thoughts and agreeing with His Word. Again, we have an important role in refusing to allow trouble to dominate our heart, our thinking, our mind, and our emotions.

*I am identifying four negative emotions which are also mindsets in these five chapters which trouble our heart. One is grief, one is anxiety or fear with despair, one is shame, and the other is the bitterness of betrayal. Jesus identifies these and focuses on these four. He says not to let these get a stronghold inside of your mind and your emotions. We resist by the truths that He gave. In this session we will focus on walking in confidence in love—the emotion and mindset that we are focusing on in this session is to overcome **shame** that troubles the heart of many believers. It is an emotion and also a mindset. It is both as they overlap.*

Shame is one of the most common challenges in the life of a sincere believer. When we stumble, we can sink down in a way that is outside of the will of God. Yes, it is good to have godly sorrow when we stumble (2 Cor. 7:10). We need to repent of sin, declare war on it, receive His forgiveness and rise up with confidence believing in what Jesus says about forgiving us based on the sufficiency of His finished work on the cross thus enabling us to go forth in confidence.

2. Jesus told Peter, “You will deny Me three times (13:38), but let not your heart be troubled.” He informed Peter that he was not as strong as he thought he was, then Jesus gave 4 core truths to help Peter overcome a troubled heart related to the shame of betraying Jesus.

We must go back one verse to read John 13:38 as this verse leads us to John 14:1. There was no chapter break. He was in the same conversation. It is important to read 13:38, which is the verse right before John 14:1. In 13:38, He said to Peter, “You will deny Me three times.” Peter pushed back on this and said, “Jesus, I will never deny You. I will die for You.” Jesus said, “No, Peter, you will surely deny Me but let not your heart be troubled.” The very first issue after Jesus informed Peter of his failure was Jesus’ exhortation—that he not be

troubled. Jesus is in essence saying, “I am going to give you important truths.” He identified four core truths in John 14:2-3 that would help Peter overcome a troubled heart—related to shame, fear, and more.

- B. John 14:1 is not a salvation appeal to become born again. Many in Israel, including the Pharisees believed in the *God of Moses* without having seen His form (Jn. 5:37). They had *faith in an invisible God*. They were meticulous about the laws of Moses believing that they came from their invisible God. Jesus called them to believe also in Him *in this way*—after He died and was no longer visible.

¹**“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God [a fact], believe also in Me [a command].” (Jn. 14:1)**

*In 14:1, Jesus is not giving a gospel appeal for salvation. In this verse, He is not calling them to “be born again.” They are already saved. Jesus knew that many people in Israel “believed in the God of Moses” whom they had never seen. Jesus basically even said it in John 5:37, “You have never seen God’s form. No one has.” And yet many in Israel including the scribes and Pharisees **believed in the invisible God of Moses**. They believed in Him so much that they were zealous and meticulous about all the rituals associated with the law of Moses. They believed it so much that they even added many extra laws because “they believed in God” though they had never seen Him. Yes, there were many things that they did not obey Him in, but they did believe that He existed and that His laws were important. Many in the nation did believe in the invisible God of Moses.*

The new thing or command that Jesus was saying in 14:1 in essence was, “After tonight, you are not going to see Me. I will be invisible to you after tonight because I am going to die tomorrow. Therefore, you need to believe in Me like you believe in My Father—that is, ‘without seeing Me.’” They were looking at Him thinking, “What do You mean?” What Jesus was trying to get them to see was, “I am not going to be visible to you after tomorrow and you will need to understand or believe that I am as ‘much God’ as the invisible God the Father is” [the Old Testament God of Moses].

1. Jesus was saying as it were, “I will be invisible to you, but you must believe what I tell you about 4 truths (14:2-3) like you believe in the invisible God who gave the law of Moses.”
2. Thus, He insisted that receive Him as God similarly to their belief in the Father.

Next Jesus gave them four core truths in 14:2-3 that He required them to believe with the same confidence with which they believed in the law of Moses. They would need to anchor their hearts in these four truths after He died. He insisted that they saw Him as reliable and divine as the Father is. That is what He was saying to them.

I do not think they understood what He was commanding them—“to believe in Me this way.” We will look at these four core truths in a minute. Jesus would call them to believe that these truths are reliable and that we can base our lives on them. Even though we would not see Him, Jesus wants us to anchor our heart in these truths—they will equip us to overcome having a heart that is troubled by shame.

- C. The apostles’ crisis of stumbling (by denying or abandoning Jesus) was a painful, personal failure (13:38; 16:33). To alert them to pray, Jesus told them that they would all abandon Him (Mt. 26:31).

³⁸*...the rooster shall not crow till you [Peter] have denied Me three times. (Jn. 13:38)*

³²*...the hour...has now come, that you will be scattered...and will leave Me alone. (Jn. 16:33)*

³⁰*...they went out to the Mount of Olives. ³¹Jesus said, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night...” ³⁴[Peter] will deny Me three times.” (Mt. 26:30-34)*

The point we are focusing tonight is overcoming shame. In the upper room at the last supper, Jesus first told Peter, “You will deny Me.” Then a little later, in John 16:33, while in the same conversation, He told the eleven disciples (as Judas had already left) that “They would be scattered and would abandon Him.”

They were looking at Him thinking, “What do You mean that we will abandon You? What is going to happen in the next hours that we would even entertain the idea of abandoning You and being scattered?”

Then they left the upper room and walked to the way to the Mount of Olives, which is close by, so this was just a few moments after He told them in 16:33 that they would all scatter. Jesus said, “I will say it more clearly. Not only are you going to scatter,” in Matthew 26:31 He added, “You will all be made to stumble (or sin by abandoning Me). You are going to stumble tonight, every one of you because of Me.” Then He looked at Peter the second time and said, “Peter, I want to tell you again that you are going to deny Me.”

And Peter pushed back again. I mean, this is the second time He warned him. The first time was in the upper room. Peter said, “No. You really do not understand me. I will die for You.” Here it is the second time, at the Mount of Olives.

Jesus was saying, “It is important that you grasp this, Peter. Let me repeat this.” The Lord says in essence, “Peter, you are going to experience a spiritual failure in your life tonight. It is going to break your heart, Peter,” so here in 14:1, “do not let trouble dominate you. I am giving you the way through the shame that will trouble your heart. Here it is: you believe in God, believe also in Me.” Then He says in 14:27, “I will give you supernatural peace. I will do my part if you will do your part of resisting the trouble of shame dominating your mind and emotion by saying no to it and by speaking specific truths in the Word of God over your heart.”

A lot of folks just say, “Lord, give me peace,” while they let their minds just run rampant with troubling thoughts. They do not stop and realign their minds to believe what Jesus called them to believe—the truths and promises in the Word of God—that Jesus spoke to them in that very conversation in 14:2-3.

- D. Jesus told Peter a second time on that way to the Mount of Olives that he would deny Jesus. Peter pushed back yet again. *Peter had more confidence in his commitment to Jesus than in Jesus’ commitment to him.* Afterwards Peter would see Jesus’ commitment to him is far superior to his commitment to Jesus—this resulted in him being overwhelmed with gratitude for being so loved even in his weakness. This changed the way Peter felt about others who struggled with sin.

*The fundamental error that Peter had was that **he had more confidence in his commitment to Jesus than he had in Jesus’ commitment to him.** Peter wrongly thought his relationship with Jesus was secure because his commitment to Jesus was so strong. And Jesus looked at Peter and understood without saying it in words, “Peter, there needs to be a great shift in where you put your confidence.” Again, Jesus gave Peter four core truths in John 14:2-3 to help him realign his heart and put his confidence in Jesus’ commitment to him.*

Peter would learn that Jesus’ commitment to him was far superior to his commitment to Jesus. And when he saw that, then Peter was overwhelmed with gratitude knowing that even when he stumbled, Jesus’ commitment to him was reliable and continued until the end. Jesus’ love and commitment to His people is fierce and passionate, even in our weakness, and when we see this along with the four core truths in 14:2-3, our heart is awakened with deep gratitude. The gratitude for being forgiven and loved and cherished by Jesus, even in our weakness. Peter would have deep gratitude for Jesus’ mercy toward him, and it would spill over into his relationships with other people. Peter would be kind toward others who stumble with an overflow of the gratitude that he had because of how Jesus treated him when he stumbled. We see others through the lens of gratitude, and we view other people’s failure differently when we see how Jesus treats us when we stumble.

- E. Various sins and weaknesses are highlighted in the life of the leaders in the early church (Mk. 9:33; 10:33; Lk. 9:54-55; Acts 15:39; Rom. 7:18-19; Gal. 2:13; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 4:10; 3 Jn. 9).

There are a number of times that the apostles' weakness is seen in the New Testament. It is clear that the apostles were weaker than they thought they were when they listened to Jesus at the last supper in John 13-17.

I remember being a really zealous believer in high school. I met the Lord fifty years ago on June 9, 1971. I am enjoying my fifty-year anniversary of being born again. In high school, I was on fire for the Lord. I loved reading missionary biographies. We went on mission trips and evangelistic outreaches, and we witnessed to people almost every day, etc. But as I discovered my sin and weakness, I remember how shocked I was. I said, "I can't believe it!" I imagine now that the Lord was thinking, "There is a whole lot more sin and weakness in you that you are not aware of." The fact that I was shocked by seeing my sin was an expression of my unperceived arrogance.

As I see my weakness over the years, and then I see His tenderness, that creates a gratitude in me towards Him. That gratitude comes from growing in our confidence in His commitment to us. The gratitude that we have for it changes the way we relate to other people. We treat other people out of gratitude. With gratitude for what we have received, we treat others very differently.

Many believers are judgmental. They easily speak their judgments against others, often whispering in secret, but they have judgmental attitudes because they have not perceived the measure of mercy that they have actually received. They have not understood it. Yes, they know they need help and mercy, at least somewhat. We have far less judgments towards others when we understand how much we have been forgiven. In Luke 7:47, Jesus talked to Simon the Pharisee about the harlot who was washing His feet with her hair and tears. He said, "Simon, she has been forgiven much. That is why she loves Me so much." The person who thinks they are only forgiven little, they do not love that much. Therefore, it is easier for them to speak accusing, judgmental words about others.

II. THE ASSURANCE OF BEING ENJOYED BY GOD: POWER OVER SHAME

- A. God designed the human spirit with the longing for the assurance that we are enjoyed by God even in our weakness. This assurance grows in us as we gain understanding of His affections. He delights in the relationship He has with sincere believers (Isa. 62:4; Ps. 149:4; Song 7:10; Lk. 15:20). David was a student of God's emotions. His insights into God's emotions are seen throughout the Psalms.

⁴For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble... (Ps. 149:4)

⁴...but you shall be called Hephzibah...for the LORD delights in you... (Isa. 62:4)

¹⁸Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity...? Because He delights in mercy. (Mic. 7:18)

*God designed the human heart in such a way that our greatest longing is for **the assurance that we are enjoyed by God** even in our weakness. Now this is my language, not Jesus'—you can say this truth in different ways. We will look at the four core truths in a minute. These four core truths answer what I believe is the strongest, and most powerful longing in the human heart—the **assurance that we are enjoyed by God** even in our weakness.*

*When a believer grows in understanding God's heart, it creates this growing assurance that Jesus delights in His relationship with His people even though there are still areas in our lives that He wants to change and areas with which He disagrees. But He actually **delights in the relationship**. Many people wrongly think that if there is an area in their life that Jesus is not in favor of, then He is grieved over the entire relationship with*

them. But that is not how He responds to His people. God created the human heart with a longing for this assurance. We can grow in this assurance.

Growing in this assurance is one of main takeaways for the message tonight: that we would grow in confidence in His love. This confidence or assurance grows when we gain more insight into God's affection. David was a student of God's emotions. We can read the book of Psalms to see David's understanding of God's emotions. David was a man after God's own heart. Thus, he was committed to obey the commands of God's heart, and he was also committed to being a student of God's emotions, too. In this sense, David was a man after God's own heart.

- B. We cannot thrive spiritually without confidence in God's affection towards us, even in our weakness. The affection of the "Genesis 1 God" for us is a declaration of our value as a person. Confidence that God enjoys us and delights in showing us mercy (Mic. 7:18) strengthens our heart. Confidence empowers us *to run to God* instead of *running from God* when we see our sinfulness.

I just want to make a blanket statement. This is a conclusion that I have had for many years We cannot thrive spiritually if we do not have a growing confidence in God's affection towards us as sincere believers—even in our weakness. If we do not have a growing insight into this, then we need to be progressively growing in this truth. I have never seen people have a vibrant thriving spiritual relationship with the Lord if they lack this truth. Someone can be on fire for a few years and be zealous and go to many of the meetings and all the outreaches and do everything. But, after a few years, their passion often slowly drains away, so to speak—I do not know if "drain" is the right word. God's affection for us is a declaration of our value, our intrinsic value as a person. The fact that the "mighty Genesis 1 God" desires us—beloved, that declares your value beyond any other declaration that could be made. The fact that God desires to be with you; He wants you in His family. That is a remarkable statement about how important you are.

- C. The fear of rejection with shame is perhaps the most common destructive and painful emotion that we can experience. Many psychologists disagree in how they distinguish between guilt and shame. One view is that a person who feels guilty sees that "**what they did was wrong**" and thus they feel responsible to correct it. The one with shame concludes that "**who they are is wrong.**" They lash out in anger at themselves and others and thus either avoid or attack people. Many who are highly judgmental struggle with shame. They vent their disgust of themselves by speaking critically of others. *What we say about others say a lot about how we see ourselves.* The contrast of guilt and shame in secular terms parallels the contrast of conviction and condemnation in biblical terms.

The fear of rejection that comes with shame is perhaps one of the most destruction, painful, traumatizing emotions that a human being can experience. I want to say that again. I believe that shame and the fear of rejection that is related to it is one of the most traumatizing, painful, crippling emotions that a human can have. But in contrast to it, when we have confidence, it is exactly opposite. It strengthens our heart. Confidence that God delights in the relationship, that God is for us, that God has great mercy. Micah 7:18 says, "He delights in giving mercy." That is one of my favorite verses. He does not just give mercy sort of begrudgingly. But "He delights to do it."

When we have confidence in our spiritual life, then our heart grows strong. When we have shame, it cripples our heart. It injures our heart. When we have confidence in the truth about what Jesus is like and how He feels about us, even when we stumble, then we run to Him with an open heart because we know that is the only safe place of refuge. When we know the way He feels about us—that is the only place I can go for sure and be fully

accepted and loved and enjoyed. But if we do not have this confidence, we run from Him when we stumble, we do not run to Him, and that is exactly what the enemy wants.

Now psychologists and sociologists distinguish between guilt and shame and there are disagreements, but I am just going to give a thought or two on this. Yes, various camps disagree with each other in distinguishing guilt and shame. Guilt says, “What I did was wrong.” But shame says, “Who I am is wrong.” They are different. Guilt says that the activity was wrong. I need to take responsibility and correct it. Shame says, “I am wrong”—my essence as a person is wrong. In my core identity, I am bad and wrong. Guilt in context to some psychologists implies that I am owning that what I did was wrong, and therefore, I will take responsibility for it and seek to repair the damage that my wrong behavior created. But shame cancels out the person. It cancels out their whole personhood; they feel written off and hopeless. The enemy’s goal is get us filled with shame so we feel written off and hopeless.

People with guilt do try to repair the relationships that they have hurt; rather shame avoids or attacks people. Shame creates an angry response. Matter of fact, the most judgmental believers that you know are probably those who feel the most shame and feel accused in their own heart, because if you feel accused and shamed, it is really easy to vent it towards others.

If you run into somebody who is mistreating you—I mean, they are falsely criticizing you—instead of only seeing them as a judgmental person or whatever, think of them as someone who is hurting with shame and accusation against themselves in their own heart. You might pray, “Lord, I want to help them by blessing them.” Do this instead of being mad at them because they are mad at you. Remember they have to go to bed with themselves every night and feel the pain of their shame as they go to sleep. You might have mercy and say, “Wow, maybe I could be helpful.”

- D. What do we do when our heart is troubled with shame and condemnation related to our failure? We must realign our mind to agree with what God said: His peace will guard our hearts. Paul exhorted us to engage in prayer and thanksgiving (for core truths); that is, conversation with God that expresses thanks for the core biblical truths which are foundational to receiving His peace.

⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer...with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God...will guard your hearts and minds... (Phil. 4:6-7)

²...be transformed [emotionally] by the renewing of your mind... (Rom. 12:2)

I am just saying it again. What do we do when our heart is troubled with shame? We do the same thing when it is troubled with the other negative emotions and mindsets. I identified four different emotions and mindsets in John 13 to 17 that are clearly in the conversation: grief, anxiety or fear, shame, and betrayal. Those are four mindsets that were troubling the disciples. Jesus was saying, “Believe what I say and overcome those four things.” But this one tonight we are focusing on shame itself.

What do we do when our heart is troubled with shame? The same thing we do when we have grief, anxiety, fear or the bitterness of betrayal. We must realign our mind to agree with what God says. Look what Paul says in Philippians 4:6, “Be anxious for nothing”—this is the same thing that Jesus is saying, “Do not let your heart be troubled.” He is saying the same truth but using different phraseology. So, Paul, “Do not be anxious for anything,” or “Do not let your heart be troubled.” He could have just as easily said that.

Next Paul gives us the key, “In everything by prayer with thanksgiving.” In other words, prayer speaks of getting into conversation with God. While in conversation with Jesus, thank Him for the core truths that He has made known to us, the truths that help deliver our hearts from the trouble. Some preachers say, “We thank Him for the trouble.” I do not think that is what Paul is talking about. We are grateful for the core truth, meaning when shame comes, we say, “Father, thank You for Your great mercy in forgiving me.”

I have taught this for some decades actually: that when I read a truth about God’s promises in the Bible, I often stop and say, “Thank you Lord for that promise—for example, “Thank you that You, Lord, desire to be with me (14:3). Thank you, Lord, that You have prepared a place for me (14:2). Thank you, Lord, that the Father’s house exists and You established it (14:2). Thank You that You did that.” In other words, I say, “Thank You, show me more. Thank You, show me more.”

It is important to get the biblical core truths into your conversation with the Lord. It is not enough just think how amazing a specific promise is. Actually talk to God about it. Actually say, “Thank you, Lord, show me more!” Many times you will add more phrases and more sentences.

I have done this for some decades. You know core truths like, “God so loved the world.” I might say, “Thank you that You so loved the world including me. Show me more!” And then often I will add another phrase or two, and it sometimes inspires my heart, and sometimes it does not. It is important to get biblical truths and promises into conversation with God with thanksgiving for them, thus in everything by prayers with thanksgiving for those core truths. Thank Him and ask Him to show you more.

In Philippians 4:7, Paul adds, “and the peace of God will guard your heart.” Even a little bit of peace can guard our heart (our emotions), and it also guards our mind (our thinking). Often when even sincere believers get negative emotions and wild negative thoughts, they just let them run their course for a couple days or a week. The Lord would say, “No! Challenge those dark thoughts and emotions by speaking My promises over your heart.”

The answer is in our mouths. We are to say what God’s Word says about us and, in time, peace will guard our emotions and thinking. You can enjoy a reprieve from some those heightened dark emotions and thoughts. We do not have to let them run their course in us for a few weeks or even a few hours, whatever. Paul said it another way in Romans 12—I have used these verses almost every week—you will be transformed in your emotions by renewing your mind, lining your mind up with the core truth that God said to believe.

We must prioritize cultivating this confidence in God’s affection and God’s emotion for us. We cultivate this when we feel shame and condemnation by saying, “Stop, no, I am not going to let this trouble to dominate my heart. I am going to say ‘no’ to it by speaking what the Word of God says is true about me.”

If you do that consistently, the peace of God will come in. But He wants you to say “no” or to resist the negative thinking that disagrees with what He says about you. That is what I mean by resist the negative—that which disagrees with Him. The most natural thing for us to do with negative thoughts and emotions just to let them carry us for a while like being carried by a rushing river of negativity. Many believers just go a flow of negative thoughts for a few days, or even a few weeks. They sort of ride out the storm waiting for a reprieve.

Jesus says, as it were, “No. Stand up and speak My Word over the storm and do not let that trouble dominate your heart. I will surely intervene in time with My peace if you stay with it.” Maybe the storm will not all go away immediately. But the peace will grow over time. It is not like the peace comes and is there permanently. In my experience, I have had peace, and then, some days later, I am troubled again. Jesus says to me in those times not to let trouble dominate my thinking but to speak His Word over my own mind and heart. Then the peace comes again.

A lot of believers pray, “Well, give me peace if You want to.”

He says, in effect, “No, I am going to give you peace when you take a stand and let not the trouble dominate.” So we have a role, and the Lord has a role.

E. We have confidence because of what He did (14:2), how He feels (14:3), and who He is (14:4-10).

²In My Father’s house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you...³I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (Jn. 14:2-3)

Just a real quick overview of the three reasons that we have confidence so that we are not overwhelmed with a troubled heart. Again, why should we have confidence to overcome troubled emotions and mindsets? Because of what He did in 14:2. how He feels in 14:3, and who He is in 14:4-10. We will look at 14:4-10 in the coming weeks. There are three reasons to have confidence: What He did. How He feels or why He did it is another way to say it. And who He is.

1. ***What He did (14:2)***: Jesus is the architect of the New Jerusalem (Heb 11:10; cf. Jn. 1:3) which is the Father’s house, and He went to the cross to make a way for us to live there.

¹⁰[Abraham] was looking for the city...whose architect and builder is God. (Heb. 11:10 NAS)

What did He do? Jesus highlights two different things in verse 2. Jesus is the architect and builder of that city (together with the Father and the Spirit—They all did it all together). Hebrews 11:3 says that the Word of God created the worlds, and thus the Word of God is the builder and the architect of that city in Hebrews 11:10. The very fact that the Father’s house exists is so amazing and generous. The Father’s house exists because of Jesus and the Father and the Spirit. The second thing in 14:2 is that Jesus was going to prepare a place for you which is what He did on the cross.

2. ***How He feels (14:3)***: He desires that we be with Him (17:24).

How does He feel? This is fantastic! Jesus declared that He was going to receive us to Myself so that where He is, there we will be. That is why He prepared a place for us.

*He did not prepare a place for us just because He wanted an eternal workforce of servants in His kingdom. He wants a family, even a Bride. He wants us to be with Him forever. **He desires us more than we desire Him**, and that should be staggering to us.*

We may be thinking, “Lord, don’t write me off.”

The Lord would say, “No, I never will, but you must stay in the conversation with Me. Why would I go prepare a place and establish the Father’s heart if I did not want you? Why would I come again if I do not want you? No. Line up with what I say about you.”

Our confidence in God’s affection grows as we understand what He did on the cross but in addition why He did it. We must thank Him for this. When was the last time you said, “Jesus, thank You that You want to be with me,” or “Thank You that You want to be with me”?

3. ***Who He is (14:4-10)***: He is the only way to the Father and is one with the Father (Jn. 10:30).

In 14:4-10, we see He is one with the Father. Imagine, the Man who wants to with you is one with God the Father. Thank Him for this and ask Him to show you more.

III. FOUR CORE TRUTHS (JN. 14:2-3)

- A. Jesus declared 4 core truths in John 14:2-3: Three of these core truths are related to **what** Jesus has done or will do and one core truth tells us **why** He committed to do what He did.

²In My Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you...³I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (Jn. 14:2-3)

Let's look at these four core truths. Three of these truths are related to what Jesus has done or will do. Three of these truths are the "**what**" that God has done or will do, and one of these truths is the "**why**" He did the three "**whats**." So, He is going to give us three "**whats**" and one "**why**" He does what He does.

1. **Truth #1—My Father's house:** The Lord is the architect and builder of the New Jerusalem (Heb. 11:10), or the Father's house, where the redeemed live and belong together as family in God's immediate presence and enjoy pleasures and beauty that surpass any paradise that we can imagine. He prepared the way for us to enjoy the Father's house *spiritually* in this age by the indwelling Spirit (14:17, 23) and *physically* when He returns at His second coming.

First—this is remarkable—"In My Father's house." I have no doubt that Jesus is still looking right at Peter, "You will deny Me, but do not let your heart be troubled." The first thing He says is so surprising. He says, in essence, "Anchor your thinking in the reality of being My Father's house together with Me forever. I am the architect and builder of the city of God, the New Jerusalem, the Father's house. It was in My heart and mind to create this for you."

Peter could say, "Why are we talking to me first about eternity right after warning me of my failure in denying You?" Jesus wanted Peter to anchor his heart there first. I do not know very many pastors or counselors who take this approach when dealing with somebody who is troubled with shame. Jesus went right to the New Jerusalem, which is the Father's house. That was truth number one that Jesus emphasized. In Hebrews 11:10, God is the architect and builder of the New Jerusalem (which is the Father's house). So, the first thing is what God has already established. The Father's house exists.

Now, I want you to note this: This is where Jesus begins. This is the point of truth He emphasizes first when He is teaching them to overcome a troubled heart. I mean, what pastor or counselor or analyst or psychologist would begin with a person with a troubled heart of anxiety, fear, or shame and the first point they make is the eternal Father's house. Really? That seems like a little pie-in-the-sky, but Jesus would say, "It is not. You get anchored in that truth, and you will view your life through an entirely different lens when you see this as your story, your inheritance, and how I feel about you." It is remarkable.

2. **Truth #2—I am going to prepare a place for you:** Jesus succeeded in accomplishing eternal salvation. He went to the cross to prepare or fully secure our place in the Father's house forever. Within one day He cried out, "It is finished" or the work of atoning for sin is done.

Core truth number two. Jesus says, "I am going to prepare a place for you." And He means going to the cross; we talked about that last week. But the strength of this encouraging promise is in the word "prepare." He is saying, "I am going to do something so perfectly. I am going to accomplish the work of redemption with such success. It is going to be so reliable, fully prepared. You will be utterly prepared forever by the work that I do, and nobody can undo it. I am going to the cross. I am going to make a way for you through the sufficiency of the finished work of the cross. That is the second "what" I am going to do."

3. **Truth #3—I will come for you:** He will come back to receive His people to Himself. He will come to His people *physically* at the end of this age to reign over all the nations from Jerusalem, while He comes to them *spiritually* in this age by the indwelling Spirit (14:23).

Now Jesus declares the third “what” He will do: “I will come for you.” The main thing He is talking about here is His second coming at the end of the age. But in John 14:23 He is also going to come to them on the day of Pentecost by the Holy Spirit to dwell in them—to communicate with and impart truth to them.

So, He comes to us spiritually in this age, but He will come to us physically at the second coming. At the end of the age, Jesus will come back to reign over all the earth with His physical, resurrected body. At that time, He will bring the Father’s house down to the earth—the New Jerusalem will descend out of heaven to the earth (Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 10). We will live with Jesus in our resurrected bodies in the New Jerusalem in the Father’s house.

So, core truth number one, the Father’s house exists. Core truth number two, Jesus is going to the cross to secure in a permanent way our place in that house forever. He fully paid the debt of our sin. It is final. It is done. On the very next day He cried out, “It is finished,” and it was finished forever. That is a fact you can count on. Core truth number three, “I am coming to you by the indwelling Spirit at Pentecost, and I am coming for you in the sky at My second coming. We will live for billions of years in face-to-face communion forever.

This is Peter’s story, so “Peter, do not be troubled by your shame, but trust in My heart for you.” Beloved, this is your story too. Do not wait until you die before you rejoice with confidence in this core truth.

4. **Truth #4—That where I am, there you may be:** Here, Jesus gave the *why* behind *the what* He would do in 3 areas (the Father’s house, going to the cross, and His second coming). He desires His people more than they desire Him just as He is more committed to His people than they are to Him. This core truth helped Peter not to be troubled with shame of his failure.

Now He is going to give us a “why” behind those three “whats.” Why is there a Father’s house, and why is He going to the cross, and why does He want to come to us? The answer is indescribably glorious. He said, “Because I am going to receive you to Myself.” It is impossible to exaggerate the glory and privilege that is implied here. The Genesis 1 God became a Man and died for us because He desires that we be with Him

Jesus gave this core truth to men who would stumble, fail, and abandon Him that very night. He says, “I am coming back for you because where I am, there I want you to be with Me forever. Jesus was saying to Peter and the others, “I desire you more than you desire Me. I am more committed to you than you are to Me.”

So, there is the fact of the Father’s house, the fact of Jesus going to the cross pay the debt of our sin, the fact Jesus coming back for His people and the why: so that we always with Him where He is. He is saying, “Peter, I want you to “believe in Me” (14:1) as I declared these four core truths to you

I love to repeat these truths because we just cannot say them too often. When was the last time that you thanked Jesus that the Father’s house exists and then asked for more insight into it? Do you continue to thank Jesus for preparing a way for you to be in the Father’s house?

We must often thank Jesus for coming back for us. First by the indwelling Spirit in this age and then the physically at His second coming. After you thank Jesus for these core truths, then pray, “Show me more, Lord! Show me more of these things.” As we get these core truths into our mouth in prayer, then we are starting to obey Jesus’ command, “Do not let trouble dominate your heart” (14:1). He gives these four core truths as our beginning point.”

- B. Jesus began elaborating on what it means to overcome a troubled heart by promising that He would bring them to the Father's house. This gave them a radically new perspective for their lives.
- C. Jesus went to the cross to prepare a place for us. That "place" was prepared when He died to atone for our sin. He had to suffer God's wrath in our place to remove every obstacle to our acceptance by God. Jesus, the innocent One became guilty so that the guilty ones could stand as innocent before God. The next day Jesus declared, "*It is finished!*" He qualified us join Him there now and forever.

21 For He [the Father] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:21)

24 being justified freely...through the redemption...in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation...28 a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. (Rom. 3:24-28)

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life... (Ps. 23:6)

*Now He makes this big statement, "I go to prepare a place." This is massive. I think this is one of the most monumental statements that Jesus made in His whole 3 ½-year earthly ministry. It probably did not seem that big to them. He had told them on three different occasions on His way to Jerusalem that He was going to Jerusalem to die. They didn't grasp what He meant. They thought, "You cannot die, You are the Messiah. You are going to deliver Israel from Rome and usher in Your worldwide kingdom. Therefore, You cannot die. That is not possible. There are too many Bible verses that say You will rule all the nations." Well, there are Bible verses in Isaiah 53 that also indicate that the Messiah would die too, but they did not grasp that, so He told them at least three times on the way to Jerusalem—"I am going to Jerusalem to die." But He had not yet told them **why** He would die. This is the first time. This is massive. He said, "I am going to die to successfully prepare a place for you in face-to-face communion with My Father in My presence forever. I am preparing that for you through My death." I do not think that any of this made sense to the apostles until after His resurrection.*

They might have thought that Jesus said, "I am going to prepare My Father's house," because Jesus had said on Tuesday of that week that "every stone in this temple would be torn down" (Mt. 24:2). Now here on Thursday. they might have been thinking that maybe He was going to go to another area of Israel to build another temple or something because He called the temple His Father's house. They were not grasping what He means about the preparing a place in the Father's house for them.

*Now for the first time He is telling them **why** He is going to die—to prepare a place so we could be with Him. He wants to be with His people. Why would a God as powerful, as beautiful, as interesting, as fascinating as Jesus want to be with somebody as weak and boring as me? It is because of who He is. Therefore, it was essential that they would "Believe also in Him (14:1)." Though they would not see Him after His ascension, they must believe in these core truths. They had to believe in His invisible promises just like we do today.*

So, when He said, "I go to prepare a place," this was such a massive statement He was making. "I am going to prepare a place for you that is final and completely sufficient." The place that He had to go was the cross to die to atone for their sin, that is to pay the price for their sin in the court of God's justice. He had to bear the wrath of God in their place to remove every obstacle between them and the Father. They did not understand that.

Only after the Holy Spirit was given to them did they receive revelation of what happened on the cross (Rom. 3:21-31; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 1:3-23; Col. 1:12-18).

Paul said it the clearest right here in 2 Corinthians 5. It is very graphic and so clear. For He—the Father—made Him who knew no sin— Jesus is Him who knew no sin—The Father made Jesus to be sin. What? As a free gift He made the innocent One take the role of the guilty ones so that the guilty ones (you and I) could stand in the place and of the innocent One before God? This is staggering beyond almost human comprehension. The innocent One became guilty so that as a free gift the guilty ones can stand as innocent before God.

*Here is why He did it. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:21. This is staggering. It is mind-boggling. So that we, weak and broken people, as a free gift of God **have become the righteousness of God** in Christ Jesus. Beloved, when you received Jesus, He gave you His righteousness as a gift. He prepared a place for you. But why did He do it? Because He wants to be with you. He did not just do it just to have free work force in heaven forever. He did it because He desires you. He desires relationship with you forever.*

We must not let shame trouble our heart. In light of everything He has done for us, Jesus says, as it were, “Do not let shame rule your heart.” Romans 8:1 is the famous verse: “There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.” In context this is for sincere believers who have a genuine “yes” in their spirit to obey Jesus. They sincerely want to obey Him, but when they come up short in their sin and weakness, they do not look at their sin and casually say, “Oh well, boys will be boys; everyone is doing it, what is the big deal?” No. They declare war on the sin that they stumble in. They set their heart to resist it. They might stumble 50 to 100 more times over the years in that area, but they rise up and say, “No. No, it is not okay with me that I just sinned. I am Yours, and You are mine. I stand before You by the gift of righteousness. You prepared a way for me. You prepared it, it is already done, and You did it because You desire to be with me. I am going to believe You. And I desire to be with You.”

*By His death, He qualified us (Col. 1:12); you can read that later. By His death we are made qualified. Can you imagine people like us are qualified to live in the Father’s house as a free gift? The very next day on the cross, Jesus declared with prophetic certainty, **“It is finished.”** In saying, “I am going to prepare a place,” Jesus meant that it would be finished very soon. It will be a fact that could never, ever be undone. What a stunning declaration! We will dwell together in the Father’s house forever.*

- D. He made a monumental statement when He said, “I go to prepare a place for you.” This promise had a tone of certainty and finality knowing “it would be forever finished” in the next 24 hours. He prepared a place for us to live in a face-to-face relationship with the Father—in His very house.

Oh, I love this! I think of this as one of the most monumental statements He made in His three-and-a-half-year ministry. This statement is so big! It is massive that He “prepared a place”—this has a note of finality and certainty. It is not going to be only partially prepared; Jesus did not stop halfway in between when completing His atoning work on the cross. When Jesus said, “It is finished,” you can count on it forever.

Our story is that we will live in the Father’s house, the New Jerusalem, in deep relationship with Jesus. Life in this age does not make sense without this salvation storyline.

- E. They had no idea of the magnitude of what Jesus was saying to them, that He was going to die to accomplish eternal salvation for them. We must never lose focus of the cross and its sufficiency.

I think they had no idea of the magnitude of what He was saying to them in verse 2 and 3. They had no idea the magnitude. He was going to die as a perfect man filled with love for us. He was going to die to accomplish eternal salvation for weak and broken people. Anyone can have it for free? What? Really? That is just beyond exaggeration. It is beyond anything we can grasp in its fullness. This is so big. We can never lose sight of it. As a matter of fact, Paul said it in Galatians 6:14: “I glory in the cross and what happened.” I never lose my

fascination with that Man and what He did for us on that cross. And then I have the passage here in Revelation 5. I mean for all of eternity we will be magnifying this Man for His shed blood on the cross. We will be singing about it for billions of years. We will never, ever exhaust the gratitude and fascination we have with this reality. Meaning, let us get into it now. Let's not wait until the age to come to start really locking into this. This is massive.

These guys had no idea the magnitude of what Jesus had just told them. "In My Father's house," okay, that is good. "I am going to prepare in a successful eternal final way for you to go there. I am coming back," whoa. "Because you are going to be with Me where I am. Because I desire you more than you even desire Me. Let not your heart be troubled. Draw on those."

We can never ever lose sight of the glory of what He just said, "I am going to prepare a place for you." He is about to die within the next hours to accomplish eternal salvation for anyone in the human family who wants it. This is so big. Paul said in Galatians 6:14, "I glory in the cross." That is, "I am so awestruck by what He did for us and the price He paid, I will never get over it."

*In Revelation 5:8-10 makes it clear that forever we will be awestruck by love shown to us by Jesus going to the cross to make a way for us. We will never outgrow this reality, ever, in the age to come. It will always be one of the main central themes in the holy gatherings, the convocations before the Lord. They will sing for ages and ages the glory of what He did when He shed His blood. He is saying it right there in John 14:2; He says, "I am going to go prepare a place for you." You know, that is the first time He told them why He was going to die in Jerusalem. They had not connected it yet. I mean that "I am going to prepare a place for you and come back for you" is a massive statement. He was all but saying, this is the core truth they will sing about forever and forever and forever. My real point is not just that we will never graduate from it. Let's lay hold of this **now**. I want my mind and my heart guarded, not troubled, by lining up with thanksgiving. Thank You for what the cross did. Thank You for the desire You have, for why You went to the cross: because You want to be with me.*

IV. JESUS PREPARED THE WAY FOR HIS PEOPLE TO BE WITH HIM (JN. 14:3)

- A. Jesus applied His promise *to come to them* in 3 ways—His second coming (14:3; Mt 24:30), by dwelling in them by the Spirit (14:23), and appearing to them soon after His resurrection (16:16).

³**I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.** (Jn. 14:3)

²³**...If anyone loves Me...We will come to him and make Our home with him.** (Jn. 14:23)

²²**...you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice...** (Jn. 16:22)

He promised to come to His people and receive them to Himself so that where He is, there they will be also.

When He said, "I will come again," there are three different applications of His coming to His people in John 13-17. He comes in three ways. The main way that He is referring here is to His second coming in the sky, the one He talked about two days earlier on Tuesday in Matthew 24:29. He said, "I will be seen in the sky by everybody." By this they knew what He meant by promising to come again to them.

Second, a few moments later He again spoke of coming to them in 14:23. Here, He promised to come to them by the indwelling Spirit at Pentecost so that they could experience the Father's house spiritually by enjoying communion with the Lord in this age before living in the Father's house physically in the age to come.

In 14:23, Jesus said, “We will come to you and make Our home with you,” speaking of communion with God in this age. In other words, He was saying that we can thrive spiritually in the face of trouble. We can have a vibrant heart spiritually, with a tender heart towards God and towards people. Beloved, the superior pleasure of the gospel is to feel God’s love for you and to feel a little bit of that love back for Him and others. That is the superior pleasure of the gospel. It is the greatest pleasure available to the human frame: when God lets us feel His love from Him and give a little back to Him. The human spirit was designed to thrive there. That is the conversation He wants us in.

Third, He referred to “coming to them” in 16:22 by appearing to them right after His resurrection on several occasions before His ascension to heaven in Acts 1:9-11.

- B. **There you may be:** Jesus is deeply desirous for us to be with Him forever (14:3; 17:24). He had told them three times before this that He was going to die and be raised (Mt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19) but here He told them **why** He was to die—to prepare the way for them “to be with Him forever.”

²⁴**Father, I desire that they...may be with Me where I am...[to] behold My glory... (Jn. 17:24)**

¹⁸**...that you may know...the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints... (Eph. 1:18)**

This phrase, “I desire,” speaks of the deep emotions of God for His people. He said, “I am going to receive you to Myself.” And then a little while later that evening while offering His famous John 17 prayer, Jesus was not talking to them but praying to the Father (and they are listening to Him), He said this fantastic statement which reveals **why** He is going to the cross to prepare a place. He said, “...so you could be with Me” in 14:3, but here in John 17:24 He says this in even a stronger way. Here He is just moments away from sweating drops of blood in anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk. 22:44), that is just a minute down the road, maybe an hour or two, who knows. Right before that happens, He prays, “Father, I desire that they would be with Me where I am.” He is about to enter into the reality of His suffering, yet He says, “I desire. Father, I desire her. I want her with Me, My Bride. I do not want to rule the nations alone. I want to rule them with her, My beloved people—My Bride, I want them to be with Me. This statement is so dynamic that it is almost impossible to grasp its full meaning and implications.

I love the verse in Song of Solomon 7:10 where the bride says, “I am my Beloved’s, and His desire is toward me.” (Spiritually, “the Beloved” speaks of King Jesus whereas, in the natural she spoke of King Solomon). The King’s desire is for His beloved Bride. Do we really grasp that, “His desire is for me?” Really? I mean, we can only get a little bit of that. Paul prayed in Ephesians 1:17-18, that the Father would release the spirit of revelation on the saints so that they would know by experience the riches of the glory of being Jesus’ inheritance. Beloved, the riches of the glory of being who Jesus wants or desires! You are who He wants. You are who He desires.

Why does He desire you? Why does He desire me? Why does He desire the others in the body of Christ? Because of who He is. It is because of His personality. Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. His heart is so different than anybody else’s heart. That is why He wants us so much. Paul prayed that we could see the riches of the glory of being Jesus’ inheritance, being what He wants and who He desires. And so, we pray, “Jesus, I want to see what You see. I want to feel what You feel when You look at me. Jesus, I want to see what You see and feel what You feel when You look at me. “

Well, Jesus’ statement, “...that where I am, there you will be also” is the high point of this revelation. It is the “**why**” behind the “**what**.” The three “**whats**” are that He established the Father’s house (the New Jerusalem), He went to the cross to prepare a place for us, and He is coming back. Why? So that we can be with Him. This truth declares our intrinsic value. Beloved, you know why you are valuable? Because Jesus wants you. That

makes you so valuable. He did not die for angels, but He died for you. He wants you. This statement also tells us what He contends for. He wants us close together. This statement tells us what Satan is attacking. Satan does not want us to enter into this.

- C. Jesus paid the full price to secure our nearness to Him. Jesus died so we could be with Him and not stand at a distance because of shame. *He desires us more than we desire Him*—thank Him for this.

¹⁹...having boldness [confidence] to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus...²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance...²³Hold fast the confession of our hope... (Heb. 10:19-23)

Look at Hebrews 10:19-23. It uses, in the New King James, the words, “boldness” and “full assurance,” but I added the word “confidence” because it is the same thing. We have confidence. Do we? I mean, we do if we take hold of the Word. However, if we just let negative emotions run wild and control us—do we see our failure and conclude, “Oh, I am just so bad, whatever.” No. We resist those lies, and we say what God says about us. We have confidence to enter the holy of holies—that is the Father’s house. I mean, there is more to it than that, but we have confidence to enter in by the blood of Jesus. It is a new and living way.

Here it is, verse 22, “Draw near with confidence. Draw near with confidence.” Beloved, do not be content to live at a distance from Him in your heart with negative thoughts fueled by condemnation and accusation. You say, “Well, I really messed up last week. I did not read the Word. God is boring to me. I mean, I love Him, but He is boring, and the Bible is boring, and prayer is boring, and nothing seems to work. Everything is bad. So I am just going to wait this negative emotion out.”

I say to you, No! Do not be content to live at distance from Him. He wants you near Him. This is the truth in verse 23—look—“Hold fast this confession on your lips.” This is your testimony. Instead of the word “confession,” insert the word, “testimony.” Confess that without wavering you are going to draw near. That is your testimony. That is your confession. That is your statement of faith.

Satan’s greatest weapons in this age are fear and accusation (Rev. 12:10). He lies to create fear and accusation against you in your own heart. He gets you to buy into lies about how God has written you off and that you have gone too far and that it is too late, and there is no tomorrow or new day of mercy for you. He gets you to believe lies about you—he gets you to accuse yourself, then you are easy prey to speak accusations against others. If he can get into accusation against yourself, then you will have no patience with the failures of others who bother you. He wants to put his accusations in your mouth against yourself and then in your mouth against others.

V. HOW JESUS RESPONDED TO THE DISCIPLES IN THEIR FAILURE

I am going to go through the next part of my handout really rapid-fire here. How did Jesus respond? Why do we care about how He responded? Because Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8 teach us that God never changes. So, however He responded to the apostles is a picture, a guarantee, a reliable model of how He responds to us. What He said and did to them—and I could give you a handful more verses of how they failed besides just stumbling that night—this tells us how He responds to His servants that stumble and fail.

- A. On the night that Peter and all the others stumbled (Mt. 26:31), Jesus spoke of loving them (15:9; 17:23), called them His friends (15:15), prayed for them, and spoke words of life over them (15:8). Jesus never changes (Heb. 13:8); how He responded to the apostles then is how He responds to us. He declared truths over them *before* they stumbled—it is easier to believe truth *before* stumbling.

⁸By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit... (Jn. 15:8)

⁹*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you... (Jn. 15:9)*

¹¹*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you... (Jn. 15:11)*

¹⁵*...I have called you friends... (Jn. 15:15)*

On that very night all of them stumbled. He spoke lovingly to them, He called them His friends. He prayed for them. He spoke words of life over them. Each one of these truths—and I could put more verses in there—Each one of these truths is like a missile destroying Satan’s lies that come, the accusations that come to hold us into bondage. Just a few moments after Jesus alerts them of their failure that will occur that night He says, “You are going to bear fruit.” In other words, “You are not disqualified. You are going to be a fruit-bearer.”

They might have said, “I thought we were going to fail tonight?” By the next day they probably felt that they had gone too far in their failure, that they were now disqualified spiritually to be leaders in the kingdom.

He said, “No, no, you are fruit-bearers; that is your destiny in Me.” The enemy wants to convince you that you are disqualified, and it is over, but it is not true. Jesus has called us to bear fruit even after our failure.

In 15:9 He says in essence, “I love you in the same intensity the Father loves Me, and though tonight you will fail Me, but this truth about how I love you and feel about you will help you to recover.” And He could have continued by saying, “By this time tomorrow, you will know how important the truths are that I just told you in 15:8-11.”

Speak these truths back to Jesus. Beloved, I do not care what stumbling you did this month, last month, this week, next week—sincerely repent of it and say, “Jesus, thank You that You love me like the Father loves You. Show me more. This is my testimony. This is my story. I am lining my heart up with Your Word and I am not going to let my heart be troubled.”

A few verses later in 15:11, Jesus said, “My joy will remain in you.” Beloved, there is life after our failure. The enemy lies and tells you that you went too far and is too late to recover. The opportunity for mercy and a new start has passed. Jesus says, “No, you have not gone too far. In fact, I am committed to release My joy in you. It is within your reach, and it is part of your inheritance.”

Begin to thank Him that you will walk in His joy. “Thank You that Your joy will be in me. Thank You that is my story. Thank You that is my future. Joy and peace”

The Lord would say, “Agree with My promises to you; do not let your trouble dominate your heart.”

Then in 15:15, Jesus declared that they were His friends. That is the truth. Thank You. When was the last time you thanked Jesus that He sees you as His friend? And you said, “Lord, show me more”?

B. Jesus spoke words of life over Peter, assuring him that he would recover and be used by God.

³¹*The Lord said, “Simon...Satan has asked for you...³²I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” (Lk. 22:31-32)*

*Then, an hour or two later or whatever, Jesus prayed for them. Since we know He prayed for Peter, we know He is also praying for us, because Romans 8:34 says, “He makes intercession for us.” Hebrews 7:25, “He lives forever to make intercession.” He is making intercession for us as He did for Peter. Notice what He said to Peter at the end of Luke 22:32. He said, “**Peter, you will return.**” He spoke these words of life to Peter. He did not say, “Peter, you are just a hopeless hypocrite that I never counted on anyway.”*

*Jesus said the very opposite. These words mattered greatly to Peter after he denied Jesus later that night. And Jesus is speaking these words to people in this room and on the webstream right now. “**You will return!** You*

will recover! Talk to Him. Do not draw back and run away. Talk to Him. Enter into the conversation. You will return to your first love! Not only that you are not disqualified. You are going to be anointed to strengthen the brethren like Peter was. You are going to have a ministry that is important to touch other lives.” The next day, I am sure Peter was weeping and saying, “I can’t be a help to anyone anymore.” Jesus told Peter that he would be used of God again. The enemy wants to tell you that you will not recover, that you are different than everybody else, and even if you did recover, you are disqualified, so you will never be used to strengthen others.

Some days later when they were up in Galilee, Jesus appeared to them over forty days. This is towards the middle or the end of that forty days. Simon Peter had been fishing all night. Do you know why he was fishing? He was not fishing for recreation. You do not fish all night with toil for recreation. He was fishing all night because he quit as an apostle saying, “I can’t do this. I am a loser. I am going back to being a fisherman. I cannot be a leader. I cannot be trusted.” He went up to Galilee and got his fishing boat and was back into the fishing business. He was out there in the water. Jesus appeared in His resurrected body, but He was on the side.

Look at John 21; they do not know who He is. He says, “Hey, you guys! Throw the net on the other side.” What are You talking about? No, we have been laboring all night. There are no fish. This is exactly what happened three years earlier in Luke 5 when Peter and Jesus first met. Peter worked all night. Jesus said, “Throw your net over on the other side.” Peter was wondering, “What is happening? What do You mean? He throws it on the other side.” 153 fish. And there is a reason for that. That is not my point right now. But there are lots of ideas why that number 153 is mentioned. Peter threw the net and got the fish. In other words, Jesus is saying, “I am supernaturally confirming, Peter, what we did three years ago. Back in Luke 5, you were a fisher of men. I am reinstating you in leadership, even in your weakness and failure.”

“Well, it has only been a few weeks since I failed. I cannot be in leadership. I cannot be trusted.”

“I am calling you in leadership” but not only that, but look at 21:15, “Feed My lambs.” And 21:16, “Tend My sheep.” And 21:17, “Feed My sheep.” Three times Peter denied Him, and Jesus commissions him to leadership three times in a row. He was saying, as it were, “No, we are in this together, Peter.” What kind of God does this? At least put me in the penalty box for a couple years. Let me prove how sorry I am. “No. I know you are sorry. I know your heart better than you do. I want to prove that I am more committed to you than you are to Me, and I want to prove that I desire your presence more than you do My presence. And this is going to produce meekness and gratitude in you. You will treat everyone differently once you are wounded by My tender mercy over your life and failure.”

*You know, Jesus gave them these truths in the upper room in John 15, 16, and the passage we are looking at **before** they failed. Because if you get these truths before you fail, it is a lot easier to believe them after you fail. But if you fail and hear these truths, you will think, “Ahh, too good to be true.” You want to get these truths now. Somebody might say that it is too late already. Let’s not worry about that right now. My point is: go deep in these truths now. You are going to need these truths. We are entering, I believe, the generation the Lord returns which will be the most lawless, perverse, dark generation in human history. There will be more temptations, more seduction, darkness, and demonic power, and there will be people stumbling and failing. Jesus said, “Get anchored in what I said. The Father’s house. I prepared a place for you that is secure. I have done it. It is reliable. I am coming for you, and I desire you.” Get those truths deeply locked into your heart.*

- C. Jesus re-enacted what happened when He met Peter (Jn 21:3-6 11; cf. Lk. 5:5-10). Peter denied Jesus 3 times, and He commissioned Peter to leadership 3 times—“feed my sheep (Jn. 21:15-17) .

¹⁵Jesus said to Simon Peter, “...do you love Me?...feed My lambs.” ¹⁶He said...a second time, “Simon...tend My sheep.” ¹⁷He said to him the third time...“Feed My sheep.” (Jn. 21:15-17)

15...if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained [won; NAS, NIV] your brother. 16But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more...17And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. (Mt. 18:15-17)

I am going to mention this really quickly. In Matthew 18, Jesus talks about “If a brother sins, go to him in private and try to win him.” So often what happens is that when a brother sins, we go to someone else and tell him and not the brother that sins. No! Not that way. Go to him privately, and do not go to your brother privately to accuse him, “Hey, I caught you.” No, go try to win him to walk in fresh obedience to the Lord. And my point is not to break down how we go to people. My point is this: this is how Jesus comes to us in our sin over the years. He comes to us privately. He does not even bring someone else. Think of how many things you have thought or done over the years that He did not bring anybody else. He came privately to you to win you. So, He is telling us to treat others like He treats us. This is a revelation of how He approaches us. I mean, this is beautiful. He is the God of the second chance a thousand times. Again, the Micah 7:18 “He delights in showing mercy.” He does not do it begrudgingly. He delights in showing mercy.

- D. We must see the difference between rebellion and spiritual immaturity in those who sincerely seek to obey God. God is angry at rebellion but feels affection for immature believers who love Him.

20...his father...had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him... (Lk. 15:20)

You have to understand this one point. There is a difference between rebellion and spiritual immaturity. A sincere believer that is spiritually mature—I do not care what age they are in the natural, but they are sincere—They will do some of the same activities that the rebellious person will do. At a glance, outwardly, they look the same.

The Lord says, “No, no, it is very different. I am angry at persistent rebellion. And I have tenderness towards spiritual immaturity. Yes, I am going to deal with the area, and I want them to stop it, but I delight in the friendship and the relationship I have with them. I view them differently.” It is like you have a big mud hole there. The pig runs straight to it. You get the pig out, look the other way, and the pig runs right back to the mud hole. The sheep are going across the path and they get stuck in the mud hole, and they are kicking to get out. They are both in the mud, but one of them is trying to get out and the other one is not.

Jesus told us in Luke 15 how He feels for the prodigal son. This is somebody in the family. We always tell the prodigal son story about the unbeliever and how God had compassion. This was a guy who was in the family, who wasted the family resources and privileges and dishonored the family, but he came back. And Jesus in Luke 15 was telling this story to the tax-gatherers and the harlots. They were right in front of Him. But the Pharisees were there too, and He was looking at them, and He said, “Let me tell you what the God of Israel is like. When that prodigal comes back, the Father runs in compassion and kisses and hugs and rejoices. That is what My Father does when one of His children turn their mind back to live in a spirit of obedience.” That is how He looks at us.

Amen and amen!

Let us just stand before the Lord. I love to say this, we have it made! We really do! I mean, life is challenging, some decades of challenge, then billions of years in this reality. Billions of years. I do not like the challenges, but I believe these four core truths in verse 2 and verse 3.

Father, here we are before You. You are the God who delights in mercy. Micah 7:18. You delight in mercy. Wash us with the water of the Word. I ask You to wash us. Come and wash us with the water of the Word. We love Your leadership, Jesus. Better is one day in Your presence.

I want to pray for anybody who would like prayer tonight. You are saying, "The enemy is attacking me." I mean, he is accusing all of us. "But I just want somebody to join me in prayer. I want this to break this off. I agree that I am going to say Your words. I just want somebody to pray with me." Everyone in the room, the enemy attacks us but sometimes it is just overwhelming. You are saying, "I just need somebody to pray today. I need peace today."

Just come and stand on the front line here.

Lord, I ask You to wash us with the water of Your Word.

I ask folks to come forward whether you are visiting or live here. Just lay your hand on their shoulder. You do not even want to say anything if you do not want to. Just pray, "Lord, touch them. Bless them."

Lord, we love Your leadership. You are the God of the second chance. A thousand chances, the second chance. We love Your leadership, Jesus. Come and wash hearts tonight.