

This week we are looking at John 14. This past summer I chose to teach on this chapter because John 14:27 has been my favorite Bible verse since I was 13 years old. I had just turned 13, and I was in the hospital facing surgery the next morning for what at that time was considered serious, because it was so close to the heart. After enduring 18 shots of antibiotics in my legs and a nurse who couldn't get an IV into my hand because of my wiggly veins, I was pretty much traumatized. But God brought me His comfort and peace from His word through my dad's assistant pastor coming to visit me in the hospital that evening. He shared John 14:27 with me, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." I thought teaching on this chapter would be good way for me to go deeper into the verses leading up to verse 27 and gain more understanding of the depth of this promise that Jesus gives us and the comfort it has been to me for so many years. Little did I know 8 months after choosing this chapter to teach on I would be facing one of the most difficult trials of my life and how much I would need to cling to not only verse 27 but the depth of this whole chapter. As most of you might know, just last week, my husband was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. What started as a cough several months ago led to an Xray a few weeks ago and many more tests, showing masses in his lung that had also spread to his chest wall and liver. God had moved in Don's heart several months ago to commit to reading the chapter of John 14 every morning at the end of his quiet time so he would be familiar and connected to the passage I would be teaching on. What a gift God has given us both, as we have been immersed in His word, this chapter on peace, preparing us for this cancer journey He is taking us on. The fact that I am even

standing up here today and have anything written down is only because of what Jesus teaches us in John 14.

As we look closer at John 14 let's look to understand what exactly is the Peace Jesus is promising, how do we get it and how do we keep it.

We just learned last week in chapter 13 that the disciples were hearing some troubling news. One of them was going to betray Jesus. Peter, their outspoken leader of the group was going to deny he knew Jesus 3 times, and Jesus was talking like He was really going to die and not set up His kingdom on earth the way the disciples thought He was going to. It is in this context that Jesus says in verse 1, "Let not your hearts be troubled." This verse can seem as impossible to attain as Phillipians 4:6, "Do not be anxious about anything." And it is impossible this side of heaven to attain it perfectly. As I've been trying to write this talk, I recognize my heart is like the disciples, it is troubled and I wanted answers and understanding with each test Don was getting. I didn't want to wait to see how God was unfolding His story for Don and me. But just as He told the disciples "Let not your hearts be troubled", He also says to me and to you in your own circumstances, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." The most wonderful part of this verse is that Jesus provides the way for our hearts not to be troubled when He follows it with, "Believe in God, believe also in Me." Commentator JC Ryle explains we have a precious remedy against an old disease. That disease is a troubled heart and the remedy is faith. He says, "Faith in the Lord Jesus is the only sure medicine for troubled hearts. To believe more thoroughly, trust more entirely, rest more unreservedly, lay hold more firmly, lean back more completely." The disciples believed Jesus was the Messiah, but Jesus was saying as He says to us, believe, believe more, believe on Me! Ryle goes on to explain that there are

degrees in faith, and that there is a wide difference between weak and strong believers. The weakest faith is enough to give us a saving faith in Jesus, but it will not give us such inward comfort as a strong faith. I personally wonder if we don't want to think too deeply about weak faith vs strong faith. As Christians we know that strong faith takes a big commitment of spending time in God's word and in prayer and if I'm really honest with myself, it is really hard sometimes. The Bible also speaks of our trials and suffering producing more faith and I really don't want to suffer. I want enough faith to trust Jesus with day to day average problems but do I really want to risk more suffering for a stronger faith when it seems like life is going ok? But then I go back to His word and I know in the depth of my heart I do want more Jesus. I want a heart that is so deeply in love with Jesus and so connected to Him that when trials, suffering, and uncertainty of the future comes, my heart isn't troubled and I'm not afraid. My husband has adopted James 1:2-4 in this recent journey God has us on, "count it all joy, my brothers when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." I pray I can say this verse with him on days even when my faith feels so weak because I believe with my whole heart Isaiah 26:3 which says, "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."

Another aspect of peace that Jesus fills our hearts with is that He tells His disciples He is going to heaven to prepare a place for them and He is coming back to get them so they can be with Him. There is a lot we might not know about heaven, but we know with certainty what is important. We know without a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is there and He is preparing a place for all those who believe in

Him and have accepted His free gift of salvation. I love how Ryle puts it, “heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.” God is preparing us right now to meet Him in heaven and to spend eternity with Him. What peace that should give us as believers, that God through Jesus and His Holy Spirit are doing all the work, we just need to believe and trust Him as He prepares us to meet Him one day. The past several years I have thought a lot about heaven as both my parents have passed. God gave me a beautiful gift in answering my prayer that I would be with my 100 year old mother as she passed from this life into the arms of Jesus. I will never forget seeing the look of confusion on her face as she asked me what was happening. I told her, I think Jesus is getting ready to take you to heaven and asking her, are you ready to go see Jesus, mom? And as she said yes, this look of confusion turned to a look of peace. A peace that I know is a peace that only God can give as He brought her home to a place He had prepared for her.

Jesus says in verse 6 that He is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him. We don't need to go searching for answers of how do we get to heaven like so much of the world is doing. Whether it be through their good works or following a good person who started a certain religion. Jesus tells us the absolute and only answer, that He is the way to the Father. He is the truth, so we can believe Him and believe in Him and He is the life, our only sure hope for life after death. JC Ryle writes, “To use Christ daily as the way, to believe Christ daily as the truth, to live on Christ daily as the life, this is to be a well-informed, a thoroughly furnished and an established Christian.” Ladies, if we remind ourselves of these truths every day, in other words preach the gospel to ourselves, our hearts will be filled with His peace.

Phillip in verse 8 seems to need a little more understanding. Phillip says, "Lord show us the Father and it is enough for us." Jesus gives him the assurance and the truth that whoever has seen Him has seen the Father. Verse 11 reads, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me, or else believe on account of the works themselves." How many times as I find my world upside down and not making sense, I like Phillip, Lord if you just show me this one thing, it will be enough for me. And the Father wants me to believe as commentator Milne writes, "In Jesus and his coming, in his death and his rising, God speaks His Word of peace. There is meaning. Life can make sense, and purpose can be reborn...In this man, and his life of lowly service unto death, God is made known, a God in whom we can truly believe and find peace. The answer to the anxiety of troubled hearts is assured knowledge, and assured knowledge comes through Jesus."

Let's now look at how Jesus offers us peace in verses 12-14. "Truly truly I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will he do because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it." My brother preached a sermon on these three verses that I listened to, so some of my thoughts are from him and some from commentators. Jesus in saying in verse 12, truly truly is giving His disciples a promise that He doesn't want them to miss, nor does He want us to miss. Jesus is promising whoever believes in Him will also do the works that He did and greater works than these will he do because He is going to the Father. Whoever believes, means me, and it means you if you believe in Jesus. The greater works He is going to do isn't more spectacular works, but the mighty works of salvation.

DA Carson writes, “The Son is no longer limited by the pre-death humanness that characterized His ministry. At that point redemption is won, the kingdom of God is triumphantly invading the nations with saving and transforming power.” Jesus is no longer limited through His humanness, He is now our advocate in heaven building His kingdom through us. And we will see in future verses He not only is sitting at God’s right hand interceding for us, He has also released a new power and given us His Holy Spirit to live within us to do the work through His power. In other words Jesus is continuing to do His work through us as believers through the power of the Holy Spirit living in us. Because Jesus is in Heaven sitting at the right hand of God interceding for us and has given us the power of His Holy Spirit, He can also give us His promise of verses 13-14, “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.” These verses are connected to verse 12 where Jesus is using us as believers to build His Kingdom. When we accept Jesus free gift of salvation, He gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit and His power to continue God’s kingdom work. As we pray to do His work, Jesus wants to build a relationship with us and that happens by abiding in prayer and reading His word. Our prayers need to be prayed with courage and humility. Courage to pray for big things to build His kingdom and with humility to pray in Jesus name, to say not my will but Yours Lord, whether You answer my prayer or not I will trust You because I want the Father to be glorified. As I was studying these verses and writing I had to confess that sometimes I don’t pray big because I’m not trusting in God’s love for me. The Holy Spirit spoke truth to my heart, and reminds me that God really does love me and wants to give me His good gifts. Right now I’m struggling He might be taking away His greatest gift to me on this earth for the past 50 years, so I am praying big, but I

also know if taking my husband of 50 years is what will bring Him glory, He loves me no less but out of His love for me this is His will and He will use it for His glory and to build His kingdom. And because of that belief I can have peace in Jesus's promises in these verses.

A lot of what I am going to say about verses 15 to the end of the chapter come from 2 sermons I listened to by Tim Keller. John 14:15-17 reads, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." Tim Keller says that when Jesus says I will send you another Helper, the Greek word for helper is parakleet. Parakleet is such a rich word that it can be translated with different english words such as: Comforter, Counselor, Advocate as well as Helper that the ESV uses. Para means who is beside you, for you and by you. Keller explains that he prefers the translation using the word advocate, because Jesus was our first advocate which encompasses so much more than a helper or counselor or comforter. Jesus as our first advocate stands before God representing me as a sinner who deserves death and says I have paid Kathy's debt. Jesus doesn't plead for mercy for me but He demands justice because He has paid the price by dying on the cross for my sin. Keller goes on to say that there is no way to understand Jesus sending another advocate, the Holy Spirit unless we understand what Jesus has done for us as our first advocate. God's justice is now on my side. Jesus has lived the perfect life for me. Until I retain Jesus as my advocate, I am my own advocate and trying to reach Jesus on my own through my good works. Jesus promises believers another advocate, His Holy Spirit to live inside of us forever.

The Holy Spirit says look to Jesus Christ and trust Him. The Holy Spirit points us continually to our first advocate Jesus. We need the Holy Spirit to listen to Jesus. JC Ryle writes “The Holy spirit is called the spirit of truth, It is His special office to apply truth to the hearts of Christians, to guide them into all truth, and to sanctify them by the truth.” By the power and the working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts we will show our love to Jesus by keeping His commandments. As we pray for more faith let us also pray for the Holy Spirit to work more powerfully in our lives to give us that faith and to search our hearts and to see if there be any grievous way in me and lead us in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24.

John14:25-26 Reads, “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Verse 26 is such a beautiful promise, Jesus is promising us that His helper the Holy Spirit will teach us and help us to remember what He is teaching us. Let’s not be slow to ask the Holy Spirit in His mighty power to do this for us.

Jesus follows this promise with the promise of verse 27. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” Jesus is the giver of this peace and it is different than any other peace. Keller says that Christ’s peace is the opposite of fear. Fear comes from sin. The first result of sin in the garden was fear. Adam ran because he was afraid. Fear gets greater as we move away from God. I love the word picture when Keller says, we were built to hold God’s hand and when we resist fear sets in. Jesus is telling us not to be afraid, but nowhere in the Bible does it ever say not to be sad. It says to rejoice in our sorrows. Romans 5:3-5,”We rejoice in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance and

endurance produces character and character produces hope.” The Bible never says to rejoice in your fears. Peace eliminates fear, not sorrow. In my current situation of not knowing what our future will look like it has been so helpful for me to separate my sadness from my fears. It fills my heart with sadness when I think what might lay ahead for us. But as my sadness turns to the fears of the what ifs, that is what I need to bring to God confessing my fears and asking for the power of the Holy Spirit to take away the fears and fill my heart with the truth of His promises and His peace. I don’t know what God’s peace will look like in the days ahead, but I know I can trust Him to give us peace as we look to Him to carry us each day. Does that mean He is not giving me peace when I lay awake at night with so many thoughts and questions? I don’t think so. I believe He still gives us peace in the midst of questions and uncertainty. The Holy Spirit gives us peace as we take our questions and thoughts to Jesus, and Jesus is sitting on the throne next to God interceding for us. As I struggled to write this talk amidst all the tests Don was going through and all the uncertainty of his future, as I sat down to write I would picture in my mind Jesus sitting right next to God praying for me as the Holy Spirit was bringing His truth to my heart and mind. Just as God gave me peace as a young 13 year old girl laying in my hospital bed and so many other times throughout my life, I know with full assurance He can keep giving me peace because His peace will never run out. Jesus has promised His Holy Spirit to us until He returns to take us home to heaven one day. Psalm 81:10 says “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. Ladies let us open our mouths wide and receive the peace that Jesus offers us through His Holy Spirit. Won’t you please join me in asking God for His peace as we ask Him for big things with a heart full of courage and humility.

Dear God, we come to you believing you do want us to ask for big things. These big requests might look different for each one of us. But we want to ask with much courage, because some requests seem impossible. Give us the faith Lord to believe You can do the impossible, but also give us the humility to want Your will, to want whatever advances Your kingdom. Lord give us the peace that only You can give through Your Holy Spirit as we wait to see what You are going to do through each one of us for Your kingdom and Your glory.

In the Name of Jesus, Your precious Son,