Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Passover was an annual feast day of the Jews. The meal they would eat the evening before Passover Day was called Seder. And in Exodus 12, the Jews were commanded to have this meal at night. So an obvious question for law-abiding Jews was? When is it night? Well, the Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar, which means that it follows the moon. So the Jews have a very precise system for working out when it is officially sunrise and sunset and nightfall, etc. And so, according to a Jewish calendar website, nightfall today would be 6:34pm. If we were having that Seder meal today, we could not begin before 6:34pm.

Well, as we come to ch. 14, Jesus and the disciples have finished the Seder meal, which we commonly refer to as the Last Supper. During the Supper, the Lord Jesus also washed His disciples’ feet. So it is probably around 8 or 9pm now. And we know from the Bible that Jesus was nailed to the cross at 9am the next morning. That means we have come to the last 12 hours or so of Jesus’ life on earth. He knows that He will soon be betrayed and arrested, tried by Pilate, tortured by the soldiers, and crucified.

But as ch. 14 opens, we see that His concern is not for Himself but for His disciples. Unlike you and me, who, when faced with some major ordeal, are usually quite self-absorbed and anxious, the Lord Jesus is a picture of trust and selflessness as He continues to minister to His obviously distressed disciples. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, who has seen to it that we have these words of Jesus in Holy Scripture, He ministers to us as followers of the Lord Jesus today.

You see, there are many circumstances in life that can deeply trouble us. Some of us here today will have come to church troubled. It might be because of things like poverty or illness or injury or conflict, or something like spiritual depression, which is when the Lord seems very far from us. And unless the Lord Jesus returns beforehand, every one of us will have to face death. And many of us have also had to deal with the death of loved ones who were followers of the Lord Jesus.

But in these words of the Lord Jesus we have **calming words for troubled souls**. And they are calming words because they are **a Powerful Call to Faith** and **a Beautiful Pair of Promises**.

And it is especially fitting that we come to these words as we look forward to celebrating the Lord’s Supper. For the Lord’s Supper is a reminder that one day the Lord will return to earth to take all who have believed in Him to be with Him in the eternal glories of heaven. And we get to meditate on that glorious hope today!

1. So let’s consider these calming words for troubled souls, beginning with the **powerful call to faith** in v1. Jesus says, “*Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me*.”
   1. Now, I want you look back a page to **13:21**. There we read that Jesus “*was troubled in His Spirit*.” And that is the *third* time in John’s Gospel that we are told that Jesus was troubled. So let’s get this straight right at the very beginning – it is not sinful to be troubled. Jesus is not saying in v1 that we should never be troubled or shaken by things.
      1. This is also why we read from **Habakkuk** earlier. Habakkuk heard some terrible news and we are told that his body trembled and his lips quivered and he felt decay creep into his bones. And I am sure you have all experienced those same feelings of dread at one time or another. This is the reality of being weak and frail human beings. Because we do not know everything and because we are physical beings, we will be troubled by the sorts of things we listed earlier and many other things besides. Spiders will give us the shivers, surprises will make us scream, and the phone ringing at 3am will make us sweat; that’s just how we are made.
      2. But is that all we read about Habakkuk? It’s not, is it. We are told that he went on to rejoice in the Lord; he took joy in the God of his salvation.
      3. And in **James 1:2-3** we read, “*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness*.”
      4. The point that Jesus is making here is that we must not *remain* troubled; we must not be ruled by our feelings of dread. He is calling us to lift up the eyes of faith to the God of our salvation that we too might rejoice in the Lord.
   2. Jesus had just spoken about a disciple who would betray Him. He then told Peter that He could not follow Jesus where He was going. And when Peter declared that he would lay down his life for Jesus, Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him three times before the roster crowed. So the disciples had sensed that something is up and that Jesus was going to leave them, and they were greatly troubled by this. And of course, their trouble would only increase over the next few hours as Jesus was arrested and then crucified. So Jesus gave them the solution to their troubles. He said, “*Believe in God; believe also in me*.” Some Bible versions have it as “*You believe in God; believe also in me*.”
      1. You see, the disciples believed in God. They trusted in God. They knew that God was sovereignly in control of all things; that He ruled with authority; that He had their welfare in His hands. But this was not yet how they thought about Jesus. So Jesus was calling on the disciples to have the same confidence in Him.
      2. Very soon, the Lord Jesus would be on the cross. It **would look like the end of Jesus’ life**. As He hung there, it would look like all their hopes and dreams were shattered. But what they needed to understand and believe was that the cross was a necessary part of what Jesus came to do. They needed to know and believe that on the other side of the cross He would become the risen and ascended and exalted Lord of lords and King of kings, who would continue to work on behalf of His people!
         1. The Heidelberg Catechism wonderfully lays this out in how it answers the various questions that have to do with what the **Apostles’ Creed** says about the Lord Jesus:
            1. We are told that the significance of Jesus *suffering* is that by it He set us free from eternal condemnation and gained for us eternal life.
            2. And He *died* because only the death of God’s Son could pay for our sin.
            3. His *resurrection* benefits us because by it He overcame death, and made it possible for us to be resurrected to a new life, and gave us a guarantee of our glorious resurrection.
            4. And His *ascension* to heaven benefits us because in heaven He pleads our cause, and because His presence in heaven is the guarantee that He will bring us to heaven, and because from heaven He has given us His Spirit, and defends us and keeps us safe from all enemies.
         2. But the disciples would only come to learn these things after they had happened. It would only be then that these words of Jesus would calm their troubled souls.
      3. But of course, the question for today is, Do you believe this about Jesus? Are these great truthes about the majesty and authority and glory and power of Jesus what you remember and cling to when trouble comes to you? The disciples were standing on the other side of the cross. They did not have the NT record of Jesus’ resurrection and ascension and exalted rule in heaven. But you do. The last question of the Heidelberg about the Lord Jesus is about the significance of the fact that He will come again to judge the living and the dead. The answer is:

*In all my distress and persecution I turn my eyes to the heavens and confidently await as judge the very One who has already stood trial in my place before God and so has removed the whole curse from me. All his enemies and mine He will condemn to everlasting punishment: but me and all His chosen ones He will take along with Him into the joy and the glory of heaven*.

Is that your response to trouble? Do you look to the Lord Jesus with confidence and conviction and trust? Are you quick to turn to Him in prayer for strength and help and wisdom and courage? For that is what He calls you to do here in v1.

1. But not only is this **powerful call to faith** a **calming word for troubled souls**, so are the **beautiful pair of promises** that we have in vv2-3. For in v2 we see that Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven and in v3 that He will come again to take us to be with Him in heaven. Let’s briefly consider both of these beautiful promises:
   1. The first of them is that the Lord Jesus **is preparing a place for us in heaven**.
      1. You see, what troubled the disciples most was the thought of being separated from the Lord Jesus. The idea that Jesus was leaving them filled them with utter dread.
         1. I expect that many of us who have had young children will remember the first time that we tried to palm them off to Grandpa and Grandma or a brother or sister or a friend so that we could go up to the Lord’s Supper table. We told them where we were going and that we would be back in just a couple of minutes, we then got up and handed them over, and all seemed well until we got a few steps up the aisle and this wail of horror rang out from behind us as our children thought that we abandoned them. No pressure intended, parents ☺ Well, the disciples were dreading being abandoned by Jesus.
      2. So what the Lord does is to reassure them that the purpose of His leaving is a **glorious reunion**! He wants them to know that their separation will not be permanent; where He is going there will be rooms for all His disciples as well!
         1. And the Greek word translated here as ‘room’ literally means ‘dwelling place.’ The King James uses the word ‘**mansions**.’ We are not to think that we are each going to have a kind of shop dressing room or a halls of residence bedroom; no, we will have a mansion!
         2. A moment ago I gave you the Heidelberg Catechism answer about the significance of Jesus’ ascension. It actually references this verse as it says that “*we have our own flesh in heaven; a guarantee that Christ our head will take us, his members, to himself in heave*n.” Jesus was fully human. So the fact that He died and rose again and ascended to heaven is a guarantee that we also will go to heaven.
      3. And this is why we are able to **rejoice at the graveside** of loved ones who trusted in Christ for their salvation. We are sad that they are no longer with us, but we know that their souls have already gone to be with Jesus and that one day their bodies shall rise from the grave and be reunited with their souls to spend eternity with Jesus ‘in mansions of glory,’ as the hymn puts it.
      4. And this is also why we are able to walk through the valley of the shadow of death ourselves with peace and courage and confidence. We know where we are going.
         1. Have you met believers like this? They know they are dying. You pluck up the courage to visit them because you want to try and be an encouragement. But you come away having been encouraged by them because of their peace and confidence! What a precious gift of the Lord!
      5. So of course, I need to ask you if you know where you are going after death? On the other side of death is heaven or hell. The promise of heaven is only for those who have received Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. Have you done this? I hope so.
   2. So the first beautiful promise is that the Lord Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven. The second promise is that He will come again to take us to be with Him in heaven.
      1. And perhaps you are wondering why I have called this a second promise? Isn’t it just the promise of heaven in different words? Well, I want you to see that it is not. You see, the promise here is not heaven, but **being with Jesus** in heaven. Jesus says, “*I will take you to myself … that where I am you may be also.*” Our chief excitement and anticipation about heaven should not be our ‘mansion’ or being sinless or even being reunited with the wife or husband or child or parent who has gone before us; it should be that we will be with *Jesus*!
         1. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** makes the same point: “*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord*.”
         2. Is that something that thrills you? Does the thought of being with Jesus fill you with eager anticipation? Is *the* thing about heaven that most excites you the knowledge that you will be with Jesus?
         3. The story I am about to tell you comes from a long time ago when there were different ideas about how to deal with grief. But there was once a single mother wit a young daughter and the mother got very sick. So it was agreed that the girl would go and stay with some neighbours until her mother was better. Well, sadly, instead of getting better, the mother got worse and eventually she died. The neighbours thought it best not to tell the girl that her mother had died and to wait until after the funeral was over before they took her back to her home. So as you can imagine, the moment they got back home, the little girl ran to her mother’s room to look for her mother, but she could not find her. At last she asked, “Where is my Mama?” And when they told her that her mother was gone, the child immediately asked to go back to the neighbour’s house again. You see, home had no attraction for her anymore because Mama was not there. And in the same way, what should excite us the most about heaven is knowing that that is where Jesus is!

This place, earth, is not our permanent residence. We will live here for 70 years or maybe a few more. But then comes eternity. That is why Jesus said, “*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*.”

The words of the Lord Jesus in our text will only calm your troubled soul if you are looking forward to eternal life in heaven with Jesus. If that is where your treasure is, then let not your hearts be troubled. Look with confidence to Jesus! Amen.