

How to navigate through trouble

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[0 : 00] This is God's word, John 14, reading from verses 1 to 7. Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.

Lord God, we do pray and thank you for your word, the Bible. We thank you that this is the way that you have decided to speak to us. And so we pray for our hearts now as we think about what these words mean, that you would help us to concentrate, to reflect upon who we are and who you are. We ask for this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Here's a question to start off with. Have you ever been so consumed with trouble or worry that you couldn't see a way out or how it was going to be resolved?

I'll say that again. Have you ever been so consumed with trouble or worry that you couldn't see a way out or how things were going to be resolved?

[1 : 53] If you've had that experience, which most of us have at some point, then what Jesus says here in these few verses is exactly what you need to hear today.

There was a day, wasn't there, before Google Maps. Remember the day before Google Maps on car journeys?

Now, it's almost impossible to get lost because you just type in where you're going and it tells you exactly... You don't even need to remember how to get anywhere because Google Maps will tell you where you need to go.

But in the days before Google Maps and the days before SatNav, if you got lost, it was a nightmare. Not so long ago, my phone died whilst I was on a car journey.

And I instantly didn't know where I was. Instantly needed to find out where I needed to get to. I had to resort to the old tried and tested method of pulling over, stopping and asking a local if they knew where the address was.

[3 : 02] Because maybe some of you are old enough to remember having to do that as well. When we are troubled and consumed with trouble, it has a similar sensation to being lost.

It's not that we don't know where to go, it's that we, you know, when we're worried and troubled, it's not that we don't know where to go, it's that we don't know what to do. These words that we've just read, that should be still on the screen, these words from Jesus, he's speaking to his disciples and they are troubled.

They are consumed with worry, feeling lost, because they don't understand what he's talking about. He's talking about, there's a long, these words, they come in kind of a short section of a larger sort of breadth of him talking to his friends the night before he died.

And he's talking to them as their leader, as their best friend, that he's going to leave them. Their best friend who's, he's led them, he's spent every day with them.

And now he's telling them he's going away. Trouble and worry when we're consumed by it. This is, why do they happen? It happens because in our lives we don't know how things are going to play out.

[4 : 27] Where things happen to us, we're troubled, we're worried, we're anxious, we're concerned, and we don't know how it's going to play out. That's why getting lost, we don't know how it's going to play out.

I don't know how I'm going to get to where I'm going. Getting lost on a journey is one thing. But in the grand scheme of things, it is actually a minor trouble, isn't it, compared to the bigger troubles that we face in life.

Because when bigger troubles happen, we ask bigger questions than asking a local for directions. We ask the what if questions. And a lot of the time when we ask the what if questions, we naturally assume that the worst is going to happen.

And here's what we're going to think about today. What if today you could shift that mindset? What if instead of having trouble, because of the uncertainties in life, you could live with confidence with where you're headed?

What if that was true? What if you could live like that? That's what we're going to explore. And the first thing that we're going to see is that what Jesus says about his, he says his father's house, he says that there are many rooms.

[5 : 57] Jesus tells his disciples, what he's saying is, he's telling them the end of their journey, the destination. Look with me, you see in verse 2, you see what he says? He says, my father's house has many rooms.

If that were not so, would I have told you that I'm going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I'll come back and take you to be with me, that you may be where I am going.

Jesus lifts the eyes of his disciples from the trouble they're in. They're, you know, they're panicked, they're worried. Where's Jesus, our best friend, going? What is he talking about?

The trouble they're in, the worries, the concern, he lifts their eyes to a whole new reality. The reality that their future is secure, no matter what the trouble right now.

And he uses the metaphor of having a permanent room in a house. Now, if you've ever had family come and stay, and, you know, they're coming to stay, we often have visitors and relatives coming to stay in one of the rooms.

[7 : 08] What do you do before they arrive? You want their room to be just right, don't you? New fresh sheets, perhaps some clean towels at the bottom of the bed.

You want to go that extra mile so that your guests feel appreciated and cared for. You might even go and push the boat out, some special food that you don't normally eat for them.

You prepare before they arrive. You are ahead of them. That is a picture of what Jesus is saying he has done and will do for you. That Jesus, in dying, has gone ahead to prepare a place for us, and then he's going to come back and guide us.

But he's going to guide us more than a local who can give us the right directions. No, Jesus doesn't just, you know, he's not just somebody that you pull in and sort of catch by chance.

Jesus comes from the place you're going, that you want to go. He comes from the address. He comes from the right destination, not just to point the right way, but he comes to us searching for the right way, and he comes himself to lead us to the place where we want to go, to take us with him to be where he is.

[8 : 22] And he takes us to the permanent, secure place at great cost. He takes us to the place where we've actually always really wanted to get to, but we didn't know how.

You see what that means? This is what it means. It means, because he comes, it means he's the one who comes to get us when we're lost.

It means we don't have to worry and be troubled about how we get there. If there is an eternal home, we don't have to be the one who are building it.

We don't have to be exhausted with the burden of how to secure our future when we don't know how it pans out. But that all sounds well and good, which is, the question is, then why do we find it so hard in our lives?

This is the reason it's hard. It's because the destination is far off and we live with the troubles now. We live the troubles now. And so instead of believing and resting in that, we act like the disciples in the room that night panic.

[9 : 33] We panic. Their hearts were troubled by what Jesus said and so are ours. Why are our hearts troubled? This is why our hearts, the reason our hearts are troubled. This is kind of the key thing which is kind of going to grab us.

The reason our hearts are troubled is because we struggle to believe that Jesus is the one who will prepare our way. That's the reason.

We struggle to believe that. Jesus knows the night before he dies that his close friends are troubled. They're worried and concerned. Look, he says, what does he say? First, straight off the bat, he says, don't let your hearts be troubled.

The reason somebody says don't let your hearts be troubled is because he knows that their hearts are troubled. He says that he knows who they are. He knows what they're like. He knows the reason. Because he's told them he's going away. And then we hear it, verse five, Thomas, honest, what does he say?

He says, Lord, we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way if we don't know the way? If we get lost on the road and ask for directions, at least kind of we know the address, where we're supposed to be going.

[10:40] Thomas says, we don't even know where you're going. You haven't told us. Knowing how to get to a place we don't know is impossible. And that is why the trouble and the anxiety and the worry settles in.

We all have trouble. We might not have the same trouble that the disciples have here. But as I've said, life is full of anxiety and uncertainties. We know what we'd like to happen, but we don't know what will.

We don't know how it's going to pan out and where we'll be or how we'll cope. Maybe we might be even feeling like that this morning. What is going on in my life?

How will I sort it out? What if it doesn't work out? And what will I do then? You know, under the waterline, and this is where it grabs us, and this is kind of the stuff that it's hard to wrestle with, is the reason behind it all is really we want to be in control of our future.

We would love our actions to work like, kind of like an insurance policy against our future trouble. And yet there are things out of our control. And when it's out of our control, what do we do?

[11:56] We just ignore it because to think too deeply about it just stresses us out. Perhaps we worry about school. We want to be popular, and maybe we're not the most popular kids in the class.

And we worry about that. Maybe we're worried about, you know, we want to make sure that we're making enough money in life to secure not just our own future, but the future of our children.

Maybe we're worried and troubled by our own health or the health of a loved one. And because we don't know how it's going to pan out, it feels overwhelming.

It feels like being lost. And it feels like not knowing the destination. And there's no one to ask for help. Jesus promises in these verses to be the one to point you the right way.

And more than that, to lead you the right way. He promises to be the one who comes from the destination we all want to get to. The one who goes before us, who's travelled the way ahead of us, who comes back for us.

[13:06] But up until this point, there is a huge part that we're kind of leaving out that we've missed. This is where we get to. At this point, we have to ask, well, how did Jesus get to that place?

How did Jesus get there in the first instance? If he's gone ahead of before us, he must have gone that way himself. How does he know the way and we don't? Because right now, as we're reading it, it all sounds like a little bit abstract, a little bit mystical.

This is the answer. It comes with what Jesus says in verse 6. And this is the answer that Jesus prepares a place because of what he says about himself in verse 6.

He says, look with me, I am the way and the truth and the life. It's not an abstract, mystical journey or a fairy tale. Jesus' journey, the one who went ahead of us, his journey paved the way for ours, but his journey was different to ours because Jesus' journey was the bloody reality of crucifixion. Beaten, tortured, mocked, nailed to wood, dying the agonizing death of a criminal. This is a good news that that journey is one that we will never have to go through.

[14:24] That journey, the journey of the cross, is the means by which he's made the way for us to be rescued from our lostness. And this is why, not only did Jesus say he was the way, the truth, and the life, but Jesus gave up his life so that he could save ours.

He traded in his perfect life so that he could give us his. At the cross, an exchange took place, and that exchange is still in place today for anyone who will trust him.

For anyone who will trust him, because he's died for you, he's made a way for you to have a place with God the Father. That is the truth that gives us life.

Jesus is the life, and yet he gives up his own. That is the good news. Good news, when you hear good news, I mean, we use, that title, isn't it just a little bit too flippant? Good news is a title that doesn't do it justice.

It's the best news you'll ever hear. People often have a problem, you know, love these verses, but people often have a problem with what comes next.

[15 : 39] The exclusivity of Jesus' claim. You see what he says after he says, I am the way, and the truth, and the life? He says, no one comes to the Father except through me. The reality is, this isn't said as a restriction to kick against.

It's a comfort. Because if you are lost and need to know the way to go, you only need one set of directions. And you need them from the one who has actually been there.

It's the lifeline that will point you and show you. You don't need a local, really, with a half-baked understanding of the area. You need the exclusive claim of Jesus, who is the only one who knows the way.

we can have a secure future. With him, tomorrow doesn't need to rest on our successful navigation. With Jesus, it rests completely on his finished work paid for with his life.

And so, in light of that, in light of the cross, how we respond, it must change, mustn't it? It must change how we approach our today's and how we approach our tomorrows.

[16 : 54] Because rather than living with trouble and being overwhelmed by it, there is an answer. There is a way to live with confidence. And here's the rubber, the green.

The gospel, the good news, following Jesus, this is what it means. It means we can have certainty not only about our eternal future, which is the best news we've heard, but actually about today and tomorrow.

Because your final destination is assured you can live with confidence today and tomorrow. And it's more than, Jesus is not just, he's not just the way, the truth, and the life out there, but actually he can be your own personal way.

He can be your own personal truth and promised life. And if that is true right now about your future, it means you can leave the journey up until that point in his care.

The world tells us that if we want peace, we have to figure it all out for ourselves. Our culture says we must secure our own path, navigate our own way, and strive for control to avoid being troubled, but Jesus offers a completely different reality.

[18 : 03] Jesus' way is this, if your eternal future is certain, you can live tomorrow free of the anxiety and restlessness that trouble brings. Can you see how that might change things?

If you're in money trouble, if you or a friend have received the diagnosis from the doctor that brings dread, if you're not the popular one in school or even popular in the area you live, if there are things going on in your life today where you can't see how it's going to pan out, Jesus knows the way.

He doesn't promise to magically get rid of the trouble, but he promises that you won't have to navigate through it alone. He is the one who will walk and is walking with you, and he promises to lead you to the place he has prepared in advance.

You are free today to breathe, to rest and to trust in him. Present trouble doesn't get to have the final word, but Jesus does.

Now, I don't know where everyone is at this morning with this kind of stuff. We're all in different places, we've all come from different backgrounds, we've all had different experiences, and so, we'll all be thinking different things as we hear this.

[19 : 29] But Jesus says something at the beginning that I've left out up until now, and it's the key to having certainty and troubles. You see what he says? He says this, do not let your hearts be troubled, and then he says, believe in God, believe also in me.

And then right at the end he explains what happens when we believe in him. He says, if you really know me, you'll know my father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.

You see what, this is what Jesus is saying, he's saying this, he's saying, if you put your trust in him, if you believe in his name, if you trust that this future is prepared for you because of what Jesus did on the cross, you have the opportunity to actually have a living relationship to know, as much as you have got a relationship with anyone else in your life, you get to actually know the God who created you as a personal friend.

You can know the one who holds tomorrow. Belief in God is so different from what we sometimes think. You know, belief in God, it's not just agreeing to a set of rules, it's an invitation to stop panicking and breathe because the God who holds your future in his hands is your friend and knows you.

And the beauty of this belief is that it's not just for a select few men 2,000 years ago, this belief is on offer to all people.

[21 : 08] to all people. Anyone who puts their trust in Jesus, anyone who follows him can know and have a living relationship with the God who made them, who prepares a place for them.

And it will change our tomorrow, it will change your tomorrow. Instead of living with anxiety and fear, we get to live with certainty and security because Jesus God in the flesh is there for us.

when our internal navigation is broken and the journey goes dark, we don't need to panic. The guide, the map, Jesus himself is the way and has given us more than directions.

He has walked the bloody road ahead of us and the room at the end is prepared and waiting. And so can I encourage you today? Can I encourage you afresh? Maybe you think, oh, I've heard all this before and you've just let it slide over you.

Well, why can I encourage you to give it another go? Why not try Jesus out and see if he comes through for you? I can assure you it will be the best decision any of us will ever make.

[22 : 18] He's given us more than directions but walked the bloody road ahead of us. Let me pray. Almighty God, you know us, you know everything that's going on in our lives, you know where we're troubled, you know the concerns and the worries we have about ourselves, about our lives, about family, about even things go on in the recesses of our hearts which we've never admitted to anyone and sometimes it even keeps us up at night and we don't get enough sleep.

You know all of that and I thank you that you're a God that knows but I thank you that you're a God that has said we can come to who in the uncertainty of life and we don't know what's going to pan out you say that you're the way and you're the truth that we need and you're the life, the source of life and you offer us new life in you and so I pray that we would consider again afresh maybe we've been we don't know you yet maybe we've been Christian for many years for wherever we're at would you help us to consider you again afresh what it means to follow you because you have walked and gone ahead of us going to Calvary for us we ask for this in Jesus name Amen