

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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'Twas the Master Himself who said it
To the sorrowful little band,
Facing an hour of darkness
That they could not understand.

The light of their lives was fading,
Their eyes with tears were dim,
The rugged men were shaken
At the thought of losing Him.

'Let not your heart be troubled.'
Never was voice so sweet,
Never was look more kingly,
Nor assurance more complete.

'Let not your heart be troubled,
Ye believe in God Most High,
And one with God the Father,
Equal with Him am I.'

Author Unknown

Stop! Start!

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

John 14:1

What precipitated the words of Jesus in this text? This is part of Jesus' love expressed in His Farewell Discourse to His disciples. These very first words are the keynote to the entire discourse. He was answering some dreaded issues with those to whom He was speaking. What were the dreaded issues? They were anxious and agitated and aghast because of the recent news: the declaration that there was a traitor, Jesus' declaration of His coming departure, and the prediction of Peter's denial. The most recent troubling issue was "whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 13:33). A separation was coming. And although He is going to sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane, He is going to be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, He is going to be denied thrice, He is going to be mocked and tried, He is going to be scourged and crucified; yes, with all of this knowingly before Him, He does not solicit comfort but He seeks to give solace to those He loves who are troubled. He is full of sorrow over leaving these disciples. He has been living in such

a way as to impute His righteousness to them, and He is about to suffer in their place for all their filthy sins. But in the light of this He seeks to care for their troubled hearts which He addresses with some vigor.

Many contemplate our verse on heart trouble, and some apply it especially to funerary situations as a reminder of sorts. This is an application which can be made. But we could say that it is helpful to those who are *face to face with Life*, and it is equally precious to those *face to face with Death*. Jesus' words were addressed to those under the sound of His voice entertaining agitated hearts. What do we need to consider? Consider what Jesus vigorously said to these: STOP DOING THAT and then START DOING THIS!

STOP DOING THAT! What! Stop letting "your heart be troubled." Jesus knew what was in man and here is one of those times wherein He addresses this state of heart. "Heart" normally refers to the physical organ of life, but here points to the place of spiritual life. So, here it is used metaphorically referring to the soul or mind which is the fountain and source of thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, or endeavors. So here the heart has reference to the internal stress of soul or mind. The condition at issue here is called a "troubled heart," and the gracious Saviour does not want this for those whom He loves and for whom He will give His life as a substitutionary atonement. "Troubled" means to be put in a state of consternation, to experience great internal agitation, to have calmness of mind removed, to have emotional equanimity removed, to be rendered restless with fear, etc. Jesus does not want this for His own and tells them to stop doing that! Remember who is addressing us: the one touched with the feelings of our infirmities, the man of sorrows who is acquainted with grief, and He who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself. He is our Adviser!

START DOING THIS! What? Keep on believing in Me! "You believe in God; you keep on believing also in Me." (Here we have the blessed present imperative). Yes, they had believed on Him already but in their confusion over the circumstances He gives the imperative to "Keep on believing" and thus you will "stop giving in to the turmoil within." This internal agitation can be superseded by continuing to trust in the Saviour who is presently speaking! He is going away through the death of the cross, but the Comforter is coming. Their sense of vulnerability is soon to be manifested but they are to "Keep on believing!" This is the way, walk in it for we walk by faith not by sight. "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,—this is the prescription which our Master urges on the attention of all His disciples" [J. C. Ryle].

During Dr. R. W. Dale's (1829-1895) last illness, which was described as "a horror of great darkness falling upon him." He who had strengthened the saints in the most holy faith

was in conflict. He described his situation, “It was a sad, distressful night in the early stages of my illness. The house was quiet, all the members of the family having retired to rest. Soon after midnight I awoke in great pain, and a terrible distress crept over me. I was full of fear. I did not wish to disturb my wife and daughters; they were struggling against the indescribable horror of an unknown dread. When the conflict reached its worst, it seemed as though Christ Himself came, and, standing close beside me, said: ‘Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you.’ And he said, ‘That ... steadied me, and I felt strong and safe in the love of Christ.’”

Charles H. Spurgeon wrote, “You have believed concerning God, the great invisible One, and His great spiritual promises, now believe concerning this visible thing, this loss of yours, this cross of yours, this trial, this present affliction; exercise faith about that. Jesus Christ did in effect say to His people, ‘It is true I am going from you, but I want you to believe that I am not going far; I shall be in the same house as you are in, for my Father’s house has many rooms to it, and though you will be here in these earthly mansions and I shall be in the heavenly mansions, yet they are all in the Father’s house, for in my Father’s house are many dwelling-places. ‘I want you to believe,’ says Jesus, ‘that when I am away from you I am about your interests, I am preparing a place for you, and moreover that I intend coming back to you. My heart will be with you, and my person shall soon return to you.’ Now then, the drift of that applied to our case is this—believe that the present loss you sustain, or the present discouragement which threatens to overwhelm you—believe that God has a high design in it; that as Christ’s departure was to prepare eternal mansions for His people, so your present loss is to prepare for you a spiritual gain. I like that word of Christ when He says, ‘If it were not so I would have told you.’”