

Chinese whispers with choristers 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me
(already done beforehand)

Don't let your heart be troubled....

This chapter of John is preceded by Jesus, talking both about his betrayal by Judas, and his denial by Peter. Jesus knows what is about to happen, and knows how profoundly his disciples will fail him but even though he knows this he does something that demonstrates grace and his unconditional love for the disciples. In the first, he washes the disciples' feet – and given that John doesn't say anything to the contrary, let's remember Judas was also in the room and so Jesus will have washed the feet of his betrayer. The text certainly makes clear that he washes Peter's feet. In the second Jesus gives a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you. So, on the verge of betrayal and abandonment, Jesus both proclaims his love for the disciples and gives them the central core of their faith: to love., because of his grace for each of us

That was chapter 13 in this chapter (14) Jesus telling his disciples not to worry. They have much to worry about, but Jesus acknowledges the disciples' fear without endorsing it. Instead of making their fear the focus, Jesus calls them to faith. Now we know that in Romans 8:31 it says If God is for us, who is against us? and 1 John 4:18 Perfect love casts out all fear so Love and Faith triumphs over fear. But the disciples did not have this understanding... so Jesus is trying to get through to them that it was going to be ok. We know that it is ok, but they didn't...

Don't let your heart be troubled...

Verses 2&3

The relationship Jesus had with his father was a loving relationship and any child who has that sort of relationship enjoys privileges that would be denied anyone other than family. By saying there were many dwelling places, Jesus was saying to the disciples that the privileges of family belonged to them as long as they believed in him. But he also says that at the end of times there will be a place for all who believe in him – that he is not in the business of abandoning but rather his love for us is constant – constantly generous and overflowing. His is perfect love, not the inadequate, human love that is ours...

I like Thomas – I have a real soft spot for him as he is a doubter but he also asks the questions that most of us want to ask, but feel too embarrassed to ask! Jesus responds immediately and Thomas doesn't get to respond back here, but later in John 20:28 he becomes the only disciple in the Gospel to declare a full confession of Jesus' identity by saying: "My Lord and my God." But at this moment in time he is still uncertain of what is going on.... He is hanging on in there, but I would imagine feeling very confused.

However, back to the text....Jesus then says the words that can and do often cause problems for those following Christ and those not following him.... I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

I believe people (including me a lot of the time) become too preoccupied with worrying about issues that do not really concern us... in this passage what many, many people read into it is the exclusivity, the exclusiveness of what Jesus was saying – I am the Way and the truth and the life....instead of listening to what Jesus was telling us to do – to follow the teachings of Jesus, which is what God the Father was saying through him, to love God and others and to not let our hearts be troubled....

It is not for us to worry about who will be included or excluded in heaven, who is going to be classed as deserving of eternal life with God...– what we have been commanded to do is to love God, love our neighbours as we love ourselves and to follow the way of Jesus, the son of God...We like to put boundaries on God, because we are human and often judgemental, because we need boundaries, but there are no boundaries for God and whoever hears his voice and becomes one of his sheep – as we heard last week, will enter his Kingdom... but we are not to trouble our hearts – what we need to do is to keep our focus on Jesus Christ, to follow Him.

Sloyan writes “Jesus must be proclaimed as the one way to God to whoever is willing to listen, while leaving the faith and the fate of those who have never heard the gospel to a God who is equal to the problem”

- Jesus is "the way." We will not get lost if we follow the way of Jesus.
- He is "the truth." We will not be deceived if we follow the teachings of Jesus.
- He is "the life." For the Jewish people, the Torah was the book of life. Now Jesus becomes the life-giver.

Verses 8-14 are highlighting the relationship of Jesus with the Father and prayer...

According to various scholars including Brown and Moloney, Jesus' oneness with the Father is rooted in the Jewish understanding that the messenger bears the identity and speaks with the authority of the sender. In other words, Jesus was sent on behalf of the Father, but he was so completely tuned into what God the Father wanted that he spoke with total authority.

It isn't like the game of Chinese whispers that I played with the Choristers before the service.. the message was I am in the Father and the Father is in me where the message starts out as one thing and by the end of the group it was totally unintelligible....it has to be because we are listening properly...

Most of us at some point when praying will end with the phrase in Jesus' name – almost using those words as a magic formula and if they are not used it won't

happen...But if that was the case, it would be like putting power into our hands that would be too dangerous....

To pray in Jesus' name, requires that we first try to understand Jesus' mind so that our prayers represent his will as closely as possible. To pray in Jesus' name is to bring our prayers into accord with the essential character of Jesus.

Praying in Jesus' name, is not a matter of whether we include the formula, "in Jesus' name" at the end of our prayer. It is I would suggest a matter of discipleship -- of bringing our lives and prayers into line with Jesus' heart. Praying in Jesus' name is not about what we want... we cannot and should not use prayer as a wish list and expect God to answer our prayer for a brand new top of the range car or computer or...

What prayer and discipleship is about is us listening to what God is saying to us, who are the people he wants us to pray for, what situations need us to become more actively involved in praying about and getting practically involved with.

To pray in Jesus' name, requires that we be in a close relationship with him -- that we do what we can to understand and listen to his will and that most importantly God is glorified through our actions, our prayers, our love for others...

Jesus calls us to know the Father, but He does so in the middle of everything that makes our lives - in the middle of life's joys and tragedies. To fundamental questions about life and faith, Jesus comes back with words that echo the words of God to Moses at the burning bush when he reveals His every essence... I am...the way, the truth, the life. To know Jesus is to know God Himself. but we need to show Him and His heavenly father to the world? How do we do that - - I suggest we need to spend much more time with God the Father - building a relationship with him, no-one can have a relationship with someone by just saying hello and moving onto the next person, we need to have real deep conversations with him, and perhaps more listening than speaking! When was the last time you spent more than a few moments listening to God? We need to listen to the questions that the world is asking and not just speak of but show the love of God through our actions....

Let not your heart be troubled.... Believe in God, spend time with God, show God's love... Amen