

## No Greater Love – In Peace <sup>2</sup>

✠ For troubled hearts (vv.1-14,27-31)

✠ For guardians of God's Word (vv.15-26)

In the Name of Jesus, God's greatest Love, dearly redeemed disciples of our Lord:

What kinds of things trouble your heart? And what makes it hard for you to guard and treasure God's Word? On the night our Lord Jesus would be betrayed, His Twelve disciples were reclining with Him in the upper room at the Passover meal. Jesus had just washed their feet and now was giving them comfort to carry them through the most wrenching ordeal of their lives. A sense of foreboding filled the air. The urge to run would soon overwhelm them in the Garden of Gethsemane. So for these few precious moments the Savior of the world will focus on their heart of hearts to bring them final victory in his death and resurrection. Therein lies our peace and love as well. For beyond the Lord's Christ there is **No Greater Love – In Peace**. And in our darkest night we find his greatest **Peace...**

✠ For troubled hearts (vv.1-14,27-31)

Not many people enjoy the pleasure of a pastor in full-time service for our Lord. I was still a vicar when my supervising pastor left me to make hospital calls one weekend. On Friday he had introduced me to Walter Stark. Saturday morning I called to find out how Mr. Stark was doing. "Not well," the nurse told me. "It would be good for you to come." I stood outside his door hearing loud groans and cries, wondering whether to go in. The nurse nodded, but Mr. Stark did not open his eyes. As I was trained, I spoke familiar words like Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer. Amazing, like turning down a dial on his entire system – such peace came over him. The next day the nurse said the whole family was visiting. Several times he thanked me, remembering my visit, though he had not spoken the day before. That night the Lord took Walter Stark home to heaven. He had served his first wife in her illness, then remarried and took care of his second wife. Now God's grace took him home to glory. And I saw our Savior's **Peace**.

So many times I've witnessed this divine **Peace** on God's people and my own soul. As our Lord Jesus revealed to His disciples, preparations were underway for mansions up above. Jesus says: "**Let not your heart be troubled. 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 am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.**"

Our place in heaven is already prepared. Jesus opened the way by His suffering on the cross for our sins. He burst the chains of death by His glorious resurrection. In view of His victory, Jesus had told a grieving sister named Martha, "**Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die – ever.**" (John 11:26 HCSB) We fall asleep in Jesus; we wake up in glory. Heaven is not like some apartment building or hotel with "**many rooms.**" The Greek original literally means *places to abide*, and the context of heaven implies luxury. For centuries the Latin Vulgate and the King James Version rendered this as "**mansions.**" That's more like it. And we can go home anytime the Lord calls, because by His death and resurrection, Jesus has the sprawling, spacious estate (Isaiah 32:20) of our heavenly mansion ready and waiting.

Jesus wants all His disciples to know clearly *the Way* home to heaven. Jesus explained to Thomas, "**I AM the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.**" Thomas replied, "**Lord, show us the Father, and that's enough for us.**" Jesus' answer is a window into

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from a draft translation by the undersigned for the Wartburg Project – John.

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the very essence of God. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. Yet they share with the Holy Spirit the same divine, eternal essence as God. Jesus says, ***“The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me?”*** If that’s not enough to convince you, Jesus says, ***“Believe because of the works themselves.”*** John reports in the last verse of his Gospel account: ***“Jesus did many other things. If every one of these were written down, I suppose the world would not have room for the books that would be written.”*** (John 21:25 NETNT) We might say, “Not a hard drive alive could hold all Jesus’ miracles.”

Our Lord Jesus wants His disciples to understand something really awesome. So He doubles up on the ***“Amen”*** again, saying one for Himself and one for His hearers at the beginning of the sentence: ***“Amen, Amen, I tell you, the one who believes in me, will do the works that I am doing. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”*** Dear friends of Jesus, great works await us on the way. Wealthy men and women have passed through the gates of death where their fame and fortune failed. No matter how brash and bold they appeared in life, they pass their last gasp in terror unless they trust Jesus as ***the Way*** to heaven. Then they enjoy a **Peace** which all the world’s wealth cannot buy, which Jesus also gives freely to the worldly poor. He says, ***“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, give I to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*** **No Greater Love – In Peace....**

### ✠ For guardians of God’s Word (vv.15-26)

Few things show more love and respect for someone than when you remember what they say and quote their words to others. Little kids do this all the time: “Well my Mom says....” “My Dad will tell you....” It can get frustrating for parents with kids in school always telling you, “My teacher says....” You need teachers who share your values and don’t tear down the solid structure of their faith in Jesus.

More than anything else our attitude toward God’s Word reflects our love for Him. If you merely ***“obey”*** God’s Word because you’re afraid of God or what people might think, if it’s nothing but tradition for you, where is the heart in that? Jesus says, ***“If you love me, you will guard my commands.”*** But that does not mean keeping your Bible locked up somewhere. Nor does it mean arguing with people who contradict Christ’s commands. We have good examples of holy writers like Paul, James and Jude who could contend for the faith without being contentious. But before you get to apologetics, Jesus explains, ***“Anyone who loves me will guard and treasure my word.”*** You’re like a woman who can’t stop admiring her new diamond ring – beautiful by itself, but especially because of the one who gave to her. You’re like a man who can’t stop planning a trip for his new rod and reel. All the good accomplished by ***“guarding and treasuring”*** Christ’s commands makes worldly wealth look like melted plastic.

But you know what can enhance your rod and reel even more? Or make that diamond really sparkle? Having someone to guide you to the fish and show you the value of a diamond. That’s one more promise our Lord Jesus has for us tonight. ***“These things I have spoken to you while remaining beside you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I told you.”*** Need help remembering God’s Word? The Holy Spirit is right there to remind you. Need understanding? This Counselor will apply it to real life. Sound like only words? This Counselor is also the Comforter who can bring their sweetness to your soul. He’s the wisdom that builds the mansion for the Father and the Son right beside yours in heaven’s glory.

As true God, Jesus is equal with the Father. As true Man in His state of humiliation, Jesus gave up the full use of His divine power and glory. So Jesus could truly say, ***“If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I.”*** Everything Jesus said came true. Satan truly has no power over Jesus or His disciples. Don’t look around in worry. Don’t look back in guilt. Don’t look ahead in fear. Look up and keep your eyes on Jesus. As you follow Him, you will enjoy **No Greater Love – In Peace. Amen**, and again, **Amen**.

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