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## Uncertainty

“Our deep fear of the unknown not only scares us,  
but it can scramble our brains.”

That’s the lead line of an article titled *Why we're so terrified of the unknown*. The article goes on to tell us what we may already, and painfully, know—any element of unpredictability significantly increases our discomfort. That discomfort can lead to anxiety, and even chronic anxiety disorders.



Mental health professionals have devised steps people can take to alleviate anxiety, to not be frozen by fear. Some of those can be helpful. While we can gain help from them, as God’s people we need to be grounded in God and His truth to evaluate all things, and move forward.

John chapter 14 opens with Jesus telling His disciples,

“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.”

Before we jump to what those words mean and how they apply to us we need to review the setting.

Jesus had just celebrated the Passover with the disciples, including washing their feet, telling them one of them would betray Him, that He was leaving them and that they could not come with Him.

Talk about uncertainty! They accepted Jesus was not only their teacher and master, but as the long-awaited Messiah to deliver and rule over Israel.

“One of us is going to betray You?” “You are leaving us?”

“What will we do?” “What will happen to us?”

“If You are the Messiah who is to remain forever, that doesn’t make sense! How can this be?”

I am sure that uncertainty not only alarmed them, it may have terrified them as the questions and thoughts kept playing in an endless and intensifying loop.

It is in this context, with these uncertainties and fears that Jesus moved to help them calm the turmoil within.

Back at verse 1 in John chapter 14, Jesus began helping the disciples by saying “Do not let your heart be troubled.”

The word *troubled* came from the idea of causing movement by shaking or stirring, and so to cause disturbance, unsettledness, confusion. Jesus told them

“Do not allow what you do not understand keep on disturbing, confusing you, keeping you troubled.”

The disciples had an active role to play to keep from being troubled by what they did not understand.

It is also good to note that disturbance by events in and of itself is not a bad or sinful thing, it is how we respond to that disturbance that can be bad. We know that because three times in John's gospel just before this incident he tells us Jesus was troubled (see 11:33, 12:27, 13:21).

Jesus pointed the disciples to the first step to keep uncertainty from troubling them, from dominating them. He said, “believe in God, believe also in Me.”

God knows all things. God controls all things. God loves and cares for His people as He brings about His good and perfect plans. So, trust God. Decide to trust Him to lead you through and to calm the turmoil. In doing that recognize and face the turmoil, and do not allow your heart to stay in a troubled state based on God and His truth for you.

After Jesus tells them to believe in Him, He went on to reassure them, to promise them, that He was not abandoning them, that He would return and take them to Himself (see verses 2-4, 18-19). Jesus will never abandon you, leave you on your own no matter how confused and disturbed you may be. In Jesus' promise to return for them and take them to be with Himself He is also telling them to take the long view, to keep the end in view of being with Him forever in order to gain perspective, hope and courage. We also need to do that to dispel our unsettledness.

As we go on in chapter 14, Jesus then tells them to pray (verses 13-14). Don't sit and fret. Don't rely on your own ideas and abilities. Pray! Pray regularly, consistently about it. Then He tells them to obey His commandments (verses 15-25).

Uncertainty is part of life here on earth. We are limited, finite beings. We do not, cannot know and understand everything about the present and the future. God knows all things and cares for you. He will lead you and keep you from being scared and scrambled by the uncertainties you face.

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