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JOHN 14:1

John Series: Get a Life in Jesus

[PRAYER] Lord, I pray for Sarah and for Bryson and Jayden and Landon and Ava. I pray that you'd provide for them and demonstrate your provision in their lives as they walk through this challenging time where they can't be in that house that they were living in. Reveal your greatness and your strength. I pray that you would reveal to them in personal ways, especially the children just that they would experience the grace that comes from being part of a fellowship and being with other Christians. Lord, I certainly appreciate that. And for my wife I ask for your grace for her this week as she goes through the surgery. I ask for wisdom for the doctors and for a speedy recovery for her as well. Lord, there are other things going on in this fellowship right now and people who have needs and hurts, and we ask that you would bless them. Heal, forgive, comfort. Do what you do in each person's life this morning, Father. As we open your word, we do so recognizing that this is your word that we're looking at and these are your people. I pray that you'd give me wisdom as I share today from your word that the message that comes through would be from your Holy Spirit and that you'd touch each person in a special way and bless them. In Jesus' name, amen.

Next Sunday morning I won't be here. I'll be gone in New York city with my wife. You will be in the capable hands of a number of leaders here at Calvary Chapel. Tim will be preaching next Sunday and Peter will be leading worship. So I encourage you to come and be a part of the fellowship next Sunday and enjoy what God wants to do next Sunday here at Calvary Chapel Living Hope.

I read this week that the greatest mental illness challenge in our culture today is anxiety. So when I read John 14:1 I thought, you know what, we could read a whole bunch of verses here. Because you know we get to verse 6 – *I am the way, the truth, and the life*. We get to a whole bunch of great verses in John 14. But I stopped after verse 1 because verse 1 just seems to address this issue in our lives. This is not just for everybody else. I think all of us struggle with the challenges in our own hearts that have to do with anxiety or worry.

So what I'd like to do is take a look at the verse today. So if you'd stand with me as I read this verse of God's word. This will set the stage for our lessons that I hope God will speak to you and you will be able to walk away as we look at His word today. John 14:1 says this: *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."*

I feel like I could just read that over for thirty minutes over and over again, and then we could all go home. I mean that is such a valuable piece of truth. The rest of the passage is going to be delightful and we'll pick up there again. But now I just want to spend some time on those words. So you may be seated.

What prompted Jesus to say this to His disciples, “*Do not let your hearts be troubled*”? Well I think this is what prompted Him. In the last few weeks we’ve been looking at chapter 13 in John. As we looked at that chapter, we saw a number of things take place that I think were a little disconcerting and maybe upsetting for the disciples.

The first thing that happens is the screen opens up in John 13, the first few verses, is that Jesus gets up from the table during the meal and He gets a basin of water and a towel and He starts washing the disciples’ feet. I know that that made them feel uncomfortable because that was the job of some lowly servant lower down on the ranks. For someone like Jesus to do that just felt, I’m sure, uncomfortable. But I’m sure it was made even more uncomfortable when Peter resisted that and said, “No, no. Don’t wash my feet.” And so Jesus and Peter have this interaction together, which I’m thinking is further making them feel a little bit uncomfortable.

Right after that, the scriptures tell us that Jesus said to all of these people, these guys, “*One of you is going to betray me.*” And the Bible says that they turned and *they stared at one another*. They just looked at one another, I think, as if to say, “Is it you? Is it you? I wonder who it is? Is it me? Who’s going to betray Him?” And so I think that made them feel a little bit uncomfortable as well.

Then comes the next session in chapter 13 where He’s saying, “Guys, I want you to know something. I’m going somewhere and you’re not going to be able to come.” Now I think that is really the prompting of what Jesus is going to say here. Because of all of the things that are going on, to think that the last three years they spent with Jesus and now He’s going somewhere and He’s not taking them with Him? That is disconcerting. It’s confusing. They’re wondering and they’re challenging.

In fact Peter (he’s the one with the most courage, I suppose), he’s an external processor. You know those people that you know everything they’re thinking. So they’re talking out loud continually. Peter is like that. He says, “Lord, I will lay down my life for you. I’ll go wherever we need to go.” And Jesus even says to him, “Before the end of the night, you’re going to deny me three times.”

Right after that come these words where Jesus says to His disciples, “*Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.*” I think He sensed the troubledness in their hearts. I’ll bet He looked around at them and they were feeling on edge, they were agitated. And so He says these words to them to comfort them, to give them direction.

It reminds me of a story in the Old Testament that I want to show you in just a moment. But before I do, when He says *troubled*, notice it doesn’t say anxiety there. I want you to see where I’m going with this when I think of anxiety. Because there are three primary emotions that we need to have a plan for in our lives. If we’re going to do well spiritually and emotionally, we must have a plan and God has things to say about our heart and anger and our heart in sadness and our heart in anxiety. He has something to say about those things in our lives.

So I was wondering, what is it here? Were the disciples angry? Well I don’t think so. It doesn’t look like anger is the primary thing that He’s saying there. Were they sad? Well maybe there was a little bit of sadness here wondering He’s leaving us, I’m sad about that. But I think the primary

thing they're feeling is this sense of anxiousness because we don't know what this looks like. We've not been this way before. We don't know where to go, which takes me to this beautiful story in the Old Testament where the Israelites are about to cross into the Promised Land. It's in Joshua 3:5. He sends the commanders among all the people, maybe a million people, lots of people. He sends the commanders among all the people and He says to them these words. He says, "I want you to keep your eye on the ark. Follow the ark because you haven't been this way before. This is new territory for you. You're going to get lost. It's going to be confusing."

Now I would suggest that sometimes in our lives the anxiety comes because we're confused. We haven't been this way before. Oh it's fine when you get up every morning, you go to the same job, you take the same lunch break, you come home, you go grocery shopping or whatever you have to do. You pay your bills the first of the month. You've got your routine. Your routine is going fine because you've been this way before. You don't feel anxious about that. Maybe there are some things that are troubling, but you're basically on the path. It's when something disrupts that and you have to go on a different plan. You lose your job. Or you have a car accident. Or you have a health challenge. And now you're saying, "Lord, I've not been this way before. What do I do?" That's the feeling that I think that Jesus is addressing here for the disciples.

So maybe today you're on the path. You're not really feeling a lot of anxiety, but you're going to need these things that we talk about today either for yourself or for others that you spend time with. Because Jesus is giving a solution here that's really valuable for all of us as we come and understand this idea.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Now the word *troubled* is the word stirred up. That's what it means. That's the literal word. To stir up. We say in the English language 'upset'. If you have a tray and it tips over, it's upset. So we describe our hearts as being upset. Jesus used the word *troubled* to describe what they were feeling. Worry is one of those things that's upsetting for us. You start thinking about things and it gets us into trouble.

So Jesus has a solution for this idea of being troubled and notice what it says that we need to do. He says we need to believe. *You believe in God; believe also in me.* The word *believe* is the word trust. The antidote for worry is trust and belief.

Worry. Belief. Two kinds of things that are on opposite sides. Let's just dig into these words. We're right in this passage. Let's stay with the words for a moment and look at the verbs because there's a passive verb in the beginning and this passive verb is *do not let* and *be troubled*. Do you see that? What I mean by passive is being done to you. Whereas *believe* is active. You do that. *Do not let your hearts be troubled.* So what that implies... So if it were active, it would say do not trouble yourself. That's not what it's saying. It's saying don't be troubled. Why is that? Because worry tends to trouble us. It kind of grows on us. It just happens. Where belief is something we do that's active.

I want to suggest that in our lives if we don't have an active plan of belief and exercise in the belief side, worry tends to grow. But if you have the belief and it's growing, then worry can diminish. The goal here is to manage the worry, which comes normally. He says it just comes out. It attacks us. It's after us or whatever. It just happens. Do not allow it. Do not allow your hearts to continually be stirred up or upset. It's just going to happen in life. In order to deal with that, you need to believe.

So we've got this contrast between worry that tends to happen in our lives if we don't check it and belief in God, which is active. Those two things, which are belief or our trust in God, let me draw some parallels between the two to help us understand a little bit more of what I think Jesus is saying here.

Worry is circular. It churns. I know you've all experienced this as I have. It kind of goes round and round and it actually spirals down as you tend to worry. You go over the same information. I already thought about this once, but we think about it over and over and it keeps going down. Like a screw that keeps screwing into our hearts as it keeps going down and we go around and around. It screws into our hearts and it's a painful thing. You know we start out as something innocuous or something that's a problem.

Dad looks at his little boy who's two years old and sees that the tooth is crooked and he's going, "Oh no. The tooth is crooked. This kid is going to have to have braces. Go look on the web. How much does it cost for braces? \$143,000. Oh no. I'm not going to be able to afford braces. This is terrible! He's going to go into middle school and then what happens when he's in middle school? The kids are going to make fun of him and he's going to be violent, and then he's going to be attracted to gangs, and then he's going to be involved in a life of crime, and I'm going to visit him in prison." And all it was was a little tooth that's crooked.

That's what happens with worry. I know that's kind of a funny illustration, but look at your own life. You start thinking of a bad thing, and it gets worse and worse and worse. And worry does that. It kind of screws into our hearts because worry is circular and it churns.

But trust is vertical. It looks up. It's different. We have to move out of looking around at all the stuff that's going on and we have to look up. We have to stop the worry and we have to believe in God. He's saying *don't let your hearts be troubled* about these things that I'm talking to you about. *Believe in God and also believe in me.*

Secondly, worry drains energy, which could be used otherwise. You only get a certain amount of energy. I've got to tell you. It is like you only have a certain amount of money or a certain amount of time. It's like you're a steward of those things. Some people have more energy than other people have. And you're going to use that somehow, one way or another. and how you use the energy God has given you is important because you're a steward of that energy. If you're using a lot of it to worry, if worry is taking up a lot of your time, you're missing out on some other thing that you could be doing. Whereas trust realizes that God is strong in the midst of my weakness and He can do something amazing and I need to rely on His wheelbarrow. Throw it in the wheelbarrow so He can carry that instead of me trying to peddle around and around about it. Worry crosses the line to things we can't control.

See I think a certain amount of...I don't know if I should use the same word worry, but conscientiousness is good. It's conscientiousness that gets you to pay your bills. Right? It's conscientiousness that turns the temperature down to save money on your heat bill. It's conscientiousness that says I've really got to talk to that person or send them a birthday or card, or whatever it might be. That's a good kind of uncomfortable feeling. But then it crosses a line at some point where there's nothing we can do. We do all we can do and then there's a part of we

can't do and it's the part we can't do that we spend time worrying about. And that's where we get into trouble and that's when it crosses the line.

And trust by its very nature releases control. I'm going to give up the control to someone else. Whether you're a child who trusts a parent, or you trust in a doctor, or you trust God. Of course Jesus is saying – *Don't let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.* Release the control. Give it up. Trust in the Lord. When you trust in Him, it's going to be okay and you're going to be able to manage the stuff that's inside.

I'm convinced that our hearts are not designed to handle all the cares that we experience. So when we try to deal with all the cares that we experience, our hearts just can't handle them, so they start rattling and shaking. One person described this anxiety as "I feel like electricity is coming into my body and it's going to come out, but it doesn't. And that's even worse. It just kind of rattles around inside and it just creates this tension." Another person describes anxiety as "this invisible cage that comes around me and I feel like I'm trapped in the middle of this." I would suggest our heart is not designed to carry around all of our own personal cares. We try to maintain them, control them, manage them all in a way that crosses the line, then anxiety tends to develop and grow in a way that's not productive.

Trust is God's solution to the challenge. Worry focuses on our weakness and the things I can't do and the problems that I have. It focuses on the challenges that I'm experiencing and the inadequacy that I have in my life. That's what worry does. But trust focuses on God's power. That's why He says – *Don't let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God.*

We've got worry and trust and find them to be working against each other. If I worry, then I'm not trusting. But if I can learn to trust, then I can deal with that worry and worry tends to diminish. The two are so important and so I think there's an exercise program that God has for us and I want to phrase it this way: I would say that worship is worry in reverse. If you've got the screws in there and they're digging in because you're going round and round about the things that you're being challenged about and you don't know where to go and things that you just don't know what to do, the way to unscrew them has to do with this idea of worship. To focus on the Lord. To believe in Him. Because focusing on trust, focusing on who God is does something to the worry. It releases it. It removes it. It makes it less strong in our lives because we're offloading it to the Lord and we're allowing Him to do something instead.

So if you're struggling in this area of worrying, you can exercise your heart in a way to practice the belief and that is through worship. It can be public worship like this. That's one of the reasons we get together. We encourage each other when we worship and sing songs about God and trusting in Him. But you can worship the Lord in the course of your day. When you exercise worship, worry tends to diminish.

There's a story in the Old Testament that I like in 2 Kings. It's a story about Elisha's servant. You remember the story about how he comes out to get some water from the well early in the morning. And when he comes out to get some water from the well you know he's clearing his eyes and he's starting to get the water. He looks up and he sees all around these chariots and horsemen, these soldiers, this army that's going to come and attack and take over and they're after Elisha. So they want to capture Elisha. They want to kill Elisha because he's offending them and doing what he's doing as a prophet. And so they're after him. *When the servant of the*

man of God got up and went out early in the next morning, an army of horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my Lord! What shall we do?" I think you may have said those words. You didn't know it was a quote.

See in my life, I tend to be okay if problems come at me one at a time. Give me a problem, okay. I'm a problem solver. I can focus on that problem, I can solve it. But here's what happens. Sometimes I got this problem, I pick up the phone to solve it and I get a text about some other problem. And now I've got another problem coming and I'm going, "Oh boy." Now I'm starting to feel overwhelmed because I'm surrounded. That's the idea here is that the household there was surrounded on the mountainside by all these soldiers and horses and chariots that I imagine were pretty scary. What are we going to do?" the servant says. "Oh no. Oh Lord, what are we going to do?"

I love what Elisha does in worshiping the Lord. He prays. He prays the prayer that I need to know and I need to have this in my life. *Elisha prayed, "Open, his eyes Lord so that he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire* (notice the words) *all around him*. It's the second circle. I need to recognize there's a second circle because sometimes I only focus on the circle of things that are surrounding me. I need to know there's another circle inside of it with chariots of fire that God is protecting me. My job is to offload this through belief and turn it over to the Lord.

Wow. Now I'm coming to some exercise things I can do in my life when I start to worry. I can practice what Jesus said in those words. *"You believe in God; believe also in me. Trust me. I've got this,"* He says.

Peter was one of those guys listening. So I got distracted. I'm going to share with you my distraction today because this is where I spent some time in my own study. I'm going to go to the passage in 1 Peter where Peter is writing about this idea. Notice in verse 7 he says – *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you*. That's right in the middle, but I want to read the verses around it. Notice that Peter has learned something very important in his life to cast the anxiety on God. Why? Because God cares for him.

I think Peter got himself into trouble in a number of ways and one of those anxiety producing situations was when he got out of the boat. Remember the boat? Jesus is walking on the water in the storm and it's after most of the night. They see Him on the water and they recognize and discover it's Jesus. So Peter says, maybe impulsively, maybe because he wants to be a true disciple...I don't know what he's saying, but he's outside of his game here and he says, "Lord, if that's you out there, call me out on the water too." One word. *Come*. Peter steps out of the boat onto the water. I just can't imagine. It seems solid. So he starts to walk on it and everything is fine. He must have walked quite a distance because the Bible tells us that when he starts to sink (he doesn't go all the way under it doesn't look like), he starts to sink and he yells, *"Lord, save me!"* The Bible tells us that he started to sink because he looked at the things around him, the wind and the waves. It started making him feel anxious and upset, and so he started to sink down in the water.

Notice Jesus is right there with him. The Bible says He reached down with His hand and pulled Peter up. Now Jesus must have been really strong to pull a guy up out of the water like that. Very strong. It reminds me in the Old Testament how they had over and over again the mighty hand of

God. His *mighty hand* and His *outstretched arm* is referred to several times in the Old Testament, especially with the Israelites coming out of Egypt. It was God's mighty hand and His outstretched arm that delivered the Israelites from the problems that they experienced.

And now Peter, putting this all together recognizes as he writes these words, he says – *Humble yourselves*. I had to stop there. *Humble yourselves*. I wonder how much humility has to do with trust. Or can we say it the other way? Or how much pride has to do with anxiety. It's interesting that the middle letter in the word anxiety is *I*. The middle letter in the English word anxiety is *I*. The middle letter in the word pride is *I*. Right? In both of those cases. I wonder if some of our anxiety may be caused because of our own pride and get us into trouble. I need this. I want this. I'm in control of this. And our pride gets to a place where we feel anxious. I can't do this. I've got a problem. I don't have what I need for this. I don't know the answer for this. So we start getting anxious about things.

What is the solution that God would have for us? Well I think it's trust, definitely. We're going to see this casting your care. But he starts with humble yourselves. We just need to be humble people. Because humility moves a little bit of that control out of the picture and recognizes I don't have what I need. I am weak. I need to trust God. And when I learn to trust God more, then good things can happen.

Notice it says – *Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand*. I wonder if Peter is picturing the Old Testament, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm or he's picturing the Jesus when he's going under water and he's saying, "Lord, save me," and Jesus reached out His hand and pulled him up. *Under God's mighty hand that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

Then comes the warning. All this is in context here. Notice the warning. *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour*. Oh wow. Peter was in the upper room when in just a previous chapter in John 13, the Bible says that Satan entered Judas because of his greed and he went out and did the betrayal of Jesus. Man. *The devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

I just want to be careful about my own anxiety that I don't allow the devil to use that somehow to get me off track. Because Satan would love to destroy me. He would love to weaken me, distract me, mess with me. The idea that he's a roaring lion, it's not like he's one of those leopards who sneaks up and pounces. He roars first. There's warning here. And I think that in our lives we do have warning many times that our worry is getting out of control. It's crossed the line. That we're getting ourselves into trouble and we need to trust the Lord.

Yesterday Carrie and I were in Brooklyn in New York City visiting our granddaughter and her parents. Carrie left her phone in the car. Well we parked on the street. We got into the house, "Oh, I don't have my phone. I left it in the car." So I went out to the car to get it. I had to go down the street where we had found a parking place to get the phone. And I'm thinking, "Wow, I do a lot to retrieve a phone."

Let me ask you a question. If you left your phone out in the driveway when you go in the house, would you go back out and get your phone? Well I would! Because I like my phone and my phone really helps me a lot. I keep it on my hip. I wear it right here. This is my phone. So my

phone is right with me a lot. Now I wonder if I left my phone at my house and I drive fifteen minutes away, would I stop and realize it and turn around and go get my phone? Fifteen minutes? Probably, depending on how long I'm going to be out. Would I go back and get it if I were an hour away? Again, it's how long am I going to be out? If I'm going to be out for a couple of days, I'm going back if it's four hours probably to get my phone. I want my phone and keep it there.

Now I would suggest if we spend as much energy as we would retrieving our phone to retrieve our peace when it's lost, we would be much more... What's the word I have when I have my phone? I feel... What do you feel when you have your phone? Okay. Secure. Right. So there's this security of having my phone. I'm going, "A phone?"

It's the peace of God that helps us to experience security and I want to have that much value for the peace of God in my life that I'm willing to get it when I've lost it, to go find it when it's not around. Worry is one of those things that robs us of peace. When we have worship on one side and worry on the other, you know we can only choose one of those. Right? If you're worshipping God then the worry is going to drift off. It's not going to be there. If you're worrying, then you're not worshipping God. That's why Jesus says – *Don't allow your hearts to be troubled. Believe in God and also believe in me.* I want that peace. I want to keep it.

Oh the passage has many more good things we're going to read about and learn in this passage, but I felt like it best to just stop with this one verse and just let that sink in a little bit and allow you to meditate on that over the next few days and allow God to speak to you about your own peace and how God wants to do something special in this area to strengthen your heart.

Would you stand with me? Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, I pray for those who on the one hand are facing new challenges and are going into a path that they haven't been through before. I pray that you'd give them peace and the ability to trust in you and your Son, Jesus Christ. I pray for those of us who are on regular paths of our lives just going over the same thing over and over, but worry tends to creep in and we're not even aware of what's happening. Lord, I pray that you'd help us to stop, to look, and to see what's going on and to learn how to trust you. So Lord, in the midst of all those struggles that we face, the things that seem insurmountable, the things that cause us to worry, teach us the value of trust and belief in you. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.