

# ANTIDOTE for WORRY

Karen said something to me this week that really stood out. She said, I don't think most guys have Christmas stress." How true that is. Karen is the chief architect of Christmas. I come along and help where I can but I don't do much in the busy season. The stereotype is that women tend to worry more than men do. That is true in our house. But part of the reason I don't worry as

much is because I am ignorant. You can't worry about what you don't know! Sometimes ignorance has its benefits.

The guy in this cartoon knows how mom's tend to worry too much!



ARE YOUR KIDS OKAY, BANK BALANCES  
DIPPING, DO YOU STILL HAVE THAT RASH?  
MOM NEEDS SOMETHING NEW TO WORRY ABOUT.

to say that worry and anxiety costs our nation hundreds of billions of dollars per year. So if we could eliminate worry, we could save hundreds of billions per year—and a lot of heartache as well.

According to the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, anxiety and depression costs Americans in excess of \$100 billion each year.<sup>1</sup> These numbers only reflect what people spend on pharmaceuticals for anxiety and depression. And these studies were from the 1990's and don't include the impact of anxiety on other health problems nor do they take into account lost productivity from missed work days. So it is safe

There is an antidote to worry. John chapter fourteen begins with Jesus' calming words. *Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.* Belief is the antidote to worry. As I read this passage, see if you can pick out the truths that we are meant to believe which are the antidote to worry.

*1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3*

*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going.” 5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”*

*8 Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.*

*12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.*

Jesus said, “Believe in God; believe also in me.” We often get this word believe wrong. It is not merely mental agreement. The word belief can be translated as either belief or trust. I think in English, our word trust is a better choice. Trust implies more than just agreement with a fact. Let me show you trust looks like.



I have yet to see the Grand Canyon but if I did, I think I would like to check out this glass walkway. It hangs over the edge of the canyon cliff with a sheer drop of 800 feet. So the question would be, do you trust the glass? Do you trust the engineering and construction skills of those who built this glass structure? The only way to test your belief is to walk on it, right?

Or how about this glass bridge in China? It measures 1300 feet across and swings 1000 feet above the canyon floor. Would you 'trust' this bridge to hold you up?



Let's take that trust to the next level. Here are a group of men who attempted to smash one of the glass panels with sledgehammers. Would you trust the glass to hold you up under these circumstances? When they were done, they drove a car onto the same section they were just trying to break.



Now you might say that these men have moved from trust to utter foolishness, but you get the point. Your trust is as only as good as the object of your trust. This bridge proved worthy of trust in it, due to its inherent integrity and strength. Many say they believe in Jesus but fail to trust him. Many will gladly accept right doctrines about Jesus but don't see how these wonderful truths can change their lives. This is trust. This is the kind of belief that Jesus spoke of here. Jesus is more than worthy to be the object of our trust.

This trust was spoken directly to the troubled hearts of the disciples. *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. The old NIV use the word trust here, so from this point forward, I will use trust instead of belief also. “Let not your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. Now why were the disciples troubled? They were worried for Jesus. They knew that death threats were swirling about Jerusalem, especially during the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that his disciples were troubled in heart. But the amazing this here is that Jesus should have been on the receiving end of comfort but instead, he is the one giving comfort.*

And we have a record that his heart was troubled.

John 12:27—“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.

John 13:21—After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”

One thing these verses teach us is that it is OK to be troubled at times. If Jesus was troubled in heart and spirit, and Jesus never sinned, then at least in theory, our hearts can be troubled without being in a state of sinful weary and fear. Now saying this is a bit like reminding us that it is possible to be angry and not sin. Most of our anger is sin, so I would not want to give an excuse for our anger any more than I would want to cover up our sinful worry with a couple of Bible verses.

So we need a strong caution there. However, it is also encouraging to know that just because we are troubled it doesn't mean we are sinning or seriously doubting the Lord. We all face various trials at times and some of them are most severe. It is perfectly natural and normal for your heart to be troubled at these times. Grief and suffering are weighty things. You feel them in the gut. They feel heavy upon your shoulders. They are a burden and they will feel weighty at times.

This is how Jesus felt and he knew that the disciples were feeling the same way. The difference was that Jesus knew exactly what was coming and when it was coming. But the disciples probably just had a vague sense of worry. They knew it could happen but they were not privy to the details. Nevertheless, Jesus did not condemn their worry but rather spoke comfort into it.

Trust in Christ is the antidote to worry and now for the specific ways Jesus wants us to trust him.

### **1. Trust that Jesus is going to prepare an eternal dwelling for us.**

The KJV translates verse two as, "In my Father's house are many mansions." The KJV was my first Bible given to me by the family that helped bring me to faith. It's the only Bible I had for the first few years of my Christian life but sadly, I did not read it very much back then. But if you were raised on the KJV, then John 14:2 with the promise of many mansions is near and dear to your heart. In my Father's house are many mansions. Jesus is saying something very important about Heaven here so it's important that we understand him.

The word mansions is not a helpful translation in my opinion. It makes it sound like we will be living in audacious, 30,000 square foot mansions like a Hollywood celebrity or CEO. The word first appeared in the Latin version in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It comes from the Latin word *mansiones* which means "dwelling place." It's the same reason we have the word 'pastor' in Ephesians chapter four. Pastor came from the Latin word *pastorem*, which means 'shepherd.' It's easy to lose the actual meaning of words by doing this.

The NIV and ESV is not much better. "In my Father's house are many rooms." That sounds like we will be living in a corner of a large house with our own small room to call our own. Or maybe a small room in a high rise apartment. It would be OK if this is what Jesus actually taught, but it is not. They are just poor translations. Maybe this is why some people prefer the KJV, cause they get mansions and we only get rooms!

In this case, the NASB has it right. "In my Father's house are many dwelling places." The NASB accurately translated the Greek word as it should be. It simply means a dwelling place. In my Father's house are many dwelling places. The Father's house is heaven, where the Father, Son and Spirit abide, where they are. Where they dwell. And in that glorious place there are many

dwelling places. It's not a room. It's not a mansion. It's a place of being. A place of eternal dwelling with the Lord.

It is a place that Jesus prepare for us. What does that mean, that he is preparing it for us? Was it not complete? Did it need to be created or built or improved? In what sense is Jesus preparing it? I don't think it is being built so much as it personally prepared for us. It is a statement of personal care. And the main point of preparation is that he is coming again for us. If he goes he will come again and bring us to be with him.

This is Jim Downing. At 103 years old, he is the second oldest Pearl Harbor survivor and recently attended the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that attack. Here's a short section of Jim Daly of Focus on the Family interviewing him.

Jim: How did your faith help you that day? Did you question God? Why would this happen to me and to us?

Jim Downing: It was the greatest spiritual experience of my life that is still applied. It was a gasoline tanker under fire that had a capacity of 6 million gallons. The Japanese sent in 75 fighters. They didn't have targets, so they began to strafe and machine gun this tanker right in the middle of the harbor... I expected I'd be in heaven in the next minute. That went on for about 45 minutes. I had the deepest peace that I've ever had in my life. I think it was because, "Lord, I'll be with You in a minute," but it never happened. Now the application I made of that [is], I know that the Lord is always present, but verses like Psalm 46:1 indicate He's a very present help in trouble... You know He's there. But when we worry a lot, God doesn't respond to false alarms.

Christmas is a reminder of his first coming but we are promised a second coming, a final return. We could call this a "Christmas destiny". Next Sunday will be a Christmas prophecy. But the Christmas destiny is that all believers are destined to be with the Lord forever. And whatever it means for him to be preparing it for us, it is all the more wonderful.

So here's how the antidote works. First you need to acknowledge the worry, the anxiety, whatever it is that is troubling your spirit. If you can't name it, you can't deal with it. If your worries are vague and fuzzy, then any attempt at a solution will be vague and fuzzy. Do you have absolute confidence that Jesus is preparing a place for you? Do you have any doubts, any concerns about where you will spend eternity? If you have trusted in nothing but the blood of Christ, then apply the antidote to your worry. There is a dwelling place reserved and prepared just for you in your Father's house. It's big, it's beautiful and best of all, Jesus is there waiting.

## **2. Trust that Jesus is the way to the Father and to this eternal place.**

*"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

This is one of the best known verses for Christians. Even if we can't quote chapter and verse, we can quote this verse accurately. And when are we most likely to quote it? We almost always use it when sharing the gospel or defending our faith.

I used this verse when I preached at the funeral of Karen's stepdad. This service was held at the Unitarian church where Karen grew up. As you walk into the front entrance, there is a large sign with foot high steel letters that says: ONE CHURCH-MANY PATHS. This is a picture of the front of the church. You can see flags of Islam. There was a Star of David flag and just about anything else you can think of hanging there. It was a surreal place in which to preach a funeral. Here's a bit of what I said that day.

We will die, yet while we live, we are instructed to take our own death to heart. The day before he died, Jesus said the following to his disciples. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." No one has more love and compassion than Jesus Christ, but one thing is for certain—Jesus was extremely intolerant of other religious viewpoints.

Dedicated Jews who rejected Christ did not gain eternal life. Sincere Muslims will not gain access to the Father. Hindus, Buddhists and even some who call themselves Christians, when they die, will not go to the Father unless they have thrown themselves upon the mercy of Christ and asked him to cleanse them of their sin. Jesus said no one comes to the Father apart from me. No one? Yes, Jesus said no one. But did he really mean what he said? Isn't there more than one path to Heaven? How can so many people be wrong about eternity? No one can come to the Father except through Jesus because there is no one who is righteous, not even one. No one is capable of earning God's righteousness. We stand before the Lord as lost sinners until we ask him for help.

After the funeral, Karen told me that while I mentioning Muslims, Jews, Buddhists and Hindus, you almost expected me to turn around and rip the flags off the wall one at a time! That thought did not occur to me but with those flags as a backdrop, my words were certainly doing just that. Remember, I wrote this message before I had any idea what this church was like. Jesus is extremely intolerant of other religious viewpoints.

This is how we almost always use John 14:6. We use it as an evangelistic tool. Now that's totally understandable because part of the power of this verse lies in its exclusive claims. I am THE way and THE truth and THE life. No one comes to the Father EXCEPT through me. That's as clear as it gets for the unbeliever. However, we must not forget that Jesus spoke this to his disciples in order to strengthen their trust and alleviate their troubled hearts. That was the original context. So how can this have the same effect for you and me?

It answers the certainty question. What we really seek is certainty. We want to know that we know something for sure, especially if it concerns our eternal destiny. Even unbelievers want this level of certainty. On the website of the Unitarian Church, they state this about their belief—or rather lack of belief, in the doctrine of hell. "The 'Universalist' part of Unitarian Universalism rejected the idea of hell over a century ago." So my question to them would be—Are you certain about that? And they would say, yes, we are quite certain. Even those who deny you can know anything for certain are quite certain about the belief that you can't know anything for certain. Am I right?

This is obviously not the only verse in the Bible that gives us certainty. Far from it, but this one is so clear, so certain in its truth claim. Jesus says to us, “Do not let your hearts be troubled?” Why? “Because I am the way and the truth and the life. I am the only way to the Father. You need to get to the Father. You want to be with the Father and only belief in me can get you there.”

There’s almost no certainty in our lives. We don’t know how long our marriages will last. We don’t know if our children will turn out alright. We don’t know if we will lose our job, how long we will live or any of these things. There are no guarantees in life. There are precious few certainties and the most precious certainties are anchored in Jesus Christ. This truth is meant to calm your troubled heart like nothing else can. And remember, this is not a one-time application of these promises. Has your heart been troubled more than once in your lifetime? We apply these promises over and over again.

What we need are stronger trust muscles. If you don’t use your muscles, they don’t stay the same. They atrophy—they shrink. Trust is the same way. We need to acknowledge what is bothering us and then apply these and other truths. That is exercising your trust muscles. You can’t just hear a sermon on how to defeat worry and then you’re set for life. You need to practice how to work through your worry. It’s not that you worry, but rather what you do with your worry. And remember that Jesus does not condemn us for being troubled in heart, he just wants to speak peace into those troubled hearts.

I want to close differently than I usually do. I want to play the old hymn, Rock of Ages. But this is a very different rendition, an [a capella version by the group Glad](#). I trust that you can name your worries and apply these truths.

**Rich Maurer**  
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<sup>1</sup> file:///C:/Users/Grace%20Church/Downloads/ch67\_981-992%20(1).pdf