

February 22, 2026

The Way to the Father's House

John 14:1–14

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

There are many things troubling our hearts, aren't there? The shooting at Tumbler Ridge, the wars in Ukraine, Israel, Gaza, Sudan, and Myanmar, the political and economic instability of North America and the global powers, and the boldfaced bullying in those high places; closer to home, we are troubled by a lack of snow this winter and pending drought, by health concerns both mental and physical, by lost loved ones, family conflict, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and a creeping doubt that God is not present in this world at all.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

The disciples' hearts were very troubled. Their teacher and friend had just told them that he was going to be betrayed by one disciple and denied by another. He had told them that he was going somewhere where they could not follow. They were about to be abandoned. The new command given by Jesus to love one another as he loved them was lost in the bewilderment of what Jesus was saying. The disciples are confused and distraught.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

How can they not be? The disciples cry out to him, *Jesus, how could you leave us here all alone?* How many of us have prayed a prayer like this? *Jesus, how could you leave us here all alone?*

In my Sunday School days, I memorized John 14:1–6 in the New King James Version; it goes like this:

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And where I go you know, and the way you know.” ⁵Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

I grew up singing well-known songs like, “I'll Fly Away,” which says, “Some glad morning when this life is over, I'll fly away / To a home on God's celestial shore, I'll fly away,” and hymns like, “When We all Get to Heaven:”

February 22, 2026

Sing the wondrous love of Jesus;
sing His mercy and His grace.
In the mansions, bright and blessed,
He'll prepare for us a place.

When we all get to heaven,
what a day of rejoicing that will be!
When we all see Jesus,
we'll sing and shout the victory!

And while visions of pearly gates, golden streets, and celestial shores may shine a bright spot in our lives as the hope for which we wait in the life to come, it doesn't give us a whole lot to live for here, right now, does it? If we're just waiting for Jesus to come and take us to heavenly bliss, then what on earth are we here for *right now*? Is there a point to this living, this drudging life of work and conflict and nasty living-in-the-world business? If we are only waiting for some future glory and perfection, then this life here doesn't matter at all. It can go to hell in a handbasket. It can burn, for all we care.

If, when Jesus comforts his disciples on the eve of his death, he only means some future angelic bliss, then this is a very cold comfort. Their rabbi was going to leave them. Things were getting hot with the Jewish leaders; their lives may well be on the line! Why would the disciples care about pearly gates and getting to heaven when life as they knew it was falling apart?

"It's okay, boys. I'm going to leave you, but you'll have perfect happiness in Heaven some day in the very distant future." That doesn't strike me as one bit comforting.

In order to understand what Jesus is saying in this passage, we're going to take a little journey into the Greek. Most of our modern understanding of these verses comes from a translation from the 17th century, which translated the Greek word *μονή* (*monē*, mo-NAY) into "mansions." At that time, a "mansion" was not a palace or multifloor rich-person house with a pool and theatre, and equipped with a butler and servants. It was simply a modest home.¹ This word, *monē*, means "dwelling place" or "abode."

The verb form of this word is *μένω* (*meno*, meh-no), which means to "abide," to "stay," or "remain." This word, *meno*, is what the disciples used back in chapter one when they asked Jesus, "Teacher, where are you *staying*?"² In chapter four, the Samaritan villagers begged Jesus to *stay* with them for a while, so he *stayed* for two days.³ In chapter twelve, Jesus said, "I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust

¹ Burge, *NIV Application Commentary: John*, 391.

² John 1:39

³ John 4:40

in me will no longer *remain* in the dark.”⁴ In chapter fifteen, he says, “*Remain* in me, and I will *remain* in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you *remain* in me.”⁵ *Meno* is used eleven times in John 15 alone and thirty-nine times total in the Gospel of John. This is what Jesus says in our passage today, “The Father who *lives in me* does his work through me.”⁶ In verse seventeen, Jesus says, “You know him,” speaking of the Spirit, “for he *lives with you* and will be in you.”⁷

The noun form, *monē*, is found only twice in John, in 14:2, which we already said is usually translated as “mansions” or “rooms,” and verse 23, which says, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make *our home* with them.”⁸ So, to use “mansions” or “rooms” isn’t really the best way to interpret this passage. It might be better said, “In My Father’s house are *many places to stay*.” Based on where this word is used in John, this “place to stay” is always where Jesus is. It is *with him*, and this fits better with what we’ve been talking about all along in John, that Jesus is *one with God* and has come to earth to *make him known*. He invites us to life *with him* here and now.

I found this Greek word study very helpful, but I still had questions, so I journeyed to the Old Testament. I was puzzled by the phrase “my Father’s house.” If Jesus goes to prepare a place *with him* and this doesn’t mean mansions of gold, then what does he mean by “my Father’s house”? Then, I realized that the Bible never talks about the Father’s house as some heavenly place far away from our earthly pain and struggles. No, Scripture always refers to the Father’s house as the place where God lives *on earth*.

In Exodus 40, we read, “Then the cloud covered the Tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. Moses could no longer enter the Tabernacle because the cloud had settled down over it, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.”⁹

God chose to come to earth to live among his people in the Tabernacle. The pagan cultures of the time worshipped many distant, far-off gods, but the God of the Israelites, the Creator of all, came here to earth so that his people might know him. He is a God who desires relationship with his people, and so his very presence lived in the Tabernacle as the people wandered in the wilderness.

⁴ John 12:46

⁵ John 15:4

⁶ John 14:10

⁷ John 14:17

⁸ John 14:23

⁹ Exod 40:34–35

Then, when the Temple was built by Solomon many years later, the same thing happened: “At that moment a thick cloud filled the Temple (literally, *house*) of the Lord. The priests could not continue their service because of the cloud, for the glorious presence of the Lord filled the *Temple of God*.”¹⁰ God came to earth again, this time to a permanent structure in Jerusalem.

The Psalms frequently talk about the house of God as the place where heaven and earth meet, and where the wonderful presence of God was made known to his people. Ps 23:6 says, “Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” David sings about the wonder of living in the presence of God every day. The Psalms are filled with praise about the house of God. It is the place of worship; it is where God’s throne sits on earth; it is where God meets humans in the only way in which they can.

Let’s fast forward to the New Testament. When Jesus was lost as a boy and then found teaching the teachers of the law in the Temple, he says to his parents, “Didn’t you know that I had to be in *my Father’s house*?”¹¹ Later, in John chapter two, he clears out the commerce from the temple courts and tells the Jewish leaders, ““Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” “What!” they exclaimed. “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?” But when Jesus said “this temple,” he meant his own body.”¹²

Jesus redefines the temple as his own body: God came to earth again, this time to take up residence in flesh and bone. “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us,” says John 1:14. He cleared out the trade within the old courts and declared his own body as the new temple, which will be destroyed and raised again, in order that God’s glory might fill it once more. He *is* the Father’s House.

So, when Jesus tells his disciples, “In my Father’s house are many rooms,” he’s talking about the place where God dwells on earth, now in the temple of his body.

He says, “I go to prepare a place for you.” He goes—where? Where does Jesus go after he leaves the Upper Room? He is arrested, tried, and crucified. He goes to his death, to the very depths of hell... why? To prepare a place for you. A place where? In my Father’s House. In my Temple. *In my body. With Me.* In chapter twelve, he said, “I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”¹³ In his death, the curtain separating the

¹⁰ 2 Chr 5:13–14

¹¹ Lk 2:49

¹² John 2:19-21

¹³ John 12:32

February 22, 2026

Most Holy Place from the rest of the Temple is torn, and the way to the Father is made open and available to *everyone*.

“In my Father’s house are many places to stay... I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you may also be where I am.”¹⁴

God enters the Temple; the author of Hebrews says it like this: “By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place.”¹⁵ The curtain is torn. All may enter.

But how? How do we enter this place where Jesus is? In the words of Thomas, we echo, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

Jesus answers, “*I am* the way, the truth, and the life.” What is the way? Jesus goes there before us: It is death and resurrection. The way to the Father, to the heart of God, is death. Death to self. To control. To pride. To anger. To assumptions. To superiority. To being right. To believing the right thing. It is the crucifixion of every dark and vile thing within ourselves. It is only by losing our lives that we live.¹⁶

Remember, Jesus is a seed who is placed in the ground, and after three days, he rises again. On an individual level, we, too, are a seed, placed in the ground to die to all that is *not good* in our lives, and we are raised to life again because Jesus defeated it. The call of Jesus is to follow him into death so that we might be raised to new life. We are in the season of Lent now and dying and repentance is what Lent is all about as we prepare our hearts for resurrection.

This is the choice that the Gospel of John has presented all along: Believe in Jesus, the Son of God who is human and God all at once. *Believe*. Not in an intellectual way; this has nothing to do with doctrines or statements of faith and everything to do with relational trust. *Trust in him*.

People ask me, “Where is God?” When life is hard, when everything is awful, when there are more wars than peace and the death count rises; when our job sucks the life out of us and we struggle to find motivation to take a step out of bed...

God is *here*. He is with those who trust in him. Within us. *One* with us. There is a way for us to partner with him in his lifegiving touch, to bring healing to the nations and to our own hearts, and it is to follow him *into death* so that we might be resurrected with him—not

¹⁴ John 14:2–4

¹⁵ Heb 10:20, NLT

¹⁶ John 12:24–26

February 22, 2026

in some golden palace in the future, but *one with God on earth as Jesus was one with God on earth*. Unity with God is possible, here and now! This is the hope that Jesus gives his disciples; his departure to death is to prepare a place for them with God *now on this earth*.

Jesus goes on talk about the Spirit, who will fill the believers with God's presence on earth just as he filled the tabernacle and temple. Heaven collides with earth in the little temples that his disciples will become, walking and talking on the earth. The apostle Paul tells the believers, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?"¹⁷

You, yes you, the believers, the church, First B, are God's temple. God's Spirit dwells in your midst, right here. For we cannot know the love of God if we do not know it through the compassion of others. We do not do this alone. We, here, are a room full of people who have lived and suffered. We are people who know Love through the kindness of others and the warmth of a touch.

The biblical story moves from God descending to be among his people in the wilderness tabernacle, teaching them what it means to follow him, to God's presence in the temple located in Jerusalem where all people would gather to worship him, to God becoming *human* to walk and talk among us and to touch us, and finally, by the Spirit's power, God expanding his presence throughout the entire world in the bodies, languages, and hearts of every person on this planet.

Where is God? He is *here*—in First B, in Lethbridge, in Canada, and in all the world. As you walk out of here today and you head back to work whenever your next shift is, or to school when it starts up again, *Jesus is where you are because he is in and with you*. You are part of his body, you are part of his glory filling the earth. Our lives matter *now* because *we are God's presence on the earth*.

Where are you on this journey? Will you choose to trust in him today? Will you choose to die to everything that holds you back and then fill the earth with his resurrection life? Will you make it possible for others to know him, to be cared by him? You are the hope that someone needs today and this week. You are Christ's body, his temple.

Don't let your hearts be troubled. He is with you. He is in you. He is here with us *now*. *This is the Way to the Father's House*.

Let's pray.

¹⁷ 1 Cor 3:16

February 22, 2026

Benediction:

Ps. 27:4: The one thing I ask of the Lord—the thing I seek most—is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.