



SABBATH SCHOOL

DON'T WORRY

...an understatement of promise, power,
prediction and astonishing love.

John 14: 1-31

Preamble... no, addendum... um, maybe just a thought that affects my perceptions.

Luke 24:45 - He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

I think John, the older person of the teenager who met, followed and had an adolescent's loyalty to his hero, wrote the gospel that bears his name. I haven't seen any evidence that proved to me it wasn't. I see in his writing someone who was not positing a theological treatise but a delineation of a powerful truth that had motivated his entire life. In John's writing I see someone who doesn't view Jesus only as a Divine Ruler but as Someone who loved him dearly and personally and Who he loves with a powerful and softened heart.

Claimer (as opposed to disclaimer) Much to your great surprise I did not quote commentaries or make graphs. I did use the concordance and some understanding of Hebrew linguistics (concrete/conceptual). For me this reading is a personal journey that I get to share with you.

Context: Jesus shared these thoughts while facing 24 hours of betrayal, mockery, torture, and agonizing, broken-hearted, death. Love inspired the care he showed for his disciples and the lengths He went to prepare the thick-headily unprepared.

As close as I can come to an example of this is a family I know about whose wife and mother died of a disease she understood, for several years, would kill her. Over the years she clearly told her tween and teen children what the next stage of her disease would look like, how it would affect her and how it might change the day to day interactions with her children. She told them quite clearly what her dying and death would be like for her and for them to care for her in the process. Without euphemisms she educated them for their part of the journey with no-nonsense thoughtfulness. Along with that education came her regular reminder that her love for them would never, ever go away. One of her daughters is at university in Amsterdam now. She says that, as much as she misses and will always miss her mother, one of the greatest gifts is her mom's preparation of the family for a shared journey that would have been confusing and terrifying as well as painful. Her mother could not stop the pain but she made sure they knew of the love.

As John 14 begins, the metaphor I have in mind of Jesus, is a hen, trying to gather her chicks under her wings to protect them, as much as she can, for the storm that is coming.

Do not let your hearts be distressed.* The Greek word used here is **tarasso. It can mean **terrified, thrown into confusion or thrown into turmoil**. It is at the very far end of the worry continuum in terms of what it creates in our psyche. It is used to describe Jesus own state in John 11:33, 12:27, and 12:21.

Knowing what His believers will be heading into over the next 72 hours, Jesus opens the door to the long game: beyond the cross: beyond the resurrection; beyond the complicated years ahead when these men would share their stories. Before any of this has happened he shows them a vision of the journey's end. The safest of places is being planned for them....and by Someone they already knew to be a skilled carpenter.

I am pretty certain it's not in any respected commentary but I think Jesus was also talking to the angels who had loved Him for millennia and who were about to be horrified beyond anything they had ever seen...and to the beings living on planets scattered throughout galaxies who had chosen not to believe the lies of the adversary but in the love of their Creator. We human beings can be self-absorbed and think this story affects only us.

So if there is a place where the word **worry** fits in my vision of this narrative it could be said that Jesus said, in my vernacular *Don't worry, I've got this. I will come back and take you there to be with Me.* In a terrifying time that will not end in their lifetime, Jesus lets these fragile human beings know that He himself, will be the guide home. Jesus is already seeing beyond the cross and he wants them to share His sense of perspective.

Along with a master class in patience, it seems to me that **Matthew 14: 5-11** is a lesson in the nature of the Trinity...that I am sure I don't understand yet. *If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father...the Father residing in me performs (or does) His miraculous deeds.* And then teaches how this affects them, and us. *I tell you the solemn truth, the person who believes in me will perform the miraculous things that I am doing and will perform greater things than these because I am going to the Father. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.* (I remember here that **name** in Hebraic culture often meant character. So I think about this as if I ask anything with Jesus self-sacrificing love and living following the leadership of the Holy Spirit, it will be granted.

More teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit: *I will give you another Advocate to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot accept.* (The complete opposite of the father of lies)

In this section, I see lots of repetition and am reminded that repetition indicates importance (and maybe an understanding that we don't get important concepts the first time around)

More Comfort- vs 27 begins the final section of this part of the Messiah's teaching. *I am leaving you with peace....I am giving you peace.* Again Jesus commands that the disciples not be distressed, fearful or cowardly. When I was younger somewhere I heard that statement "God's commandments are also enablement". In many circumstances I, for sure, could not be courageous without some sort of Divine intervention.

I have told you now before it happens so that when it happens you may believe.

Questions



1. What do you make of the sentence *if you ask anything in my name, I will do it*?
2. What do you think *if you love me you will obey my commandments*?
3. Why is that a criteria for the gift of the Advocate?
4. What do you think of the statement *the person who keeps my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me*?
5. Why do you think Jesus reiterated that He was leaving and giving peace to the disciples at this time?
6. What would that mean to us in our time?
7. Hebrew concepts (such as love) generally come with concrete actions. How would they have acted out belief? How can we act out belief?