



Sunday, May 3, 2026
John 14:1-7 (Fifth Sunday of Easter)

Ascension Lutheran Church
Pastor Tony Acompanado

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.” These aren’t soft words spoken into a calm and peaceful world. Quite the opposite. Jesus speaks them just before betrayal, just before the cross, just before everything seems to fall apart.

And that matters. Because it means Jesus isn’t offering shallow comfort. He’s speaking directly into fear, uncertainty, and grief – and who of *us* isn’t carrying at least one of these today?

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.” If we’re being honest, I think many would agree that Jesus’ words can feel like an almost impossible command, because there’s just so much going on in the world to trouble our hearts.

We live in a world where headlines bring anxiety before we’ve even finished our morning coffee. Wars rage, communities are fractured, truth feels slippery, and the future often looks unclear. I think about healthcare, immigrants, and refugees. I think about gun violence, racism, and poverty. I think about stories of bullying and suicides. I think about Iran, Russia, North Korea, and the ever-increasing tensions around the world.

I think about the nightmare of our political dysfunction in both parties. I think about those grieving the death of a loved one. I think about families that are struggling, spouses that are divorcing, children that are hungry, and people that are hanging on by a thread. And then there’s the personal stuff - health concerns, financial stress, strained relationships, or loneliness. Some of you carry quiet burdens that no one else sees. So, when Jesus says, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled,”* we might wonder, *How?*

“Do not let your hearts be troubled,” Jesus says. And despite what Jesus says about not letting our hearts be troubled, my heart *is* troubled and I would guess yours might be too. What would you add to my list? What’s troubling *your* heart today? Because I don’t see how any of us could look at the pain of the world today, the suffering of a loved one, or our own hurts and fears and *not* have a troubled heart.

Notice that Jesus doesn’t say, *“You won’t feel trouble.”* He doesn’t deny reality. He doesn’t dismiss pain. Instead, he speaks to what we *should do* with that trouble.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.”

In other words, trouble *will* come – but it doesn’t get the final word. Jesus invites us into something deeper than avoidance. He invites us into trust. And trust isn’t pretending everything’s fine. Trust is choosing where to place your heart when everything feels uncertain. And Jesus gives us a reason for that trust.

Today’s Gospel from John is one that we often hear at funerals. And there’s a reason for that. When death feels close, when loss stings, *these words* sound like a lifeline. *“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places... I go to prepare a place for you.”*

This is a relational promise. Jesus is saying, “You aren’t forgotten. You aren’t alone. There’s a place for you.” In a world where people often feel displaced, overlooked, or uncertain about where they belong, this is radical hope. Your life isn’t random. Your future isn’t an afterthought. Jesus is actively preparing something for you – even when you can’t see it. And he invites us to cling tightly to that promise.

But here’s the thing. Jesus wasn’t only talking to people at the edge of death. He was talking to disciples whose hearts were breaking in real time. They were confused and afraid. The world as they knew it was unraveling.



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And into that moment – not just into death, but into life as it really was – into life as it really is – Jesus says, “*I am going to prepare a place for you.*” Not just someday, but also now.

And yet, the disciples *still* struggle to understand. Thomas speaks up with a question that echoes our own confusion, “*Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?*”

We know that question. *How do I move forward when life feels unclear? How do I make decisions when I feel lost? How do I keep going when my hope feels weak?*

Jesus answers with one of the most powerful declarations in all of Scripture, “*I am the way and the truth and the life.*” Notice again what he does *not* say. He does not hand them a map. He does not give them a step-by-step plan. He gives them himself.

“***I am the way.***” When you don’t know what direction your life is taking, faith isn’t about having all the answers – it’s about walking with the One who does. Following Jesus means orienting your life around his love, his teachings, his example. It means choosing compassion over bitterness, courage over fear, and faith over despair, even when the path is unclear.

“***I am the truth.***” In a time when truth can feel distorted or weaponized, Jesus reminds us that truth isn’t just information – it’s a person. Truth is what’s real, what’s trustworthy, what doesn’t shift with opinion or circumstance. To trust Jesus as truth is to anchor yourself in something deeper than headlines, deeper than fear, deeper than uncertainty.

“***I am the life.***” Not just existence. Not just survival. **Life.** Full, abundant, enduring life. The kind of life that persists even when things get really hard. The kind of life that can’t be destroyed by grief, failure, or even death itself. This is the hope Jesus offers – not a life free of trouble, but a life that’s stronger than it.

So what does it look like to live this out? It looks like waking up in a difficult season and choosing, even quietly, to trust. “*God, I don’t understand, but I place this day in your hands.*” It looks like refusing to let fear define your identity. It looks like extending kindness when the world feels harsh. It looks like holding onto faith when doubt creeps in – not perfectly, but persistently. It looks like remembering that your story isn’t finished.

Because that’s the deeper truth behind Jesus’ words: “*Do not let your hearts be troubled.*” He’s not asking you to create peace on your own. He’s offering you his presence as the source of that peace. And here’s the good news. The same Jesus who spoke these words to his disciples speaks them to you now. Not from a distance, but with full awareness of your life – your struggles, your fears, your questions, and yes – even your doubts. He knows.

And still he says, “*Do not let your heart be troubled.*” “*Believe in me.*” “*I am the way.*” “*I am the truth.*” “*I am the life.*”

So when the world feels heavy...and it will. When your heart feels overwhelmed...and it will. When hope feels hard to find...and it will. Return to these words. Not as a command to suppress your feelings, but as an invitation to anchor your life in something deeper – in **someone** deeper.

Jesus isn’t saying, “Find the right path and you’ll make it.” He’s saying, “I am the path, and I am coming to you.” The way isn’t a set of instructions. It’s a relationship. The truth isn’t an argument we win. It’s a person



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who knows us fully and loves us still. The life isn't something we achieve. It's something we receive – again and again and again.

So, when our hearts are troubled, we don't fix ourselves first and then come to God. We come as we are. Troubled. Afraid. Angry. Grieving. Hopeful...even if just barely.

And we hear again: *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.”*

That word “believe” isn't about having everything figured out. It's about trust. It's about leaning into the promise that we're not alone, not abandoned, and not without a future.

That's our hope. That's our courage. And that's our way forward.

Christ is Risen!

Amen.