

-S- Children's Moment

January 18, 2015

Title: **-S-** Come and See

Object: Cookies

Scripture: **-S-** "Nazareth! Can
come from there?"
"Come and see," said
(NIV)



anything good

Nathanael asked.

Philip. John 1:46

A few days ago, I saw a friend of mine eating a cookie. "What kind of cookie is that you are eating?" I asked.

"These are Oreo cookies," she said.

"Are they good?" I asked.

"Good? They are delicious," she answered. "Here, taste one and see how good they are," she said as she offered me a cookie.

Mmmm, Mmmm! They were good! They were so good that I couldn't wait to tell you about them. In fact, I wanted to share some with you. I have a whole package of them this morning so that you can taste them and see how good they are. *(Pass the cookies around for the children to try.)*

Don't you agree that those are really good cookies? That is why my friend couldn't wait to share them with me and I couldn't wait to share them with you.

Have you ever found something so good that you couldn't wait to share it with a friend? This morning I want to tell about a man named Philip who couldn't wait to tell a friend about something good that he had found. What Philip found was much more important than cookies. Philip had met Jesus. When Phillip met Jesus,

he knew that Jesus was the Savior that God had promised, and he became one of Jesus' disciples.

After Philip met Jesus, he couldn't wait to tell his friend Nathanael. He found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

"Nazareth? Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael asked.

Come and see," answered Philip. Then he took Nathanael to see Jesus and Nathanael also became a follower of Jesus. That is how the good news of Jesus is spread. Friends telling friends!

When we find a really good cookie, we can't wait to tell a friend about it. Shouldn't we be even more anxious to tell our friends about Jesus? The Psalmist said, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." (Psalm 34:8) Surely we want our friends to know how good he is!

Dear Father, nothing can compare to the Good News of Jesus. Help us to share the Good News with others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

-S- Troubled Hearts – Calm Words

When the world begins to cave-in, what is a follower of Jesus to do? When we experience trouble in our lives, what are we to do? This is a question some Christians would say we should not ask, because the answer is obvious. Even though we do not like to think about the troubles of life and there are some circles within Christianity that says that a believer only allows trouble to worry them if they lack faith – the truth is life is filled with troubles.

Have any of you ever-experienced disappointment? Disappointments are troubling and life is filled with disappointments. I am most often disappointed in myself; I want to be strong physically and spiritually, but I fail at times. I find this troubling. Like most men I desire to be successful in career and marriage, but again I fail at times. I ask myself at times what does success look like? Title? Position? Money? More and more I find that the answer is one of being faithful to God first, then my wife, then my children and to those I shepherd. I want to be liked and accepted by others, but at times people are indifferent towards me and there are some who just do not like me. These things are troubling. Then at times I am disappointed by those around me; my wife, children, grandchildren, and people I work with and even by my brothers and sisters in the Lord. This is also troubling.

Then there are the circumstances of life - which are troubling. I have so little control over so few things. I can vote, demonstrate and protest, but really I have very little impact on my government that in my opinion is a mess and getting worst. Someone I do not know and have never met is suing me. Even though this is unfair and evil I have to go through the legal system and its process, and the

courts to disprove this frivolous suit. This is troubling. Poverty deeply troubles me, poverty cannot always be changed and I am shocked when I meet people in poverty who do not want change.

Those we love deeply will at some point die and this is troubling. I remember the pain of the death of my father and Joyce's father. I remember the pain of losing my grandson Christopher. The deep pain when both our mothers died within three weeks of each other. These things are beyond our control and that also is troubling. We have all experienced the lost of a job or lengthy illness or seeing those we love reject Christ and all that means. All of these things are troubling.

Since you and I are Christians, what about spiritual troubles? Have you ever experienced times when the Lord seems to have withdrawn or when you cry out and you do not hear Him respond? What do you do when you seem to be lost in the desert of life and you do not feel the presence of the Lord or sense His direction? This is troubling. Especially if you have had times in your life when the Lord's will and direction have been so clear that they are undeniable. What do we do? First and foremost we pray and go to the Scriptures, the very words, direction, insight, guidance and love of God.

John chapter 14 calls us to be strong Christians. We are to be Christians who can take the hits of life and remain faithful. We are not to be like so many of the fallen world around us - wining victims and seeking pity from all who will listen. Through good times and times of trouble we are to be an example of faithfulness and a source of strength for those around us. So, is it wrong or sinful for a Christian to be troubled?

Cause To Be Troubled

The world gives everyone cause to trouble. How believers and the unsaved respond is the difference. I am frustrated and even troubled by certain factions within Christianity the pretend that once you give your life to Christ - life is a bed of roses with no thorns. Anything other than this “Pollyanna” view shows a lack of faith and if you are troubled you are not truly surrendered to Christ – not a true child of God. They see Romans 8:28 to mean only goods things come to those who are truly spiritual. “We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” (Romans 8:28) What this verse actually says is that evil will indeed come but that God will nevertheless accomplish His plan and good purposes in spite of the evil Satan and mankind inflict. We are not to deny evil but recognize it and deal with it biblically.

On the evening of the Lord’s Supper from a human viewpoint the disciples were troubled. Jesus had told them He was leaving, Judas was unmasked as a traitor and Jesus told Peter in front of the other disciples that he would deny Christ. Where these feelings the result from a lack of faith – possibly, but the disciples had cause to be troubled. We should not be to quick to judge for if we do we also judge Christ. For in chapter thirteen just a few verses ago it says Jesus “became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.”” (John 13:21) Would it not have troubled the disciples to know that Jesus was “troubled in spirit.” They had seen Jesus still the waters of roaring seas, deal with the evil Pharisees, calm hostile crowds, defeat death by raising Lazarus, but now at this point in time Jesus is “troubled in spirit.” In addition the opposition to the gospel and Jesus was growing, one might say it had come to the critical point – and Jesus now tells the disciples He is leaving. Turn with me to John chapter fourteen

and see what Jesus says to help His disciples, ¹“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³If 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.* (John 14:1-3)

Troubles do come, the world of men is filled with trouble - both Jesus and His disciples were aware of this truth.

Without salvation death is an enemy and Jesus’ death is rapidly approaching – the disciples do not have the wisdom the Holy Spirit yet. This is what prompted Jesus to speak to His disciples for they were troubled. I believe it is not wrong or sinful to openly recognize the troubles life throws at us for in truth this is a sign of maturity when one recognizes trouble and approaches it with the faith knowing Christ will see us through – no matter what the outcome. It is also not wrong to recognize and acknowledge the troubles in the lives of others. However, here is a lesson I have had to learn. We are not to minimize their problem, saying “Oh, that’s not so bad, it could be worst.” Or, we may think we should tell them stories of other people who have had it far worst. But, we must not do this for nothing is gained by minimizing problems. We need to listen and hopefully help guide them to the scriptures and godly solutions through faith. The Apostle Paul wrote to those in Rome, “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.” (Romans 12:14) It does no good to curse what is already evil. What kind of witness would this be? Bless those who curse you and let the Lord deal with their evil. “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. (Romans 12:15) As a community and as brothers and sisters we are to be deeply involved in each other’s lives. When we are involved we can truly rejoice and weep with each other. “Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.” (Romans 12:16) Paul is calling believers to be of

the same mind – the mind of God – the mind of God found in the Bible. As redeemed sinners we have little wisdom of our own and a great depth of wisdom from God. This was true that night for the disciples and it is true today.

Cause NOT To Be Troubled

Christians are to be realists about the troubles in this life and in the world. At the same time we need to be realists about the power of God and His promises to His children. So even though there is legitimate cause to be troubled, there is even greater cause not to be.

In these first few verses of John 14 we find five reasons not to be troubled. First, we know Jesus and He knows us. Jesus is God and He knows us and cares about us, our troubles and circumstances, and He is able to deal with them. We have every reason to trust in Him. Jesus plainly said, **“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.”** (v. 1) Jesus is telling the disciples the proper order has always been believe and trust in God first and foremost and then because you believe in God you will also be able to believe and trust in Jesus. I think the disciples believed in God and knew that God would care for them in the general sense, but they are troubled because Jesus is leaving which was present action. Jesus is trying to get the disciples to see how this saying **“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.”** (v. 1) is true in their circumstances and in the present time. Jesus is saying if you believe and trust in God the Father then you need to believe in Me and know that as God - I know what I am doing and it is for your good. Do we see this in our own lives? When we are under great stress, when we are troubled, when life is painful do we, you and I, believe in God and His promises and does this give you the peace to know Jesus cares and that He will see us through these times. Two verses I meditate on to

make them true in my life comes later in John chapter 14 where Jesus says, “**But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**” (John 14:26) The things I see in the Scriptures that demonstrate the wisdom of God, the truth of God and the love of God only make sense in my mind because of the power of the Holy Spirit who God the Father has given me to “**teach me all things.**” When I spend time with God in prayer and meditating on His Word then the truth Jesus spoke is shown to be true – not just back when He walked this earth – but true in my life, my mind, my soul and my heart. When I have made the decision to pursue God and be faithful then Jesus words again I find true Jesus speaks to my heart, “**Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.**” (John 14:27) Both the disciples and we should not be troubled beyond what God wants in our lives to teach us for we have every, every reason to trust Jesus.

The second reason these verses tell the disciples and us not to be troubled is heaven. Jesus says in verse two, “**In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.**” For Christians we are to seek balance from this verse. We should not be escapists from life when trouble comes by turning our backs on living – escaping into others worlds of alcohol, drugs, movies, books and make believe. We are called to live and not to live just for ourselves but those in our life. Also we do know that no matter what this world throws at us we are here for the purpose of glorifying God and at the end of our lives with be joined to Him in heaven. Joyce and my friend Karen who died from ALS and painful process that took two years rarely complained and she shared Jesus with any of the many medical workers who would listen. She deeply loved Christ and longed to be with Him. She saw her pain

and disease as short-lived and fully believed God had an eternal purpose. So then, her purpose was to be faithful to God.

The third reason Jesus told the disciples and also tells us that we should not be troubled is that He is leaving to “go to prepare a place for you.” On the surface this may seem as saying the same thing; we have a home in heaven. But it is not repetition – it is more. There is a place called heaven where we will be with God and Jesus, at the time He spoke these verses is soon going there Himself. But, in addition Jesus is saying there is work He must do in heaven in order to prepare a place for each of us. As people talk of this verse the emphasis is usually put upon the “place”. We speak of the many mansions in heaven. But what if instead we placed the emphasis from the “place” and placed it on “for you”. If we make this change then the emphasis changes from architectural renovations to heaven to the fact that the Lord is changing heaven in preparation for each and every believer. In this great home of God, the God of the universe and Creator of all that is in it, God is so concerned with each believer He is making it ready and special for each of His children. My beloved, meditate on this. I did all week and it both brought me comfort and peace, but it also blew me away with the depth of love the Lord has for me and for each of you.

The fourth reason the disciples and we are not to be troubled is that Jesus says, “I will come again.” Jesus returns so that none of God’s children, the followers of the Lord Jesus will be left behind. In the first sense Jesus has already come to every believer when they are regenerated and indwelt with the Holy Spirit. In the second sense Jesus will come again when each believer arrives in heaven and is reunited with Jesus for eternity - we arrive in heaven that has been specifically prepared for us. Paul saw this vision and wrote, “For the Lord Himself will descend

from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) I am comforted by these words and look forward to that day. This is exactly what Paul's intention was for he concludes, "Therefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

Fifth, we should not be troubled because when the Lord returns or when we enter heaven it is not for the short span of a life as is here on earth, but for eternity. This puts the sufferings and troubles of this life in perspective. As our friend Karen so clearly saw even through her pain – this life is short and heaven is forever. This is cause not to be troubled as the world is troubled. We can through trials look to our coming home in heaven.

Cause for Peace

In closing we return to the question we began with, "When we experience trouble in our lives, what are we to do?" When the world is falling in around us what are we to do? We are to remind ourselves of the promises of God and make a deliberate decision to pray and go to the Word of God. When we do this God will remind us of who He is and who we are in Christ. Jesus, Himself gave us this example. He went to the Garden of Gethsemane when He was troubled and prayed to the Father. Jesus took "took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled." (Mark 14:33) Jesus made a conscience decision to seek God at a time of trouble for He knew God was faithful and He was faithful also. Jesus speaking to the fact that His soul and heart were burdened and troubled and this certainly was not sin and He dealt with His trouble the way God instructs us all to do. When we are faithful to seek God in times of trouble then

Jesus gives us the result of that faithful and willful act. Jesus says, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (John 14:26-27)

This is my hearts desire for you – seek Christ, pray to God, meditate upon His Word and you will know the peace of Christ.