

1/23/22 - John 13:36-14:14 - "Confidence Amid Uncertainty"

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 January 2022

Preacher: Brenton Beck

[0 : 00] We're going into a passage that's just the beginning of Jesus' farewell discourse. And what we are going to be looking at is revolving around uncertain circumstances.

And it's titled, Sermon, Confidence Amid Uncertainty. And there were quite, I think, uncertain circumstances when you looked out the window this morning.

It was fortunately dark when I left the house this morning and came. And the roads were fine. But then I started, the text started piling in of the uncertain weather that we just experienced, which created an uncertain circumstance of, oh boy, maybe we better stay back.

Boy, Ohio is so funny because within two hours, the roads can clear. It's amazing the work that some of our snow crews do. Uncertain circumstances.

But if you're anything like me, when you're in the face of uncertainty, when it's knocking at your door of a circumstance which could go left, it could go right, it tests my faith in such a unique way.

[1 : 17] It tests my faith of going into hypervigilance mode where I kind of analyze every different angle of possibility. It's sometimes scary.

And there's no other situations in life that can cause me to ask God questions surrounding why this circumstance is coming.

So for less extreme cases of uncertainty, some of us might be, you know, questioning between Taco Bell or McDonald's. I am uncertain of which way we will go.

Or Maxwell House or Folgers, you know, which way are we going to go? Hopefully neither of any of those options for you guys for the sake of your health. Red shirt or a blue shirt?

Those are less cases. Will the car start today? Am I going to have a good hair day? Those are less severe cases of uncertainty. And some of us, I think, can probably be crippled at sometimes if the car is going to start.

[2 : 23] But I'm talking about more very, very severe cases of uncertainty in life. It's uncertainty that revolves around severe illness. When severe illness hits.

When you go to the doctor and he gives you the bad news. Or maybe a family member. Or when life experiences a loss, materialistically speaking or possibly personally speaking of an uncertain circumstance of how things will turn out.

Or when close friends that you used to have become enemies. Or not knowing how the utilities are going to be paid this month. Those are more extreme, more severe cases of uncertainty that we can experience.

And as we look upon the passage today, we're entering into a severe instance of uncertainty. Jesus Christ just recently in the passage announced his departure from the disciples.

He announced it through the act of foot washing. Leading into not only announcing his departure, but announcing Judas' departure. Which would inaugurate Jesus' ultimate departure.

[3 : 40] When the Son of Man would be lifted up upon the cross. Equaling his suffering, but also the means of his glory. And the circumstances are drastically going to be changing for the disciples in this time period.

And while uncertainty has the power of testing all of our faith. Regardless if it's Maxwell House or Folgers or, you know, whatever have you. It makes us enter into a dialogue often of questioning God.

And these disciples seem to be asking these questions. All regarding and relating to their faith. In different ways, shapes, and forms.

But the underlying current within all of their questioning is in relationship with their faith. All concerning Jesus' departure.

And so before we detach the relevance of their questioning and even judging them. Like, really, Philip? Why are you asking that question? If I were Jesus, I would slap you on the back of the head. Before we judge them, I hope that we can understand today that these are the same questions that the church is asking of Jesus today.

[5 : 05] Whether we want to admit it or not. Wait till our circumstances are uncertain. And then judge how we're doing. So these are the same questions the church is asking today.

And so we're going to look at all of these dialogues. Because it's kind of like a question and answer structure. And so we have disciples sort of going out and asking Jesus a question.

Jesus responds. Another disciple asks Jesus a question. And Jesus responds. And we're going to be looking at what we can learn about the questions that the church is asking.

And how we can properly align our minds and our faith according to our uncertain circumstance. Just as the disciples did in this day.

Let's pray as we enter into the word. And pray for God's help through the power of the Holy Spirit working in our midst right now. Let's pray.

[6 : 05] Father thank you for your word. Something that we know and we hold and we cling to as true. That regardless of the revolving and the ever so changing culture, situations, and conditions around us.

We know that this word remains the same. Father it is the foundation that we put and rest our faith in.

Of which Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone. Father let us rest upon your word today. By the power of your Holy Spirit. And we praise in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. So the first section we're going to be looking at today. Is comfort amid our confusion. And we're going to be looking at the verses that I have up on the screen as we look at that.

Let's just remind ourselves what David read this morning. He says in verse 36. Simon Peter said to him, Lord where are you going?

[7 : 11] And Jesus answered him, Where I am going you cannot follow me now. But you will follow me afterward. Peter said to him, Lord why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.

And Jesus answered, Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly I say to you, The rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times.

Let your hearts not be troubled. Believe in me. Believe in God. Believe also in me. We see that there's a whirlwind of emotions going on.

We can really taste and sense the nearness of Jesus' departure from the disciples. A very uncertain circumstance that will be changing.

And you can almost sense the rawness and the realness of what Peter was experiencing in this whirlwind of emotions. And I want you to imagine these last hours of desperation and confusion as they're sharing their last supper together.

[8 : 21] Let's keep in mind the timeline that we have in our laps right now. Jesus is hours away from being captured. And keeping that in mind, He's having, You can sense the whirlwind of emotions.

That you can sense something is wrong. There's a, To start, To quote Star Wars, There's a disturbance in the force here. We have a problem happening.

Consider that this is Peter giving us a raw example. It doesn't flatter Peter, At least, But none of the narratives often flatter Peter for the majority of the gospel narratives.

But Peter gives us an example of the effects that uncertainty has upon our troubled hearts. Jesus Christ's departure is challenging the disciples' devotion.

It's challenging their security. And most of all, It's challenging their faith. These changing circumstances are calling the disciples to trust like never before, To have faith like never before, To pray like never before.

[9 : 33] And this is deep-seated trust that God has been calling His people to have. This is God that we've seen engraved throughout the Old Testament scriptures, Where He tells His people to do not fear.

Do not be dismayed. Remember all of these reminders for God's people to have faith, In the face of various threats from the enemy.

And as Peter broadcasts our natural inclination to become confused and emotional wrecks at times, What great comfort Jesus provides to ease our troubled hearts.

Right? Have you ever desired to change your circumstance in life? No matter how severe or maybe how petty. Those prayers that we say, God, if you would just do this, I will become a monk.

I will detach from society. I will go into just serving you. I'll do anything for you to help in this. And we become like we're bartering with God.

[10:48] And we want to make a deal with God. And this is kind of where Peter's at at this time. He's saying, I'm with you to the end. This is kind of like echoing Ruth's dedication and servitude to Naomi in the book of Ruth.

Where you go, I will go. I will follow you. Don't leave. And how does Jesus respond? He brings Peter comfort through the mission of the cross.

That just as the object of the cross is representative of uncertainty and his departure, it is better to be viewed as the object of hope.

Because the mission of the cross was the means of suffering as a substitute for us, where our sins were placed upon Jesus, and Jesus died the death that we deserve.

But additionally, it is also the means of Jesus going, Jesus preparing a place for us.

[12:01] And you see, even today, our propensity to become confused emotional wrecks, right, for the world to probably turn in and say, are you even a Christian?

You're pretty anxious today. I mean, 2020, people were looking around the shelves, looking where they're going to buy toilet paper. And here's the church coming out. I don't know where I'm going to find toilet paper, right?

These small things that affect and happen in our lives that bring us great grief. But Jesus Christ explains during these times to fixate our lives and our attention upon the cross in uncertainty because doing so reminds us over and over again that this earth is not our home.

that in our uncertainty, we have something certain that we can put our faith in. The cross being the object of propitiation, substitutionary, propitiation, a satisfaction for sins, it's also the object of preparation for us.

And if this earth is not our home, what shall the church fear if this earth is not our home? What can cause us to be emotional wrecks?

[13:25] I mean, we clearly don't feel as we ought. Peter is an example of that. But Jesus Christ has given us the heart guidance, which should reign supreme over our emotional state and align our emotions with hope.

So what question is the church asking amid uncertainty, church? Where do we find comfort for our troubled hearts? The church finds comfort in the cross, the object of propitiation and also preparation.

We see the next dialogue occurring between Thomas. And this provides us coordinates amid our lostness.

And we see in verse 5, in chapter 14, Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you're going.

How can we know the way? And Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.

[14:39] From now on, you do know him and have seen him. This sparks a question from Thomas. We can't forget Thomas. This is logical Thomas.

This is Thomas who needs to feel the holes in Jesus' body, his resurrected body, in order to believe. This is logical Thomas. Thomas is logically approaching the situation similar to Peter.

Kind of at a physical level. Jesus is deep. He's like head deep in the spiritual sense of his words in this time. And Thomas is planning the road trip to follow Jesus.

How are we going to know where to go? He's planning the bathroom breaks. He's writing the entire itinerary right now. How will we know the way?

And Jesus makes the profound, often quoted scripture, I am the way and the truth and the life. This is such a deep and profound reality that the world needs to hear today.

[15:47] This is a reality that is stretched also through the pages of scripture where the way of truth, as referenced in Psalm 119, verse 30, is a life that's described living in conformity to God's law.

Meaning obedience. And also, thinking of way and life, those are often packed together within wisdom literature, specifically in Psalm 16, verse 11, or Proverbs 15, verse 24.

But before the sense was found in obedience to the law, devotion to God was expressed in keeping the law. And Jesus has come and fulfilled the demands of the law.

And the source of our devotion of Jesus, saying that he is the way, the truth, and the life, our source of devotion and emulation is in the law, the filler, Jesus Christ.

And so for the early church, they were designated as followers of the way. They were, quote, the way. That's a cool youth group name, right? The way. And then a derogatory term came out sometime in the early church of calling them Christians, which wasn't a flattering term whatsoever.

[17 : 06] But they were known as the way. They were followers of the way. And if they're followers of the way, they're followers of the attitude, the actions, and the commands that Jesus Christ has laid out throughout the New Testament scriptures.

And it's funny, because when we talk about Jesus, we often can evaluate various religions in the world. I just viewed a video just last night, rocking a baby to sleep, and a video from Kosti Hinn, who was saying, essentially, getting Jesus wrong, and the implications of Jesus getting it wrong. And he actually quoted this thing, because if you think about the culture at large, everyone has a Jesus. The Muslims have a Jesus. Jehovah's Witnesses have a Jesus.

The Mormons have a Jesus. Catholics have a Jesus. The Catholics have a Jesus. American politics have a Jesus. I know, it's unfortunate.

But if you get Jesus wrong, you don't have a Jesus who then saves. Because Jesus Christ, recorded in John, distinguishes the role of the Jesus that the early church followed.

[18 : 33] This is the Jesus who is the way, the truth, and the life. And no one comes to the Father except through him. He's not one of the many ways. He's not one of the many truths.

He's not one of the many lives that you can follow and adhere yourself to. Or the destinations, if you want to return as a butterfly. He is saying that no one comes to the Father except through him, that there is no hope on the other side of history apart from believing in Jesus Christ.

And so, at this moment, if this is somewhat new to you, I'm seeing the Jesus of the Bible, that the gospel according to John's writing has been communicating and illuminating for us within this church.

Jesus has called you to follow him as well. That he is the way, the truth, and the life for you too. And it comes down to, will you have faith in that?

Will you believe in that? Jesus Christ is the way to be followed. He's the truth to be trusted. He's the life, the everlasting condition for all of us who follow and trust him.

[19 : 53] Let today be marked as salvation within your life. Because our propensity, even within the church, not to mention those outside of the church, we become paralyzed with uncertainty, especially when it's great in our lives.

But Jesus provides the coordinates amid our lostness. And we look simply for Jesus Christ's footprints up ahead.

We don't worry about what the destination, where the ship is sailing. Jesus is saying, trust me, look for my next footprints and place your foot in that direction.

So what is the church asking amid uncertainty? Where do we find our way when we cannot see? Just as Thomas was.

Well, the church finds its way through following Jesus Christ according to the Bible. But there's no other way to follow Jesus regardless of the cost of that following.

[20 : 58] And we get into the third dialogue of confirmation amid our forgetfulness. And we get to Philip.

Right? Oh, Philip. Philip, Philip, Philip. Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us. Jesus says, have I been with you so long?

You still don't know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? And then there's Philip who's like, he's been playing Nintendo the whole time. That Jesus has been on mission at this time. And we can look at this text and I'll admit, I was victim of looking at this text and saying, what are you doing? This is the whole purpose of which Jesus has called you to be a disciple.

This is what he's been proclaiming to the Pharisees all this time. But before we get, call him an ignorant loon or whatever thing you want to coin him as, we must identify that this perceived

forgetfulness, as the Holy Spirit reminded me as I studied and marinated in this passage, this perceived forgetfulness is often very much so marked in Christianity today of similar forgetfulness. [22 : 30] Essentially, Jesus corrects Philip firmly, I would say. Have I been with you so long you still don't know me? In other words, I and the Father are one. If you've seen me, you've seen the Father.

If you've seen the Father, you've seen me. What Philip provides is a model of the general population of Christians today. Have you heard it? Show us the Father. Show us, God. Prove that you hear me. You look at the nice side. Guy, if you want me to do this, Lord, give me a shooting star. Show me a sign. Give us a miracle. Make your truth a physical manifestation in order to appeal to my immature faith. We are inherently forgetful people who continuously need confirmation in order to continue to fuel our faith tanks.

[23 : 33] This is a lifestyle of discontentment. This is a lifestyle, a Christian lifestyle of immaturity. Immature faith says, show us, prove to us, verify for us.

But mature faith says, on the other side, what you have revealed is true. And upon your divine revelation, we stand firmly rooted in what you have finished.

End of story. For Philip, in his case, better to rest firmly in what God has clearly, sufficiently said, rather than needing a continued visual validation that our unbelief and our immaturity beckons for. What question is the church asking amid uncertainty? Where do we find confirmation when we forget God's truth?

Well, the church steadfastly trusts in the words of Christ, not in this visual verification of the works of Christ, resting in what he has said and promised.

[24 : 55] And we finally get to this point of the passage that it's like all of these dialogues are building up, like building blocks of asking these questions.

All these questions are being asked from this sort of physical realm. I want us to see that because that's important for this next passage. We have Peter who's all about following Jesus.

Where you go, I'll go. Where you stay, I'll stay, right? I'll follow you. Ruth and Naomi, same thing. For Thomas, oh, here's my itinerary. We'll do a bathroom break here and we have this all charted out.

Perfect. But where are we going? Can you detail that? Physical. And then Thomas, and then Philip, completely in the physical. Like, show us the Father.

Give me something here and it's going to be enough for us, right? Physical, physical, physical. And Jesus has been diving these disciples down to something deeper than just what meets the eye.

[25 : 57] And that's important because as we survey the structure of this passage, we have what we have titled as a sermon, Confidence Amid Uncertainty.

All of this, as John outlines, regards different aspects of our faith at a spiritual, level. Disciples are up here on all this physical.

Jesus is taking us for a dive into our faith. Amid confusion, comfort amid confusion regarding our hearts. Coordinates amid our lostness regarding what we see.

And confirmation amid our forgetfulness at which we hear. our heart, our heart, our sight, our hearing.

Being a Christian and being recruited into the family of God, God has placed us. If you're a Christian, welcome. The world's going to hate you.

[26 : 59] All right? And you have been recruited into this opposition with the world. Everything we abide by, everything that we stand for, everything that we live for is contrary to the worldly standards.

Just yesterday, I read an article written by Dr. Al Mohler of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. And he titled this in an article from a really good biblical journalism news source.

I guess I'll plug it. It's called World News Group, WNG.org or something like that. And it's really fascinating to see what's going on in the world from a biblical perspective and looking at things through a biblical worldview.

But anyhow, he wrote an article just yesterday that says an urgent threat to churches and parents. And it talks about Lafayette and West Lafayette, Indiana.

They offer ministry for biblical counseling. And so this reporter reports that these counties are looking to penalize anyone who talks with minors to help them overcome unwanted same-sex

attraction or gender dysphoria.

[28 : 24] And so the aim of this is to coerce churches, it says, into forfeiting any counsel that would imply or teach that there's anything sinful about LGBTQ behaviors impulses, feelings, and identities.

And so it's threatening church's ability to preach the Bible and even be threatened, threatening the right of Christian parents to counsel their own children in the ways of scripture.

And this is, this is going on, it's even more prevalent in Canada. I mean, if you're a Christian because you want to feel good, ask Paul how that worked for him.

being a Christian, you have entered into to be called a Christian, a derogatory term that unites us with Jesus Christ that the world just cannot hear.

And so, when we're talking about uncertain times, we're living it right now. This is just yesterday that was published. I don't know what next year or five years or ten years down the line will look like, but the strength of the church, the strength of the church needs to live out well, live this out well ought to be found within such dialogues that are occurring right now between Jesus and his disciples.

[29 : 54] So, leading up to verse 12, Jesus has been aiming for their belief, right? He's taken them for a deep dive. He's aiming for their belief, their faith in a spiritual level and he spoke in such deep spiritual ways to his disciples and he concludes with a final statement of having confidence amid his departure.

He says in verse 12, look, it's often misquoted verse in Christianity today. 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.

This made me think of probably a funny competitive nature that we often have, sometimes more prevalent than others, you know, between the disciples having conversations.

Ooh, greater works, right? What does that entail? Hmm, what could we do? I mean, could we turn water into wine, says Thomas and Philip's like, no, no, it's already been done.

Could we catch a massive amount of fish? Could we cast out demons or maybe raise the dead? Nope. Nope, says Peter. It's already been done.

[31 : 13] Could we call him a storm? That's a good one. Maybe give sight to the blind or maybe feed 5,000. Those are the works we're supposed to be doing, right? And Paulson John said, no, no, no, it's already been done.

Oh, we could resurrect. No, it's been promised that it will be done. What are these works?

What is Jesus communicating amid this uncertain time? And this is important, church. What are these works? Well, it's already been answered and biblical context is key.

Back in John 6, 28, we see that Jesus was asked, what must we do? And he says, this is the work of God that you believe in him whom he has sent.

The work of God is that you believe in him, meaning salvation. Look at John 8, 39, when he was talking about the works of Abraham and the works of the devil and contrasting the two.

[32 : 28] What were the works of Abraham? Abraham believed that God would be the giver of eternal life. Ding, ding, ding, meaning salvation.

And what if greater works then is simply not to be reduced to this prosperity gospel message of materialistic emphasis but spiritual emphasis diving deep with Jesus in that realm.

What if greater works is the horizontal scope of salvation to all who believe? Now that is a faithful conversation that we can have regarding what Jesus is doing in this text.

and the mission of Jesus Christ in our lives is bringing confidence amid uncertainty. This is not saying that we just throw out miracles all in and of themselves because we need to throw that away. We need to be dry Christians and everything and not expect God to do really great things that exceed our expectations. It's not what the Bible says and that's specifically not what this passage is supporting.

[33 : 39] this is coming from somebody who believes in miracles who believes that God can work the impossible in this life but my eagerness for these miracles to occur in life cannot persuade my understanding and how I view scripture to meet my own agenda and scratch my own itching ears.

Jesus Christ simply has been speaking in a spiritual sense strictly spiritual sense all throughout this dialogue and what greater works a spiritual work could be greater what greater spiritual work could be greater than seeing the spiritually dead coming to spiritual life through this message of the gospel.

Think about what this meant. Jesus words are being fulfilled even today. You had 11 disciples at this time and according to reports from 2015 poll there are 2.3 Christians in the world.

That's over 30% of the world populations that identify as Christian. Now we don't need to get into dicey conversations okay what kind of Christian are you but just look at what the implications of greater works is.

We're seeing the greater works as people are coming to salvation it's not in a materialistic sense. And what great comfort specifically that this ought to bring to our troubled lives.

[35 : 11] Why would this bring comfort? Because Jesus is stirring confidence for the questions that we are asking even today. And he doesn't stop there he continues to say bring even more confidence.

He's saying yeah I'm departing call out to me in prayer and I will do it if you ask in my name. This is the call for the church to intercede on behalf of God to work miracles within the souls of unbelievers in this life.

What Jesus Christ has accomplished through his ministry has provided great comfort great coordinates great confirmation in our lives.

and these disciples have addressed a diverse set of questions that the church today continues to seem to ask Jesus in uncertainty. Questions that he has already answered even today.

God when fear seems to be winning the day over our faith in God and we become emotionally paralyzed within our circumstances we have a God who will return to us to gather his children to raise us above our circumstance with him to the place where he provided.

[36 : 37] when we are lost due to challenges that we face in life and are unsure of the way we have a God who said we don't need to be concerned about the destination but to be focused upon the steps.

When we have forgotten the promises of God concerning who he is and what he has accomplished we have a God who confirms his faithfulness again and again and again through his anchoring word.

And when we are troubled at the fact of the gap between our lives now and the glory that lays waiting ahead we have a God who has given us a soul winning truth sharing disciple making mission right now.

When we are troubled in our own inadequacies to be effective within this mission we have a God who desires to help us. He desires to continuously strengthen us as we ask him for strength in his name for more opportunities.

When our highest concern is what Jesus desires for us to do we become less concerned about our inadequacy and rest upon Christ's sufficiency. There is no greater hope that we rest in.

[37 : 58] So we may ask our questions of uncertainty amid uncertainty but we are without excuse to not know where we can find the answers to the questions we ask.

Let's pray as we respond in singing and praise God for the work that he has done upon the cross. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.