

Easter 5 5/3/2026
 St. John 14:1-14 A

“I WILL COME AGAIN AND WILL TAKE YOU TO MYSELF, THAT WHERE I AM YOU MAY BE ALSO”

You may recall that several years ago, I took a trip across the pond. . . . When in the course of my travels in France, the time came when it comes to all men, and I had to have ice cream. What should the Good Lord put before my wandering eyes but the golden arches of a McDonald’s and my brain was instantly filled with the singular thought, “McFlurry”. There to greet me was the usual pack of teenage McDonald employees, even in France. So, I commenced to order a McFlurry, in the English language of course, and they all looked at me like “Stupid American Tourist”. Wanting to help them be good McDonald employees, I pointed, clearly, at the McFlurry machine, like a mime pretended to put the ice cream and M&M’s in the cup, and mix it together. And they looked at me like I was a stupid American tourist.

Yes, My Friends, I knew what it was like to be a stranger in a strange land. And so do you. The hymnwriter so beautifully and correctly captured the truth of earthly life for the Christian believer, “I’m but a stranger here, Heav’n is my home” {LSB 748:1}. We have this comfort and certainty because of the words of Jesus,

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.”

I. Jesus begins our Gospel lesson for this Sunday with the words, *“Let not your hearts be troubled”*. Why does He say that? Because in this valley of the shadow of death, there is no rest for the saints of God. Later in John’s Gospel, Jesus says, “In this world you will have trouble” (Jn 16).

The book of Revelation describes this present age as the “great tribulation” (Rev 7).

In this vale of tears, death robs of us our life’s mate. Cancer, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s and any manner of infirmity embitter our lives. People, often people we love very much, break our hearts. Criminals damage our property and steal from us; at times, they even harm us physically. One wagging tongue speaking one false accusation, and our good name and reputation are ruined.

Trouble. Tribulation. Frustration. Why? Because the world is cursed by sin. *“The creation was subjected to frustration,”* Paul writes (Ro 8:20). That’s what happened in the fall into sin. In the Garden, God saw all that He had created and it was *very good* (Ge 1:31). That meant there was no sin to curse our lives and bring death. But, it was not enough for us simply to enjoy all that God had given. We wanted to be in the place of God. So, we rebelled and brought sin, death, and the condemnation of hell upon ourselves. God cast us out of Paradise and now we are left to wander through the troubles, tribulations, and frustrations of this valley of the shadow of death.

But, as we feebly struggle, God gives us hope and reason to rejoice, we are strangers here, heaven is our home.

II. *“And if I go and prepare a place for you,”* the Savior says. Jesus has prepared a place in heaven for us through His suffering, death, and resurrection.

Jesus humbled Himself to be born of Virgin Mother. Upon His own human body, He took all the guilt and penalty of our sin and died the death those sins demanded. The Bible says this, *in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself...For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no*

sin (2 Co 5:19, 21). The sin which separated us from God is gone in the blood of Christ and we are now reconciled to our Father in heaven. When the Savior rose victorious on Easter morning, He defeated our greatest enemy, death itself, and opened heaven to us.

III. *“Let not your hearts be troubled,”* the Savior said. Then, He tells us why there is no reason for our hearts to be troubled,

“In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also”.

In the Old Testament, God’s people were known as "Israelites". God was teaching them a great truth with that name. "Israelite" means "wanderer." By calling us wanderers, God is teaching us that we are pilgrims, strangers, on this earth. This earth is not our home. God never wanted our lives to be days and nights of trouble, tribulation, and frustration.

So, Jesus assures us, *“In My Father’s house are many rooms”*. “Rooms” it says in English. But Jesus is literally saying that heaven is a place of eternal "staying places." Strangers, wanderers live in tents. As we feebly struggle with troubles, tribulations, and frustrations, Jesus directs us to the eternal rest of heaven. Heaven is a place of eternal protection, a place of eternal rescue, a place of eternal safety.

Jesus ascended to prepare in place in heaven for us. Even though He has ascended, He has not abandoned nor forsaken us. As He attended the Israelites of old in their journey through the wilderness, He sustains us in our journey through this wilderness of trouble, tribulation, and frustration.

When God's children were enslaved in Egypt, God heard their cries and delivered them through the Red Sea waters. When His children

wandered in the wilderness, God kept them alive, feeding them and leading them with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Every day, they pressed on because before them God had set the Promised Land to be their home. After 40 years, God allowed them to enter that Land flowing with milk and honey. The third chapter of Joshua records for us that when the children of God arrived at the Jordan River, God made the river waters stop flowing, allowing the children to safely, at long last, enter the Promised Land.

As God led His children to freedom through the Red Sea waters, God has led you to freedom through the waters of baptism. God has delivered you from death and hell in your baptism and made you a citizen of heaven.

This day, you wander through the wilderness of sin. But, God has set the Promised Land of heaven, your eternal home, before you. Christ has opened it to you. As you walk by faith, awaiting your exodus from this vale of tears, Christ, your Good Shepherd, is ever with you. He comes to you through His Word of Absolution to bring peace to your fear-filled heart. He comes to you in His Body and Blood to forgive you of your failure to trust in His will. As He forgives, He feeds your faith so that you may ever fear, love, and trust in your Heavenly Father above all things. You see, My Friends, faith in Jesus drives out all fear and worry.

In this earthly life, we will have troubles, tribulations, and frustrations. But we remember the words of Paul, *We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us (2 Cor 4:7)*.

In Christ, you are prepared for whatever God, in His mercy, permits to enter your life. Whatever crosses God allows into your life will not trouble you. God is our Refuge and Strength, an ever-present help in time of need.

God gives to us the hope of heaven and no one or nothing can take that from us. God will direct you there. He will hold back all dangers and foes, as He did with the waters of the Jordan, so that you may pass unharmed into your eternal home of heaven

As strangers here, subject to troubles, trials and tears of body and soul, we pray, "Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found."

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.