

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

John 14: 1

The short sentence quoted immediately above has a couple of different levels of understanding to it. On the one hand, there is an assurance that Jesus is giving to his disciples. He is supplying more than encouragement to them because he knows they are under attack often and sometimes even under assault from the evil one. Jesus wants them to know that he knows. He wants them to know that he is superior to any and every attack that may be waged upon them. He is granting them the consolation of his presence and his grace.

BUT. And here's the BUT. Each of those disciples has to make a decision. The decision has to do with letting Christ's encouragement, support, consolation enter into their lives, enter in to their minds, enter into their hearts. There is a decision necessary or all that the Lord provides will be useless. It is as if a hungry person is starving inside his own home. The Lord hears of the situation and brings all kinds of wonderful and nourishing food to the person's home and puts them on the front porch right by the door. But the hungry person has to open the door and bring the food inside. Only then will his hunger be satiated and his condition relieved. God provides but the person has to let the Lord's grace in. Consciously. Humbly. Willingly.

And now the deeper level. Do not LET your hearts be troubled. What we do not always realize but which is something very often in play in our lives is precisely the opposite. We actually DO let in to our minds and hearts and souls trouble. It is almost as if we welcome it. And Jesus says “Don't do that.” Do not LET your hearts be troubled. We actually allow our hearts to be troubled. And we say to ourselves, “I had no choice. That barb, that rejection, that meanness, that unfairness, that wound, that disdain—all of that—is just too overwhelming. I have no way of not letting that enter.” Well, that is just flat out wrong. But a lot of people believe it. Perhaps you do. I did once upon a time but I do not believe it any longer. I do not let trouble in. Not in a way that can take me down. I put it in Our Lord's hands. I cannot deal with it. He can—and will. Do I really believe that? That is the question of the week.