

Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled, Because I Know the Way. In Fact, I Am the Way. I Will Lead You Home.

"Recently, a man who was struggling with some issues in his life sought help from a psychiatrist," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said Sunday. "During one session, he lay on the couch in the therapist's office and unburdened his soul" about his fears of terrorism, global warming, a major earthquake, the price of oil and the cost of living. He said, 'Well, doc, what do you think?'

"The psychiatrist stood up from his chair, walked over to the man on the couch, and said, 'Move over.'

"Indeed, the times in which we live are troubling, aren't they?" Pastor Thelander continued. "And in fact, people of any age have been able to make this claim. Centuries ago, this claim could just as easily have come from the lips of the disciples. Our Gospel lesson this morning begins with the words of Jesus, 'Let not your hearts be troubled.' But the very reason these words are said and need to be said is because Jesus' followers are *very* troubled." Jesus has just told them that one of them will betray him, he will suffer and die, he will leave them for a time, and they cannot come with him. "And suddenly, these followers of Jesus no longer *anticipate* the future; they *fear* it."

"Jesus says, 'Let not your hearts be troubled,' but there is no way of getting around it. These men's hearts are *very* troubled. . . . How will Jesus' followers carry on? How will everything end up?"

It's hard *not* to be afraid, Pastor Thelander said, if you watch the evening news or read the papers, or are a senior citizen on a fixed income, or if your son or daughter is in the military in Baghdad, or if you're disabled and unable to work. "And yet, these words of Jesus come center stage, and will not go away: 'Let not your hearts be troubled.' . . . 'Do not fear,' says Jesus. Do not fear the future, as uncertain as it may seem to you. You trust God. You must also trust me. Trust me when I tell you that you always have a place in the Father's house. . . . Your place is with the Father, and I will take you there, because I know the way. In fact, *I am* the way. *I will lead you home.*"

"It's not that the disciples don't have cause for fear. They do, but Jesus offers them an alternative to fear, . . . simple faith. Jesus asks them to trust him, to see past (p.2→)



"Creation of Adam", part of the fresco painted 1508-1512 by Michelangelo (1475-1564) on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, The Vatican. In the New Testament Lesson for Sunday, Paul tells the Athenians, "For in him we live and move and exist. As one of your own poets says, 'We are his offspring.'" In the Gospel lesson, Jesus tells his disciples, "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit." Image credit: www.netpagz.com

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Sundays
 10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service
 11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation
 11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion
 6:00 p.m.: (First Sundays only) Evensong, then tea & refreshments

For the poor: Meat; fresh produce; canned fruits and vegetables; dairy products; peanut butter; cooking oil; pancake mix; syrup; spices; diapers; baby wipes; bathroom tissue; for personal care: soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving cream; new underwear (adults and children); cleaning supplies; bleach.

Readings, 4/27: Acts 17:22-31; Ps. 148; 1 Peter 3:8-18; John 15:1-8. **5/4, 10 a.m.:** Acts 1:1-11; Ps. 110:1-5; Eph. 1:15-23; Luke 24:49-53. **5/4, 6 p.m.:** Ps. 46; Ex. 3:1-12; Heb. 12:18-29.

Prayer Emphases: Nicaragua; Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada; Centenary United Methodist Church, Lexington, KY, and the Rev. David R. Thomas; Boise Rescue Mission; parishioners on Joretta Drive.

(Sermon, cont'd.) their immediate circumstances to the conclusion of the story Some answers . . . are just not meant for them to know on this side of heaven. But when answers aren't enough, there is Jesus. He is both the guide and the goal of their faith. And he will lead them home. . . . 'Let not your hearts be troubled.' . . . As we come to the Lord's table this morning, I invite you to bring your fears and anxieties about the future with you. . . . And in these gifts of bread and wine, hear his words to you: 'My child, let not your heart be troubled. Don't be afraid. Just trust me. Let me lead you home.' "