

*“Don’t Worry – Believe!”*

[The video, “*Be Still*” was shown.]

That video revealed the nature of God in terms which may seem quite different or new for us. As I think about the video and the Gospel Lectionary Reading, it looks to me that the meaning of the first verse of our Scripture and the names for God in the video are very closely aligned with each other. For example, the video indicated our Divine Parent is our “Counselor, Provider, Stress Taker, Strength Giver, Soul Soother, Mind Clearer, Peace Giver, Storm Calmer, Tear Dryer, Heart Healer, Fear Taker,” and “Truth Lover”. Each of those job titles would apply to someone, who brings comfort, encouragement, healing and peace!

That first verse comes in the context of the last hours of Jesus with his Original Disciples – during his final night with them before he was betrayed and taken prisoner and eventually executed. Earlier, he had warned them he would be betrayed. He shared he would soon be leaving them. Jesus predicted Peter would deny even knowing him three times prior to the crowing of the rooster. It was a shocking and extremely disquieting time for the disciples! They were in great distress! **So, Jesus told them in verse 1, “Do not be worried and upset. Believe in God and believe also in me.”**

In that terrible moment, Jesus fulfilled serving his disciples in those roles for God shown in the video. Indeed, his primary message of comfort and instruction was to remind them to “believe in God” – the Divine Parent’s Love and Care, as well as, to believe in himself – their Teacher and Lord. As we heard later in the Scripture, Jesus went on to assert the Almighty and he were part of the ultimate unity, so believing in God and believing in Jesus are extremely close to identical. Therefore, as Jesus was facing the prospect of his own betrayal, suffering, and death, he focused on comforting his surprised, confused, frightened, and worried or trouble-hearted disciples. Likewise, you, the persons seated around you, your friends, family, coworkers, acquaintances, and everyone you have never met are also the focus of God’s and Jesus’ comfort, help, healing, and deliverance.

During that troubling conversation, Thomas and Philip asked questions, which revealed their distress and discomfort to Jesus. **After Philip asked him to show them the Divine Parent, Jesus challenged Philip and the rest as he responded in verses 9-10, “For a long time I have been with you all; yet you do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Why, then, do you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe, Philip, that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I have spoken to you do not come from me. The Father, Who remains in me, does His own work.”** Friends, Jesus’ challenge and question about the belief of Philip applies to all who see themselves as his followers – his believers! That means you, me, and all of us need to also be conscious our Savior, Jesus Christ, was and is in unity with our Divine Parent, so each of us believes both God and Jesus, the Son of God, love us and respond to our needs. We don’t need to be prisoners of our worries – our troubles!

Now, recalling your own life, think about the person or persons, who, like Jesus, responded to your needs, comforted you, supported you, and enabled you to overcome your fears – to not worry or be troubled. Who is or was that person or persons? [The video, “*I Thought I Knew – Mother’s Day*” was shown.] Who else has been helpful and comforting to you besides Jesus? That’s right – our parents and grandparents – especially our mothers and grandmothers! We know “what love looks like”, “the stress of worry”, and “the healing of peace” because of our mothers. The video concluded with a reference to one mother passing on this vocation to her own daughter – another mother. That message

is true but the passing on of such love and care is not reserved to women. Yes, men have also learned from their parents and grandparents to be loving and supportive of their loved ones and of others under their care.

I have witnessed this process and dynamic in my own relationship with my parents. My mother and father provided me with love, support, encouragement, and comfort from when I was a baby up through much of my adult life. Many of our long-term members witnessed my parents' support, especially as they came to special events. Unfortunately, as many other folks have also experienced, the time came when my parents needed to essentially switch roles with me. My siblings and I moved our parents from Fort Worth to a facility in Carrollton, so I could visit them daily. Eventually, I moved them to a group home a few blocks from my house. As I looked after my mother and father, I sought to provide them comfort and support as their health rapidly diminished and finally failed. While I was caring for my parents, they depended on me as I had on them when I was a young child. For example, as my father was progressing down the spiral of Alzheimer's, there were times, when I had to talk with my father on the telephone or in person to prevent him from causing harm to himself or someone else. After my parents had gone on to their eternal reward, there were a significant number of times, when I would have welcomed their support and comfort, so, in a way, we have reversed roles again. Hopefully, each of us have experienced the support and comfort of someone such as a parent or grandparent. Also, hopefully, each of us have internalized that support and comfort, so we follow those examples of love and care in the way we relate with our children, parents, grandparents, loved ones, friends, persons over whom we have responsibility, coworkers, and those with whom we come into contact or a relationship. Doing that, we are following the example of Jesus, which he demonstrated toward his Disciples in our Scripture Reading.

In that Text, Jesus went on to explain about the importance of his followers believing in God and himself, so we do not have troubled hearts – aren't controlled by our worries. He told the disciples in **verse 11, "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. If not, believe because of the things I do."** The way Jesus agape loved the rejected, the ill, and the powerless and gave his life to show all people God's Grace, Love, and Radical and Extravagant Invitation and Welcome into the New Faith Relationship with our Divine Parent and New Life in Jesus Christ reveal Jesus is worthy of being believed in.

Friends, if you and I believe in God and Jesus, we will not only have no reason for troubled hearts or a worry filled life, but we will also become agents of the love, support, and care, which enables us to be freed from being prisoners to our fears and hardships. Jesus promised and called his followers, including us, to demonstrate that support and comfort toward others, especially for those in need of such liberation from worries and troubled hearts. **Jesus said in verse 12, "I am telling you the Truth: those who believe in me will do what I do — yes, they will do even greater things, because I am going to the Father."** Let's believe and with the help of the Holy Spirit share God's Agape Love, Comfort, and Support with all people. Amen.