



## How is Your Heart?

*Why should I feel discouraged?  
Why should the shadows come?*

*Why should my heart be  
lonely? And long for heaven and  
home...*

*"Let not your heart be  
troubled," His tender words  
I hear;*

*And resting on his goodness,  
I lose my doubt and fear* (Lyrics  
from the classic hymn, "His Eye is  
On the Sparrow").

**W**hat a time we are living  
through together! What  
divides we listen to daily  
on the evening news. Political  
divides, racial divides, social  
divides, economic divides and  
more. Foreign wars and local  
disasters. In these times, many  
suffer from a crisis of faith.

How can we have a heart full of  
peace? How can we not be  
troubled when we are living  
through all we face each day?

The gospel account is well  
familiar to us. John 14:1-27 gives  
us a glimpse into a conversation  
as Jesus reminds his followers:  
***Let not your heart be troubled***  
(KJV).

As we look at both Jesus' words  
as well as context, I must admit I  
love the poetry of the old King  
James version. The phrasing in  
this translation, ***Let not***, is such a  
beautiful way of expressing a  
thought we may not hear so  
often these days.

Beginning the thought with the  
word "let" is by no means an  
accident. Please, ***let*** me explain.

We see Jesus seated at a table for  
a meal with those closest to him.  
His context is truly troubling.

Jesus knew well what was  
coming.

He knew what many in the  
Jewish community were hoping  
for. He knew the depths of the  
insecurity and constant state of  
scheming of the religious  
authorities.

At the same time, Jesus also  
knew the extent of Roman  
authority and brutality, and how  
the Romans used that brutality to  
maintain order.

Jesus had seen all of it with his  
own eyes. Soon, the world around  
them all would erupt, and Jesus  
would suffer an unfair and unjust  
public and painful death.

Despite all that was taking  
place around them, where was  
Jesus' focus? How was he facing  
the troubling times in front of  
him?

In the face of events that would  
most certainly trouble any  
human heart, Jesus was focused  
on the peace within. Jesus was  
focused on his heart, on his  
internal space, as well as that of  
his closest followers.

Hard as it may be for us to fully  
imagine, just hours before a series  
of terrible events would unfold,  
Jesus was offering the peace his  
followers would need to face all  
that would happen to him, and,  
all that would eventually happen  
to them, as well.

Jesus said, ***Let not your heart be  
troubled***. The word, ***let***, indicates  
that we have the chance to  
choose to participate in his peace.  
The peace of Christ does not force  
itself upon us. God the Holy  
Spirit does not violate our free  
will (but he does woo us.).

Therefore, we choose to ***let***, to  
allow, that peace to do its work  
within us. We share in the  
process of transformation that  
takes place.

As we ***let***, we face our own  
troubling events in life with a  
deep sense of calm. ***Christ in us  
calms us. Christ in us gives us  
peace.***

We participate in a  
collaborative effort. We know the  
peace of Christ resides within us  
through the Holy Spirit. We focus  
on that peace, give thanks for it,  
and let it complete its perfect  
work within us.

No matter what we may face,  
by Christ and his indwelling  
peace within us, we allow there  
to be space around our troubles.  
We breathe and stand fast in  
him, all the while remembering  
how he concludes his  
conversation:

*Peace I leave with you, my peace I  
give unto you...let not your heart  
be troubled* (John 14:27, KJV).

With all that we are living  
through together, we give thanks  
that Christ in us gives us peace  
and a sense of calm. In him we  
rest. In him we trust.

The old classic hymn, *His Eye is  
On the Sparrow*, asks us questions  
that are so relevant in these  
times. Thanks be to God we need  
not be discouraged, nor live in  
the shadows that come.

We may feel lonely in all we  
face, and we may well long for  
heaven and home. Yet, Jesus is  
our ever-present Friend. His  
loving eye is on us all, all of the  
time. □

—Ed Dunn