

## Rest Easy

**“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?”** (John 14:1–2)

**Scripture:** John 14:1–4

**Song:** “Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled”

Colton was only 10, but he had lived a troubled life. His biological father was physically abusive, and he abandoned the family eventually. Colton was resilient and eager to begin a new adventure as he was immigrating to a new, modern country. His mother was marrying someone who was true to his word and clearly loved her and her children.

This adventure wouldn’t start until after his new father returned from getting things set up. Anxious, Colton fidgeted and squirmed without satisfaction as the clock showed past time for his father’s arrival. Every few minutes Colton would check in with his mom, “He is coming back again, isn’t he? He wouldn’t leave us, would he?” As the time grew later, Colton’s anxiety became more intense until, at last, his dad walked through the door.

Jesus sensed the anxiety in His disciples. Things were intensifying as His betrayal grew nearer. The Lord was saying some troubling things that they did not, could not, understand. Yet, Jesus gently reminds them who they are dealing with. And He reminds us as well.

**Father,** at times I feel anxious and even abandoned. I see things around me and even in my circumstances that I don’t understand. Give me assurance that I am secure with You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

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## Rest Assured

**So that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.** (1 Thessalonians 4:13b)

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

**Song:** “My Life Is in You, Lord”

There’s a phrase often used in the military: *Hurry up and wait*. It’s the result of another repeated phrase: *If you’re not 10 minutes early, you’re late*. From day one of training, as the drill instructor herds the recruits around to the various stages of processing, 30–50 people are marched to a location far earlier than need be so that they are prepared when their name is called. It involves a lot of sitting or standing and wondering, *How much longer?*

The first-century believers may have felt like this. They, like Paul, believed in Jesus’ imminent return. As people started dying, questions arose that needed to be addressed. This passage deals with their concern.

So what is one to do in the meantime? As a military chaplain, I used the time to get to know the troops or gather a group around a tailgate for a devotional or a quick worship service. As believers living in the *now not yet* reality, time might be spent getting to know our Savior better and reaching out to the world around us.

**Father**, thank You for Your promises. Your past faithfulness assures the promises of the future. Help my impatience and unbelief. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## Paid in Full

**“I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. . . . How my heart yearns within me!”** (Job 19:25–27)

**Scripture:** Job 19:23–27

**Song:** “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth”

When I was in the fifth grade, I committed to selling newspapers. I worked for a national paper, and they sent everything I needed: a bag to carry the papers in, a coin dispenser to make change, and the initial minimum of 30 papers. What little profit I made went toward paying the debt I owed.

In the Old Testament, one might oblige themselves to serve a master for a set period of time. People without a kinsman-redeemer might do this to survive. The kinsman-redeemer was the closest male relative who had the obligation to help his family member in need and buy that person out of bondage. For example: a brother might become a kinsman-redeemer for his sister-in-law if his brother died so that she would not become destitute.

It today’s passage, Job is down and out. He’s lost everything, and speculation abounds about what he’s done to deserve this. If only he had a redeemer. Oh, wait! He does, just like believers today have. Life can get messy. We can get overwhelmed, discouraged, and defeated. Just remember that Jesus paid your debt.

**Father,** I’m thankful to be redeemed and set free from the bondage of sin. Use me as an instrument of Your grace to show others the way to redemption. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## Welcome Back

**“LORD, they came to you in their distress; when you disciplined them, they could barely whisper a prayer.”**  
(Isaiah 26:16)

**Scripture:** Isaiah 26:12–19

**Song:** “The Prodigal Song”

As a hospital chaplain I’ve often found myself in an ICU waiting room with an estranged family member—estranged from the patient, and from God. The patient lies helpless, and there are a lot of unknowns. The conversation goes something like this: *Chaplain, I don’t know what to do. I haven’t been on good terms with [the patient] for a few years now. I feel so helpless and want to pray to God, but I can’t. I haven’t been on good terms with Him either.*

In our passage today the people of Israel recall their unfaithfulness to God. They’ve worshiped other gods and wandered far from the God who loves them, and yet He’s been merciful to them anyway. They’re so broken that all they can do is whisper a prayer in humility because they realize their undeserving state.

Today, whatever your circumstance, you may feel God won’t hear your prayer. You may feel you don’t deserve mercy or doubt that God will even accept you back. However, consider these words and know with assurance that no matter how far or how long you’ve been away, God welcomes you back.

**Father,** I’m blessed to be able to confess my sin to You and accept Your grace with a humble heart. May I forgive others and show them the same grace You have shown me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## Our Victory Belongs to the Lord

**Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous.** (Psalm 118:15)

**Scripture:** Psalm 118:15–24

**Song:** “Victory in Jesus”

One of the happiest days of my childhood was when I found out that my dad was coming home! I would walk up to random strangers, beaming with pride, and tell them that on Saturday, we were going to the airport to pick up my dad. He'd been gone for a year, and my six-year-old self could not contain my joy. For days, I danced around the house with wild enthusiasm.

The psalmist paints a picture of what it means to be jubilant—this time in victory. The image of tents evokes images of the accommodations that soldiers live in during military campaigns. Whether it be a specific battle, or any number of times, the Lord has been faithful and there is much to celebrate.

On this side of heaven, God gives us many small victories. Maybe it's victory over a bad habit. Maybe it's accomplishing a significant achievement. But ultimately, and most importantly, His followers have victory over sin and death. He is the stone rejected by builders that became the cornerstone. Believers in Jesus can know true jubilation by realizing and celebrating what the Lord has given.

**Father,** today I am thankful for the victories You have won for me in my life. You deserve all the glory, and I pray that my life will point others to the victory in You. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## The Best Is Yet to Come

**But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.** (1 Corinthians 15:20)

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 15:13–20

**Song:** “Up from the Grave He Arose”

Linda was excited about the family’s upcoming trip. She’d been planning the vacation for the past year, looking through brochures, visiting resorts websites, and considering all the excursions they could enjoy. Some might argue that the planning is just as exciting as the trip itself! When have you anticipated something long-awaited, knowing that the best was yet to come? The early Christians looked forward to Christ’s second coming, when there would be no more sorrow or death.

In this passage, *firstfruits* represents the best a person could offer God. They were gathered earliest, and offering them signaled that the worshiper recognized God’s faithfulness and provision. All those people that Jesus raised from the dead, died again. But Jesus is the first to totally conquer death, giving hope to all of us that believers will conquer death.

Recently, at a celebration of life service, the deceased’s son stated that “his heart was broken, but his faith was not.” Whatever you are dealing with today, look to the victory that Christ has won on your behalf and know that the best is yet to come.

**Father**, there is chaos all around, but I will not give up hope. Looking to Your Word and example, my faith is strengthened, and my expectations are high. May You be glorified. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## A Done Deal

**Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.** (1 Corinthians 15:58)

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 15:50–58

**Song:** “Grave Robber”

Lack of motivation—that’s what the team suffered from. They just couldn’t imagine the victory of a championship. Their coach was as much a motivational speaker as he was a strategist. He recognized raw talent and was good at putting together a compatible team. The challenge was keeping the young men together as a cohesive unit when their confidence began to waiver.

In these verses, the apostle Paul reminds us of the gospel that he has proclaimed. He points to historical events that the church in Corinth was well aware of in the same way a coach would talk to his team at halftime. The difference is that Paul offers an assurance unlike any coach. He speaks with certainty of future events.

Yes, our hope is in the supernatural. Doubt in our culture is to be expected, as people have been duped time and again with photos and stories generated by artificial intelligence. We can go to the source who is reliable and unchangeable. Our work is not in vain, and it will accomplish the purpose that God has set from the beginning.

**Father,** forgive my unbelief and strengthen my knowledge of Your Word. Strengthen my resolve to not only worship You but to serve You in accomplishing Your perfect will. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.