

**“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”**

What do these statements have **in common**?

This world sure is a **beautiful** place.

There are some pretty **incredible** people out there.

The next generation might **do more** than anyone ever has.

Our country's **best** days are ahead.

Many of the world's problems will be **solved** at some point in time.

There is **more peace** in the world than ever in its history.

Men and women are **kinder** than in the past.

I wish my parents were alive. They would be **SO impressed** with what they saw.

What do they have in common? Think.

They are things we almost **NEVER** hear, right? **Nobody talks like that.**

Well, I guess it's more correct to say that they are things I never hear. But something tells me that it's probably the same for you. Now, the **OPPOSITE** of those statements I hear all the time, almost daily, in fact. I'll ask someone how they've been or what's new or **what's on their minds**, and they'll come back with something along the lines of,

This world really seems to be **messed up** . . .

or - People have completely **lost their minds** . . .

or - We're heading for **civil war** in this country . . .

or - Nobody has any **morals** anymore . . .

or - This economy is the **worst ever** . . .

or - Society is **falling apart** . . .

or - Nobody believes in the **family** anymore

or - I really **can't trust** anybody these days

or - What ever happened to the way things used to be? It was **so much better** years ago.

I hope you get the idea.

Now, you may be asking, “What's wrong with that? **I feel that same way all the time.**” You would not be alone. These concerns (rightly or wrongly) are on the minds of many people these days. But are these **JUST** concerns, or is **something more going on**? When I hear people talk

this way two things happen. First, it kind of makes me sad. I feel really bad for people who **carry this kind of negativity** everywhere they go. It can't be easy, and must certainly be weighing the person down.

The second thing that happens when I hear people talk this way is that I immediately **wonder where faith fits into all of it**, wonder if faith is still foundational for most of us, wonder if faith is still the **lens through which we continue to view the world**. Or has faith's power gotten buried somewhere, no longer trumping and shaping our attitudes, viewpoints, and feelings?

And just to be clear - I do my best to think about these things in a **general sort of way**, being careful not to make any specific conclusions about the person standing before me. But it does get me thinking, about the hearts and minds of people these days, and **even my own heart and mind**.

**“Do not let your hearts be troubled.  
You have faith in God; have faith also in me.”**

We just heard one of the most beautiful and powerful Scripture passages, one that still has the power to move us. We heard how Jesus has **prepared a place for us**, and how we can know the Father by **knowing him**, and how he wants us to do the **same sorts of things that he did** - all good stuff. All inspiring stuff. Yet, those statements pale in comparison to the one that anchors the whole passage. Jesus says,

**“I am the way and the truth and the life.”**

In a certain (and very real) sense it is Jesus' way of telling us that **he needs to be our everything**. And that by listening to him and following him and imitating him we will be safe, we won't ever get lost, and we will **be with God for all eternity**. I believe that is an incredibly comforting pledge from Jesus, one that assures us that our faith in him is **our salvation, our hope, and indeed our life**. And yet, faith in Jesus means more than just saying, “Yes, God, I'd like to go to heaven someday.” Rather true faith, authentic faith is so much more than that.

Being “faithful” also means that . . . .

We believe in the **potential of every human being** (and their inherent dignity) - the possibility for every person to be loving and kind and compassionate.

We believe that **God's beauty** is present in countless places, situations, and people.

We can help make this world an even **better place** (and I think we have a responsibility to do so).

The world is not “falling apart”, but rather is how it’s always been since the Fall - imperfect, wounded, broken, and in **continual need of healing**.

Humanity’s best days aren’t behind us, but are (with God’s grace) **ahead of us**, since every single person can be **changed for the better**, and can make a difference.

No problem we face has more power than **God’s love**. And God’s love and mercy is bigger than our mistakes.

And what Jesus has done for us has **changed absolutely everything**, and consequently must shape the way we see the world and each other.

In other words, as followers of Jesus, as “believers”, it is our responsibility not to feed into **negativity and cynicism and hopelessness**. We can’t be people who constantly speak in such a “doom and gloom” kind of way. Can we really say that we have faith, that we say we believe what we say we believe, if we constantly speak to the contrary?

And I don’t mean to suggest that we are supposed to ignore the problems of the world or pretend they don’t exist or speak in a phony kind of way. But I am saying that being a true Christian and in our case, Catholics, means that we must be men and women of **hope**. And **joy**. And **compassion**. And **peace**. And if people don’t see that in us, then our faith has lost its power, lost its ability to make a **real and lasting difference or impact in our lives**, the kind of difference that changes hearts, and ultimately changes the world.

Can we be precisely those kinds of people - the kinds of people who embody the deep hope that comes with letting the Lord Jesus lead the way. Or rather, **BE the WAY** and the **TRUTH** and the **LIFE**? My dear friends, if that’s what we truly believe, then that will certainly dominate **what we say, how we see, and what we believe is possible**.

And that’s a much **different reality**, a much different world from the one we often speak so poorly of. So let’s stop with all the negativity and start speaking as people who truly **believe in what Jesus has promised**.

Father Boat