

## LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED

This is a word study on the greek word tarassō. The New Testament Greek word, tarassō is most often translated "to trouble." Because all humans have emotion, various emotion, we will relate to this word study. We will see the negative emotion, we will see the definition of this, and we will see how great it is to know this as it is renewing the mind. In Dr. E.W. Bullinger's Critical Lexicon and Concordance tarassō is wonderfully defined "to stir up, to agitate, as water in a pool." He says that of the mind, tarassō, means "to stir up, trouble, disturb with various emotions." Those definitions help us see the full implications of this tremendous word as it is used in God's Word.

There is a wide range of emotion in life, and emotions can have positive or negative effects. In God's Word we are taught that most people's believing is based on emotion, or what they feel, rather than on logic. But that is not the renewed mind walk according to God's Word. God's Word is true whether we feel like it or not.

Emotions may complement the renewed mind, but at times they pull against it. By studying the uses of this word which means "to stir up, trouble, disturb with various emotions," we can learn how to do the will of God in spite of emotional challenges.

In the examples to come, we will see whatever their feelings were, they show their believing response. They had to deal with these life or death situations firsthand. They were threatened with confusion and fear. Yet, instead of responding with their sense knowledge they lived above it all and went forth teaching and preaching the Word of God effectually and more widely than before. The only way they could do that is by letting the peace of God rule in their hearts.

The first occurrence of tarassō in the Gospels concerns King Herod.

Matthew 2:1-3

Now when [after] Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men [Magi] from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews [Judeans]? for we have seen his star in the east [in the rising], and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled [tarassō ], and all Jerusalem with him.

In a book called Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed, on pages 230 and 231 we see why Herod was so disturbed: " ... to some people the arrival of a new king especially their expected Messiah would have been most welcome news. To others, including Herod, the news was disturbing and troubling. The city churned with anxiety as the Magi's assertion began to be more widely broadcast. Herod was not pleased at the thought that anyone would be a threat to his throne. Had such a child truly been born? And was this child really destined to take over the throne of Judea? Why had he not been informed of the child's birth before this? Why had these Magi known of it when those of his own court and kingdom and the Temple had not? Was this indeed the Messiah? Wrestling with these questions, Herod was deeply troubled."

Herod's being "troubled" involved elements of embarrassment, indignation, fear, and anger; there was no love or respect for God in it, only selfish and political concerns. Herod did not renew his mind to the Word of God to relieve his troubled state. He turned instead to deceit and murder. While this first use of tarassō defines the word, we must look at other scriptures to see the response of a sound mind to such emotional turmoil.

An incident recorded in both Matthew 14 and Mark 6 shows the disciples of Jesus Christ being "disturbed with various emotions." Here is the account from Matthew.

Matthew 14:22-26

And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled [tarassō, disturbed with various emotions], saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

Fear was involved in this emotional response. The disciples thought they were seeing an apparition, a devil-spirit manipulation, when in reality it was the Lord Jesus Christ! That's quite a mistake made in perception and awareness as they are disturbed and agitated with various emotions. Look how Jesus handled it.

Matthew 14:27

But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

Why should they be of good cheer? Because "it is I," Jesus Christ said. With him there, it wasn't logical to be afraid! "Be of good cheer" can be translated, "believe positively that which is right." That gets rid of the distress. Bishop K.C. Pillai's (teacher of the Bible in eastern orientalisms) translation is, "have your thoughts well arranged." When distressed with various emotions, we may need to rearrange our thoughts.

When we rightly divide the Word of God, believe it, and then act on it, we control our emotions to contribute and not detract from our believing walk. Then they are an asset, and complement the renewed mind. But when the mind is MOVED by various emotions, mental or spiritual perception can be distorted. Then if we try to make a decision or a value judgment on something, we could be as wrong as those disciples were in their evaluation of what they saw. We need to have our thoughts well arranged according to God's Word in order to avoid fear, believe positively, and recognize that which is right.

Luke 24 has another occurrence of tarassō, this time after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The two men who had met Jesus Christ on the road to Emmaus were relating their encounter to the disciples.

Luke 24:36 and 37

And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But [in contrast] they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

Here was Jesus Christ in his resurrected body, but the disciples thought they were seeing a devil spirit manifested in visible form. How wrong they were!

Luke 24:38

And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled [tarassō, disturbed with various emotions]? and why do thoughts [argumentative reasoning] arise in your hearts?

The disciples were disturbed with various emotions and allowed argumentative reasoning to build in their hearts. By this time, the whole series of events surrounding Jesus Christ's arrest, crucifixion, and burial had so affected their hearts that they did not believe what he had told them that God would raise him from the dead. The tomb was found empty; angels had testified of the resurrection; eyewitnesses were reporting Jesus Christ alive. Still, these disciples didn't believe it. They were discouraged, hardened in their hearts, behind closed doors for fear of the Judeans, disturbed with various emotions. Seeing Jesus Christ alive, they were terrified and affrighted, thinking they saw a counterfeit manifestation by a devil spirit. But look at what Jesus did to help them change their negative thinking. He said, "Behold my hands and my feet. .. handle me, and see ... a spirit hath not flesh and bones." Then they believed not for joy. Then he ate a piece of fish, and some honeycomb.

He did all this to get them to move out of that agitated state of mind. He got them to settle down, think clearly, and believe. That's quite a teacher.

In John, chapter 5, tarassō is used of water in a pool, which becomes stirred up, agitated. The legend of the pool of Bethesda was that when the angel stirred up the water, whoever got in first got healed. Jesus was there to minister to a man, and asked him, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

John 5:7

The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled [tarassō], to put me into the pool ....

This gives us the mind picture of a placid, peaceful pool becoming agitated. This disturbance is in the physical realm; but God's Word also tells us what happens when our believing is disturbed, or wavers.

James 1:6, 7

But let him ask in faith [believing], nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

Believing rightly is being fully persuaded of God's Word-no wavering. Abraham was fully persuaded, giving glory to God. The Old and New Testaments give us many examples of believers convinced of the truth of God's Word in their lives beyond a shadow of a doubt, even though they were people of like passions as we are. One of the adversary's methods of breaking down someone's believing, or full persuasion, is to disturb with various emotions by senses attacks.

In John 12 we again see Jesus troubled. He knew the time of his own death was near.

John 12:26 and 27

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled [tarassō, disturbed, agitated]; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. . . .

Again, he handled the emotional attack by prayer. He got clear and concerned. In casting all our care upon Him, we get specific in what our care is. Praying with our understanding helps us clearly determine what we want of God. Take our shoes off' with the Father and lay things out specifically. Jesus' prayer here was not "Woe is me." If we feel bad it's right to talk to God about it. But we want to get rid of what is hindering us, not just wallow in it. We have no reason to blame God out of bitterness or hardness of heart, so we cast our care upon Him. God has never disappointed us. We pray out of trust, love, and thankfulness to Him. He's "big enough" to handle any hurt or negatives that we need to get rid of.

John 12:27

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

He laid his agitation out to his Father and stayed clear on his own job and responsibility.

John 12:28

Father, glorify thy name. . . .

Then something wonderful happened here. He received revelation from God, His Father, which greatly encouraged him. Jesus was disturbed with various emotions, so he honestly laid his heart before God believingly, and the Father was able to bless him mightily in this difficult situation.

We also face disturbances and agitations, and here the Word is showing us how to deal with them. With Christ in us, we can do the works that he did, learning to think and believe the way he did. These Gospel records are here for our learning. Jesus spoke the Scripture and took believing and loving action.

In John 14, still at the last supper, the word tarassō comes up again. Jesus was teaching his disciples.

John 14:1

Let not your heart [where your believing comes from] be troubled [tarassō]: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

The admonition of God's Word to them was, "Don't let the believing in your heart be disturbed and agitated with various emotions." We get hit with emotional trouble, but the key is not to let it be the basis of our believing. How to deal with it is there in the same verse: believe God, and (from our perspective) in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Pray, teach, serve, move, act. Be positive and aggressive. These keys are invaluable in keeping that agitating emotion from overtaking the heart to the point of disturbing our believing. We make God's Word the basis of our believing, emotion or no emotion. Let the emotions follow believing, or else believe God in spite of emotions, like Jesus did. Verse 27 also has this word tarassō.

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

The words "let ... be troubled" are the one word tarassō. "Let not your heart be agitated and disturbed with various emotions. Don't allow it;" Jesus Christ says. That tells us that we are in charge and can prevent it from happening. We can't always keep agitation out of our minds. That's no sin. The sin is to allow the heart to get so agitated that our believing action would be out of that emotional state and not from the sound logic of renewed-mind believing. We have the peace of God, and we are to let it rule in our hearts by believing.

We learn more about the effects of emotional trouble in Galatians.

Galatians 1:6 and 7:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you [there's the word tarassō], and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

The troubling comes by various ways which are dealt with throughout Galatians. People cause the perplexing distress by things they require and legalistically promote. This agitation is used by the adversary to get believers off the Word. Another revealing occurrence of tarassō is found in chapter 5 of Galatians.

Galatians 5:6:

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith [believing] which worketh. [is energized] by love.

Here, "circumcision" represents any legalism-it accomplishes nothing and makes you no better. The love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation energizes believing, and that kind of believing DOES accomplish something.

Galatians 5:7

Ye did run well. . . .

To "run well" in context means "have your believing energized by love' They had this, but then lost it.

Galatians 5:7 (continued)

... who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

That word "hinder" in Greek literature refers to digging a trench in the path of an army so that as they attacked they would fall in. The epistle asks, "Who did this to you?" The purpose in recognizing this hindering is to not get tricked again.

Galatians 5:8

This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

God wanted them to keep running well, with the love of God energizing their believing.

Galatians 5:9

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

In context this means that just a little bit of wrong doctrine can permeate the whole fellowship.

Galatians 5:10

I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded [there's the renewed mind]: but he that troubleth [tarassō] you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

See, people can cause this emotional disturbing but we can still be "none otherwise minded"!

I Peter 3 summarizes many of the practical aspects of avoiding emotional trouble. Fellowship with God and being prepared with the truth of the Word are two of the most important keys.

I Peter 3:8-13 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

I Peter 3:14, 15

But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled [tarassō];

But [in contrast to being troubled] sanctify the Lord in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

That's what to do to handle being disturbed. Sanctify the Lord God - set Him apart in your heart, number one. Be in fellowship with God by means of His Word. Then, be ready to give an answer, a reason of the Hope that is in you. Speak God's Word! That's how we control our thinking and move positively. That backs down the agitation. Jesus Christ was troubled with intense emotion; yet he never failed to handle each occasion with God's Word in his mind. We can walk "in his steps" and live victoriously in the face of emotional trouble because we have Christ in us spiritually, and we have the wonderful revealed Word of God to practically apply in our hearts and lives. May our response to troubling times be that of living and giving God's Word like the first-century believers in Acts 8:4: they "went everywhere preaching the word."