

What the Cross Meant to Christ

Scripture: John 14:28–31

Code: 43-78

Let's open the Word of God at John 14. This is a simple straight-forward text of Scripture, John 14:28-31, John 14:28-31; and it's the last section, the last little paragraph in the 14th chapter. But if there's one place in the Bible – and there certainly are many – but if there is only one place in the Bible where chapter headings mean nothing and chapter numbers are irrelevant it would be this, because this is one evening, one monologue by Jesus with His disciples on Thursday night of Passion Week, the night before His crucifixion. He's in the upper room through the end of chapter 14, and then He's still with them as they head toward the garden.

He's with them that night and He starts talking to them in chapter 13 and He ends at the end of chapter 16, and then He prays that the Father would bring to pass all the things that He has promised. This is the legacy of Jesus. This is what He has left, not only the disciples, the promises He gave them, but through them to all who would ever believe on Him. This is an unparalleled portion of Scripture, and we've been seeing that as we've gone through chapters 13 and 14.

So we come to the end of chapter 14 which is not in itself notable, except there's a geographical transition which I'll point out, because the rest of what follows is on the same evening with the same realities in view, and all of it is just profoundly rich, all the way through the end of chapter 16.

But let's look at verse 28: "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, but he has nothing on Me; but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commands Me. Get up, let us go from here."

On our side of the cross, this side, we all know what Jesus' death meant to Him, we understand that. We know the fullness of salvation truth related to the cross and the resurrection. We have the four gospels to give us the narrative about the cross and all our Lord's words leading up to and including His words at the cross, after the cross, after His resurrection, before His ascension. We have all of that. Then we have the book of Acts which chronicles the preaching of the apostles and their associates in the early church; and they were preaching the cross, and the resurrection, and the theology of the resurrection. So we have a vast amount of historical data about the cross and about the message of the cross.

Then we have all the epistles of the New Testament sweeping through the rest of the New Testament. From the writings of Paul and Peter and John and Jude, we get more theology of the cross, more theology of the resurrection. And, of course, even in the book of Revelation, the great apocalyptic vision of John on the Isle of Patmos, we have even more of the theology of the cross that is unpacked and unfolded and brought to its fullest, most magnificent consummation. We understand that not only the fullness of His resurrection, but in Revelation the fullness of our own

resurrection.

So we are given all this truth, all this revealed truth on this side of the cross, and so we understand the cross. We understand it for what it meant to Christ, and what it meant to God, and what it meant to the Holy Spirit, and what it meant to the plan and purpose of redemption, and what it means to us. We understand that; we celebrate it. We celebrate it every week when we come together. We talk about the cross, we sing about the cross, we read about the cross, and we talk about and read about and sing about the resurrection as well. We're full of praise all the time for the work of the Lord through His death and resurrection.

And, additionally, we have communion regularly around the Lord's Table to remember His death. We have baptism in order to visualize His resurrection in which we are joined and united. So we understand the meaning of our Lord saying, "I'm going to die, rise again, and go back to heaven." We say with the apostle Paul that, "I preach Christ crucified," or, "I am determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified," or, "God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of Christ by which I am crucified to the world and the world to me." We understand all of that.

We understand what the resurrection life is. We know Romans 6 that we died with Him, we're buried with Him, and rose with Him to walk in newness of life. We understand the spiritual realities of the cross, and the cross is precious to us. We sing "In the cross of Christ I glory/Towering o'er the wrecks of time/We understand that sacred story sublime." We sing, "I love that old cross where the dearest and best/For a world of lost sinners was slain/So I'll cherish the old rugged cross," and many, many other hymns and songs about the cross full of all kinds of doctrine and theology.

We understand that Christ was crucified for us in our place. We understand redemption. We understand reconciliation. We understand justification and the imputation of sin to Him and righteousness to us by His death and resurrection. The cross then is everything to us; that's why behind me on the wall and a whole lot of other places in the Christian world, the cross is the dominant symbol. We understand that. He liberated us from bondage to sin. He liberated us from the fear of death. He liberated us from eternal hell. He set us on a course to heaven. He brought us redemption and reconciliation by His death and resurrection.

Now that's our view on this side of the cross, and it's a complete and full view. And particularly if you've been a part of our church for any length of time, you know that we go down deep into the understanding of these great realities because this is what fuels our worship, and our service, and our gratitude. But put yourself in the place of the 11 disciples, on the other side of the cross with no New Testament, no theology, no preaching by the apostles, no gospels having been written. They're on the other side of the cross.

Ours is a historical faith. We have historical accounts, the four gospels in the book of Acts. Ours is historical faith, and we base our understanding on that history, and then the explanation of that history in the epistles of the New Testament. But theirs was a prophetic faith. They had to understand something that had not happened. The only explanation they could possibly find for the cross, they would have to dig out of the Old Testament, and they found that very difficult to do, as witnessed by the fact that whenever Jesus talked about dying that they refused to believe it. And they went to the point where they actually said, "No, no, Lord; that is not going to happen," the words of Peter. They were having a very hard time with that.

You might say to them, “Well, look, don’t you understand the sacrificial system of an innocent substitute for sinners, giving up His life so that sinners could be forgiven? Don’t you understand that through the whole sacrificial system of the Old Testament?” “Well, to a degree, yes.”

“Well, don’t you understand Isaiah 53 that He would be wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities? Again, you have substitutionary atonement.” “Yeah.” But those are just a few passages. The theological truth is there, but the narrative is not there, the history is not there, the person is not there, the events are not there, and so attaching that is very difficult if you’re trying to find an attachment to a historical event.

And the idea that Jesus was going to die was just crazy to them. “How could the victor, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Servant of the Lord who would come, as we read in Isaiah 42, and bring justice to the world and establish His kingdom of righteousness, how could He be a victim of a sinful, wretched world? That just does not make sense.” So we want to give them a little credit for the fact that they were looking at all of this only on the prophetic side rather than the historical side.

They had no history, they had no events yet. They had no New Testament theology to detail the meaning of it. All they had was that Jesus kept talking about the fact that He was going to die, and then He was going to rise again. He started talking about that early in the gospel of John. It’s in all four gospels, His predictions of that. But if you just take John, He told them essentially He was going to die in chapter 2. He told them again in chapter 3; He told them again in chapter 8; He told them again in chapter 10; He told them again in chapter 12.

And in chapter 12, He even told them in verse 33 how He was going to die. He was going to die by being lifted up. Well that was odd, because when the Jews executed somebody, they threw them down and stoned them to death. This was a Roman form of crucifixion. He told them details like He would be arrested by the leaders of Israel. He would be scourged, He would be spit on, He would be abused, and He would be killed. So looking at this was a frightening thing to them because they just weren’t able even to connect with the Old Testament passages that spoke of His cross. It was just outside the realm of their understanding.

So His talk about death frightened them, and that’s how chapter 14 begins when Jesus says, “Stop letting your hearts be troubled. Stop the trauma. Stop the fear, the anxiety, the dread, the despair, the depression.” And then He says it again in verse 27. As we noted last week at the end of verse 27, “Stop letting your hearts be troubled. Stop allowing them to be afraid. Stop with the fear and the turmoil.”

It’s time to stop that and to rejoice. That’s the key in verse 28: “If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced. You’ve got to get from despair to joy.” At this point, all they can see is that, “This thing is about to be over and we’ve put everything in it – our lives, our hopes, our ambitions, our dreams, our love, our resources, everything. And now He’s leaving, He’s going to the Father and He’s going to die.”

The result is shock and fear in anticipation of lonely helplessness without the Lord and knowing that the whole of Israel is essentially hostile toward them. They don’t understand how this death can mean anything to them at all, anything good. All it is in their eyes is the ultimate tragedy of

tragedies. They're in deep despair and deep sorrow.

And by the way, He has made amazing promises to them, starting in chapter 13 declaring His love to them. And already in the first 27 verses of chapter 14, He's made amazing promises to them. He promised them heaven. He promised them that He would come and take them there. He promised them that they would have all the resources of heaven at their disposal, all they would have to do is ask in prayer in His name, according to His will, and heaven would unload all of its treasures on them.

He promised them that He would send the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth who would lead them into all truth. He promised that He would come to them, that the Father would dwell with them. Literally, they would become the temple of the Trinity. And then last week, we saw in verse 27, He promised them all-surpassing supernatural peace. All of these promises He has laid out to them on that Thursday night of Passion Week, the night before His death.

But still, even after all of that, at the end of verse 27 He says, "Stop letting your heart be troubled and being fearful." They're having a hard time, even with all these astonishing promises, getting past their confused despair. They're doubting all kinds of things. Jesus has spoken to them like a dying father gathering His beloved children around him and telling them he's leaving. But it will be good for them because he has a huge estate and it has everything they will ever need, every provision that every child will ever need, and he's leaving it all to them. He's like that kind of Christian father who says, "My children, beloved of my soul, I leave you everything I have, and I wait for you on the other side in glory, and we'll meet again."

Like that dying father about to die, He gathers His little flock around Him and tells them how good it will be when He goes. It will even be better when He goes. "It's better for you that I go away – " John 16:7 He says " – then the Comforter will come, and then all the things that have been yours through Me will become yours through the Spirit dwelling in you."

The Holy Spirit will come to live in them. They will have new life. They will have the presence of not only the Spirit but the Father and the Son. The Spirit will become their resident truth teacher. They will be used to write the Scripture. The Scripture will become the treasure of divine truth revealed to them. They will be given peace that will rule their hearts in every situation.

This is our Savior's legacy to His beloved as He leaves, but they're having a very difficult time with this. It is for one simple reason, and you would identify with this: they are selfish. In a word, they're selfish. The bottom line here is all they can think about is what Jesus leaving means to them, how it's going to affect them. Their faith is weak and they are selfish.

They want Jesus to stay and keep doing exactly what He had been doing in their lives. For the disciples it's a selfish sorrow, thinking only of how their Lord's death is going to affect them, the absence of the one they love, the one who loves them the most. Their sorrow is really completely self-centered, and that is why Jesus says this to them: "If you loved Me."

And you say, "Well, didn't they love Him?" Well, yes, to a degree. But let's just take it to the fullest possible definition. "If you loved Me in the way that Christ understands love, if you really loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, if you really loved Me."

Did they love Him? Sure, but not fully. Did they love Him? Yes, but not rightly. Did they love Him? Yes, but not intelligently, not completely. If they had, they would have been filled with joy because here's a simple principle about love from 1 Corinthians 13: "Love seeks not its own. Love seeks not its own." Love is lost in others. "Greater love has no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friends."

The purest and truest love is completely selfless, and we've talked about that back in chapter 13. That's how Jesus loved. He loved His own who were in the world in a completely selfless way so that He was willing to give up His life for them. True love always seeks the joy of the one it loves. True love in its purest form is always unselfish: "If you loved Me unselfishly, if you really loved Me, you would be rejoicing because you would see what My going means to Me. I go to the Father."

It's amazing sometimes when you go to a funeral of even Christian people, of course. Sometimes there is a kind of sadness, of course, that's accepted, and expected, and normal, and wonderful, and loving, because you've just lost someone who is precious. There's a place for weeping and we need to weep with those who weep. But when that goes on and on and on in a morbid kind of preoccupation, it begins to demonstrate that this is not love for the person, this is selfishness, this is selfishness; because if that's a believer who went to be with the Lord and you really love that person, then your sorrow is turned to joy. Well, the disciples needed a lesson in that subject. Let's go back then to verse 28, just further introduction: "You heard that I said to you, you heard that I said to you, yes, I go away and I will come." Did they ever.

In chapter 7 He said, "I go." In chapter 8 He said, "I'm going." In chapter 13 He said, "I'm going." In chapter 14 He said, "I go, I go, I go to the Father." In chapter 16 He said, "I go, I go."

He'd been saying, "I'm going, I'm going; I go, I go," over and over and over again, "I'm returning to the Father." So He said, "You've heard that I said, 'I go away.' I've said that, even detailed that this going away involves death, and death and resurrection, and then ascension."

And He said, "You've also heard that I will come again. You've heard that. I will come to you," back in chapter 14, verse 3. "I will come again after I prepare a place for you and receive you to Myself. I will come again."

Verse 18: "I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you." Verse 23: "We will come to him and make Our abode with him." Who is that? "The one who loves Me and keeps My word. I will come; I will come. I'm going, I'm going, I'm going; but I will come."

Commentators have kind of wrestled with, "What does He mean by that, 'I will come to you.' What does He mean?" I think He means several things. Number one: "I will come to you in three days." Right? "I will come to you in three days because there will be a resurrection, and I'll come out of the grave and I'll meet you, some of you on the Road to Emmaus, and all of you in the upper room with the exception of Thomas. But I'll be back." And He came back the third day, rose from the dead, and He was with them for 40 days. So there were times when He said, "I'm going to go, and I'm going to come again," when He had His resurrection in view.

And then in the 14th chapter when He says in verse 18, "I will not leave you as orphans, I will come

to you,” He’s talking about the coming of the Holy Spirit, “So that I will come to you in the form of the Spirit. I will come to you in the form of the Holy Spirit,” and that happened on the Day of Pentecost. He came back after three days; and then after 40 days, He ascended into heaven; and soon after that, the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost.

So, “I will come to you from the grave, I will come to you in the form of the Holy Spirit because the Trinity comes,” as we saw earlier in the chapter. And then beyond that, chapter 14, verse 3, “I will come again and receive you to Myself.” There, He’s talking about the ultimate glorification of the believer: “I will meet you in glory. I will come and take you to glory.”

That happens when any individual believer dies, and that will happen one day at the rapture of the church. So when He says, “I go away and will come to you,” I don’t think we need to kind of narrow that down. He came back after His resurrection. He came in the coming of the Trinity to dwell inside every believer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and one day, He gathers every believer who dies into His presence.

And beyond that, one day, He will come in the rapture and carry away all believers from the earth: “I will come. I’ve told you that. I’ve told you all of that. I’m going and I’m coming.” In other words, “Your sorrow is unnecessary because it’s temporary, it’s temporary this separation.” But beyond that, “If you loved Me as you should, you would have rejoiced. Why? Because of what this means to Me, what this means to me.”

Perspective of the disciples was faulty because it was selfish. They looked at the Lord’s death only as to how it affected them. Consumed with their own needs and hopes and desires and ambitions, they loved Him in a kind of selfish way. They loved Him because of what He did for them. And now there was a sorrow that was becoming morbid, and it was time to replace it with joy, and the only way to do that was to completely change the perspective and look at this from His viewpoint. So in this little simple passage, there are four great realities that tell us what Jesus’ death meant to Him, what His death meant to Him. And they’re familiar to us; they weren’t to these men on the other side of the cross.

The Son of God had come down to earth, been born, as you know, in manger to Mary. He had suffered for 33 years, and He suffered not from sin. He was holy, undefiled, separate from sinners. He had suffered not from sin, but He had suffered from sinners. He was surrounded by sinners. He went from the glories of heaven where there are no sinners, from the presence of God and all the holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, came from the holy presence of heaven down to suffer from sinners in this world His whole life, His whole life.

You can believe that He suffered at the hands of His brothers and sisters whose resentment to Him shows up later when they didn’t believe in Him when He declared Himself to be the Messiah. It’d be pretty hard to be adored by your siblings if you were perfect. It comes all the way to suffering at the hands of the people that He came to save, suffering at the hands of His own nation: “He came to His own and His own received Him not.” He suffered from sinners all His holy life.

And finally He suffered for sinners on the cross. He suffered from sinners and for sinners in death. His sinless body was ravaged. He bore a world of sin, the guilt of His people, and the punishment, the wrath of God and the fury of God against all the sins of all the people who would ever believe

through human history. He was coming down to the cross, it was hours now. The three hours of darkness when He suffered the full fury of the eternal wrath of God was just a few hours away.

He could feel that it was ending, and it did end. And you remember when it ended on the cross He said, "It is – " what " – finished." His death would end the suffering and open the way to the Father. He went to the cross. He suffered for the joy that was set before Him, Hebrews 12:2, "The joy that was set before Him." You should rejoice. You should share His joy on the other side of the cross, on the other side of the resurrection, the other side of the ascension. And you do if you understand what His death meant to Him.

So let me give you the four things He said. Number one: it meant that His person would be dignified, His person would be dignified. Verse 28: "I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I." Really an amazing statement. This is a reference to His exaltation, "I go to the Father."

And we know that happened in Acts 1:8 when He ascended into heaven. He was leaving the world. He was going back to His father. He had finished the work the Father had given Him to do, and He went back to the Father to receive the reward, the good pleasure of the Father. He went back to where He had eternally existed.

Look at John 17 and His prayer, verse 1. He lifts up His eyes to heaven and he says in verse 1: "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, glorify Your Son." Remember, He had for 33 years been living in humiliation. "Glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You."

Then down in verse 4: "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You gave Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world began. Glorify Me back to the glory I had with you before the world began." His humiliation had been hard, it had been bitter. He suffered as a man. He suffered the hatred of men and women whom He loved, and now it is almost over.

Obviously, we could never imagine how he felt in anticipation of that eternal glory which he had set aside for those 33 years. Now he's going back face-to-face with the infinite fellowship of His Father. *Pros ton theon*, face-to-face with God, demonstrating equality. We can't understand what that means. It's hard for us to grasp what it meant to be separated, to be humble, to be spit on; to be maligned, despised, rejected, crucified.

He is the Father's beloved, Ephesians 1:6. He's going back to the Father. And then He makes this statement: "For the Father is greater than I." What is that? Well, we know it's not essence. We know it's not nature, because in nature, that is in His being. He is the same as the Father; He is equal to the Father; He is one with the Father in nature.

John 5:17, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." For this reason, the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. He always said He was equal with God, equal with God in nature.

In the 8th chapter and the 58th verse, Jesus said, "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." He eternally existed. In John, chapter 10, familiar verse 30, "I and the Father are one,"

and they picked up stones to stone Him. In chapter 14, we've already heard Him say in verse 9, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." And verse 10, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?" So He is one in essence, one in being, and one in nature with God.

Then in what sense is He saying that, "The Father is greater than I"? The Athanasian Creed put it in a very succinct way. The Athanasian Creed reads this way: "Christ is equal to God as to His Godhead, and inferior to God as to His manhood." He is equal to God as to His Godhood – I'll say it that way – as to His Godhood, and inferior to God as to His manhood. Clearly, He took on the veil of flesh.

Look at Philippians, chapter 2. Philippians 2 is the explanation of this. It says He existed in the *morph* of God. He existed as God, but He didn't regard equality with God, something to be held onto, grasped. He was willing to give up that face-to-face, full, glorious equality with God, and He emptied Himself, He divested Himself of that and took the form of a slave and was made in the likeness of men.

Again, as to His Godhood, He's equal to God. As to His manhood, He's inferior, He submits. He's found in appearance as a man, humbles Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. But for this reason then, God highly exalted him, bestowed on Him the name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow of those in heaven and earth, and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God.

The name is Lord. God gives Him the name Lord, takes Him back into heaven to sit on His throne from which He had come. They should have rejoiced because Jesus' humiliation was over. He had come all the way down to the depths of humiliation, born in a stable, no place to rest His head during His ministry, suffering hatred, abuse, jeers, crucifixion at the hands of evil men, rejected by His own people, bitter cup was almost ended. They should have rejoiced.

They should have rejoiced that He was going to the Father from whom He had come. The garb of lowliness is about to fall from His shoulders, and to love Him would be to rejoice for Him. So first of all, they should rejoice because His person will be dignified. Secondly, His truth will be documented. What's going to happen is going to validate what He has been saying. This is very powerful.

The disciples had a difficult time believing the claims of Jesus, as I pointed out at the beginning. They had a difficult time with what He was saying, not that they couldn't understand it. They could understand it, the words were clear: "I'm going. I'm leaving. I'm going to die. I'm going to be lifted up. I am going to rise again," et cetera, et cetera. He described all kinds of things to them about the details that were coming: "I've told you all of that." Verse 29: "I have told you before it happened. I've been telling you that all along time and time and time again."

Back in chapter 2, it'd be good to just look at this so you have it in mind. Chapter 2, verse 18, "The Jews said to Him after He had attacked the beginning of His ministry, 'What sign do you show us as Your authority for doing these things? What gives you the right to do what you just did, attacking the temple?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'

"The Jews then said, 'It took 46 years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But

He was speaking of the temple of His body.” He predicts His death and resurrection. But notice verse 22: “So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.”

Now when He told them He was going to die and rise, they did not believe it. They didn’t believe it. But when it happened, they did believe it. And guess what? That validated Him as the One who had told them the truth before it ever happened; and only God can do that.

In chapter 12 of John’s gospel, you have another illustration of this that I think is worth consideration, John, chapter 12 and verse 16: “These things His disciples did not understand. They did not understand.” He was telling them details about the animal that was going to take him into the city of Jerusalem before anybody even knew about that animal, and He’s telling them about it; they didn’t understand it. But when Jesus was finally glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him and that they had done these things to Him. So, again, He’s setting up all these disciples to one day say, “Whoa, everything that happened is exactly what He said would happen.”

And then maybe one more, chapter 16 and verse 4: “These things I have spoken to you so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them,” and He’s talking about persecution. “I’m telling you you’re going to be persecuted. I’m telling you you’re going to be thrown out of the synagogue. I’m telling you there are going to be members of this association of Christians that will be killed. I’m telling you so that when it happens, you will remember that I told you.”

And then 13:19, “From now on, I’m telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He.” When all these things came to pass, they all validated the deity of Christ because He had predicted every detail, which only God can do, as we read in Isaiah 42 earlier. He is setting them up, and this is necessary.

Look, could you imagine if He had never told them He was going to die, never told them all the details, and it came to pass; they would have been scattered, never to be recovered. They would have been useless. But all of a sudden, as these things began to unfold – the death, the resurrection – they began to remember that He had said these things specifically, and they were regathered and reconstituted, even before the Holy Spirit came in Acts 2.

They’re all together in the temple. They’re meeting together in the temple. They’re meeting with the Lord. They’re learning about the kingdom in the 40 days of His time on earth before His ascension, and they’re taking it all in. They’re listening to Him. And I’m sure during those times, He was affirming all that He had said that had been historically validated with more to come.

What was to come? The coming of the Holy Spirit which He promised. What was to come? Persecution which He promised. That would all come. And every time something happened, it validated Him as the Messiah, the Son of God. And that’s what empowered them to give their lives to preach the gospel. That’s why they turned the world upside-down because they knew who He was. If He hadn’t told them any of these things before they happened, they would have wondered how this all happened and who really was He.

He said He would die; He did. He said He would be lifted up in death; he was. He said He would rise; He did. He said He would ascend to the Father; He did. He said He would send the Holy Spirit;

He did. He said He would give supernatural life; He did. Everything He said He would do He did. He said they would be persecuted; they were. Every prophecy, every promise, every pledge, fulfilled in exact precision, documenting His word.

Christ knows that the message has to go forth, the message of the gospel has to be preached. There has to be a book of Acts to record and chronicle what happened. They have to go to preach the gospel and they're not going to do that unless they believe it, unless they really hold to it with solid conviction. They have to have confidence, and that can happen only if they believe His word. So He says, verse 30, "No more talking. I will not speak much more with you."

A little more to say recorded in chapter 15 and 16: "Time for action. Things I've been telling you are about to come to pass." If they love Jesus enough, they would want His word to be confirmed. They would want confidence to preach the glory of the gospel. They would want to have the courage of their conviction. They just needed to see this whole event from His side. His person will be dignified; His truth will be documented.

There's a third reality: his enemy will be defeated. Verse 30: "For the ruler of this world is coming and he has nothing in Me." The ruler of this world is Satan, the god of the age, the ruler of this world, the prince of the power of the air.

Jesus says, "The ruler of this world is coming." He didn't say Judas is coming; He didn't say the Sanhedrin is coming; He didn't say the Romans are coming. They were, but behind them was Satan. Satan was coming.

Luke 22:52-53 says this was the hour of darkness. This is the hour when God let the Devil, who has the power of death, exercise that. This was the hour of darkness. Satan was coming at Him with everything.

Now this wasn't new. Satan had tried to kill Him when He was a baby through Herod's decree that all two-year-old male children would be executed. Satan had tried to tempt Him at the beginning of His ministry and cause Him to fall. He had continuously confronted Jesus. Everywhere He went He was confronted with demons.

Satan had launched the force of demons against Jesus wherever He went, and He just cast them out and dismissed them. He was invincible. But now Satan was going to reach the apex of his assault. This was the hour of the power of darkness. This is when Satan would bruise His heel, Genesis 3:15. He had been fighting Satan all His life – fighting Satan, fighting demons. Now He was about to put an end to that. While Satan was bruising His heel at the cross, He would crush Satan's head.

Why didn't Satan have any access to Him? Why does the verse say, "He has nothing on Me, nothing in Me"? Because there is no point of temptability that can succeed. There's no access; there's no entrance; there's no weak point; there's no vulnerability – none, none. Satan is going to come with everything he's got. He's going to bring the power of death which he wields. But Hebrews 2 said Christ destroyed Satan who had the power of death.

First John 3:8 says – and it's a memorable statement, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to

destroy the works of the devil. He has nothing on Me, no vulnerable spot, no weakness, no place where Satan could successfully create a temptation that would work. He is the Holy One.” So Satan, at the cross, is crushed and defeated, and is a defeated enemy already, only waiting for his sentence.

The disciples should have rejoiced. The humiliation was over and His person would be dignified. Everything He had said would be documented, and He would be viewed as the Son of God who knows the future in detail, and that would empower them for ministry out of the faith that they had in Him, and His long, long, enduring battle with Satan would be over.

Then there’s one final feature of what the cross meant to Christ: His love will be demonstrated. His love will be demonstrated. And He says this in verse 31: “But so that the world may know that I love the Father.” What a statement.

This is the only place in the New Testament where the Lord explicitly says, “I love the Father.” He says, “I obey the Father, I do the will of the Father, and what I see the Father do, I do. I always do that which the Father wants Me to do, desires Me to do, tells Me to do.”

This is the only place where He actually says, “I love the Father.” And we know He does, but here it’s explicit: “I want the world to know I love the Father. I want the world to know about the love of the Son for the Father, so I do exactly as the Father – ” what “ – commanded Me.”

So what’s going on on the cross? The Father has commanded the Son to come into the world and be the sacrifice for sin. He is the Father’s chosen lamb to bear the sins of all the people who would ever believe. This is the Father’s will. The Son must submit to that. He must be obedient.

He is obedient, and obedience demonstrates love. Obedience demonstrates love; it always does. We’ve been looking at that haven’t we already in this chapter? “If you love Me you’d do – ” what “ – keep My commandments, you’ll obey Me.” And here’s the model. “I am demonstrating to the entire world that I love the Father by doing exactly as the Father has commanded Me.”

And what the Father had commanded Him was to die, to come and be a sacrifice for sin. And in the garden when He’s struggling with that, He says, “Not My will, but Yours be done.” Love obeys. Here’s the supreme model for loving: obedience. Here’s the test of love: “Will you do what God commands?” He is doing what His Father commanded Him to demonstrate His love.

What is on display here is really amazing. If you really love Me – ” He said “ – you would be overwhelmed with joy because I’m going to be glorified, My truth is going to be validated, Satan is going to be defeated, and I’m going to put My love for the Father on display for the entire world.”

What an amazing perspective of the cross. We can’t get stuck on our side with all that we know and expect a whole lot out of those guys, those 11. They were dealing with something that hadn’t happened yet, and hadn’t been explained.

People have said, “Why in the world would the Lord pick those kind of people to preach the gospel? They seem like the most obtuse, the most ignorant, the most recalcitrant, the most difficult.” All I can say is this: I don’t know that I would do any better on that side. But how wonderful to be on this side

and to understand what the cross meant to Christ.

Well, I'll close with Jesus' words: "Get up; let's go from here." I mean if you don't end a sermon there, you're in real trouble, right? And, apparently, they got up from the table where they had been eating the Passover meal and they began to move through Jerusalem, our Lord and the 11 disciples, on the way to the garden of Gethsemane, and He was still teaching the truths in 15 and 16, which we'll see later. Let's bow in prayer.

We are so grateful, Lord, for the glimpses that we have of these incredible encounters and the context which makes these words come alive. So thankful for the fact that you have given us this truth. We're so grateful to be on this side of the cross. Most of the history of the world was on the other side. How privileged are we to be on this side with all full knowledge.

But there's a responsibility with that, because on this side of the cross, You've commanded all men everywhere to repent because You have declared Your truth, and you condemn any who don't love the Lord Jesus Christ. So, Lord, I pray for those that are here to understand the cross, understand what the cross means to us, but understanding what it meant to Him as well. May we rejoice in the exaltation of our own Lord, in the elevation of His Word, in the execution of His enemy, and in the demonstration of His love to You, Father.

What a model He is for our own love and obedience. We're so very grateful that every word in Scripture is alive, powerful, penetrating, encouraging, instructive, convicting. Lord, help us to be faithful to live out those things that are revealed to us here in this living Book. O thank You in the Savior's name. Amen.

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