

Guest Preacher - Rev. Colin Macleod

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Preacher: Rev. Colin F. Macleod

[0 : 00] If we turn together in our Bibles to the Gospel of John in chapter 12, the passage we've read from. We're following the triumphal entry.

! There's an incident of some non-Jewish seekers having heard enough about Jesus making a request. Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

And then we find Jesus in his answer. In verse 23 onwards, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I want us to think this evening for the time we have together about the way Jesus responds to this hopeful and sincere request from these Greek pilgrims who have traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover.

It tells us in his language, in his response, there's a shift in the narrative. There's a clear emphasis and a new emphasis made in the Gospel of John at this precise moment that something momentous and significant and incredible is about to happen.

[1 : 14] On a number of occasions up to this point, we've had phrases in the Gospel along these lines. My hour has not yet come. The hour is coming.

His hour had not yet come. And now, in response to this sincere request for time with him, we read, The hour has come. Something significant has changed.

God's plan of redemption is now moving at full speed to its final chapter, where we find our Lord and Savior becoming the Lamb of God and taking away the sin of the world.

And so, we find him in verse 23, using that language, the hour has come. And again, in verse 27, Now is my soul troubled.

What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this purpose, I have come to this hour. Christ knew what was about to occur.

[2 : 20] He saw it coming. And now, in this atmosphere of tension and religiosity, of increased national awareness and an emphasis on the things that the Jewish nation held so dear, they were, of course, smarting under Roman rule and occupation.

And at the time of Passover, there was always an intensity in the city. And nationalism was coursing through just under the surface and potential for trouble and rioting.

And anti-Roman sentiment was always in the air. It was a time of pressure and tension. But that's just the atmosphere. And within that atmosphere, we find the hour, the very hour, that lay at the center of God's plan of redemption has now arrived.

And that is announced clearly in how Jesus responds to this request from these Greek seekers.

And so we find this hour, which promised him suffering, darkness, separation, and judgment, is now pressing in upon him.

He feels keenly that he is about to become the sin bearer, to use the language of Isaiah in chapter 53. And we know this because of the remarkable language of verse 27.

[3 : 45] The Son of God saying, My soul is troubled. My soul is troubled. And we find this realization and understanding and acceptance of what is about to take place, of the darkness he has to inhabit, of the separation he's going to experience.

It's now becoming so real. Crucifixion is looming. Death is approaching. But notice how he refers to that moment.

Verse 23, The hour has come, not that the Son of Man will be crucified, but for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Christ knows that in fulfilling the work given to him by the Father, the life gate will be swung fully open, that all may go in.

And so we find our Lord and Savior, knowing the outcome that is ahead, speaking of the hour that had been coming, and the hour that had not yet come, and the hour that was to come, has now arrived, and we find our Lord and Savior in prayer.

[5 : 03] And that's what I want to think about this evening with you. And now is my soul troubled, for what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this purpose I have come to this hour.

Father, glorify your name. So I want us to look tonight at our great Savior. His response at this moment of announcement and realization and acceptance, in response to these genuine Greek seekers who have come to him, and we find Andrew and Philip coming to him, and Jesus responding to them.

The incident that flows into this troubling of his very soul, and his praying and calling out to the Father. We're here then at the crucial moment in God's plan of redemption.

It's arrived, and the arrival of this hour, it increases the pressure on Jesus. And we see that in these remarkable words, Now is my soul troubled.

We find our Lord and Savior approaching a place of suffering, and separation, and annihilation, judgment, and death. He's going there willingly.

[6 : 12] He's going there lovingly. He's going there obediently to save a people to himself. And so what we find is that it's as if the language ramps up, and Jesus, in these words, gives us just a glimpse of what he was sensing and feeling and going through.

It's a crucible. And the pressure is, it's growing and grinding and pressing in upon him. A crucible is a situation of severe trial in which different elements interact.

That's the atmosphere of these very words. My soul is troubled, because he knows what is to occur. The cross is looming, pressing, and coming ever closer.

And this looming shadow pressing in upon our Lord, into his consciousness, into his very soul, is weighing on him now. And he is troubled.

He is agitated. Here we see him, giving full expression to his understanding of his giving himself, a ransom for many.

[7 : 22] As he goes on to say, Now I am, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. A reference to us, which sounds quite strange, but a reference in the context, and in the day, to everyone around him, knew exactly what he meant.

This was a description of crucifixion. And so they said, We have heard from the law that Christ remains forever. How can you say the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? And the people reacted and said, Wait, we're looking for a leader. They were still looking for an earthly king, an earthbound king, a politician, a general, someone who would be a cultural hero for the poor, maligned, oppressed people of Israel.

But Christ is so much more. The Son of God came to seek and to save the lost. He came to be the Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world.

And so we find him preparing for this moment. And at this moment, we see him and find him in prayer. Father, glorify your name.

[8 : 27] He turns to the Father. He prays. Christian friend, what must we do? Day by day, moment by moment, challenge by challenge, we must too turn to prayer.

The church must be an organization, a gathering of men and women and boys and girls that are defined by and are led by and molded by a spirit of prayer.

So we see in our Lord this great example. And we follow him. Father, glorify your name. So at this moment, as the crucible of tension and pressure and anxiety and concern presses upon his very human soul, we find him giving vent to that pressure by praying to the Father.

And as the onset of this hour unfolds, this call to the Father, acknowledging that he would be glorified, for he came for this purpose.

I came to this hour. We find him confirming at least two things for us here. We see in these words Christ's acknowledgement and understanding.

[9 : 49] of the guaranteed agony of the cross for him and its absolute centrality for us.

Because at the very center of the gospel, of course, stands a cross. We cannot understand the gospel in isolation to the cross. We cannot preach the gospel in isolation to the cross.

And we certainly cannot come to God the Father without coming, first of all, to the cross. We must come to the one who gave himself for us. And in that sense, it's quite moving that this whole incident is sparked by this wonderful, genuine request, Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

And that must surely be the motto of our worship services. And God forbid we stray from it. That we would focus on the Lord.

That we would give him all the glory and all the praise. Setting forth his saving work in our room and in our stead as the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world, who came to be lifted up from the earth, to draw all people to myself.

[10:59] We've just sung there in Psalm 25 these wonderful words. You are my Savior and my God all day, I hope, in you alone. Remember, Lord, your love and grace which from past ages you have shown.

Do not recall my sins of youth or my rebellious evil ways. Remember me in your great love for you, O Lord, are good always. When people reject the gospel and malign us for witnessing to a Savior who gave himself on the cross and quite often we hear, well, what's God ever done for me?

And we feel that rejection and we hear that rebellion and we sense in these words the very spirit of lawlessness that says, what's he ever done for me? We, friends, must, as we can, gently and patiently, in love, bring them to the cross and let the cross speak.

What's God done? He gave his Son so that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Now is my soul troubled.

What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name. Here we have the, we read at the beginning of our worship service tonight from Galatians in chapter 4 where the Apostle Paul provides this wonderful summary of God's plan of redemption.

[12:32] When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son and the fullness of time has now come as Christ, in these words, acknowledges that the hour of redemption has arrived.

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. And so we see the foretaste of the suffering that's pressing in upon him. And so there's the guaranteed agony of the cross for our Lord and Savior.

And its absolute centrality for us is emphasized and we must never stray from it. Remember the Apostle's great refrain, we preach Christ and him crucified.

I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation. Time and time again in the New Testament we are reminded to calibrate or recalibrate, assess the focus, assess the outreach, assess the evangelism, assess the mission statement, assess the development plans, assess everything and have all these things but make sure it is all Christ-centered and cross-fixated because there is the message of salvation and forgiveness for the lost and needy around us.

You may be, even now, are sitting in churches unmoved, unconvinced, unconverted, wanting to see something special, something different, something more than a crucified Savior dead on a cross, buried, lifeless in a tomb.

[14:07] It's tragic, isn't it, that the world would rail on God and turn from the cross and say, do something else, give me something more. And so, we focus on the cross, we stay there and we present it as the only hope for sinners.

So there is this moment in the onset of this hour where we see the Lord's understanding of the agony that's to come but in this we also see the centrality of the cross for us. A number of things to notice now this evening thinking about our great Savior and his turning to prayer and Father, glorify your name in this response as the crucible works on his very soul.

We see a number of things in this prayer. The first is his anticipation of the conflict to come. His anticipation of the conflict. This language is quite remarkable and I would wonder, I wonder if you're in the habit of marking your Bibles, highlighting your Bibles, underlining the Bible.

I would strongly advise you to underline these words in verse 27, spoken by the Son of God. Now is my soul troubled.

This Greek word for troubled is a word that speaks to be disturbed, to be agitated. It even has a sense of inner perplexity. Our Lord and Savior is being torn.

[15:35] There's a pressure that's grinding on his consciousness. In fact, as much as the Greek word there gives us an entrance into that, what the Lord is using, by the Lord using that word, the Hebrew equivalent speaks of a sense of utter dismay.

And so we see this, what's working in the consciousness and the heart and mind of our Savior as the cross looms toward him.

There's an anticipation of conflict here. We behold as through a glass darkly when we see him described as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

But this anticipation is breaking through and it's beginning to work upon him and we see the response, the response of prayer.

I want to just quote to you from Finlayson's classic book *The Cross and the Experience of Our Lord*. He wrote these words, In that hour he became the victim of Satan's lie.

[16:44] In that representative position he lost his consciousness of his father's love. It was a foretaste of that separation that we see now coursing through our Lord.

There's anticipation here of what the cross would hold or held in store for him. So there's anticipation of the conflict to come.

There's also resolution to face it. Notice the language here again. Verse 27 What should I say? Father, save me from this hour but for this purpose I have come for this hour.

Father, glorify your name. He came to seek and to save the lost, the good shepherd in love prepared to lay down his life for his sheep.

He came then into this dark world and the world at times of course is so foreboding and intimidating and it looms large against us, doesn't it? and we read I think perhaps all the more with great reassurance the words of Jesus that are recorded for us in chapter 16 at the very end of that chapter in John's gospel.

[18:02] In the world you will have tribulation. There again is that sense of concern and agitation and trouble but take heart I have overcome the world.

What a moment of light is there in that phase as the Lord prepares to make his way to Gethsemane. And so I want to just focus for a moment more on this resolution to face this hour.

There is a clear commitment to enter this conflict the world the flesh and the devil to finish the work he came to do.

It is his burning purpose his clear sense of mission and his praise for the Father to be glorified. In the wonderful chapter 17 where the high priestly prayer of Christ the night he was betrayed we find him again in prayer and here we read these words I glorified you on earth as he addresses the Father having accomplished the work you gave me to do and now Father glorify me in your own presence with the glory I had with you before the world existed.

I glorified you on earth having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. He became flesh and dwelt among us.

[19:24] He took our flesh that he might take our burden and he takes that burden to the cross and there he pays fully the price that we never could pay.

in these words then we find the reason Jesus took on flesh to dwell among us he took on flesh to dwell among us for this purpose I have come to this very hour this moment which is so foreboding that it troubles his soul and he turns in prayer to the father conscious of what's to come but also conscious of why it's coming because we could not save ourselves again the words of psalm 25 are so wonderful we've sung them you are my saviour and my god there's not a religion on earth that comes close to this there's not a message on earth that even remotely begins to approach the wonder of that that sentence you are my saviour and my god he became flesh and dwelt among us truly man and truly god in order to seek and to save a people that could not save themselves and in his perfection and his holiness and his sinlessness he goes to this place this cross this hour to save his people before the world was we know as the other scriptures revealed to us that the son covenant to come to this moment this very hour to stand in our place and pay our price the language of isaiah and 53 is again so remarkable and clear and helpful he was pierced for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities upon him was the chastisement of our peace and with his wounds we are healed tells us so much about this hour and the love of our saviour he knew what was coming he knew why it was coming and christian friend he also knew for who he went there sometimes we perhaps in life forget this sometimes we're buffeted and we get disorientated we have challenges difficulties hardship failure heartache and sometimes we can be disorientated and forgetful of the greatness and grace and love of our saviour who covenanted before the world was with the father in the spirit to save a people to himself we forget perhaps sometimes christian friends how precious we are in the sight of god our father held by the son the price paid and he will not let us go the wonderful hymn that was written by philip bliss gets there in this sentiment man of sorrows what a name for the son of god who came ruined sinners to reclaim hallelujah what a saviour and here we find him at this moment in our ancient city teeming with people who were given

expression to religious fervour and there were zealots around there were people who knew the scriptures inside and back to front the deeply religious leaders of the day viewed him with disdain they hated him they were challenged by him they'd been exposed time and again by him for them their mind was made up

Jesus of Nazareth he had to go he had to be silenced and they could not wait to lay hands on him and have him put to death for them that was the only way to deal with this man and I wonder when we think about that what your attitude tonight is to Jesus because that's the most important thing this evening as we think about who he is and why he was in this ancient city at this time these Greek people who came looking for him Andrew and Philip's response and Jesus turning in prayer to think of the conflict that he anticipated the resolution he has to face it what do you have to say about all of this who is Jesus Christ to you tonight this is the question of the gospel the Philippian jailer is a great example he fell on his knees and said what must I do to be saved what must I do to know my God and my saviour as my God and my saviour it's wonderful the response believe in the Lord

Jesus Christ and you will be saved and so there's anticipation of the conflict to come there's resolution to face the conflict and then there's this wonderful confirmation to enter this hour of conflict father glorify your name then a voice came from heaven I have glorified it and I will glorify it again the crowd stood there heard it said it had thundered others said an angel had spoken to him Jesus said this voice came for your sake not mine now is the judgment of this world now will the ruler of this world be cast out this threatening hour that was imposing itself upon his conscience and into his very soul will also be the glorifying hour because Jesus entered this conflict in perfect obedience and at the very moment his enemies and the devil thought they had the victory they thought they had his death and destruction guaranteed they thought he was done with forever in a day it would become the moment he in his love and sacrifice would secure victory and vanquish the power and guilt of sin from banishing us from

God but only when we come to him only when we trust in him unless and until that moment occurs in our heart the saving work of Christ remains ineffective to us we must come to this cross we must come to the savior who went to that cross we must come to him in repentance and faith personally individually unreservedly lord be merciful to me a sinner it's not a prayer that anyone can make for us we must make that prayer ourselves so we find then the father giving confirmation and a reassurance to the son to enter this hour i have glorified it the voice thundered for some some thought angels had spoken they heard something not sure what it was but we know what they heard they heard the father speak to the son i will glorify my name and i will glorify it again the hour the plan of redemption has come gethsemane awaits golgotha awaits the grave awaits but so too does that first easter morning where our lord and savior is raised from the dead in glorious victory and so the apostles would teach thanks be to god who gives us the victory through our lord jesus christ who was dead and now is alive i want to go back to finlissan's book just for one more time just to to share with you these words he would drink the cup to its bitterest dregs and that cup and that hour was put into his hands by the father that for jesus was enough that's why we find him turning in prayer as the crucible of death and darkness and the cross looms in upon him troubling his soul we find him in prayer father glorify your name and in this moment and in the subsequent events of the crucifixion and death and resurrection of our lord we see the plan of redemption in high definition in his glory and grace which provides for you and me this evening hope hope of a newness of life and forgiveness and reconciliation and peace with god that passes understanding but without this hour we'd have none of that but our savior goes into that hour into that place with the full seal and approval of the father he's ready for what's to come but we know the suffering and the agony of the garden still awaits to go back to philip bliss's hymn bearing shame and scoffing rude in my place condemned he stood sealed my pardon with his blood hallelujah what a savior maybe you know this about the story of the man who wrote that hymn that a year after writing this hymn he would know for certain this pardon in his own experience because traveling to

[29 : 11] Chicago with his wife by train as they crossed a bridge during the depths of a winter storm the bridge collapsed and they lost their lives and he and she at that moment experienced the full and free pardon of their sins as they were ushered into the presence of the saviour and that christian friend is our hope tonight if you love the lord jesus christ if your trust is in him then you too know what it is to be able to say hallelujah what a saviour for nothing shall separate us from the love of christ the love of god which is in christ jesus nothing not even death and that's because our glorious saviour went to this hour one other thing to emphasize this evening he had this anticipation

of conflict there was resolution to face it and confirmation to enter it and because of these things there is tonight a great opportunity a great opportunity for you tonight friends if you have not yet come to the lord jesus christ in repentance and faith i can only urge you to do so with all your heart we know through the scripture that you will find the lord your god if you seek after him with all your heart and with all your soul not as an afterthought not given the dregs of your time and thinking and energy but given everything into that seeking we are told in the scriptures that if you seek him you will find him and i am wondering as we think of that about the words in the gospel of mark in chapter 12 where the lord speaking to one of these scribes who came to him and questioned him and engaged with him said these wonderful words you are not far from the kingdom of god there are many people tonight in that very position in churches with bibles open singing praise to god bowing as prayers are said who are not yet in the kingdom unmoved unconvinced unconverted and still under the wrath and judgment of god and jesus to you tonight is saying you are not far from the kingdom of god why would you hesitate why would you stay away from the man of sorrows who gave himself for ruined sinners and is proclaimed tonight as the saviour the king and head of the church the one through whom we can be forgiven and that's the opportunity tonight for barbus for lewis for scotland to seek the lord while yet we remain on mercy's ground that's where we started tonight go back to chapter 12 and verse 21 remember what kick started all this these greeks came forward and said we wish to see jesus oh that that would be in your heart tonight that would be your conviction that that would be your determination and your focus and drive to see jesus to see him in your heart and seek him with all your might to make the prayer of the scripture lord be merciful to me a sinner make that your prayer that you tonight would know this saviour fully and freely in your own experience in your own heart that you would speak of him as you've sung of him as your saviour and your god none of us friends know what a day and hour will bring but we do know that if we seek the lord our god and search after him with all our heart

and all our soul you will find him jesus our lord and saviour came to this hour to fulfil the work he had been given to do father glorify your name i have glorified it and i will glorify it again in a matter of days the lord's prophecy of being lifted up from the earth would be fulfilled as he gave himself a ransom for many on that cross but tonight because of those things the opportunity to make yourself right with god is here before you in christ through the spirit this is the gospel of grace this is the good news of the bible this is the message of christianity of which we are not ashamed for it is the power of god unto salvation to all who believe may one and all be found believing in the lord jesus christ this evening we came to this hour to seek and to save the lost let's pray for a moment together lord our god these wonderful things they fill our hearts with a sense of adoration and wonder and praise and we think of the graciousness of our lord and savior we see him here troubled in his soul anticipating that hour of darkness that place of separation that he would become the sin bearer of the world well we bless you that he went there in love that he went there to fulfill the work he had come to do the work given by you the work given by the father completed in the son and now in our experience applied in our hearts by the spirit we give thanks tonight for this opportunity that is ours to consider these things bless them lord to our hearts we pray forgive our sin and everything we ask is in jesus name and for his sake amen well in the psalter we'll close our service this evening turning to psalm 72 and we'll sing from the end of the psalm verse 17 his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call psalm 72 we'll sing these last three verses to god's praise his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call now blessed be the lord our god the god of is!

For he alone shalt wondrous words, and glory of his soul.

And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity.

The whole earth let his glory fill. Amen.

[37 : 36] Let's all earth let it be. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.