

No Fruit Without Death

by Tim Conway

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Scripture: John 12:23, John 12:31, John 12:24, John 12:26

Topics: "Preparation for Sacrifice", "Bearing Fruit through Self-Denial"

Description

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Transcript

Look with me at John chapter 13. Now, before the feast of the Passover, but you notice this, by the time we get to verse two, during supper, what supper? Obviously the supper, the feast of the Passover. And so this first verse is just kind of introductory summary.

Before the feast of the Passover, like leading up to it, we get to it in verse two, but leading up to it, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the father. What a statement, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. Like I said, for years, I've contemplated preaching from this.

And here it is. And the reason, the reason that I've looked in anticipation that I've, I've toyed with the idea over and over is just simply because John 13 through 17 is special. You can't get away from it.

Anybody that's ever read 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 to John's gospel, you know, this, this is, this is really, it's, it's special. It's unique because none of the other gospels have this. It's, it's precious.

What do you have? 13 men went into this upper room to gather together for Passover. That's what we see here. One possessed of the devil is going to exit the scene before we get to the end of this account, play the betrayer.

And when he leaves, you know what he leaves 12 men, Jesus, and his 11 faithful followers. That's it there in that place. At that time, you see what Jesus does.

It's like this statement. He loved them to the end. What he does is he fixes, he fixates on these men who he's loved to the end.

And what we find here is his love for them. I mean, and it culminates in this prayer that so intimate with the father, where he's just, he's asking for things for these men that are just blow your mind away. And we'll get to it.

We're going to look at it, but what's he doing here? What, what's he setting his attention on them for? Because he's going out of the world, but they're not going out of the world. He's handing the baton to them guys. I've been the witness.

I've been the one speaking. You know what? I'm going to go out of the world. Now you guys are my witnesses and you guys are going to speak for me and I'm handing the baton to you.

And you know what he realizes they're ready to go through the greatest trial in their life. Is Jesus troubled? Is he sorrowful at soul? Yes. But he also recognizes that these guys, this, you know what? He speaks to them.

He very plainly says, I say these things to you so that you don't fall away. He says that right at the beginning of chapter 16, right in the midst of this upper room discourse. Why, why would he say such things? You know what? They're going to be tempted.

The devil wants to sit these guys and go sit Peter. Jesus knows these guys are in great danger of falling away. This is going to be a massive trial for them.

You know what he's doing? He's in all of his love, loving them to the end. He fixates on these guys to encourage them, to prepare them, to, to equip, to strengthen these 11 men. And then you know what? Jesus knows we're all going to be watching his people through all time.

They're going to watch this event unfold. He's speaking to us too. He's preparing us as well for what? For the life he calls his followers to live.

That's what's happening. But the life he calls us to live when he is no longer bodily here, that's what they're being prepared for. And no other gospel like John's.

The accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke are really small. They don't go into, they do not give us a window into this like John does. Three, what do you have here? None of them except John tells us that Jesus actually got up from the supper and he girded himself and he washed their feet.

Can you imagine what our Bibles would be like if we didn't have John 13 and we didn't have that account? Something really valuable would be lost. And then you have 14, 15, 16. And that's, that's like the stuff in those three chapters.

Imagine if we didn't have that. And then that prayer in 17, that is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus Christ that we have recorded for us in the scripture. Can you imagine if we didn't have that? And then you think about how he prayed and what he prayed for.

I mean, what we have here is chapters of the most personal, intimate, encouragement, and reassuring truths. He's just, he's wanting to pick these guys up. You know what? You can't get away from it.

As I unfold some of this, even today, you're going to see, I mean, these are exciting, powerful, climactic times. You think about what's happening when Jesus gets up from that table to go wash their feet. I mean, if you just think what's going on in the world, anything major, it's like, it's like the greatest things in human history are going on.

What's going to happen in the next 24 hours? What Jesus is preparing these men for. I mean, just massive things, massive things. Jesus is preparing these 11 men to lead the charge, to turn the world upside down.

What he's doing is he's preparing these men for what unfolds in the book of Acts and right up to this day. That's what's happening. The question is this, what does Jesus have to say to these guys to get them ready, to get such a small little group of guys, 11 men, to get them prepared, ready, equipped to shake the whole Roman empire and the rest of the world.

You know what Christianity did in the Roman empire over the next centuries, the decades that followed this? You know what happened? You know what the authorities in Jerusalem, how did they regard these guys? How did they regard them? It's just, you see, these guys are simpletons. These guys are just ordinary guys. These guys, well, they recognize that these guys had followed Jesus, but who were they? They were Galileans.

That's what the girl said. Peter, your very accent gives you away that you were one of his followers. Why? Galileans? Hadn't Nathanael said it? Not what good thing comes from there.

Nothing good comes from there. The authorities looked at these guys, they're unschooled. They looked at Jesus and he was unschooled.

How much less these guys, his followers, they looked at these guys and they were just ignoramuses. There was nothing to recommend these guys. They had no high scholarly degrees.

They didn't have much wealth to speak of. Who were these guys? I mean, they were just ordinary nobodies. That's who they were.

And you know what's happening in these chapters? Jesus has his heart fixed on these 11 nobodies who are going to become the torchbearers for the greatest truths mankind has ever heard. Folks, these are the facts. This is what actually happened 2,000 years ago in that upper room at Passover time when all the crowds were gathered together preparing for this supper, crowded into the city of Jerusalem.

And all we have to do is we have to ask questions like this. Look around. I mean, I recognize in this country at this time when I came here, I said I gathered together with some of the pastors up in Ramsbottom.

And I was saying, why doesn't the church have a voice? Why aren't they crying out against this? And one of the guys told me the church in this country is insignificant, that the government basically has no regard for the church in this country. But I'll tell you what, they may not. There may be times and seasons where human governments look and they think that the church of Jesus Christ is very insignificant.

But I'll tell you this, the devil doesn't think that. Why? Because Jesus Christ has given a promise to the church that the gates of hell are not going to prevail against it. The devil doesn't fall asleep when it comes to the church.

Look around. I mean, look around. The fact is there are Christians in Manchester, there are Christians in London, there are Christians in Birmingham, there are Christians across this United Kingdom.

We may not see the church as healthy as we'd like to see it, but we're still the only force in this world that God is working through to challenge the devil, to challenge the forces of darkness. We are the ones that are entrusted with that word of truth. That is the gospel, the power of God unto salvation.

We are the ones. And you know what? You look around. The Christian church through the last 2000 years is the most real, the most vital, the most influential fact of human history.

Oh, you know what? We like to have our U.S. history. You guys probably have your English history, or your United Kingdom history, or your European history, or whatever it is. You have world history.

And you know what? You study guys like Napoleon and King Henry VIII, and you look at all these different things. President Washington, and we look at these things. But you know behind the scenes? You know what has really mattered in this world? You know what has been one of the most influential facts of all of human history? From Acts 2.42. You know what they did there? They devoted themselves to the apostles' doctrine all the way up to today.

These guys, these 11 guys gathered together in the room, it's their doctrine that's going to be devoted to by the people of God from Acts 2.42 all the way up to this very hour. And us devoting ourselves to those truths, those are the truths that have turned the world upside down. What other truth changes men's hearts? None other.

None other. This is what we have here. By that doctrine, the church influences the entire world even up to this day.

If we really want to understand what Christianity is all about, you know where you want to go? We can start here. This is a tremendous place to look at, to see what it is. In a very short time, after the events right here, after they unfold, you know what? You know what's going to happen? These very men are going to come down from another upper room, this time full of the Spirit of God on the day of Pentecost.

And you know what they're going to do? They're going to carry on the work of this man who is teaching them right here. A man who, when they come down from that upper room, is going to be known to have died like a criminal died. And you know what they're going to come out of that upper room and say? You know that guy that died? Well, he's not dead.

He's alive. And that's going to be the message that they've got for the entire world. That this one... And you know what? You know what Jesus is preparing them not to do? Fold, drop out, give up, fall away in the midst of all of this.

Rather, persuade these people that this guy that was dead, he's no longer dead. He's been resurrected from the dead. And this is the Son of God.

This is indeed the Savior of the world. How has the church survived for the last 20 centuries? With life, with power, with salvation? Well, here it is. And this is what he's preparing these guys for.

This is no small deal here. This is huge. And you know what it's time for us to do? What they did.

You know what that was? That was teaching time. It's class time. It's like from the time he got up from that table, probably even before all the things he was saying there at the table while they were having this, because he broke bread with them.

He was obviously teaching them even there. But it's just, it's class time. Okay, you guys all sit down.

Can you imagine he got up from the table and gird himself? You can imagine the sound in that room when he was pouring water into that basin. And you're wondering, what's he doing? You know, they sat there for a long time at 30 feet. I'm surprised none of them washed their own feet.

And it's learning time. And then you get these three chapters, chapters 14, 15, 16. And they just sit there and Jesus is just teaching.

They've got some questions, but Jesus is just teaching, teaching, teaching. And can you imagine them when Jesus goes to praying in John 17? This is an intimate time between the father and the son, but these guys are watching. They're listening.

And he says, I'm not only praying for them. I'm praying for those who will believe in their Lord. That's us.

This has everything to do with us. Now, I'm going to tell you, as I go through this, I'm not going to, I'm not going to nicely, systematically exegete every passage. I am going to go through, this is going to be a series that is going to be thematic in nature.

I'm going to find things that jump out at me, that grip me, grab me. And that's what I'm going to bring to you. And so it's basically going to be a theme session over these next sermons.

That is, that is, it's, it's going to be as God leads me. So don't be upset if I don't cover every single word. Now, the setting for the stage here, listen to this.

I want you to stay parked right here. So don't, don't move away. But John never tells us about an upper room.

This is commonly referred to as the upper room discourse, but John never tells us it happens in an upper room. It's, it's Luke and Mark who tell us that. Now, listen, I want to give you the synoptic rendition of this, just so you get a feel.

This comes from Luke 22 verse eight. So Jesus sent Peter and John. Mark tells us he sent two disciples.

Well, these are the two Peter and John saying, go and prepare the Passover for us that we may eat it. They said to him, where will you have us prepare it? He said to them, behold, when you've entered the city, obviously Jerusalem, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you, follow him into the house. You see, you know what? Sometimes we think about the miracles that Jesus did.

And sometimes we pass over things like this. You know, there's these little things that happen like Jesus disappearing through the crowd when they meant to take him, you know, we get these little things, the

miraculous nature of Jesus presence is, is really, it's more prevalent than sometimes we think. And here, here's another example of that.

How did Jesus know all this was going to happen? And then it happened exactly like he said, it was going to happen. Can you imagine if you're Peter and John, and he's kind of wander into Jerusalem? Well, we're some guy's going to meet us and he's going to have a jar of water. And it says, follow him into the house that he enters and tell the master of the house.

Apparently the guy with the jar is a servant or something, but when they get there to where he goes, then there's a master of the house in there. And they're supposed to say to him, the teacher says to you, you like that? The teacher or the rabbi, he said, where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples. And he will show you, here it is a large upper room.

That's where we get the idea of upper room from it's furnished. Prepare it there. It is the Passover meal, prepare the Passover meal there.

And they went and they found it just as he had told them and they prepared the Passover. And when the hour came, he reclined at table and the apostles with him. So you're here in John 13.

So you see that in verse two, when it says during supper. So it's right at the same place, basically Luke and John, these two accounts, we've just lined them up. And here's something I want you to feel as we're setting the stage for this upper room discourse.

It's this Jesus. I mentioned this already, but I want you to really feel this. Jesus public ministry is over.

It's complete. And now he turns away from the crowds and his eyes are set on these 11 men, his own. You see, you see what it says there in 13 one, having loved his own.

Don't you love that? I mean, if you're a Christian, you're one of his own, his own. He loved them to the end. He fixes his undivided attention on his own.

Now I want to build a little bit more context here because we are diving in right in the middle. I mean, chapter 13 in John's gospel, we're diving in right there. Now, if you had eyes to see, just notice this.

Remember when I was showing you the festival days? And I said, when you went all the way back to chapter six, it was Passover time. What's so unique about that? Just this from John six to John 13, that's about six, seven chapters. That's one year of Jesus' life.

Guess what? From John 13, now go forward six or seven chapters in John to say chapter 18, 19. And Jesus is only just getting to the cross. What's so significant from John 13 to the cross, less than 24 hours.

You see what's happening. You have six, seven chapters of a year. And then six or seven chapters of a day.

That's where we find ourselves. You see what's happening right here. John is putting the brakes massively on, and he's going to focus down in what Jesus says to these guys.

He wants to show us the intimate time that is had right here. That's key. This is Jesus' final evening.

Do you recognize this? That as Jesus gets up from this table, it's not like the supper's going to be over and they all have full bellies and he's going to lay down and sleep. Do you recognize Jesus doesn't rest? Jesus doesn't sleep anymore before they nail him to that cross. No more.

Night is coming, but you know all through the night he's put on trial. And then in the morning he's nailed to that cross. So that's where we find ourselves.

And he's turning his attention to these apostles. Now that's so significant. Why? Well, just glance at 1227 again.

We read this and I didn't spend a lot of time because I knew I was going to spend time on some of these verses, so I kind of moved over them quickly. But just glance at 1227. Now is my soul troubled.

What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But you know when he gets to the Garden of Gethsemane, what's he saying? He's saying exactly that. Father, if it's possible, take this cup away from me.

If it is possible, save me from this hour. I mean, as he gets closer and Gethsemane is on the other side of this upper room, as you see his trouble. Listen, let me ask you something.

I just want you to put yourself in that room with Peter and John and the rest of the eleven. I know Judas is there at first, but I'm not going to give him much regard until we look at his betrayal. But I want you to put yourself.

Jesus says to them at the table, and we're not given this in John, but we know he's saying, this is my body. This is my blood. This is for you.

He gets up and he washes their feet. He begins to talk to them. Listen, I go to prepare a place for you.

He tells them, it's to your advantage that I go away, because if I didn't go away, I wouldn't send the comforter to help him. But I'm going to go away and I'm going to send him. It's going to be more advantage for you.

Let me tell you something. Let me ask you this. Have you ever been in the presence of somebody that was really troubled, deeply troubled? That's Jesus.

He's deeply troubled. His soul is troubled. You know what happens when you get around people deeply troubled? Because they're consumed with their own problems.

Ever been around somebody like that? Sometimes we meet people. They don't ask how you're doing. You meet them and they immediately want to tell you about all their grievances and all the difficulties in their life.

Yet, you know what? The feel over these next five chapters, I read through these five chapters. I was thinking about all I knew about them. Where in these five chapters does Jesus even bring up the fact that his own soul is troubled? Where does he even bring up his own suffering? You know what? He doesn't even bring up his own death except in an offhanded way that he's going to the father.

You get my drift here? It's like out of love. Do you know what happens over these five chapters? If you're John, if you're James, if you're Peter, it's like, wow, you feel like you're the center of the universe. Jesus is

seriously enduring this kind of stress.

This kind of weight is on his shoulders. And yet, he takes these five chapters and it's just summed up here. He loves them to the end.

That's what we got here. Just turning his attention solely on these guys. I mean, how selfless can you get the expressions of his love for his disciples? It's just without equal.

You would think this would just be five chapters of self-pity, right? Get the guys to cry on your shoulders with you that this is going to be so bad. Instead, you know what he's concerned about? He's concerned about building them up. He's concerned that with the trial he's going to go through, it's going to be a massive trial for these guys too.

Massive. And he's seeking to prepare them. He knows that these guys are going to be tempted to fall away.

But you know what? There's more here. I want you to feel this. Jesus' public ministry is over.

You say, yeah, you've said that. Okay. But what you need to recognize is this, from 13.1 all the way to the cross, there's no more public teaching.

Well, he may say some things to certain people, like from the cross, or as he's walking to Galgatha. But you know what? His public ministry is done. No more public miracles.

No more public discourses. No more standing in the temple. No more standing on the street.

No more of that. It's concluded. It's done.

It's finished. He's done with all the works that proclaim the truth his father sent him to proclaim. All that God sent him to do and say, he's healed for the last time, three years.

You know what Jesus said? I didn't come to be served. I came to serve. But you know what? Those three years going into the crowds and healing everybody, it's all over.

It's done. He came and he said, they hated me without a cause. Why? I mean, he just, he did nothing but love these crowds.

He did the works that no one else did. He says that right in these chapters that we're going to be looking at. We know that scripture says he spoke like nobody ever spoke.

He declared himself to be the savior of the world. So what? What am I driving at? Well, just this. Look at chapter 12.

Look at verse 36. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him. What do you think of that? So that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled. Lord, who's believed? I'll He's believed what he heard from us.

Verse 39, therefore, they could not believe. Wow. Judicial hardening.

Now notice 42, nevertheless, many, even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees, they did not confess it so that they would not be put out of the synagogue for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. And it's all said and done. Three years of ministry, three years, he poured himself out.

Remember when the woman touched him? He said, virtue went out of him. It costs Jesus something to heal. Something went out of him when he healed, when he gave of himself.

And there it is when it's all said and done. When Jesus gathers these men in that upper room, and he looks each of these guys in the eyeballs. Imagine this.

Imagine just pouring yourself out, pouring yourself out. And it's rejection. You love like nobody else ever loved.

Rejection, rejection. And you know what we can say? We tend to think Jesus is unlike us. You know what scripture says? He became like us in every respect, save sin.

He took on himself this, this, when he took upon himself flesh, he became like the offspring of Abraham. He is really a man and he feels, and he feels Jesus. You can see that he had the emotions of a man.

Do you think he felt the rejection? Listen, we know he wept at the tomb of Lazarus. And there's another place that it says that Jesus wept and it's found in Luke chapter 19. But let me tell you something.

It's a different word. And the word there is wail. When he looked out over Jerusalem, he wailed over them.

Do you know what he said? Jerusalem, how often I would have gathered you, but you wouldn't. Do you think it pained him? See, this is the thing. He's, again, it's not only what's before him, it's what's behind him.

All this rejection. I mean, he comes to the end, the culmination, and he's just basically been rejected by his people. As on a whole, you might think you'd get to the end.

You'd have a thousand, 10,000, 50,000. He's got 11 men, 11 men that have stayed with him to this point. And even these 11 guys are going to scatter in a little while.

Just the rejection, the loneliness of Christ, just the isolation of such rejection. When I say loneliness, I mean, nobody else is really able to enter into this. This stings, this wounds.

And then what? You look at Jesus, where's his heart? I mean, the very thoughts of his heart are set upon his own, having loved his own, his own, those who are part of himself. You can't tell me he's not there feeling this rejection. And then you got this, another thing.

In setting the stage for John 13, we also want to recognize this. Notice what's said in 13.1. Jesus knew that his hour had come. Now you want to capture that, his hour.

Well, we know right here, what hour? Well, the hour to depart out of the world to the father. That was the hour. The hour.

Look at John 12.23, because this comes up. Actually, we could do a fuller study of this all around John, but just right here in the immediate context, 12.23, Jesus answered them, the hour has come for the son

of man to be glorified. Look at verse 12.27. We already read this, but now is my soul troubled.

What shall I say? Father saved me from this hour, but for this purpose, I've come to this hour. And you can stand back and say, for what purpose have you come to this hour? You say for this purpose, what, that your soul might be troubled? I don't think that's the purpose he means. To be saved from this hour? No, not for that purpose.

Probably for what follows. Father glorify your name. That's probably the purpose.

For this purpose, to glorify the father. And you know what? The father is so glorified. I just think, have you ever felt like, you know, you're praying.

It's like, Lord, I want more. I want you to communicate more. I know all the heavens and all the creation declares your handiwork.

I know your fingerprints are all over everything, but I want more. Can you imagine this? God is so glorified that He just announces it. I mean, a voice comes from heaven right here at this time.

The father speaks. Yet this hour, this hour is also of great tension, right? Now my soul's troubled. This is a troubling hour.

Everything in him, it's like on this one hand, for this hour, I mean, for this purpose, I've come to this hour. Why? That my father might be glorified. But yet he's so troubled by it.

By the time he gets to Gethsemane, he's actually saying, Father, if possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet it's what? Yet what? For this very purpose, the Son of God came to this hour. For this hour, this is it.

This is the hour of God's glory. And this is the hour, not only of God's glory. Notice what else he says here.

What is this? I mean, this is staggering. Look at verse 31 of chapter 12, 1231. You see, now is the judgment of this world.

Now will the ruler of this world be cast out? And you know what? As he's talking to these disciples in this upper room, he says over in John 16, the ruler of this world is judged. So he says the world is judged. The ruler of this world is cast out.

The ruler of this world is judged. And I was thinking, what does that mean? What does it mean the judgment of this world? Now, he's not talking about a future judgment. He's not talking about the great judgment that is going to happen at the end when he divides the sheep from the goats.

He's saying now is the judgment. What does that mean? The best I can think, as I really was just feeling the flavor of John, is this. Jesus said things like this.

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin. We don't like things like that, right? We don't know what to do with that. You all agree? We're going to get to that statement when we go farther.

But you don't like that, do you? Anybody like that? You should all say, yeah, I like it. It's in the Bible. We're people of the Bible.

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. If I had not come among them, if I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin.

But now they have seen and hated both me and my father. I think that that's what he means by now. This is the hour.

The world is judged. In other words, my whole ministry is done. I did all these things before them.

Now they're condemned. Those who don't believe on me, condemnation is upon them. The judgment has fallen.

I have come and I have been this great light, and they have not come to the light, and therefore now they're judged. I think that it's like there's a finality. Seriously? Such a finality that he could say, if I never would have come, they wouldn't be guilty of sin? Jesus loved to say things we don't like.

That's a statement you probably don't use very often, right? And yet it's very true. We just have to flesh it out. But then beyond that, He says, what else is happening at this hour? Well, at this hour, we got the devil.

The ruler of this world is being cast out. Now? Really? Cast out? And then you go over to 16. He says, the ruler of this world is judged.

I think it's this. He says also in these chapters, we're going to look at the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me.

You see, I think that's the judgment that's fallen on the devil. It's like the whole world, they've seen Jesus' ministry for three years. They haven't believed.

Now they're judged. The devil has been trying to find fault with him for these three years. He's got nothing in him.

He's judged. He's found to be what he is. But notice this.

It's the hour in which such things are going to be accomplished to draw all men to Christ. Notice 12:31. Now is the judgment of this world.

Now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. All people.

I think what he's doing is he's saying, not just the Jewish people, not just the people that have traditionally been the people of God, these offspring of Abraham. Now it's you lift me up. I am going to send out the message of what my death on that cross has accomplished.

And it's going to go out and in the power of God, it is going to be proclaimed. And people are going to be drawn to me out of every tribe and every tongue and every people that seems to be the picture. So what's my point? My point is this, this hour has come.

This is a cosmic decisive hour. Do you recognize the scene that's at hand? Do you recognize all the cosmic realities, all the kingdoms in motion, spiritual things happening? What's happening? The world is

being judged and the devil's being judged and cast out and all people are going to be drawn to him. You got this kind of thing happening.

The devil long held all people are among the nations in this darkness, this Gentile darkness. And you know what's happening. It's going to be decisive.

Who is actually the ruler in this world. And he that's been ruling is going to be cast out the ancient serpent all the way back there from Genesis 3 15. There is going to be the offspring of this woman that is going to bruise the head.

And that's what's happening here. It is this bruising. And then notice this John 13 three, Jesus, knowing that the father had given all things into his hands.

Again, you see the feel the scope of this cosmic events. One would think with thoughts like this, the father has committed everything to me. The devil is going to be defeated.

The world's going to be drawn to me with all these grand thoughts going on in his mind. And then the horrors of the cross before him and the glory that he's going to have the same glory that he had with his father before the earth began. You might think there's a whole lot going on.

How could he hardly have time for these 11 guys? Seriously? I mean, he's do you recognize that that Psalm 24 is about to come to pass. These everlasting gates are going to be thrown open. And who is this? It's the king of glory.

And he's going to come in and he's going to take that seat beside his father. And with all that before him and everything, you know what it says? He takes care of his own. He loved his own and he loves him to the end.

When in the midst of just huge things, like guys, I haven't forgotten you. We can see his heart is most set upon. Right at such an hour as this, what's it set upon? Set upon his own.

He's going out of the world and he set his heart right now upon those who have to remain in the world. I mean, if we want a window into Christ's heart, let's just think about it. He goes over and he takes their feet.

I mean, these, these feet, he knows probably all these guys, but one, his feet are going to go down a path and we're all going to lay down his life for his cause. He's preparing them. And you know what? He assures them, all this is coming together.

My departure is for your happiness. Guys, I'm going to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, you better believe I'm coming for you.

And then you get all the way to the end and he's, can you imagine them hearing him pray to his father? Father, my desire is that they would be with me where I am, that they might see the glory that you've given them. You see what he wants? Oh, with all his glory, what's he thinking about? I want them there to see it. And out of all the things he could have prayed for, he's praying for them.

He's praying. And it's just, it's amazing to me that when you go into such a thing as like Psalm 22, where it takes you into the horrors of the cross, the moment, the very moment he emerges from all the suffering, the payment for sin, first thing he does is he talks about his brothers, his people, his heart is so set there. I mean, can you imagine? I just, I imagine these days they're sitting there and they're hearing, they got

freshly washed feet and they're sitting there and he's saying, I'm coming for you.

I go to prepare a place for you. Father, I desire those whom you've given me. I want them to be where I am.

He starts saying things like me and you and you and me and we're in them and it's loving them with the love that it's like they feel themselves being pulled up into this trinitarian love. They're the affection. Now we need to get this.

Don't go to sleep on me because this is the last point, but it is not a minor one. One more thing as we set this stage, this is not the least. Jesus says something in chapter 12 that we don't want to miss this because the very aroma of this walks through these chapters ahead of us.

Notice verse 20 of chapter 12, John 12, 20. This almost seems strange. It's like Jesus saying, well, if I wouldn't have come and done all the works that I did before them, they wouldn't have any sin.

I love when Jesus says things that we don't like. I love it when Jesus says things that are baffling to us. Why? Because they get us to think.

And Jesus, have you ever noticed how he just does things that we don't expect? He answers ways that we would never answer. Among those who went up to worship at the feast, we know it's Passover and people came to Jerusalem, not just from Judea, Samaria, they would come from all over the place. People who were proselytes, people who believed in the true God to observe Passover.

And you know what? Some of the people who were there to worship were some Greeks. And notice what these guys do. These came to Philip who is from Bethsaida in Galilee and asked him, sir, we wish to see Jesus.

I know you know this account, but have you ever stopped to think, okay, somebody says we wish to see Jesus. Okay. The next thing, pretty, pretty expected.

Not, not out of the ordinary. Doesn't surprise us. But Philip, I mean, Philip might've gone directly to the Lord, but Philip went and told Andrew.

Andrew and Philip then together went and told Jesus. They told him what? Well, obviously what they told Philip at first, which was, sir, we wish to see Jesus. And so they went and told Jesus.

What'd they tell Jesus? Well, there's some Greeks over there and they want to see you. And you know what? If it wasn't for the words at the beginning of verse 23, we'd almost think Jesus totally ignored the fact that there were some Greeks interested in seeing him. For one thing, Jesus never mentions the Greeks again.

The Greeks are never mentioned again. And yet it says in verse 23, Jesus answered them. And so we know that it matters that it fits, that it is in response to the fact that the Greeks wanted to see Jesus.

And notice what he says. They always come for the son of man to be glorified. Hmm.

The question is this, does Jesus show himself to the Greeks? They wanted to see him. Did they get what they wanted? What do you think they wanted? Here's what I think they wanted. They wanted personal audience with it, right? We want to see Jesus.

We'd like to talk to him, maybe even see a miracle or something. We've heard all about him. We have an interest.

We'd like to see him. But you know what? The question that we need to ask is, did they get what they wanted? They wanted to see him. And I would say this, probably they did.

And I don't mean that I think that the Greeks were broad. I think that what Jesus does is he sends his disciples with the message to take back to them. And probably Jesus doesn't do things the way we expect.

They want a personal audience. What does he do instead? He shows the Greeks himself by giving a truth about himself. Jesus answered them.

The hour has come for the son of man to be glorified. They want to see Jesus. What sort of answer is this to say the hour has come the son of man to be glorified? I mean, you know what it sounds like he's saying? Here's the truth about me that really ought to matter to a bunch of Greeks or some Greeks that want to see me.

I mean, the hours come for me to be glorified. I'm going to die in order to attract and draw all men, including guys just like that, like those Greeks. But you know what's going to happen? I'm going to go to the cross.

I'm going to lay down my life. I'm going to die for guys just like them. And then you know what's going to happen? I'm going to come out of that grave and I'm going to soar through the heavens and I'm going to sit at my father's right hand where my father is going to glorify me with the glory that I had before the beginning of the world.

And you know what? I'm going to have such glory that when you come over to like Revelation chapter one and even a guy that laid in my bosom at my side on that night, it was suffer. He's going to see me. He's going to fall down like a dead man.

I'm going to have so much glory. It's going to be like that. And so it's like Jesus is saying, the Greeks want to see me.

Well, they're right in wanting to see me. You better believe it. But there's going to be really be something to see because I'm on my way to glory.

That's it. I'm the king of glory. No more am I going to be like Isaiah talked about, like a root out of dry ground and no form, no majesty, no beauty to be desired.

None of that. Yes, they're right to want to see me, to really see me because I am going to be glorified. That's really going to be worth seeing.

But then Jesus continues to say things we don't expect. Now that he's pronounced, he's going to be glorified. Well, we might expect him to say something just like I just said, wow, you can tell them I'm really going to be good.

I mean, they want to come see me now. They ought to see me. And when I'm raised and I'm glorified and when every knee bows and when every tongue confesses and when God lifts my name up higher than every name but his name, they ought to see me then when I'm over all power and authority, all the rule in this world, the dominion, those cosmic powers, when everybody bows down to me.

Wow. But you know, that's not what he says. He says something that doesn't hardly seem to fit.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. How does it go from being glorified to that? There's only one answer.

It's obvious, right? This is the path to glory. There can be no other answer than that. And you know what? It must be that there's something connected to Christ's glory that is going to be seen in his bearing much fruit.

That's the only conclusion I can come to, right? I mean, isn't that obvious? Doesn't that seem like the answer? What's the fruit? Souls, even Greek souls, American souls, British souls, all as a result of his dying. And then you know what? He hits us with the unexpected again. Verse 25, whoever loves his life, loses it.

Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there will my servant be also.

If anyone serves me, the father will honor him. Wait, what? Jesus, you were just talking about yourself. You were just talking about your glory and by what path that glory is to be had.

How do you suddenly jump to talking about whoever's and anyone's? You see what just happened? You see what Jesus just did? We can't miss this. The truth in verse 24. Look at it.

Look at 24. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Who's he talking about? So in context, verse 23, the hour has come for the son of man to be glorified. Apparently he's talking about himself. But when you get to 25, what happens? You see what just happened? The truth in verse 24 morphs into a truth about the Greeks.

What about us? We don't want to miss the significance of this. Here's the question. We need to ask this.

Do you want to see Jesus? You see, that's what the Greeks wanted. We want to see Jesus. You know what? We talk that way.

Lord, we want to see you. Lord, we want to know your presence. Lord, please, we want you to come.

Do you see what happened? You don't want to miss this. Do I want to see Jesus? But you know what Jesus does? You know what he's in the business of doing? Showing himself to me the same way he shows himself to the Greeks with a truth about himself that the longer you look at him, you realize becomes a truth about you. You see what he's doing? Tell the Greeks all that.

Tell the Greeks this great truth about me. Tell them how I'm going to be glorified. Tell them the truth that I've got to be like a grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies.

That's how I'm going to be fruitful. Tell them that. Grasp this.

And you know what Jesus is saying? If I show myself, if I reveal who I am, if I show you something about myself, that revelation of me to you will always confront you about who you are and what you do and how you live. You can't get away from it. That is the flow here.

This whole thing just seems like Jesus was, he just so often was like this. He just jumped from one thing to the next thing to the next thing. And he builds a case that almost just feels like it's just not smooth.

It feels like a bumpy road to get there. It's just, but you see what's happening. What he's saying is, do they want to see me? Okay.

Let them see me in a truth about me. But let them realize that this truth about me is a truth about them. And it's a truth about us.

You Greeks really want to see me? Does anyone here really want to see Jesus or know this? You know what Jesus is saying? You can't be a spectator. You can't simply look. None of that.

What is true of Jesus confronts me. I say, I want to see Jesus. He says, you want to see me? See this.

It's the hour for me to be glorified. And I've got to die to be fruitful. Do you see that? Yeah.

He says, come follow me. You come serve me and you be prepared to walk the path that I walk. Isn't that precisely what's happening here? I mean, you can't get away from that.

He says, behold me dying. You, you must hate your life in this world. Did you catch that? Look at this.

Let's read this all together again. Verse 24. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, talking about himself, we can just think, well, you know, that's what he's going to do.

It remains alone, but Jesus didn't remain alone. He did die. And because he died, he's going to bear much fruit.

That fruit is going to be souls. Like I said, even when people like these Greeks, but then he just so naturally says, whoever loves his life, loses it. Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

We can't get away from this. This is the reality floating in the air. As we enter chapter 13 in this upper room discourse, he's 11 men.

You know what they're being prepared to do this. They're being prepared to serve Christ, follow Christ, don't hate their lives in this world for him. It's crystal clear.

The truth he expresses about himself is the same truth for you and me. If we want to see Jesus, that's the same truth for these 11 men that are going into this upper room. This is at the heart of what Jesus preparing these 11 guys for what he prepares us for.

And Jesus makes it plain to Greeks and all, whatever you came to see, make sure. You see a lot of people wanted to see Jesus like Harry did. Why? Hoping he'd do some miracle.

We don't want to see a circus exhibition. Jesus said, if you want to see me, you better know what you're asking for. If I show myself to you, I'm going to show you the path to how I'm glorified.

And when I tell you to follow me, I mean nothing else than that the way to life is hard. The gate is narrow. The way is hard.

Why is it hard? Because it's hard to hate your life in this world. Is it not? What Jesus is really telling us is how to save our lives in the next world and not be destroyed. The path to saving your life is losing your life.

Not ultimately losing it, but losing it in this world at this time, hating your life in this world means that you choose to do things. You make decisions in this life that are going to really look foolish to the rest of the world. Why? Because you're dying to self.

You're dying. You are a grain of wheat and you have to fall in there and die if you're going to be fruitful. Just look at all of it.

A grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies. It bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life, loses it.

Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. You know what you find here? Fruit. Eternal life.

If anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there will my servant be also. I will take you where I am.

So you get much fruit here. You get eternal life. You get to be where Christ is.

If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. Anybody want that? Anybody want the honor of the Father? Anybody want eternal life? Anybody want to be where Christ is? Anybody want to be fruitful? Sounds like a life I want to live. It's a hard life.

But the glory compensates for all the hardness, right? You can't get past that. The life of Jesus calling to us is glorious. This is the most significant life imaginable.

Why? Because it's the fruitful life. It's the life that ends up with Christ. It's the life that ends up in eternal life.

It's the life that ends up when you get done. The Father honors you. We're being called to choose to die with him.

See, I can't say I want to see Jesus and leave you unaffected. None of that. That's what Jesus is saying by this.

I can tell you this. Those verses right there have always been some of the most haunting verses in all the Bible to me. Because I realize what they're saying.

And I realize the hardness. You know what? He's in heaven. Christ is in heaven.

He made it. He's glorified. But how do you get there? There's a path he walked to get there.

Emptying himself. Dying. What do you think? That sound like a life you want to live? 2023? I hope so.

It won't be easy. And the fact is, most people that sign up for heaven don't sign up for this. That's why the way is very easy and very broad that leads to destruction.

You know what? Jesus is washing their feet. Wow. Those 11 men, they've made it now.

I remember standing at the side of William Carey's grave and just thinking, he made it. He made it. His life is done.

He ran the race. Jesus is washing those feet, each one of those feet. They're going to try the same path that he tried.

He knew that. He knew that. That's what the Upper Room Discourse is all about, preparing these men to be fruitful, preparing them to hate their lives in this world, ultimately to be honored by the Father.

Folks, this is the question to end with. I ask you this, what do you have to die to, to be more fruitful as a member of this church? What does our church have to die to, to be more fruitful in this world? What do you have to die to, to be a better husband or a better father or a better mother or a better wife? What do we have to die to, to be brighter lights in this world, to be more effective salt? What do we have to die to, to really be fruitful? Is there something? We want fruit. We want souls.

Is there perhaps something that we as a church need to die to, but we haven't died to yet? It would be the very means by which we would be more fruitful. Look, you can't look at verses like this and say, that's not realistic. No, that's exactly how I would read these.

Folks, you know what Jesus is going to do? He's going to wash their feet. He's going to tell them, I'm giving you an example, love like me. You know what happens when you love? You have to die.

Think about it. Jesus, with all the weight on his shoulders, died to self to serve these guys and these chaps. And he's saying, I'm leaving you an example for me not to be looking to you guys for self-pity and all woe is me, but rather to get down there and wash your feet.

I'm leaving you an example. And Jesus didn't do it mechanically and coldly. He loved these guys.

He loved them to the end. What do we have to die to? That's a real question here. What do we have to die to? I want us to be fruitful and I don't want us to waste this life.

I'll tell you this, you got to hate your life in this world if you're going to gain your life. There's no way around these words. No way.

You want to be where Christ is and you got to serve him and follow him. And it's only serving him that you're going to be honored by the father. It's only hating your life in this world that you're going to keep your life for eternal life.

That's it. What does that look like? Would you say that that really describes your life right now? If somebody's looking at your life, would they say, wow, they really hate their life in this world? What does that look like? What does that really look like? Doesn't it mean that you're making decisions that look really foolish to the rest of the world? Doesn't it mean like, what are you doing? Don't you know the bumper sticker? He that dies with the most toys wins. Aren't you all about earning money like the rest of the world and saving up and building your empire and having a nicer house and a nicer garden in back and all that stuff? Aren't you about that? And Jesus says, those Greeks want to see me? Then they should see this.

They should see me die. And they should know that whoever really wants to see me and be with me and meet with me, be there with me forever. They need to see this truth and it needs to reflect back on them in order to realize I'm calling them to walk the same way.

And folks, as we now go into this upper room discourse, it's like, like I say, the aroma of these words are thick in the air because he is basically going to now sit down with these 11 guys and he's going to help prepare them to die in serving him. And I don't mean physical death. I mean, dying to self daily, to hating their lives in this world and making it to the end.

This was going to be preparing them in us for. Father, please, I pray that as we go through these chapters, may this be revolutionary for the church. May it really be that our love, our sacrifice, our hating our lives in this world would be ever a reality.

I pray, Lord, that we would be like those grains of wheat that fall in the ground and die. And there would be so much fruit produced from it. Help us, Lord, help each one of us to know what is it in our life right now? What is that chief thing? The first thing that we need to die to that thing that would make us more fruitful, that thing that would help us to excel, that thing that would make us most like you, the thing that would help us on that path to be most honored by the Father, is that we have to die to.

Certainly death is what you're calling us to. Death, a death that leads to life. A death in this world, a hating our life in this world.

Lord, help us. Give us a resolute determination. Give us the fight.

Give us the boldness. Give us the courage. Give us the same kind of instruction.

We see that these guys, these guys were shaking. These guys were flagging. These guys were fainting.

These guys would all run away. Lord, we need to be supercharged with the Spirit of God like they were when they came down from that other upper room on the day of Pentecost. We ask you, Lord, please breathe the life, the power.

Lord, we want to be grabbed, gripped. We want to be bent. We want to be worked upon by you that we can be a people who just lay our all on the altar and hate our lives in this world.

But in the end, we might step out into eternal life victorious. Father, I pray that you would burn the meaning of these words into the hearts and minds, the souls, the fabric of the being of these brothers and sisters in this place. I pray it in Christ's name.

Amen.

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