

# **The Heart of Christ** – the message of the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17)

*“...having loved His own who were in the world, He love them to the end”(John 13:1.)*

## **The Sacrificial Savior**

### **John 13:31-38**

*31 Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; 32 if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately. 33 Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. 36 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later." 37 Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." 38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times."*

As we wrap up this first section of the Upper Room Discourse in John 13, let me remind you that what we have before us are various pictures or expressions of the person and character of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus prepared His disciples for His pending death on the cross, He revealed to and instructed them as to His great love for them as well as the great service He would accomplish for them on the cross. He then called His disciples to follow faithfully and diligently His example of humble service, reminding them that He was in complete control of the situation. Then, as we saw last week, in an act of sympathy for these who were dumbfounded by the thought that there was a betrayer in their midst, Jesus revealed His concern for souls, His compassion for His own and His calm conduct in the face of adversity.

### **The Splendid Savior (13:1-4)**

*As He manifested His great love and devotion to "His own"*

### **The Serving Savior (13:5-11)**

*As He humbly and sacrificially served His disciples as an expression of His love and pictured His service on the cross for all who believe*

### **The Soliciting Savior (13:12-17)**

*As He called "His own" to follow His example of humble, loving service*

### **The Sovereign Savior (13:18-20)**

*As He revealed to "His own" that He was in control, that what was about to happen was not a surprise to Him, and that what might appear to them as the unraveling of their lives was in reality the unfolding of God's perfect plan for His glory and their good.*

### **The Sympathetic Savior (13:21-30)**

*As He revealed to the disciples the identity of the betrayer, He manifested His sympathy in His concern for souls, His compassion for His disciples, and His conduct in the presence of adversity.*

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All this leaves us with just one more picture of Jesus to consider, for in addition to all these qualities, Jesus is shown in John 13:31-35 as the **Sacrificial Savior**. This is to say that we see in these verses Jesus more graphically communicating to His disciples that the end is near, that all the pieces of the puzzle had been put into place and that soon His purpose for which He came to earth, that is to give His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28) and to glorify God (John 17:4) would be fulfilled.

In our text this morning this is what we see. We see Jesus, the Sacrificial Savior, making reference to His death and ultimately then explaining the purpose of His death, which is two-fold. First, the purpose of His death on the cross is to reveal the glory to God and second, the purpose of His death on the cross is to reveal the love of God for the benefit and example of His disciples. This morning we will only have time to consider the revelation of the glory of God through the cross of Christ – a consideration worthy of far more time than one week, but one in which I will do my best to spur you on to a pursuit of greater inquiry.

## I. The death of our Sacrificial Savior reveals the glory of God (13:31-33)

Let us turn our attention to John 13:31 and set the stage for two considerations of the glory of God revealed by the cross of Christ. Our text begins with the statement, “**Therefore when he [Judas] had gone out...**” Although the expressions of the love of Jesus were at first manifested in the presence of Judas as Jesus washed the feet of Judas, the time had come for a truly intimate time between Jesus and those who were truly “His own.” Judas had been dismissed from the fellowship and would never return. However, more to the point, with the leaving of Judas, all the wheels of the passion of Christ were fully set into motion. It was not as though Jesus would have changed His mind, but with Judas heading off to the Pharisees to close the deal on the betrayal of Jesus, Jesus was now irrevocably committed to His death.

From here our text in John 13:31 moves us to consider two persons who are *glorified* by this started and pending activity of the cross. In other words, the actions of the Sacrificial Savior reveals to us the glory of God, first through Jesus, the Son of Man; and second through the Father, God Almighty.

### A. Jesus glorified by the cross

Therefore, the text of John 13:32 states something that is uniquely surprising as well as profound as Jesus said, “**Now is the Son of Man glorified**” We are not to take from this that Jesus was glorified simply because Judas had left Him, but rather, as stated, because with Judas’ departure, the certainty of the Sacrificial Savior’s death for the sins of His people would be accomplished. What makes this a surprising statement is that Jesus puts it in the past tense, as if His passion, His death on the cross has already been accomplished. Only a truly sovereign Savior could speak with such authority and certainty. Jesus is saying that because of His obedience to death, even death on the cross, His full exaltation, and restoration to the Father was also assured and fulfilled.

However, all of this begs some key questions that would do us well to answer; those question being, “why is the Son of Man glorified through the cross?” and “how is the Son of Man glorified through the cross?” Jesus makes this statement of fact, but I would like us to consider these two questions of why and how.

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Let me set up the “why” question so that you understand just how important it is. When Jesus said, “**Now is the Son of Man glorified...**” making reference to His pending death on the cross, why is it that He is able to see His death on that shameful tree as His glorification? Why the cross? It would seem that there were a number of seemingly “better” events through which Jesus could have been glorified. Would it not have been appropriate that after Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan that the voice of heaven would have been heard to say not only, “**This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased**” (Matthew 3:17) but also then, “**Now is the Son of Man glorified**”? Would it not have been appropriate that at the Mount of Transfiguration where the face of Jesus “**shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light**” (Matthew 17:2), that place where both Moses and Elijah appeared with Him in a cloud of glory that we would hear the words, “**Now is the Son of Man glorified**”? Why is it that such words were not spoken in these places but were rather spoken at the time of our Sacrificial Savior’s deepest humiliation, at His severest sufferings, amidst piercing accusations, in the company of thieves, around the agonies of the cross and ultimately as He would lay alone in the tomb? Why is Jesus glorified through this time? Beloved, this statement of John 13:31 are the words of Jesus; meaning this is the viewpoint of Jesus; a divine viewpoint. This is the reason for which Jesus came, to seek and to save that which was lost and to do that, He must be obedient to the will of the Father, which was death on the cross. By this obedience, Jesus would lead many sons to glory and would Himself be restored to the glory He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5). Why was Jesus glorified through this time – because it was the fulfillment of the purpose of God for the redemption and restoration of those who believe in Him to a right relationship with their Creator, His Father?

But in addition to the why question, why was Jesus glorified through His passion that lead Him to the cross, we must also examine briefly “how”, how is it that the Son of Man is glorified by His death on the cross. Let us consider four answers to the “how” question.

**First**, Jesus was glorified, shown to be highly honored and magnified, by His death on the cross because it would be the greatest accomplishment for man the universe has ever witnessed. Consider, more glorious than the act of creation itself; more powerful than the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, more wonderful than the parting of the Red Sea; more substantive than the provisions of manna, water and quail in the wilderness; more spectacular than the temporary physical healings of Jesus and even more superlative than the raising of Lazarus from the dead is the restoration of peace between the holy, sinless and perfect God and unholy, sinful, rebellious children of wrath who believe Jesus to be their only means, their own satisfying atonement, their only way to be made right with God by His taking their own place on that cross; by their confession that it was themselves that deserved to die on that cross because they were sinners, but who believe that Jesus died for them so that they might live. So great was this accomplishment that Peter would say, “**As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you...who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**” – that even the angels themselves long to look with wonder into such glories. The Son of Man is glorified in His great accomplishment of redemption for those who believe. Do you so believe and glorify the Son of Man?

**Second**, Jesus was glorified, shown to be highly honored and magnified, by His death on the cross because it would reveal the greatest contrast between being “in Adam” and being “in

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Christ.” Every one ever born is born “in Adam” and is therefore born in the likeness of Adam, a sinner, disobedient unto death. But the “last” or “second” Adam, the Sacrificial Savior, was obedient unto death. According to Romans 5, all experience death because of their relationship to Adam for Adam’s disobedience resulted in death to all (5:12ff). But those who are “in Christ” who have trusted in that great work on the cross as being for them, who are transformed from sinner to saint, experience life because of the obedience of Christ. Namely, just as Jesus was raised to newness of life because of His obedience to the will of God, we who are now “in Christ” are also raised to newness of life. Jesus is glorified by His work on the cross because it takes those who are dead in Adam and makes them alive in Christ.

**Third**, Jesus is glorified, shown to be highly honored and magnified, by His death on the cross because it resulted in the greatest victory – the defeat of death, spiritual death or eternal separation from the blissful presence of God as well as over him who held the power of death. We read in Hebrews 2:14:

***Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself [Jesus] likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil...***

Perhaps we do not ponder the wonder of this enough, that Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh and yet He utterly defeated in that body of flesh the power of death and the stranglehold of the devil who used the fear of death as a means of enslaving people to this temporal world.

**Fourth**, Jesus is glorified, shown to be highly honored and magnified, by His death on the cross because it resulted in the greatest exaltation. After His death and resurrection, ***“God highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow...and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”*** (Philippians 2:9-10). And where is Jesus, the Son of Man and Son of God right now? According to Hebrews 4:14, ***“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus [the Son of Man, who is also] the Son of God...”*** It is this Jesus of whom it is said in Hebrews 1:3, ***“When He had made purification of sins [died on the cross], He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...”*** Jesus is glorified because His work on the cross would lead Him back to the privileged and most prominent position of heaven. Jesus’ work on the cross revealed not only His submission to the will of the Father, but also then His sovereign knowledge that through His obedience He would be glorified. ***Obedience to the will of God is the only means to glorification.***

Beloved, now, through the passion of the cross, is the Son of Man glorified. Let us pursue frequent and committed contemplations of the glory of Christ. It is to the supreme benefit of our souls and our testimony to the world to have minds so preoccupied and so filled by such glories of our Sacrificial Savior. Such devotion to the knowledge of the glories of Jesus are a sure protection against all that seeks to defile us in this world.

As we contemplate the glorified Jesus, our own vain thoughts will diminish and our own lust for the thing so this world will dim. Even as our Sacrificial Savior crucified our sins and

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sanctified our souls on the cross, let us daily experience the crucifying and sanctifying contemplations of the glory of Emmanuel. Let us be emptied of ourselves, humbled before God and abased before men. Let us cry out with Job, **“Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes”** (Job 42:6 – NKJV). Let us wail with the prophet Isaiah, **“Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts”** (Isaiah 6:5). And let us exclaim with the Apostle Paul, **“But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world”** (Galatians 6:14).

Let us continual contemplate the why and how it is that the Son of Man is glorified in the cross. Such a consideration is a sure mean of enlarging and expanding our vision of the honor and majesty of our Sacrificial Savior. Let us never place a limit on the pursuit of the knowledge of the glory of Jesus.

## **B. The Father is glorified by the cross (13:31b)**

Jesus not only states that rather than being shamed by the cross, He would be glorified, but also that God the Father Himself was glorified by the cross. We read, **“...and God is glorified in Him.”** Jesus, as the Son of Man glorified the Father by His act of obedience at the cross. We know that the greatest glory of man is to glorify God, for man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. If this be so, then *God the Father was never more glorified than when His own Son, the Son of Man, laid down His life for those God had from all eternity marked out for salvation.*

Beloved, to God, the cross is not truly *the emblem of suffering and shame*, but rather the manifestation of the power, the justice, the holiness, and the faithfulness of God – in short, *the cross is the grandest expression of the glory of God in salvation.* We cannot rightly consider the cross of Christ to which He became obedient without also contemplating the infinite majesty of the Godhead from which Jesus descended.

In verse 32 we read, **“if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself and will glorify Him immediately.”** At the cross of Jesus, God the Father was most supremely exalted. And one of the things we must see here in John 13:31-32 is the incredible inseparability of the glory of the Son of Man at the cross and the glory of the Father at the cross. If the Father is exalted by the death of Jesus on the cross (that is if God is glorified in Him by His death), then in turn, the Son must be exalted (immediately glorified) by being raised from the dead.

And just like our examination of how the Son of Man was glorified at the cross, I would like to pause here in our text and look and exactly how God the Father was glorified at the cross. What was it about the cross that showed God to be highly honored and magnified? There are many areas that could be considered, but this morning I draw your attention to the justice of God.

Let us understand that God was glorified – that is most honored and exalted, at the cross because it revealed His justice. We often speak of the cross of Christ as the place where our sins were paid for, but just what do we mean? Beloved, the cross of Jesus revealed God’s intense hatred and punishment of sin to such an extent that even if we were to witness the hand of God sweep away from existence a million other worlds as an expression of His divine wrath, this would not even begin to touch the wrath Jesus experience on the cross. Consider the extent of

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the words of 1 Peter 2:24 which say, **“and He Himself bore our sins (all of the sins of His people, every evil thought, every evil action) in His body on the cross.”**

The cross of Jesus was the most awesome and awful display of God’s wrath against sin. It has been said that the cross of Jesus *“showed it was impossible for Him to be at peace with that which had raised its defiant head against Him.”*<sup>1</sup> It was at the cross of Jesus every sin of those designated as “His own” received the fullness of the fury of the wrath of God without measure! Jesus, our Surety, our Substitute, our Savior, became sin for us and God the Father emptied upon Him all the vials of His wrath due to us. Do we comprehend how monstrous a thing sin really is and how intent God the Father is to punish it either in the person of the sinner who rejects Christ, or in the person of the Substitute received by faith. An eminent Puritan writer thus strikingly puts it— “Not all the vials of judgment that have or shall be poured out upon this wicked world—nor the flaming furnace of a sinner's conscience—nor the irrevocable sentence pronounced against the rebellious devils—nor the groans of the damned creatures—give such a demonstration of God's hatred of sin, as the wrath of God let loose upon His Son!” It has been said that never was the Son of Man dearer to the Father than at the very moment that the sword of divine justice, flaming and flashing, pierced to its hilt His holy heart.

Why, why did God the Father so inflict His beloved Son? Let us never forget that God has spoken. In Exodus 34:7 we read that God **“will by no means leave the guilty unpunished...”** May I ask you, are you guilty of sin? Do you deserve to be punished for you sins? Does not God declare in Ezekiel 18:4, **“The soul who sins will die”?** And what do we read in Romans 6:23? **“For the wages of sin is death...”** God the Father must, because of His perfect justice, punish every sin. Who among us can survive the deserved wrath of God for even our own sins? Not one of us.

So, when the wrath of God was pour out on His Son at the cross, it was not pour out against Jesus, but rather against the sins which He Himself took upon Himself as our substitutionary sacrifice. And so we who would believe this about the justice of God, who would believe in the exceeding sinfulness of sin, must behold the flaming sword of the justice of God as being fully quenched in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. God’s justice is fully satisfied at the cross and this glorifies God who by His design has made a way for His holiness and justice to be upheld and yet redeem sinners like those of us here today.

The justice of God had to punish sin. And so, as it swept upon the cross, it fully landed upon the Son of Man, impaling Him with the sins and the curse of His people and from the Son of Man then, the justice of God exacted the full penalty of man's transgression down to the very last cent of such a great debt. Oh that we might fathom the fullness of the sufferings of Christ for our sins, for God was glorified in bringing many sons to glory by it and is Himself glorified magnificently because justice had been met and salvation for man secured. A.W. Pink has noted that “God was more illustriously glorified by the propitiation (the sacrificial death) which was made by the Lord Jesus than if every member of the human race were to suffer in hell forever.”<sup>2</sup>

So then, as we contemplate the cross, let us remember how it glorifies both the Son of Man as well as God the Father. How can we come here unmoved, or unchanged as we consider the mystery of how the sorrow of the soul of our Savior; the torture of the body of our Savior; the

<sup>1</sup> Pink, A.W., “The Gospel of John”, p. 746

<sup>2</sup> Pink, A.W., “The Gospel of John”, p. 746

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tragedy of the death of our Savior; His humiliation, His shame, and the infamy of the cross would all become the very means by which both the Son of Man and God the Father would be glorified? Do we dare stand here before such a spectacle and entertain low views of God's justice, and holiness, or such light views of our own sinfulness?

In our passage, Jesus is going to the cross, to glorify God and be glorified Himself. The Godhead will be honored, exalted, and praised by the cross. This is why Jesus says to His disciples in verse 33, **“Little children (a term of dear affection), I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, “Where I am going, you cannot come.”** He is speaking of His pending appointment with the cross. We are reminded that Jesus alone must save. No one can save himself or even another. The redemption of “His own”; and the satisfaction of the justice of God would be a work that Jesus must do alone.

And beloved, are you not glad that Jesus not only could bear your sin, but that He did so that you might no longer live for yourself in sin and self-serving hell-damning pursuits, but for Him who loved you and gave Himself for you so that even as He lives, you might live to the glory of God. Do you know this morning that even as the Son of Man lived to glorify God and did glorify God, the main purpose of your life is to glorify, to honor, exalt, and praise God? Are you living to the glory of God? You cannot until you first see that you are a sinner and that you need Jesus to be your substitute, to take your place on the cross. That is why He came, for according to Matthew 1:21 He was named Jesus because He would save His people from their sins.

God the Son and God the Father are glorified by the cross and this morning we are reminded that we too are and will be glorified by the cross. For the salvation of our souls is meant to bring us to glorification, that is perfection in Jesus Christ. Let us be diligent to be all the more certain we are on this path, that even as Jesus lived to the glory of the Father, we too would live to the glory of the Father.

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*Soli Deo Gloria*

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