

+ 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 – Part 2

John 13:31-35

Consider with me an ancient truth communicated by the pen of Solomon as recorded in the book of Proverbs:

Proverbs 10:1

A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother.

Proverbs 15:20

A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish man despises his mother.

Proverbs 23:15-16

My son, if your heart is wise, my own heart also will be glad; and my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.

These three passages all convey an important truth – that there is no higher delight; no better joy; no superior honor that a son can bestow upon his father than to be wise and therefore able to speak what is right. Wisdom is said to be the application of knowledge. It is one thing to “know” something and quite another to rightly apply that knowledge to one’s life. A son might know it would a disgrace his father and a shame to his mother to be known as a drug addict and yet such a knowledge has not stopped many a son from such a lifestyle. Wisdom is the application, the living out of knowledge. And spiritual wisdom is the living out and living in the precepts, principles and plans of God.

And so, when we think of the wise son as spoken in the Proverbs, we can immediately understand that in Jesus Christ, we have the perfect example of a wise son – of one who lived out and lived in the precepts, principles and plans of God. It is interesting to note that of the young teenaged Jesus, Luke 2:52 tells us that ***“Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”***

Jesus, as the Son of Man, learned and grew in wisdom, in the applying of God’s Word and living according to God’s plan as He lived in the flesh. Later on, at the height of His ministry we read these words in Matthew 13:53-54:

53 When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there. 54 He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?”

Jesus, as the Son of Man, was born, grew up and had to mature physically, intellectually and even spiritually just like you and I do. Throughout the gospel of John we are told repeatedly that Jesus never acted alone; He never acted independently of the will and plan of the Father. Consider these statements of Jesus [turn in your Bibles]:

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

John 5:19

Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

John 5:30

I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 6:38

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

And even concerning His pending death on the cross Jesus said in John 8:28-29 these words:

When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

What I have showed you here with this brief survey of John's Gospel is Jesus, the Son of Man, exercising wisdom, that is, He applied the knowledge of God's precepts, principles and plans to His life. And certainly, while this would be a great segue into calling each of us to follow the example of Christ to engage ourselves in the pursuit of wisdom – to personally applying the wisdom of God's word to each and every circumstance of our lives; this is not the point that I wish to make – at least not yet. The point I wish to emphasize for you this morning is that Jesus, as the wise Son, gladdened the heart of His Father. To borrow now from the words of Jesus Himself, let us look at our text, beginning in John 13:31 where we read:

[slide 02] 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.'* *[slide 03]* 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."*

A. The Son is Glorified by the Cross

Last week, we camped out in verse 31 noting the immensity of these words – how Jesus is drawing His disciples into the reality of His pending death for them; how all that He had been telling them about His purpose to seek and to save the lost by being lifted up upon a cross was not only about to come to pass, but that by this seeming shameful death, He Himself was glorified, that is shown to be highly honored and magnified. We considered Jesus as the Sacrificial Savior. We pondered this, how is it that Jesus was glorified, that is honored and

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magnified by His death on the cross and concluded that by the cross Jesus secured the greatest accomplishment for man the universe has ever witnessed – his redemption, his being bought back from the death grip and eternal ravages of sin; that by His death on the cross Jesus would revealed the greatest contrast between being “in Adam” and born into sin and being “in Christ” that is born into godliness; that by His death on the cross Jesus obtained the greatest victory – the defeat of death, of spiritual death or eternal separation from the blissful presence of God as well as over him who held the power of death; and finally, we saw that Jesus was glorified, that is honored and magnified by His death as He received the greatest exaltation for... **“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). This is how Jesus could say **“Now is the Son of Man glorified”** for He had faithfully and obediently submitted Himself to the precepts, principles and plans of the Father.

But now as we move on in the text looking still at how John 13:31-33 reveals to us the glory of God; we find Jesus not only saying that He Himself is glorified, but also secondly that God the Father is also glorified.

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, obediently and according to the precepts and plans of God, laid down His life for those God had from all eternity marked out for salvation.*

Oh what an incredible thought to ponder; how it is that what we call the shameful death of Christ would be the very means by which God the Father is actually glorified; honored; and magnified beyond all else. I started thinking of that beloved hymn that begins with the words:

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame;

Perhaps to us the cross appeared to the emblem of suffering and shame, but is this so from God’s perspective? Oh, does not the understanding of the Word of God teaching us that rather than *the emblem of suffering and shame*, the cross was actually the manifestation of the power, the justice, the holiness, and the faithfulness of God – in short, is not *the cross 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, because Jesus so wisely followed and fulfilled the divine directives, 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

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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 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.”*¹ God’s justice demands that the fullness of His wrath be poured out against those who are His enemies. And who are God’s enemies? The entire human race. All have sinned and fall short of God’s glory. So how can God’s justice, that sin must be paid for be satisfied? It was at the cross of Jesus that the sin of those designated as here in John 13 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. As the Puritan preacher and theologian Thomas Boston described it:

“He was the eternal and only begotten Son of God, the brightness of His Father’s glory, and the express image of His person. Yet He must descend from the throne of majesty, divest Himself of His robes of insupportable light, take upon Him the form of a servant, become a curse, and bleed to death for sin. Did ever sin appear so hateful to God as here? To demonstrate God’s infinite holiness, and hatred of sin, He would have the most glorious and most excellent person in heaven and earth to suffer for it. He would have His own Son to die on a disgraceful cross, and be exposed to the terrible flames of Divine wrath, rather than sin should live, and His holiness remain forever disparaged by the violations of His law.”

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. Another 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

¹ Pink, A.W., “The Gospel of John”, p. 746

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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? Have you ever dishonored God by blatant or even ignorant disobedience? Have you ever defamed His glory by God-belittling behavior or attitudes? These are crimes of highest degree. It matters not if you or others think them little. It matters not if you believe are known by no one else or have harmed anyone else. Your sins are known by God and even if they have not harmed the character of God in anyone else, they have most certainly harmed the character of God in you. And so I ask you, do you deserve to be punished for such 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. As the psalmist sings out in Psalm 130:3, **“If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?”** Not one. This is how much God abhors sin and yet how glibly we often regard it.

So let us understand that when the wrath of God was pour out on His Son at the cross, it was not poured out against Jesus, but rather against the sins which He Himself took upon Himself for “His own” as their 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 on the cross. God’s justice that demands sin’s punishment is fully satisfied for “His own” at the cross and this, my friends, glorifies God – it honors and magnifies Him who by His own design made a way for His holiness, His perfection, and His 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 – the punishment of every sin you have and will commit, if you are in Christ, has been suffered by Him. And then, from the Son of Man, 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 *“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.”*²

Jesus said, **“Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him.”** Let us contemplate the cross; let us remember how it glorifies both the Son of Man as well as God the Father. Let us repent, forsake and dispose of sin in our lives by the grace and power of God. 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 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

² Pink, A. W., “The Gospel of John”, p. 746

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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 name 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.

Soli Deo Gloria

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