

Matthew 26:31

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[0 : 0 0] We're now going to turn to the Gospel of John, Chapter 12. John's Gospel, Chapter 5. John, Chapter 12.

And we're going to read it in chapter 23. John, Chapter 12.

And particularly these words in verse 27.

Yesterday we were considering those who came to Jesus. And Jesus' response to them.

And we were considering that the Jesus that we need to find is not always the Jesus that we are seeking.

[1 : 5 1] And thankfully he makes it clear to us that the Jesus that we do find is far superior to the one that we had imagined.

And the one that we were seeking in our own understanding. The Savior that we need is a Savior who gives us spiritual and eternal life.

And he's making clear to those that we're seeking him that he's not concerned primarily with the things of this life, but with the things of the life that is eternal.

In fact, we need to die to the things of this life if we're going to partake of that life which is eternal.

That life is communion with God. And he has made it possible for us to have communion with God through his own death.

[3 : 0 0] The story of Jesus entering into Jerusalem is recorded by all of the gospel writers. And he has made it possible for us to have communion with God through his own death.

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The central thing on Jesus' mind is the cross.

And we see, first of all, his reversion of that cross. He said, now my soul is troubled.

And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. Father, save me from this hour.

Now we know that Matthew and Luke give us to see the internal struggles that he had in the garden of Gethsemane.

but only John makes it clear to us that he began to have this struggle within himself long before he came to the garden in fact this revolution began even before they celebrated the Passover and his institution of the Lord's Supper we learn from John's Gospel that his soul is in extreme distress his cry to the Father from this time onwards is save me from this hour and it underscores for us the sense of trouble that he was beginning to experience in his soul as he faced the terrible prospect of the consequences of becoming our sin bearer and these words help us to appreciate the high price that he paid for us in his humanness he is longing for another way if such a way could be found but deep down within himself

[5 : 48]

I'm convinced that he knew that there was no other way and because he's aware of that his soul is troubled now when he's speaking of his soul he's talking of his inner self the deep down seat where his emotions are which are a part of the humanity that he took to himself Jesus is undergoing inner anguish he wasn't afraid of the cross because of the physical suffering that he would have to suffer on the cross that would have been a terrible suffering in and of itself but that was eclipsed by the intense mental and psychological pressure of our sins being placed upon and the penalty that would have to be paid in order to liberate us and he is rebalged by it he is abhorred by it he is in extreme distress by it he was in great anguish of soul over it and we could ask the question why is he in such extreme anguish why is he experiencing such emotional turmoil within himself why is his soul troubled well the reason is that he understood more clearly than any man could ever understand the dreadful suffering that is contained in death things far more dreadful than physically physically being punished things far more dreadful than humiliation he could see the reality of what was contained in that cup that the father had given him and that goes far deeper than any physical death or any physical suffering that anybody can ever experience in this world what we have to do continually keep reminding ourselves of is that Jesus was without sin and if we had remained without sin we would have perfect knowledge we would see things clearly and when Jesus is coming to drink of this cup he is staring into the cup and he is seeing clearly what is contained in that cup in other words he is looking death in the face and he can see everything that is contained in it you could see the hell that's contained in death because that's what death is it's hell now we hear of people dying comfortably unafraid of death and

it gives us a sense of peace when we know that the person is a believer but it gives us to wonder how an unbeliever can pass from the scene of time staring death in the face and not be afraid and the answer is quite clearly ignorance ignorance is bliss their minds are darkened they don't know what's contained in the cup that they are about to drink if they knew a small portion of what's contained in that cup you wouldn't be able to hold them down on the bed because that cup is filled with terror that cup contains what our sins deserve that cup contains the torment of hell which is what death is

Jesus Jesus could see clearly into that cup and his soul was filled with torment his soul was filled with terror at the prospect of having to drink that cup Jesus the one who is without sin anticipating the spiritual darkness that would soon encompass his soul as he drank everything that is contained in that cup that the father had given him to drink realizing that that contained the outer darkness of which he himself so often spoke the darkness out of which the recipients wail and gnash their teeth the darkness of which he warned his followers to run from to seek refuge from because this darkness this wrath is going to come upon this one and now he realizes more fully than he had ever realized in his humanity because as he progressed towards this time things were becoming progressively clearer to him and he was being made aware that now as he becomes the substitute for our sin being made sin for us who knew no sin as a result of the Lord laying on him the iniquity of us all his soul is troubled who can possibly begin to understand the agony that the cross held for our Lord and Saviour

Jesus to be the holy and righteous Son of God and yet to bear the sins of humanity to bear the crushing guilt of every wicked act and sin that's ever been committed against God in his own holy nature that had never experienced anything that would come close to anything that would resemble sin let alone experience the penalty of sin and it's because he bore our sins that his soul is now becoming exceedingly sorrowful he is troubled because he's experienced something that he's never experienced in his life before from all eternity he has existed never before this time and it would never occur again in all of eternity but it occurred at this time in the history of mankind and in the history of the

Godhead that the son experienced the awful agony of what's contained in the penalty that our sins deserve as he was to drink this cup he would experience separation from his father he had been in the bosom of his father from all of eternity he had never known anything different from being in continual communion with the father in lying in the father's prison and he would have to exhaust the eternal wrath that the Godhead required in order to satisfy its own righteousness as Jesus would hang on the cross we know that he would cry out that awful cry my

[16 : 03] God my God why have you forsaken this father who cannot look upon sin this father who can in no way excuse sin who can in no way clear the guilty had to turn away from his own son which caused an excruciating anguish of soul and he's beginning to anticipate this anguish this will be the agonising cry of the lost throughout all of eternity God where am you God I need you God my soul has been created for communion with you it has been created for a relationship with you and now

I'm forsaken by you my soul is crying out of this intense anguish and horror and agony of soul but it will never be brought into communion with God because at that stage it will have entered into its eternal destiny Jesus had to experience this for his people he had to experience the infinite wrath of God and it's only that he was an infinite and eternal person of the God that made it possible for him to exhaust what was contained in that cup in other words if I can illustrate it as we have it brought before us in picture form in the book of revelation the lost being cast into a bottomless put now a bottomless put is bottomless you will never come to the bottom of it so that when the lost soul is thrown into this bottomless put he will continue to fall further and further away from the love and from the joy and from the peace that exists in communion with

God and he will continue to fall away in paying the penalty that is due to him for his sins and if he reaches bottom in that put he will have come to the point that he will have paid and exhausted the penalty of that sin but because it's a bottomless print he can never fathom the penalty that is due to him for his sins and this is what Jesus had to fathom he had to exhaust it and the only way that he could exhaust it was because he himself was infinite he could reach bottom in the swath that he was experiencing and drinking that cup that the father was putting into his hand he exhausted everything that is contained in heaven and he gave satisfaction to the righteousness of

God that the penalty was fully paid man will never reach that point throughout all of eternity he cannot because he is not infinite so let us remind ourselves of who it is that is dying this death on the cross of Calvary yes he took our nature but he took our nature to his own passion it is the second person of the Godhead that is here in torment of soul in looking into the cup that he is going to have to drink and have to exhaust as he pays the penalty for the sins of his people this is no less and no less than the second person of the

Godhead could achieve what was achieved on the cross of Calvary and there is little wonder that his soul is troubled and exceedingly sorrowful more than anybody will ever experience even in the depths of hell because he will not be able to but Jesus had to drink it to its very last things and that's what was required in order to redeem us so let's not take our salvation lightly let's not think that we were purchased with such corruptible things as silver and gold took the life of the second person of the godhead to pay our redemption he had to exhaust everything that was contained in that cup that he was beginning to see clearly as he approached that point in his experience that he had never experienced in all of his eternal life prior to this time now even although he was reversed towards the cross he still never was out of the purpose there was a purpose to it but for this purpose

[22 : 34] I have come to this our father glory find you among the many things that the son of god had in view when he left the throne of glory to take human nature to himself when he was born into the human family when he looked and walked amongst men he never lost sight of the cross but he never lost sight of what lay beyond the cross and we're told that this is what enabled him to bear the cross for the joy that was set before him he was born into this world in order to die for our sins his birth was merely a stepping stone to the cross and almost all over the world his birth is celebrated by people who don't realise the significance of it that it's merely a stepping stone to get him to the cross it was for that purpose that he came into this world and if we should be celebrating anything it's the cross that we should be celebrating rather than his birth obviously he couldn't come to the cross unless he had been born but it was for this purpose that he came into this life and if we don't understand this about

Jesus then we hardly understand anything about Jesus because this is the most important thing that we need to lay on that this was the only way that man could be redeemed this was the only way that the father could keep his honour this was the only way that the father could be glorified in excusing sinners that he had his own righteousness satisfied and that was done through the work of the lord's obedience to his father's will and instead of insisting on being delivered from the cross he asks the father glorify your own name in other words Jesus is attributing to the father the glory for everything that's going to be achieved here at the cross of calvary because this did not arise by the initiation of Jesus father our salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the initiative of the father whose will Jesus was obeying Jesus is letting us know in these words that although our sins are an offense to the holy father and though his wrath for our sins is just and righteous it was nevertheless the love of the father for us that moved him to send his son into this world the father is not the enemy mankind he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked rather as

Paul reminds us in his letter to the Romans God God demonstrates his love towards us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us as we consider the fears which troubled our savior as he made his way to the cross let's be sure that we remember the sense of purpose that he had within himself that he was fulfilling the father's will in order for the father's love to embrace the children which he had given to him before the world was even though his spirit was troubled at the prospect nevertheless he went and he went out of love for his father and out of love for his people this was why he was willing that it would be the father's will that would be done rather than his own human desire yes he was truly reversed yes his human nature would have won a mile away from what he had to experience had it been possible but because he knew that there was no other way he resolved that he would confront whatever was contained in the cup out of love for the father and out of love for his people he would not come down from that cross even when he was taunted and tempted that if he was the son of

God to prove it by coming down from the cross he proved it by staying exactly where he was that he was the son of the father and that he would give him obedience even to the very end so that the father's love would embrace the children that he was in the act of redeeming and had he come down from that cross there would be no hope of salvation for anyone of us and if there had been no hope given to us then what would have been the purpose of creation what would give us a purpose for our lives here in this world what could give us the reason to suffer for righteousness sake by becoming a follower of

Jesus Christ if there was nothing beyond this world it's because we believe that there is something beyond what we experience here in time and that we believe that what lies beyond is far more glorious than anything that we have ever experienced here that we are prepared to take up on cross and follow Jesus into the death that we will experience assured that death will have absolutely no claim over us that when that time comes in our experience we will not experience in the storm we will not experience the hell that is contained in death but that we will experience the life that he came to secure for us the life that shall never end may may

[31 : 17] God grant that he would help us to celebrate and rejoice in the salvation that we have through Jesus Christ Amen let's build our heads and pray our Father in heaven words are so empty and so insignificant to express the deep down sense of gratitude that we have for what you were prepared to do to us but we are thankful that when words are inadequate to express our desires that the Holy Spirit makes in possession for us with groanings that cannot be done and we pray that you would hear the groanings of our souls over and above the words that we are done because we truly want to show our appreciation for the love with which you have loved us and we ask oh lord that as we continue throughout the service to remind ourselves of what was achieved through that death and to celebrate in the life that was imparted to our souls that we would come with a new resolve to give our lives to you that we might present our whole beings as living sacrifices to you which would only be our reasonable service help us oh lord to be encouraged to go towards that prize that you've set before us the prize of the high coming of god and christ jesus and continue to give us the grace to run that race until we arrive at our eternal destination and you shall continue to have all of the praise and all of the glory throughout all of eternity from the creature that you created for that purpose have mercy upon us for our sins and shortcomings and we ask you in jesus name amen we will the father sing in psalm 22 before we come to the table psalm 22 at verse 11 and now little children abide in him and when he appears he may have confidence and not be ashamed before him that is come if you know that he is righteous you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of him behold what manner of love the father has bestowed on us that we should be called the children of

God therefore the world is not most because it did not know him beloved now are we the children of God it has not yet been revealed what we shall be but we know that when he is revealed we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is and everyone who has this hope purifies himself just as he is pure now we've all looked at children at one point or another and thought how like their father or their mother they are because we see a family likeness in God's family the same is true in verse 29 we read there that if we know that he is righteous you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of him that's the family likeness that they will bear if they have been born of him they will practice righteousness

Jesus is going to come again and when he does come again we're told that some will be ashamed when he appears we could ask the question why will some be ashamed when Jesus comes again and the answer is quite simple they will be ashamed because they have not taken seriously his word the same as if you heard a message from somebody that sent a message to you and you didn't take it seriously and the next time you meet that person the person makes it clear that he had sent the message and that you failed to react towards it you would be filled with shame the gospel goes out to all mankind but those who refuse to take it seriously will be filled with shame because there will be a sense and realisation that they have wasted all of their time and energy on things that they're not going to be able to hold after they will have spent their lives in other words in vain because they did not take the words of

God seriously they lived for the things of this world satisfying the desires of the flesh and they bear the image of their father the devil the image of God's children on the other hand are those that live righteous they practice righteousness because they took God's word seriously and they allowed God's word to transform their lives and to purify them in verse 3 we read everyone who has this hope in himself the hope of the gospel purifies himself just as he is pure what we believe affects the way that we live and we believe that he's preparing us for himself that he has gone to prepare a place for us and that he's coming again to receive us into that place but we know that we need to be prepared before we can enter it so therefore we allow the word of

God to sanctify us to purify us so that we might be made righteous as he is righteous because without that nobody will be able to enter into that place that is prepared for his people we need to be prepared for the place and in that preparation being brought forth the image becomes clearer that we are indeed the children of God because we are walking in God's ways we are practicing righteousness and it should even be evident to the world that we are God's children that we have been born again of the Holy Spirit and that's what makes the difference the table of the Lord is for the Lord's children he has prepared this for his children in this world and it's only those who are beginning to bear that image that should come to the table because it is evident to them and to others that they are taking

[40 : 24] God's word seriously and that they are following him and if we're not following him then your place is not at the table because you're still following the ways of the world and satisfying the desires of your own flesh and you are not in the kingdom and you shouldn't partake of the table that belongs to the kingdom but I don't want to discourage anyone from coming to the table even if he hasn't got a strong sense of assurance and if you've got a desire to embrace Jesus Christ as your savior if you've got a desire regardless of how shocked you see yourself coming if your desire is to do the will of God if your desire is to follow his teachings then you should be at the table whether you've met with the session or not that can be rectified afterwards it is still not too late for you to come and take your place at the table because it's the

Lord's table it's not the free church's table and it's not the session that determines who's to sit at the table it's the Lord and it's the Lord that gives us the authority to give this invitation and if your desire is to embrace him as your Lord and to follow him in his ways then you should be at this table may God grant that those that are at it would feel at peace where they are and if you're outside the table and you feel that you should be at it that he would grant you the strength to come to it and if not to resolve with yourself that this will be the last time that you will let this opportunity pass you by but that you will be in the rightful place come the next communities which