

"By which WILL we are saved"

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Date: 25 June 2016

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[0 : 0 0] Hebrews chapter 10, we read at verse 10, by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

By the which will we are sanctified. On the night on which our Lord is betrayed, there is a testing of his will as never before.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is holy God and as God, the divine nature of God the Son cannot be other than in perfect harmony with the divine will of God the Father.

Yet, our Lord Jesus Christ is also holy man and the human nature inevitably recoils from all that lies before him, as indeed it must.

Or we would surely question the sanity, the psychiatric balance, the realness of a human Jesus who faced the horrors of scourging and crucifixion with a serene indifference.

[1 : 1 2] It would not ring true. It would undermine the whole concept of his being wholly human like us.

The passion of our Lord, and the word passion, you know, we tend to associate with enthusiasm. Not somebody saying, oh, I'm passionate about this.

Or somebody has a passionate love affair. We often lose the sense of what passion actually means. Passion means suffering. That's why you've got descriptions like, you know, the passion of our Lord or the passion of the Christ or whatever.

Passion means suffering. And the sense in which it is commonly used, in other words, enthusiasm or, you know, losing ourselves in something. The origin of that is that to be no longer in control of oneself.

Where your emotions or where your feelings have taken over control of yourself so that you're effectively a slave to your feelings, a slave to your emotions.

[2 : 1 3] You're no longer free. You're no longer in control. You are effectively in bondage. This is understood as suffering. Which is why if you're in a passionate embrace, for example, the sense of abandonment.

You know, you don't have any control anymore. Your emotions, your feelings, your love or whatever sucked you in completely. You are no longer your own person. You're no longer free.

You are in bondage. You are suffering. And that is the literal origin of how we now say, oh, I'm passionate about this. I'm passionate about that. It's just become an adjective that means I'm really enthusiastic.

Or I like this a lot. That's not the actual meaning of the word. It means suffering. And so the passion of our Lord is something we associate usually with the cross itself.

Or perhaps beginning with his sufferings at the hands of the Roman soldiers who flogged him and crowned him with thorns. But the intensity of suffering and trial and temptation on behalf of his people begins earlier than that.

[3 : 21] I would suggest to you that, obviously, allowing for the fact his whole life he was potentially tempted by the evil one. I would suggest to you that the particular trial of his will begins in Gethsemane.

Certainly it is here that he begins to shed his blood. St. Luke's account of the Gospel tells us in chapter 22 and verse 44 it says, There is a particular medical condition called hematidrosis.

And the name refers to the excretion of blood through the sweat glands and skin pores. Hematidrosis. It occurs only under extreme conditions of intense stress.

And it is very, very rare. Outside the medical profession, few would know of it. And fewer still would recognize it.

But a doctor would recognize the symptoms if they were described to him. And Luke, uniquely amongst the Gospel narrators, Luke was a doctor.

[4 : 50] One could argue that Christ's whole life had been a preparation for this time. Which, of course, it had. But the real battle for the will of Christ begins in Gethsemane.

This hematidrosis, this beginning to sweat blood, it has been documented in other cases. You know, sometimes prisoners on death row and so on have been known to excrete blood through the sweat pores.

It's happened in one or two other extreme situations. But the number of documented cases, it's maybe like half a dozen in the last 2,000 years. It is very, very rare.

But it is known to happen. It is a medical condition which only perhaps a doctor would recognize. But here is in Gethsemane then the deliberate and pre-planned intention to be found that night by Judas and his mob.

And to die in accordance with the eternal plan of salvation. Jesus knows exactly what he is doing. You know, we read in John's account, chapter 18, verse 2.

[6 : 00] Judas also which betrayed him knew the place. For Jesus oft times resorted further with his disciples. He knew what he was doing.

And some commentators have drawn attention to the fact that the Jewish liturgy, for remember that this is a Passover time when the Jews had a particular liturgy, certain readings of the Old Testament scriptures for those evenings and for that night.

And some have drawn attention to the fact that the Jewish liturgy for that night included the verses from 1 Kings, chapter 2, and verse 37. Where the setting is that Shiriai, a Benjamite who had insulted King David in his lifetime.

And then he had come and pled with him to have mercy on him afterwards. And David said, well, nothing will happen to you as long as I'm alive. And then, of course, David died. But before David died, he said to Solomon, remember this guy that cursed me.

And when you get a chance, you know what to do with him. So Solomon had called Shiriai and he said to him, well, you know, your life will be spared as long as you stay in Jerusalem. But here we've got this passage, 1 Kings, chapter 2, verse 37.

[7 : 10] And it says, In other words, you cross the boundary of the Jerusalem city.

You cross the boundary, you cross the root Kidron. Thou shalt surely die. Thy blood shall be upon thine own head. And John, chapter 18, verse 1 says, When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into the which he entered and his disciples.

It's only one that explicitly mentions it in that way. And there is the suggestion that it's intended to chime in with what the readings from the Jewish liturgy were for that night.

That John would know that many of his readers, being Jews, would recognize the significance of that. Jesus went over the brook Kidron. And for that night, the reading was, The person that went over the brook Kidron would be put to death.

These are the things that draw attention, again, to the fact that this is all perfectly planned. It is from Matthew and Mark that we are given the name Gethsemane, which means literally olive press.

[8 : 29] It has the same function as a wine press. It pressurizes the fruit itself, so that the oil, in the case of the olives, or the juice, in the case of the grapes, would be squeezed out.

And it's located exactly where you would expect such an olive press to be located, namely at the foot of the Mount of Olives, probably in a particular garden area.

Now, we think of a garden as a place with flower beds and nicely trimmed lawns and wee pathways and ornamental. A garden in the Jewish cultural sense in the first century would simply mean a particularly cultivated or tended, probably watered area, probably enclosed, simply to stop animals wandering into it and trampling the plants so that the furrows underfoot.

So it's probably enclosed in a wee wall, perhaps, around it. It's enclosing the area in which the olive press would be, but it would be a larger area as well, watered and tended and looked after and so on.

So this is the sense of the garden death ceremony. So we're told that Jesus went over the brook Kidron, over to the other side, the foot of the Mount of Olives, where was a garden into the which he entered and his disciples.

[9 : 47] By this time, there are just eleven disciples, remember. And Jesus, with eight of them, Jesus leaves in a particular spot and he takes the three, Peter, James and John, with him a little further.

Now, this is pre-planned and deliberate, no doubt, and it may be so, but he is still heavy with the sorrow of it. And so the suffering, the very passion itself, begins.

Significantly, it is the three witnesses of his transfiguration that he now takes to be the witnesses of his agony. In other words, those who had seen displayed in his glory, this is the Son of God, this is God the Son, his Holy God, are now to see and to witness the agony that shows that he is holy man.

Because it is these three witnesses of his transfiguration that he now takes to be the witnesses of his agony. And it seems that being fully human as he was, the company and fellowship of his three closest disciples was indeed a comfort.

Matthew 26, verse 38, tells us that he asked them to, tarry ye here and watch with me. That's not in the sense of witness for me, you can testify to what you see, but rather just keep me company.

[11 : 11] Watch with me. The words, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, describe not simply or wholly the sense of his own approaching death.

Oh, I'm going to die, my soul is sorrowful unto death. But rather, we know that he laid down his life willingly anyway. No man took it from him. I mean, John 10 tells us this, and verse 17, Therefore, does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, and I may take it again.

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. So he's laying down his life willingly enough.

It's not simply the fact, I'm about to die. My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death. But rather, it is the sense of the wrath of God, which was due to man for sin, wrath which he was now called upon to bear, the agony of which had now begun.

The grief, the very intensity of sorrow, we can barely conceive of. He is ready to die from the weight of sorrow.

[12 : 29] Now, just try and imagine for a moment, supposing you and I had to bear the weight of our own sin. If we were to be condemned for our sin, we would be expiating that sin in hell for all eternity.

That's just my sin. If I were to take on one person's other sin, that would be double the intensity. You can't make the time longer. So you can't spoon it out longer.

It's like, you know, if you've got a thousand pounds to repay and somebody says, well, you've got to repay it over the course of a year. I think, okay, well, I've got 52 weeks to repay this thousand pounds.

So divide it up into 52 payments. So that makes, I don't know how much it makes, was it like 200 pounds or 20 pounds or something like that? 20 pounds a week or something like that.

And make it pay that thousand pounds. But if somebody says, well, you've still got that thousand pounds to repay, but now you've got to repay it in 10 days. Now that means that the time isn't, it's not made any longer, but the intensity of payment is now much, much greater.

[13 : 35] And the time from eternity cannot be extended. Can't say, well, you've got to pay for a hundred souls. You've got to pay for a thousand souls or the souls of all the elect, Jesus. So we can't extend however many lifetimes or however many eternities you've got.

So it's all intensely poured into this one time, this time of suffering, all payment for all the souls that shall ever be saved.

If I had to pay for one more soul other than myself in hell, then it would be double the intensity of suffering. If it was three souls, it would be three times the intensity of suffering.

If it was 10 souls, 10 times the intensity of suffering. We don't know the exact number of the elect. What do we know? That it must run into hundreds of thousands, millions, no doubt, of those who down all the years have been saved and amongst the elect.

These are the people whose sins Christ took upon himself, not spread over the course of an eternity, but spread over the course of less than 24 hours.

[14 : 46] We cannot begin to imagine the intensity of that suffering, the sheer weight of the wrath of God coming down upon that sin which he is beginning to bear.

he is ready to die from the sheer weight of sorrow. Now in Matthew's account, chapter 26, verse 39, we see a struggle not between a reluctance as opposed to a compliance.

We'll be turning over for a moment to Matthew. We see there this struggle going on there. Verse 39, where we read, he went a little further and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, know as I will, but as thou wilt. Remember what we read in the Hebrews there, chapter 10, in that passage that we read, where it said that, He delights, then said I, lo, verse 7, I come in the volume of the book and it's written on me to do thy will, O God, not my will, but thine be done.

This is not a struggle between a reluctant will on the one hand and a compliant will on the other, but rather the same solemn undertaking viewed from two different perspectives.

[16 : 15] The human and the divine is viewed from the two perspectives subjectively and objectively. Subjectively, as viewed by one who will be the subject of such fearful, intense, and degrading, painful suffering, the prospect before him is of itself utterly repugnant.

So totally revolting that only if it be the Father's will would ever induce him to taste of such a cup. Now, remember that we're not just talking about the physical sufferings of crucifixion.

We're talking about the sheer weight and intensity of sin that he is fearing. But even if you were to leave that aside, even if someone were to say to him, well, it's okay actually, Jesus, because now you don't have to take all this weight of something.

It's okay. It's just the crucifixion you have to worry about. Well, it's just the flogging and scourging and crown of thorns and the nails and the cross. That's all as though it were nothing.

Even if that was all, although it wasn't, of course, but even if that had been off, again, we can't begin to imagine the horrors of that.

[17 : 30] Oh, we get told the facts, but they're fairly minimized and sanitized. For someone in Jesus' day and age, the reality of crucifixion would be something that they saw in a regular basis up and down the highways and byways of Palestine and Judea.

every so often, every time there was a little slave revolt or somebody rebelled against Roman rule or somebody was convicted by the courts who was a slave, there they would be crucified at the ruleside.

Everybody would know what crucifixion involved and everybody would have seen it and witnessed it many times. Thank you, the reality of it. Leave aside the burden and the weight of sin.

Jesus would be well aware of what was involved in his forthcoming execution. So subjectively, it is repugnant. It is revolting.

He knows that he is the subject of it and it is a frightening prospect. But recognizing objectively that through this which he must pass, this was the sure and guaranteed way of achieving God's objective, the only way of purchasing salvation and forgiveness of sin for all the Lord's people in every age.

[19 : 00] It was the Father's will to save them and this was the way it had to be done. Here in such a light, his passion and his cross were, if you can say it reverently, all welcome undertaking.

Hebrews 12, we read at verse 2, that we're to be looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

You see, all the elect from all the Old Testament times, they would be in heaven by then on the promise of what Jesus was going to do.

Supposing he, for some reason, didn't carry it out, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Adam, Noah, Enoch, they're all no longer able to be in heaven.

In fact, the very premise of their being in the first place would all be called into doubt or question. God's faithfulness, God's all-knowing truth would be called into question.

[20 : 06] If Jesus for any reason doesn't do this, then not only, logically, would all these Old Testament saints have to be cast out of heaven, but they shouldn't be there in the first place as though God somehow didn't know that his son wouldn't go through with it, let alone us.

Since then, we wouldn't have a chance. Nobody would be saved if the price is not paid. Not a single soul. All the salvation of all the elect in every age comes down to this 24-hour period.

till this one man bears the weight of all their sin upon himself. It is all of Christ. And yet the knowledge of his achieving that for them is to him a joy.

For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross despising the shame. By revealing to us how clearly Christ felt in the one view, the gospel shows to us his beautiful oneness with ourselves in nature and feeling.

He is holy man. He does not relish the idea of being crucified. Nobody would. He doesn't. He is holy man. And by revealing how he regards it in the other view, we likewise have revealed to us his absolute obedience and subjection to the father's will because he is absolutely one with the father.

[21 : 37] John chapter 10 verse 30, I and my father are one. He is holy God. But that holy will is being tested to the ultimate extent.

The struggle is intense. The agony is acute. The extremity of the battle inducing, as already mentioned this, the shedding of blood through the sweat glands.

But the will is winning. So the flesh is being conquered and the turmoil is easing. Even as Luke gives us this description of what he was going through, he has him saying in verse 42 of Luke 22, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me.

Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. He is already acquiescing on the Father's will, and there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him, helping him.

The intensity is easing as the flesh is overcome. He is holy God, but he is holy man as well.

[22 : 55] As one commentator puts it, he has anticipated and rehearsed his final conflict on this stage and battle ground of an invincible will, by which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

It is his will which conquers even his holy human flesh. it is this will which is winning.

But later on it will be acted out in practice on the stage of Golgotha on the cross. Thy will be done. I delight to do thy will, O God.

This divine willingness to suffer is the final and fruitful result of Gensame. Whilst it is finished is the shelter of victory that bursts on the cross.

The will without the deed would have been vain and empty. Remember the parable Jesus told about the two sons who were asked to go and work in the vineyard. One said yes, of course I'll go father.

[24 : 04] But he doesn't go. And the other one says no, I'm not going to bother. But afterwards he feels guilty and he goes and does it. Yes, of course I'll go. His will was there but his flesh doesn't follow through.

Now if Christ's will had not followed through in practice, then it would have been an empty victory. It would have meant nothing. It would have been vain. But his work was consummated when the resolved will was carried on into the palpable deed.

And both will and deed combine to effect our salvation. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once ago.

is there anything that could so clearly demonstrate to us not only the love of God but also the deliberative intensity of his design, the purposeful certainty of his absolute determination to save his own beloved children.

He leaves nothing partially undone. He will not risk any particle of their salvation to be left to their own feeble and sin-ridden abilities.

[25 : 15] When he saves, he saves all the way up to glory. Hebrews chapter 7 verse 25 where it says, therefore, not just as some modern versions have, therefore he's able to save completely those who come to God through him, but therefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.

He has saved them all the way up to glory, all the way up to heaven. Perhaps by way of a perfect Calvinist illustration, Christ does it all, and the all too fleshly disciples do nothing.

They don't even witness his agony, they are out of it, hopeless, and in all reverence for this purpose, useless. Sorrow is indeed a massive drainer of strength and energy and alertness.

You know, Luke 22 verse 45 does it, they were sleeping for sorrow. Or, as some modern versions have it, and sometimes the modern versions do say it better, you know, exhausted from sorrow.

And we all know ourselves dying, so we've had days where just everything goes against you, everything seems to go wrong, and then somebody makes some little comment or other, which left to itself on an ordinary day and you think, oh yeah, you just shrug it off, but coming at the end of a day where just about everything has gone against you and everything has gone wrong, it's the last straw.

[26 : 41] And the effect, apart from making you gloomy and depressed, is so draining, it just wears you out. Adversity is very draining, sorrow is exhausting.

The disciples were sleeping for sorrow, exhausted for sorrow, but at the end of the day, that means they don't do a thing. they can't help even lifting one finger.

There is nothing they do. It is all done by Christ. But is this not an apt illustration of our own part in the work of redemption? Nothing at all. Not even spectators, just rather passive, helpless, like the apostles.

We're not saved by the apostles. We're not saved by any saints who supposedly intercede for us with Jesus. We are saved by Christ and by him alone. And who knows how long our Lord wrestled in the intensity of prayer.

When he came back to his disciples, had he been away a full hour? Could you not watch one hour? Was it literally an hour? Sixteen minutes? Possibly. Or indeed possibly longer? Or was it just a turn of phrase?

[27 : 52] Could he even watch for a short time? Certainly it is a fact that the intense wrestling with the Lord or sometimes times of real prayerfulness could cause one to lose track of time.

But it certainly makes it pass a lot quicker. I'm quite sure when Jesus was out all night on the mountain praying he wasn't sort of mentally looking at the equivalent of his watch and thinking of watching this guy, oh when is it going to be done?

James is out here for ages. No, he is intense in his relationship with his father. The time is just falling away. The hours are just passing with the intensity of that prayer time.

It makes time just seem unreal. The huge track of time certainly makes it pass a lot longer. But at same token, was he away another hour, a second full hour when he rebuked him the first time and then the third time?

Well, it's possible the first time was a long one, the second time was a short one as he came back to check in them to see if they were still awake and if they were praying as they ought to be. But no, asleep again so maybe he just leaves them for longer the third time.

[28 : 53] The fact is we don't know. It's all speculation. But clearly the single sentences that are recorded for us in the gospel accounts do not reflect the time or the intensity involved in each prayer session.

But it would be no surprise if it was indeed a good three hours between his arrival in Gethsemane and his arrest. But we see here God's great providence and love to the son who was called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice.

His father will not allow him to be disturbed at all before the internal battle of the will has been won and settled in peace.

Think about that for a minute. Why didn't Judas come two hours sooner? Why didn't they appear to arrest him right at the beginning of the evening when he was first in Gethsemane? No, his father knows he has to do this wrestling.

He has to fight in prayer. He has to see off the devil. And only when he is finally at peace on my will will die be gone.

[30 : 02] When he is completely submitted body and soul, flesh and spirit to his father's will. God's love. The Lord does not allow him to be disturbed in peace.

Then Judas comes. God's promise is perfect. Even the arrival now will betray her. This too is of the father's love because we know ourselves we can say look I'm resolved to do this.

This is it. I've decided. And I say well maybe I shouldn't know. Maybe I should think over that one again. God does not leave his son one moment longer.

Once the will is resolved, once it is set, he doesn't leave him squirming in agony for one moment longer or sweating or anxious to allow conquered doubts or temptations, once banished to have time to resurface while he waits.

So likewise we may be assured that whatever the Lord may call upon us to endure or to undertake or to suffer for his sake, we will be given all the time we need in advance to prepare and once ready we will not be called upon to endure one moment longer than is absolutely necessary.

[31 : 24] Remember 1 Corinthians 10, 13 there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you're able but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it.

Now we know that there are dangers, difficulties, fears that we must face, all of us must face, but we have to wrestle with the Lord in prayer beforehand.

Give him no peace until he has given you his blessing. and then when that your will is come in harmony with his then you will have his peace.

Give him no peace until he has given you his. peace. And that will only come when you will are subjected to his, when you will is in harmony with his. Then let us face the coming onslaught with wakeful dignity and godly strength, not our own.

we all have things that we must face, we all have things that we will be afraid of, but the way to face them is to take them to the Lord, who alone has power to overcome them, who alone has power to defeat them, bring them to the Lord, wrestle with the Lord in prayer, give him no peace.

[32 : 47] He has given you his, when he has given you his, you will know you have his strength, you have his blessing, you have his perfect time and ability and will to face whatever is coming with his godly strength.

When we look again at the example of Christ in Gethsemane, remember how we see, you know, the example, the fear of those who come to arrest him, you know, he says, who are you looking for?

And they say, Jesus of Nazareth. And when he says that, they all fall back, and they are terrified, they're terrified of his very calmness, they're terrified of the fact, why isn't he cringing, why isn't he running away, what's the trick, who's he got hidden behind the trees?

Are we going to be ambushed? Is something wrong? Because he's completely calm, and he's completely unafraid. He says, well, I'd be. And he says again, who are you looking for? Jesus of Nazareth, I've told you, you can let these other ones go.

He's completely fearless, yet his willing self-giving of himself puts the fear of God in them. they did take him, he gave himself up to them.

[33 : 57] Matthew tells us that Jesus says he could simply easily have asked his father for 12 legions of angels. No doubt 12 is specified because there was Jesus and there was the 11 disciples, would be perceived as needing protection if he did summon them.

How many is 12 legions? Well, the full complement of a Roman legion was 6,000 men. So that would be 12 times 6,000. 72,000 angels Jesus could have asked for, just like that.

But he doesn't. The will of Christ stood firm to the end by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Alas, not so the will of the disciples. When it seemed nothing more they could do, their will to continue to disappear. They fled. When the honour and dignity of our Lord or his word is under attack, we will always have that choice to follow or to flee.

Usually what breaks our courage is the whisper of Satan that there's nothing you can do anyway. It's not like you can stop him being arrested.

[35 : 12] All it means is that they'll take you too. You've done everything. You've been here with him. You've stayed with him in the garden. There's nothing else you can do. They've got him. What are you going to do? Are you going to get arrested as well? Oh, nothing else you can do.

What's the point in that? You can't help him now. You can't change the way things are turning out. You must do yourself now. Now, just for a moment, speculation, what verdict do you think Christian history would have given of the one disciple, if there had been such, just suppose one disciple, let's take one of the minor ones, say, Bartholomew or something, had said, well, I'm not going to run, I'm going to stay with Jesus.

And had been arrested with him and dragged off with him and condemned with him, what verdict do you think history would have given of that one faithful disciple? He would have been, oh, wow, way up there, alongside Jesus, the one faithful one.

Maybe that's why the Lord didn't permit that to happen. There's been enough problems with people exalting saints as though they were worshipping angels as though they were needed to intercede for us to Christ.

You know, Christ is alone, our Savior. Not one of the disciples stood fast with him. They fled, they were weak, just like us.

[36 : 27] But the devil will always tell you to flee. Jesus will always call you to fall. I'll say that again. The devil will always tell you to flee.

Jesus will always call you to follow. Of course, in fairness to the disciples, most of them did end up dying for faithfulness to Christ, but just not that night.

This wasn't their time. As Jesus said of his chapters, you know, Luke 22 verse 53, this is your hour and the power of darkness. But it's precisely in the hour of darkness that he calls us to be the light of the world.

But for the disciples that time would come and our time will come. Unless the Lord comes back first, we're all going to die of something and if not for him, then for what?

As has been said in secular arc, of course, every man dies, not every man truly dies. part of living for Jesus is remembering his dying.

[37 : 45] It took a massive and supernatural exercise of the human and divine will to go through with that dying.

But he did it, and he did it faithfully to the end. Above when he said sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin, no, it's not, neither has pleasure the end which are offered by the law.

Then said he, lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He take away the first, that he may establish the second, by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once and for all.

Once and for all he has died for his people and once more and today he calls them to live for him.

and to live in him. And if you do, and keep on living in him and for him, then I guarantee you by the time you get to the dying part, it will have ceased to be a problem long ago.

[38 : 54] Let's pray.