Sermon- To Be Troubled is Human…

Scripture: Jn 12:27-36 Sunday, May 5, 2019

Last Sunday I had shared with you how Jesus determined that it was time for him to die. It was when the Greeks started coming to see Jesus. Because at that point Jesus realized that the impact of his ministry had overflowed out of the Jewish world and into a new people group. Reaching the rest of the world was the job of the Jews and Jesus was never into taking away other people’s jobs. But it was also a signal to Jesus that it was time for him to move on to his next job. And his next job was his work on the cross. Now, as Jesus gets ready to do this, he takes time to explain to his disciples why he has to die. As I mentioned last week, in this instance Jesus explains his impending sacrifice not in terms of his unique death but in more general terms about how dying in general produces new life. But because he explains it in general terms it also plants the thought in his disciples that some sort of “dying to themselves” in a necessary part of being Christ’s servants. And it is in following Jesus in this way that his servants will reap honor upon themselves by their heavenly Father.

Today we continue examining this conversation between Jesus and his followers. Our passage today starts at verse 27. Even though Jesus is very clear about what he has to do and why he has to do it, it does not mean that dying on the cross was going to be easy for Jesus. In fact, knowing the torture that lies ahead is torture in itself, don’t you think? I certainly am glad that I never had the ability to peek into the future of my life. But Jesus does. And as Jesus peaks ahead, he utters these painful words, “Now my soul is deeply troubled”. Jesus is talking to his disciples not as God to man but as one human being to another. Now walking into your death goes against every human instinct there is, isn’t it? But I want us to come real close to Jesus. In fact, I want you to put your ear right against his chest and hear his heart beat. Can you hear his heart thumping at this moment? Can you feel his anguish? Just ponder that anguish for a moment. Have you had times in your life when you were deeply troubled, and you were in anguish? What did you do at that time? Different people react differently. But this is a moment when your body is experiencing extremely high stress. The stress hormones are racing. But in our minds it feel like the ground beneath us is shaking and our entire world is breaking apart, right? Our mind is full of questions. What is going on? What is going to happen? Even, what are you doing God? Even, why are you forsaking me God? And at times like this, we don’t even know what to pray for right? Actually, Jesus is also for a minute pondering the question of what he should pray, in a moment like this. The reason why it is difficult to pray is because in your anguish sometimes you cannot see the way forward. Because you think of one option but then there may be a huge downside to that option. And you think of Option B and Option B has a big downside to it as well. Sometimes the solutions we think of are worse than the problem. And we don’t know what to pray for. Jesus experienced exactly this dilemma as he looked at what was waiting for him. When we are in pain, we want the pain to go. But Jesus could not simply pray the pain away. “ Father, save me from this hour” was an example of a prayer where the solution is worse than the problem. Sometimes in difficult situations, the solutions that come to mind are worse than the problem. And all we are left with are questions. …

But fortunately for us. Jesus does not leave us in this dilemma. By his example he takes us out of this dilemma. And he does that with what he prays. “Father, bring glory to your name”. In other words, when all the questioning is done and Jesus knows that there is no other choice but to walk the painful road, he takes his eyes off himself and his pain and puts the focus at a point above the cloud line, where the sun is always shining, where God dwells and prays, “Father glorify yourself”. What is unsaid but is implied is “glorify yourself in this desperate situation that I face”. When the going gets tough and you don’t even know what to ask God for, because you can’t see three feet ahead of you, simply, take your eyes off yourself, focus on God and your ultimate life purpose. We have one ultimate purpose, right? It is to glorify God. So tell God, I don’t know what to pray. But I know that my ultimate life purpose is to glorify you. So glorify yourself in this, Father. All the details are in your hands. When you don’t know what to pray, there is a three word prayer that Jesus prayed that is sufficient for all people and every situation, no matter how distressing. Glorify yourself Father. …

What follows in our passage is fascinating because God talks back. It is the only time in John that we hear God speaking directly. In the synoptics we hear God’s voice during Jesus’ baptism and also at the Mount of Transfiguration. But you don’t have those two instances in John. This is the only place you will hear God speak in John. And God says, “I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again”. To fully understand this phrase we have to add in the same part of the sentence that was omitted even in Jesus prayer. Jesus’ prayer if you absorb the context into it really was, “help me glorify your name in what you are about to do in my situation”. So his heavenly Father is now replying , “I have already brought glory to my name through your life up to this point and I will again bring glory to my name through the rest of your life and what is about to happen”. Everybody agrees that my additions to this prayer are in agreement with the rest of scripture? Well, if you don’t come see me later 😊 But here is what the Father is saying to Jesus in his reply. Look Son, you have been successful in your mission up to this point. You have done what you were supposed to do. You have lived your life in the center of the Father’s will. As a result your life has already brought glory to your Father. And guess what? You will continue to be successful in the future as well. You will achieve your life’s purpose. And in what is about to happen, even though you do not know all the details, know this, I will ensure that you will bring glory to your heavenly Father, in your situation. Do you hear these words of assurance from God the Father to Jesus in response to Jesus’ prayer at one of the most agonizing times of his life? But here is the thing folks. Through this conversation, Jesus is literally revealing to us, what we will hear back from our heavenly Father, in response to the prayer, “Glorify your name” in our moment of utter desperation.

Now, if you are thinking, well that was true for Jesus, but how do you know that those words of the heavenly Father mean what you said for me? Well, you know how I know? Because in verse 30, Jesus says, buddy, “that voice was for your benefit, not mine”. Let me clarify. That voice does serve two purposes. Don’t misunderstand. The voice is first talking to Jesus, telling him that Jesus has glorified the Father and will glorify the Father in what is about to happen on the cross. However, when Jesus says, it was not for his benefit, he only is saying that because he already knew that. That voice was for our benefit, so that we can see the interaction between the heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. But also, so that we can learn something from it for our own lives. If that message was only for Jesus Christ, we would never have heard it, right? We have no capacity to spy on the conversations between the heavenly Father and Son. We only know what has been revealed to us. And if it was revealed to us, it is for our benefit. Yours and mine. And Jesus wants us to know that when we pray that prayer, glorify your name, then our Heavenly Father will reassure us that through his sovereign power, he will ensure that through our situation, he will enable us to bring glory to his name and thereby fulfill our life’s purpose even through but especially through our worst moments. “I have glorified my name and will glorify my name through you in the whatever you are going through” The words, of our Heavenly father. …

Of course at this time the crowd hears all this and tells Jesus, we understood from scripture that the Messiah would live forever, so if you are the Messiah why are you talking about dying? Well, first off what scripture are these people referring too right? Well, it could be Isaiah 9, 6 and 7 which says, “For a child is born to us,
    a son is given to us.
The government will rest on his shoulders.
    And he will be called:
Wonderful Counselor,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Is+9&version=NLT#fen-NLT-17812d)] Mighty God,
    Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
**7**His government and its peace
    will never end.
He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David
    for all eternity.
The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven’s Armies
    will make this happen!” Sounds pretty everlasting isn’t it? It could be Ps 89:35–37 or 2 Sam 7:13 texts that talk about the promise of an everlasting kingdom to King David. It could be any of those passages. But the sentiment of the people is something like this. They have just come to accept Jesus as the Messiah that God promised. From their understanding, such a figure would be something of a divine superhero. For the Jewish people, Jesus had just proved himself to be this superhero with all his sign miracles. Now they were expecting this superhero to overthrow the big villains of their life. So you can imagine their disappointment if just after the superhero had shown the people all his superpowers now tells them he is going to die. That is one hell of an anticlimax, don’t you think? Nobody is going to buy tickets for that movie for sure 😊 And it is that disappointment and frustration that you can hear in their voice when they ask the question, “How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man anyway?” You see this is like the “silence of God” moment. You have a problem, you know God can solve the problem. But you have waited and waited and either the problem has not gotten solved or it has gotten worse and you ask, when are the fulfillment of God’s promises coming? How long will it take to answer God? Why does the Son of Man seem to be dead to me? …

And what is Jesus’ response? Well, Jesus knows that it is not time to debate the crowds. It is not time to explain to them who the Son of Man is or what he came to do. All he says is, “folks, my light will shine for just a while longer. So walk in the light while you still can”. Then he says in verse 36, “put your trust in the light. When you do, then you will become children of light”. What Jesus is saying is this. You will not understand everything. But, He is the light of the world. Trust him while you still have time. If you do, then your heavenly Father will do what he has promised. But remember, you and I have a window of opportunity to trust God when it really matters. So pray, hear, Your heavenly father speaking to you and trust God to come through.

Listen, if you are His disciples, you will have your cross to pick up. That means the going will get tough. And it will get so tough that you won’t even know what to pray. When you are in that moment, simply pray, Father, glorify your name. Say it with me, father, glorify your name. Then simply, pause and listen. You will hear your heavenly father, speak these reassuring words to you. My son, my daughter, I have brought glory to my name through you in your journey through life till this point, if you have put your faith in my hands. And so now, even in what you face, I will do the same. I will glorify myself through your journey into this challenge. All I ask of you is that you continue to trust me. If you are listening this morning or online and have not come to put your trust in Jesus Christ yet, I invite you to do it right now. It is not a promise that your life will be scrubbed clean of all problems. Not at all. But you will have the assurance of our heavenly Father that he will glorify himself through you and because of that, everything that you go through, all your joys and sorrows, the good and the bad, everything in your life will be filled with meaning and purpose. This life will start making sense to you, you will be able to journey through life with God by your side and once you have completed this journey successfully, you will begin a new journey in eternity that is too glorious to understand.

But if you have already put your faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, know this friends, To be troubled is human, but to glorify God in your darkest moment is divine.

No matter what you are going through, God will come through. He will have the victory. He will even glorify himself through you. This is how God transforms the darkest moments into amazing light. And when it feels like it is taking forever, trust God and keep walking in His light. This is our instruction from the Lord. Trust God and keeping walking in the light. The end will come. And it will be glorious. Let us pray.