

How to Respond to Pressure

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[0 : 00] So while you're finding it, let me introduce what we're going to get into tonight. One of the biggest problems, you should be aware of this by now if you've been saved any amount of time and if you have a desire to know the Lord and to please the Lord, one of the biggest problems that you encounter on a day-to-day basis is your old nature.

That's your, we call it your flesh. The Bible calls it the old man. And that guy doesn't want to go away. He just doesn't want to go away. And one day, Paul said, I thank God through Jesus Christ, my Lord, one day he's going to be put away for good.

But that's not yet. And so for now, we have this flesh to deal with. And when things are going smooth in life, you kind of maybe can keep him in check and kind of keep him at bay and you can put on a smile even if you're not as pure as you pretend.

And you can still kind of have some sense of spirituality and a desire when things are good, a desire to walk with God. But a real indicator of how close the old man is, just how much he is right there, ready to take over, a real indicator is when things start to get tough, when pressure mounts, when things in life go wrong.

It can really bring out the worst in all of us. You know it. You know what I'm talking about. It's just when something doesn't happen good, you tend to snap or you just tend to be shorter with people.

[1 : 34] Or you know what I mean. Just a bad day brings out the worst in you. And it reveals to you that your flesh is right there. And sometimes you may overcome him with the fruit of the Spirit.

And maybe it rises up and you put it down with the Word of God and walking with Christ. And that's great. That's kind of the goal. But it doesn't happen like that all the time.

And as I said, the bad days and the tough circumstances, the pressure of life brings him out. But he kind of like gives him an opening and he takes it.

And I want to preach to you tonight about how to respond to pressure. And I think Jesus Christ here in John 13 is a great example of how to respond to pressure to show us how we can handle situations we face without giving into our flesh.

And so that's what we want to look at tonight. And we're going to start in John 13 and verse 1. And before we do, I'd love to pray once more and ask God to take over right now.

[2 : 41] So our God, we ask that you would do that. That you'd just seal in our hearts and in our minds what these words of your book say. And God, draw out truth.

Help us to understand. And may this occurrence, this historical event, this night, that we read about what took place and how Jesus Christ responded, how he handled himself.

May this mean something to us tonight. May this guide us into how we should respond. And may there be fruit that is worthy that comes out of us.

Lord, just use this time. Please help us. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. All right. I want you to read with me the beginning here of this chapter. Verse 1 says, Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father.

And right there I want to pause and notice that phrase, that Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world. This hour is referred to even by the Lord Jesus Christ back in John chapter 2, at the very beginning of his ministry, when he turned the water to wine and his mom, she came up and said, Hey, you need to do something here.

[4 : 03] And he said, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour has not yet come. And that was three and a half years ago. In John chapter 7 and in John chapter 8, the Bible says that no man laid hands on him because his hour was not yet come.

And that was a few years ago. But here in chapter 13, he knew that his hour was come. The end is in sight.

It's imminent. It's so close. Before, it was coming. It was out there in the future. It was every day is a day closer.

But now, this is his last evening on earth. It's happening tonight. And I know in John 13, you might feel like you're in the middle, but John's different than the other gospels.

By chapter 12, like we're getting into the last week. And at 13, going through 14, 15, 16, 17, this is it. There's a lot of information John gives us about that night.

[5 : 09] When his hour was come. Now, he had already informed his disciples prior to this evening. More than one time, he informed them that he would be delivered unto the Gentiles.

Not the Jews, the Gentiles. They're going to deliver me to the Gentiles. That would be the Roman authorities. I'm going to be mocked. I'm going to be spitefully entreated and spitted on.

He already told his disciples that they shall scourge me. They're going to put me to death. And now, what we're reading, he can feel it. It's here.

Imagine, imagine the kind of frame of mind that you might be in if you knew that in just a few hours from right now, like I'm going to go home.

And before, when I get home, there's going to be people waiting for me. And they're going to take me downtown. And from there, it's going to go downhill fast. I'm going to be in a jail cell. And I'm going to get beat up like I've never gotten beaten before in my life.

[6 : 12] And they're going to take me out there. And before this night's over, I'm going to be in the electric chair. Or by tomorrow sometime, I'm going to be murdered. Imagine just standing right here knowing that while we're sitting here at peace, one with another.

You can imagine, I'm not making this up, that in this moment, he's feeling it. He knew, it said, the text said, Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of the world.

It's no longer just getting closer. It's here. The time has come. This is the dreaded hour of his betrayal, of his arrest, of his trials, of his beatings, of his suffering, and of his agonizing death on the cross.

This is the hour that he would bear in his own body our sins on the tree. This is the hour that he would be made to be sin for us. This is the hour that in the garden, he said, the time is at hand.

This is the hour where the Father would forsake him, whereas the psalmist prophesied, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And as the psalmist prophesied, they parted my garments.

[7 : 25] And as he said, they tell all my bones, they stare at me. All of these things the bulls of Bashan beset me about. He knows what's coming, and it's coming.

It's here. And so in his time on earth, remember, he's experienced some hardships. He's dealt with some things in his public ministry. He's had people hate him.

He's had people say terrible things to him. He said that the Son of Man hath no place where to lay his head. He didn't own property and have some just beautiful spread and just enjoy it and go out and sip sweet tea on the porch each night watching the sunset.

He didn't have that kind of life at all. He was always going and always moving and always ministering and always being rejected and always going. The Bible says that he said this about a prophet, speaking really of himself, referring to his own family, saying that he's not without, implying that he was without honor of his own country and kin and house.

He knew that. He endured constant opposition from the Jewish leadership. So he knew those things, but this was different. This was about to escalate much this night.

[8 : 38] This hour would magnify all of the evil of man in the face of God, including those spiritual wickedness in high places against him.

And the thing is, all of what man and his sin being against God, Jesus Christ was going to be the one that felt that in his body this night. And I don't want to say, don't take this wrong, but God the Father determined this to happen, but it wasn't happening to him.

It was happening to Jesus Christ. And he on earth in a man's body and flesh, the hours come to where what the Father has determined me for, the body that he has prepared me for, it's coming.

And I'm about to face this thing. And it's just going to be a short time that he's saying, Father, let this hour pass from me. Let this cup pass from me. He's going to feel it.

And this hour that comes is going to change the course of history. So, I'm saying all of that to show you, to get you to realize and to believe that, that the going was getting tough for the Lord Jesus

Christ this night, right here.

[9 : 55] Worse than anything else, worse than anything he's ever going to deal with, or had to, not even close. So, how would the Lord Jesus Christ respond to this pending pressure, to this, what the Bible calls this looming hour of darkness?

How would he respond to that? I want to analyze tonight some thoughts here from this chapter and these verses about his response and learn how we can respond to the pressures that we face in life.

Let's let Jesus Christ be our example. Please, please notice what we're talking about this hour. He knew it was there. So, know that all of that is on the table and let's see what he does.

In verse number one, I'll read it again now, before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, notice this now, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

You know what his response to the pressure was of the moment? He's still loving them. He's still loving. Jesus Christ is still loving his disciples.

[11 : 06] Loving what it says in that passage, he loved his own which were in the world. He loved them unto the end. In these moments of pressure, you know what our tendencies are?

It's to become self-absorbed with our problems and to just be constantly thinking about all the problems and to feel like you're the victim and to seek and even demand in some people's manner pity.

Everybody needs to pity me and needs to see how hard I have it and see how bad this is. The pressure's real and we seek pity and we demand it.

But Christ looked upon these men and he loved them. Look at chapter 15 and verse 13 where the Bible says, Jesus said this in the same night, the same discourse.

These chapters just go on. He said in verse 13, Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. And so Jesus Christ is prepared to display the greatest love that's ever been manifested on this earth.

[12 : 17] He's prepared to do this. He's going to give his life for these men. He loved them until the end. He's not going to die for himself or for his own sake or for his sins.

But he's going to be dying for the men that were present with him in the room that night. And I'm going to take a little side note here on a little bit of doctrine to teach you and we'll come right back into where we are.

But it's this display of selfless love of Jesus Christ that opens the door for these and for us to understand or experience the love of the Father.

The love that God has for only his own. Now look at chapter 14 and I'll let you the scripture speak for itself.

14 and verse 21. Again, all of this is in the same night. Verse 21. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.

[13 : 25] And he that loveth me, notice, shall be loved of my Father. And I will love him and will manifest myself to him. He that loveth me, it's, what I'm going to show you is that access to the Father's love comes exclusively through a relationship with the Son.

Apart from the Son, forget about ever experiencing the love of the Father. It's not available. You've got to be in the Son. Look at verse 23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he'll keep my words and my Father will love him.

And we will come unto him and make our abode with him. But it's going to have to do with that man loving his words and loving the Son. And then the Father takes notice of that man. I'll show it to you clear.

Look at chapter 16. A little bit later, same discourse. He hasn't stopped talking. By verse number six, chapter 16, he speaks about a future day in verse 26.

But in verse 27, he says, For the Father himself loveth you because ye have loved me and have believed that I came out from God.

[14 : 38] See, their connection to Jesus Christ is what gets them the love of the Father. Look at chapter 17 and verse 20. If you're in the Son, you can experience the love that the Father has for the Son.

If you're not in the Son, you're not going to know the Father's love. Verse number 20, 1720. And the Bible says, Neither pray I for these alone, but for them, that'd be you and me, for them also it shall

believe on me through their word.

Now he's praying to the Father this night. Verse 21, That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, that's key, and thou in me.

If Jesus Christ isn't in you, the Father's not in you. His love's not toward you. But I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

[15:52] Father, or verse 26, And I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

So I hope you see that. The love that the Father has is through the Son. You've got to get connected to the Son. You're not going to get to the love of God outside of Jesus Christ. And we could go on to Calvary, showing you that's where the love is displayed. And this was manifested, the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. God hath commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

So we'll get off with that for the moment, but come back to chapter 13, where we started. The response that Jesus Christ has for pressure, all the pressure that this night brought on, He didn't stop loving.

He loved them unto the end. He's not seeking their pity. He's not seeking pampering. He kept His mind on why He came, that these sinful men, that He's seated around, these sinful men are in desperate need of me, a Savior.

[17:05] They need me. I'm going to lay down my life for them. I'm going to love them unto the end. And that pressure was real, and instead of just whining and sitting back and getting all quiet, He loved them.

As a matter of fact, He wasn't quiet at all. He wasn't just turning into some inverted, just mellow out, and you can understand how you can kind of get that gaze, that stare, and just not be hearing what's on in the room because you're so consumed.

That's not Him. His mouth's running. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. He's doing something. We'll get to that later. Christ loved them unto the end.

Let's make a little application here if we can. He loved His own, it said in verse 1. He loved His own which were in the world. You know what you should do when you're faced with tough times and with pressure?

You should love your own, your own that's in this world. Your spouse, your kids, your parents, your brothers, your sisters, of your own blood or in Christ.

[18:18] You should love your own that are in this world, just like Jesus Christ did. Look, what I'm trying to get at is you have responsibilities toward others, whether it's a parent or a child or any of that.

You have responsibilities in relationship to others and they don't change because you're having a bad day. They don't change, as Christ showed, even if it's the last night of your life.

And that could be tough. That sounds kind of like, come on, you've got to give somebody a break, right? He loved them to the end. Love is a fruit of the Spirit.

Love resides within the new man and love can overcome the works of the flesh. And what I'm getting at is just because the pressure comes on doesn't give you the right to lash out or to blow up or to vent on people that you love that are your own.

But aren't those the ones that we flip out on? The ones that are closest to us? The ones that love us and we love them and then we treat them bad when the pressure gets on.

[19:24] It's easy to say. But there's Jesus Christ, our example on how to handle pressure. Love your own which are in this world. Love them till the end.

Husbands, love your wives. Love one another. Love the brethren. Respond to the pressures of this life by loving the ones that God gave you to love.

Don't stop loving them. Instead, put your energy into showing that love because it'll help you and because it'll lift you up and because better than all of that, it will be pleasing to God.

That's what's going to happen. Christ didn't turn all the attention onto his issues that night. He didn't even blame those men. You bunch of sinners. You're the reason that I'm in this spot right now.

He didn't turn it on to them either, did he? Instead, he continued to love others. Love those that God gave him to love even to the end.

[20 : 25] Amen. And you and I, we're carnal. We're shallow. We like the sympathy. We want the pity when things are tough.

And we want it too much, more than we should. That's not a fruit of the Spirit. But the first one, as you know it, is love. And so turn that desire for pity and sympathy into showing Christ's love to those that are your own in this world.

That's what he did. Now there's something else he did. Look at verse 2 and 3. It says in chapter 13, verse 2, And supper being ended, The devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he was come from God and went to God, he riseth from supper and he began to do something. But I want to backtrack to verse 2 and 3 and see that what's happening in the room isn't even what's being discussed there.

What's happening in the room is going to, this foot washing is going to transpire as we'll see in a moment. But there's activity going on that his disciples are completely aware of.

[21 : 44] The devil is active right now having put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him. The devil has activated his plan because the hour has come.

The devil, you could say, has activated his soldier. Notice over in verse 27 of chapter 13 it says, And after the sop, Satan entered into him.

Speaking of Judas Iscariot. The time is ticking and Christ's death is coming tonight and the scripture is being fulfilled right here and right now, verse number 18, he makes mention of that scripture being fulfilled by Judas Iscariot.

In verse 18, Christ says, I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen, but that the scripture may be fulfilled. He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

It's happening right now. All of that scripture, it's happening tonight. But Jesus, what's his response to that pressure?

[22 : 54] His response is, he's still trusting God. In verse 3, Jesus, knowing that the Father hath given all things into his hands and that he was come from God and went to God.

He knows what the scripture says. He knows how this is supposed to unfold and he's not shook. He displays in just that statement, suppers ended, the devil's started the whole thing, the work's going on, he knows the hours come and Jesus knows something too.

He knows what the Father has declared about this night and his plan and he knows at the end of the verse he says, and went to God. He knows, I'm going back in the end.

So this isn't going to defeat me and it's not going to keep me down. He displays a confidence here. He's not shook by this scheme of the wicked one because that scheme is afoot and it's ever, he's present in the room with him and the whole time Christ even sees the scripture being fulfilled right in front of his eyes.

There it is. You're the one. You're not all clean. I know who I'm talking about and then, you know, if you know the story, you know the disciples get wondering when he says that and he lets them know who it is as Christ responded by still trusting God.

[24 : 16] He knows the hour is at hand in verse number one. In verse 11, he knew who should betray him. He knew that. In verse 38, the last verse of the chapter, he knows that his disciples are going to deny him.

Speaking specifically to Peter, but elsewhere, it says that he told them all that they would like, likewise said they all, they were all, and he said, no, you're all going to forsake me and flee, and they did. They all said they'd stick with him.

Christ knew who would betray him, who would deny him, and yet he's calm, and yet he's confident. Why? Because he's still trusting God. Because he still is believing the scripture.

When the pressure's on, when it's happening right in front of his face, he's still like a rock because of what the scripture said. Because my father said, this is the way it's going to go, and it's going to go that way, and I trust him.

He's still trusting God. How are you going to respond to the pressure? When the hour comes upon you, you know that night that the father forsook him?

[25 : 26] Do you know that the father forsook him that night, and he cried out, why hast thou forsaken me? And what did he have in that moment? He had one thing.

He had the scripture. He had the scripture that he was trusting in that said, thou wilt not leave my soul in hell. I know what's going to happen here, but I also know what you said.

And he didn't have the father anymore, the connection. But he had the scripture. And that's, from what I see, that's all he had that time, that moment when he's hanging on the tree.

Still trusting God. Still believing the scripture. And how can you overcome the pressure in life? You can trust God. That sounds so cliché. It sounds so, I hear it coming off my lips like, eh, trust God. Maybe you don't understand. You need to learn how to trust God. And you need to learn how to claim what the scripture says to you. That God is not going to violate his word.

[26 : 27] He's too holy for that. And if he said it to you, learn how to take it to you. And believe it. And trust the word of God. Trust that he'll never, ever, ever leave you nor forsake you.

Trust that he careth for you. Trust that God cannot lie. Trust that when a temptation or a trial comes on, that God is faithful, who will not suffer to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape it, that ye may be able to bear it.

Learn how to take hold of that one. Trust it. It's not going to kill you. It's not going to bury you. God will make a way. So the pressure got on and the pressure was hot and Christ is still trusting God. He's believing the word of God. And Christian, hold on to the scripture and believe the scripture that God did not lie to you and you may not understand why it's happening and here's what you don't do. This is the best thing you can do is exercise faith. Exercise faith and that will please God. I can assure you that will please God. That will get his attention when you exercise faith and say, Lord, I'm going to believe that this is in your hands.

[27 : 53] get on your knees and lay it at the foot of the cross or lay it rather at the throne of grace and say, God, I can't do much here. I can trust you and I'm going to.

The pressure gets on. You can't resolve the problem but you can leave it with the Lord and you can do what Christ did, just rise from supper like he did in verse 4 and got going.

Trust in God. Jesus Christ knew some things and he rested his troubled heart in what he knew to be certain and what he knew to be true and there's faith and oh, it's glorious.

It's a great example for us when the pressure gets on. There's one more thing I want us to see here in verses 4 and 5, how Jesus Christ responded to the pressure.

First, he's still loving his own unto the end. Secondly, he's still trusting God despite the pressure. and thirdly, he's still ministering.

[28 : 56] He's still ministering. Verse 4, he riseth from supper and laid aside his garments and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Now, this is really, really, really, really, really interesting because unless I miss something and I'm, I don't know, somebody check me on this, fact check, I don't see anywhere in the scripture where a man washes another man or anyone's feet for that matter.

I don't see it anywhere in the Bible and maybe I missed something, I could have. I searched a little while today and I just didn't have the time to really dig too hard. And this is interesting, what that would tell me is that what's happening here is kind of wild.

There's references, most of the time the references are that the host provided water for them to wash their feet. You washed your own feet.

Sometimes there was a reference, I want to say, was it Abigail and David where she just says, I'll be a handmaid to wash the feet of your servants or something.

[30 : 13] She makes that comment. I think that was where it was. I'm not positive. And that's maybe that happened, maybe it's just her talking, being a humble offer. There's Mary that washed the feet of Jesus with her hair, but that's a rare thing.

Most of the time it's, you know, Christ said that time, he goes, thou didn't, thou just, you know, I came to your house and you didn't provide water for me to wash my feet, but she did what she did. So what I'm showing you, I'm thinking this is a very weird thing for a man to be girding himself like this, pouring water into a basin, what in the world is he doing, and then beginning to wash their feet. I think this is out of place from the way they were raised, their whole world. They've never, in my opinion, have they seen this their whole life, and yet Jesus Christ riseth from supper, lay aside his garments, took a towel and girdeth himself and poured water into a basin, and he's doing it the right way.

I mean, he's doing it for real. He's not just kind of flinging water and saying, there, I did something. No, he's actually one by one taking his time, taking their feet into his hands and washing them and taking that towel that was girded about his loins and wiping that foot.

Now, that would gross half of you out to even consider doing that to grown men. And there's the Lord Jesus Christ bowed down at their feet. That's interesting.

[31 : 54] He's getting in all the way, ministering to these men in what I believe at the moment, I haven't seen otherwise, in a way that they've never seen before, ever.

And when he gets to Peter in verse 6, he cometh to Simon Peter, and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? I think Peter's like, what do you think you're doing? This is not the way this should be.

If anything, it should be reversed. And by verse number 8, Peter saith unto him, thou shalt never wash my feet. And I think Peter is kind of, I think he means well.

I don't think he's just being some cocky, loud mouth, although I can't put it past Peter too much there. But as far as position and reverence for the Lord Jesus Christ, he's the Lord, he's the master, verse 13, that's just not the way things are done.

But that wasn't the necessity of the hour. What was, was Christ was showing some kind of humility they've never seen. He's not exercising his authority.

[33 : 00] He's not displaying his lordship over these men, that he's their lord and master. He's about to leave them. And that tells me that this is the last thing that he's going to do for them.

And the last thing he did for them was not heal their diseases or do some powerful thing, some display of his deity, but rather the last thing he does for these men is to minister in a way that even made them uncomfortable, it seems.

Now how do you respond to pressure and to tough times in your life? Well, find a way to minister. Find a way like Jesus Christ, even if it's a way that you've never done before, something that maybe might normally feel like it's below you.

And most of the time in your life when things are good, that is below you. But when the pressure's on and the hour is at hand, find a way to minister to somebody else.

Find a way to lay aside your emotions and your fear and your frustration just like Christ laid aside his garments and gird your loins with truth and seek out something that you've never done before.

[34 : 24] and do it no matter what people think, no matter if it's weird. The master would never wash the feet of his disciples and yet there he is.

And this thought about ministry, it won't fix your problems that you face in life. It won't make them disappear, but I think it will do a lot of good for you to be humbled and that's what this is talking about.

I think maybe in some cases that might be all that's necessary because the Lord, that pleases the Lord to see men humble themselves. It pleases him, he says, I'll give more grace to you if you'll humble yourself.

I've got plenty of grace and I'll give you some extra. And maybe that's something you could use when you're under pressure. It's a little more grace. And you'll get it if you'll humble yourself.

You might find out that's all you really needed in the first place. God maybe take his foot off the pedal a little bit with the things in your life. Now there's more here. There's actually much more.

[35 : 30] But we're going to save that for next week Lord willing. And I want to just rehash quickly this thought that the flesh, as you know, is quick to take over. It's very quick to take over when pressure gets, it just builds, it builds and you know how you can snap or react wrong.

How those words that shouldn't ever come out of your mouth can come out of your mouth. Or how you can say those things and direct them towards somebody that you should be loving. You know how we do this. But Christ shows us a better way.

He shows us here a way to get our eyes and our fears off of our situations and on others. And a way to get our hearts in faith on God and on his word.

And he shows us how to minister to others and serve others. And the last thing I want to say is that all of these three things loving others and those that God put in your life, trusting the Lord, exercising faith in him and in his word and in ministering and humbling yourself before others, all three of those things, please God to see you do those things.

That could help take the pressure off. Knowing that you're pleasing God. That might not sound like much to you, but I'm telling you, this is gold. This stuff is good.

[36 : 55] And it can help you if you apply it. So we're going to pick it up next week because there's more that goes on in this chapter and even carrying on through the rest of this evening, how Christ handled the pressure that was on him as it was imminent.

And may we take those thoughts and as God allows and shows us, put them into a practice. So let's be dismissed with that. And let's have a word of prayer together.