

We Want to Meet Jesus

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Date: 13 January 2019

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[0 : 00] Father, we thank you for your great provision for us. We ask that you would pour out the Holy Spirit upon us and make us a very generous people, a people who desires to bless this city, bless other people groups right to the ends of the earth, that you would help us, Father, not only to bless this city with the best of our talents and our gifts, but also by the sharing of the gospel, by telling people of Jesus.

And we ask now, Father, as we pause to dig deep into your word, that you would dig deep into us, that you would touch us at the level of our heart and shape us by the gospel.

And all these things we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So we're going to talk today about something that Canadians aren't supposed to talk about. We're going to talk about death, something that Canadians aren't supposed to talk about. And like when I say that, some of you might say, well, no, no, George, we can talk about death.

But usually what that means is we can say a few flippant things about death. But if you were ever at a party and you made some comment about we're all going to die, and I don't know, the person who's the least drunk or the most drunk would make some type of a flippant comment, another person makes a bit of a joke, and then we'd move on to another topic.

[1 : 20] But if you said, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, time out here. Like, what do you think death means? Like, what do you think death means? Like, what do you think about the fact that you're going to die? Like, you know, maybe tomorrow or tonight or like in a few years.

And if you were to try to press the topic, the room, the temperature, it would get very chilled very, very quickly. Because we can make the odd flippant comment about death, but we're not really allowed to talk about death.

It's something which is not very Canadian. And in fact, it would even be viewed in many churches as something depressing. And we don't come to church to be depressed.

We come to church to get a few positive and uplifting thoughts to help us through the rest of the week or whatever it would be. But we're going to talk a little bit about death this morning. And I'm going to talk about it because the Bible talks about death.

Like, what is it? Like, what? I've, I mean, I don't know. In heaven, I might find out more of the story. I will find out the whole story of my life and the meaning of my life. And maybe there's been many times when I've been very close to death.

[2 : 23] I know there's been some times I've been in the car and, you know, somebody starts to go into my lane. And, you know, we're all going 115 kilometers an hour. And I don't know. It could very well be that if that person had just been a tiny little bit more inattentive or I had been a tiny bit more inattentive, I would have died in that accident.

But I've never had an illness yet. I had one time when I thought they diagnosed me with a heart trouble that would have drastically changed and probably shortened my life.

But that turned out to be a misdiagnosis. But I haven't on one level had to be close to my own death. I have in terms of family members, obviously. And as a minister, I've done lots of funerals. In fact, I felt really, really bad about it.

And during the Arise, a couple of weeks ago in December, we had the Arise dance group here. And there was a person who came to the church. And she came up and she said, do you remember me?

And I have to confess, I said, you look familiar, but I can't remember you. And then she told me, you did the funeral for my baby. And I felt really bad that I didn't remember her. Although it had been about 10 years ago.

[3 : 31] But what does death mean? Like, we all are going to die. Every single one of you here, unless Jesus comes back, you're going to die. And what does it mean that we're all going to die?

That you're going to die? It's not an abstraction. It will be real someday. Like, it's funny, you know. Why is it that we Canadians don't even want to think about that? That it would be viewed as, like many of you would already say, or maybe if you're a guest, you're going to go, okay, George, let's move on to another topic.

Like, you're pushing this too far. It might be getting a bit uncomfortable. But why is it that we feel so uncomfortable about talking about death? Like, if you think about it, in a sense, death, from one point of view, is completely and utterly natural.

Like, nobody gets upset if we talk about gravity or the sun rising. But we get very upset talking about something which is natural. Why is it that we find death which is natural?

Why is it that on one level it's natural, but on a very, very fundamental level, we don't think it's natural? We think there's something just wrong with death. Why is that? And if we live in a world where everybody dies, doesn't it seem then as if death wins?

[4 : 47] And if death wins, how is it that life has any meaning? Like, if you think about it for a second, well, actually, you could just do a little experiment. I mean, I'm guessing the Sunday school has something you can stack on top of something else.

If not, next Sunday, I just ask you for a simple experiment. Bring a pile of blocks. Find some young kids. And if you put the blocks out where the young kids are, one young kid will start to pile the black blocks on top of another.

And what will also happen when the blocks are all tied, piled up on top of another? What is just as certain as the sun will rise tomorrow, another kid will knock the blocks all down.

Right? Isn't that how it works? Trust me on this one. If anybody has more than one kid, if one kid starts to make possum blocks on top of the other, it's just a matter of time before another kid comes in.

In fact, sometimes when kids get really into knocking the blocks out, the building kid gets maybe only three blocks up and some other kid with great glee comes and kicks it.

[5 : 47] And the poor builder kid never knows if they're going to get three blocks up or eight blocks up or ten blocks up. But one thing they know for certain is that the blocks will be kicked out. But isn't that like life? Like, don't every single one of us not know if we've just built three blocks and then we're going to die on our way home, or whether we might get to build 20 blocks or 30 blocks high, but they will all be knocked down.

And if you see any kid who's trying to be the builder, building those blocks, the one thing you know for certain is they start to scream in anguish and anger. And if their mommy or their daddy is nearby, they scream for their mommy and daddy to come and fix it.

And if it's not fixed, they stop building because it's meaningless to stack blocks on top of another. If some other kid at any random moment is going to come and knock the blocks down, but isn't that life?

Like, is that one of the reasons we don't like talking about it? That if at the end of our life, all that's going to happen is we die and death wins, then, like, what is the point of having children, those of us who are able to have children?

Like, what is the point of bank balances and careers if it can just be taken away in a moment? And why is it that, well, I guess we can start to see why it is that we don't want to think and talk about that.

[7 : 17] See, it's very, very funny. One of the things that many people would say about the Christian faith is that it's very, very impractical, that it's sort of airy-fairy.

Yet, the fact of the matter is, is the Bible talks about things which go right to the very, very heart. In fact, something like talking about death is far more practical than all sorts of other stuff.

And the Bible actually forces us, or tries to force us, to deal with these very, very fundamental issues and what it means for the meaning of our life.

So, if you take your Bibles and turn to John chapter 12, we'll see why it is that I'm talking about this, because Jesus talks about it. John chapter 12, verse 20. And actually, those of you who don't have Bibles with you, we're going to put it up here on the screen.

And we're just going to read through the text again. Maybe you didn't notice that it talks about life and death, but it does talk about life and death. One of the references is sort of hard to get. And so,

just remember I said that the context of this, just as we're starting to turn to it, is this book is written by a man by the name of John.

[8 : 24] He was one of Jesus' very early disciples, and he was one of Jesus' most intimate disciples. And so, for three years, this fellow, three years and a bit, this fellow, he traveled with Jesus all the time.

They camped together. They ate together. He would have known everything there is to know about Jesus for those three plus years. And after Jesus' death and resurrection, there were four biographies written, all based on eyewitness accounts.

And John writes his own eyewitness testimony of Jesus. And John's testimony of Jesus is different than the others. It really shows more the intimate side of Jesus.

It has far more of the intimate conversations that Jesus probably had with his disciples than the other ones show. And that's why the sermon series is called Knowing Jesus, an intimate, John's intimate biography of Jesus.

And the way John, one of the ways that John organized his story of Jesus is he wasn't concerned by chronology. What he did is he sort of introduced who Jesus is.

[9 : 30] And then for basically ten chapters, he organized all of the chapters around remarkable miracles that Jesus did. And he calls the miracles signs, because signs communicate something.

And so John wanted to make sure that we understood that Jesus was communicating something about the nature of reality, about who he is, about what the real world is.

And these miracles are an attempt by Jesus to get us to stop, to notice something, to see where it's being pointed to. And so for the big, over half the book, it's all sort of an unfolding of these remarkable miracles.

And then there's this sort of chapter of transition, which we're in right now. And then the next big section will be the intimate conversation that Jesus has with his disciples in that about five or six hour period when he's in the upper room, and he knows he's going to die the next day.

And that's the next big section. Then there's the account of his death and resurrection. So that's where we are. And here's how it continues. I've already told you about how the triumphal entry, and now we have verse 20.

[10 : 42] Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some pagans, some Greeks. So these came to Philip, one of Jesus' disciples, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee.

And they asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. Let's sort of pause there for a second. Some of you Christians will know this is a very, very, very, very famous phrase.

What you might not know is that in churches that still have pulpits, and there are churches that still have pulpits, it's not uncommon that that phrase will be written on the pulpit.

So if, for instance, if you go to a very famous church, All Souls Langham Place in England, and there's a pulpit, and usually with the pulpit there's a little bit of a, you know, like a thing over here.

And what you might or might not know is it's very common in pulpits to put right there so the minister sees it, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. As a reminder of what my task is as a preacher.

[11 : 44] That the room, they want to see Jesus. They don't want to hear my thoughts on debt, or the transit way, or bicycle lanes. I have views on all of those things, by the way.

You don't want to hear any of those things. The congregation should be coming, and I should be opening the Bible to tell you about Jesus. It's this very, very famous phrase.

And so there's these pagans, again, they've come to Philip, they'd like to meet Jesus. That's what it means, see. They can obviously, they've seen him, rioting, but they want to meet Jesus.

They want to meet him and to get to know him. And they say, once again, verse 21, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. So Philip went and told Andrew. Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

And Jesus answered them. So they make their request, and Jesus answers them. The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Now just sort of pause here.

[12 : 44] On one hand, this is a very unsatisfactory story. He doesn't say, like what we would expect, said, yeah, sure, come on, love to meet him. Let's go over, tell him to come over here, you know, get through the crowd.

So just before you, you know, because it puzzles people. First of all, at the end of the story, we don't know at the end of the conversation whether Jesus met with him or not.

John, on one hand, ignores that particular part of the story. We don't know whether he said yes or no later on. What John records is something different, because you see, in a sense, you and I are

those pagans.

Jesus, John isn't writing his biography so that all the people who were, you know, he's writing the biography of Jesus for people like us who want to see Jesus.

And so what John does is he records part of Jesus' answer. He never ends up telling us, like, we're all maybe curious. Well, did he meet Jesus? Like, what did he say? Like, John doesn't say anything. He's not concerned about that part of the story.

[13 : 46] But he's concerned that, you know, in a sense, every single one of us, I mean, I think maybe apart from Daniel Avitan, who's in the room, who's Jewish, the rest of us are pagans.

And maybe there's another one or two of us here who are Jewish. We're pagans. We're the pagans wanting to actually see and try to get to know who Jesus is. And so what John does is that John gives us part of Jesus' answer that's very, very, very important.

You see, what he's going to say is we have to understand something about Jesus is that Jesus isn't just a rabbi. He's not just a miracle worker. He's not going to be like an earthly king.

He's not a philosopher. He's not intellectual. He's not a mighty military commander. He's not somebody with all sorts of degrees. And his purpose isn't any of the things that go along with those types of things.

If you want to see Jesus, well, Jesus actually, in a sense, tells his disciples something really important about himself so that when the disciples are telling others about Jesus, they can communicate the part about Jesus which is most important.

[14 : 54] And so just go back and look at that thing, the beginning of Jesus' answer. We're going to read it. I'm going to unpack it a bit more later on. But the first thing he says then in verse 23 is, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

And, you know, this, just as a bit of an aside, Jesus knows, we don't know if this happened immediately after the triumphal entry or the Monday or the Tuesday or the Wednesday, but Jesus knows that on Friday he will be hanging on a cross after having been whipped.

He's stripped naked and he's hanging on a cross and he's going to die. And he says, my life has an overarching purpose. That's what it means by the hour.

My life has an overarching purpose. My life, and because it's true of my life, it will be true of every other human life, my life is not one dang thing after another and then you die. My life is not just one succession of moments measured by teaspoons.

My life has a purpose. My life has a purpose. And my, the culmination of the purpose has now come.

[16 : 05] And, and it's going to be very interesting later on when he says it's going to reveal God's glory. And what we need to understand is that, I mean, how would Hollywood try to display God's glory?

Hollywood tried to describe God's glory by, I don't know, by maybe psychedelic visions or by just the things which are unbelievably bright that you can't look at.

It might try to describe it by glory and majesty, by a mighty army, by a man with huge muscles, by a woman who's unbelievably beautiful, by any sorts of things.

But what Jesus is saying is that the most perfect illustration of the glory of God will be me being naked, nailed to a cross, with my blood dripping down and my labored breath and then me giving up my spirit and dying.

And it is in my dying upon the cross that God's glory is most perfectly revealed. And that is an offense to every system of thought.

[17 : 14] And it is an offense to religion. And it is an offense to spirituality. But this is what Jesus says shortly before he dies. Let's continue to look at that verse 24.

When the Bible has the word truly, truly, another way to translate it would be amen, amen. It's John, it's Jesus communicating to his disciples, okay, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, you might have fallen asleep, you might be nodding off, you might be thinking about, you know, the cute woman who just walked by or the handsome guy who just walked by or whatever it is.

But whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, this is really, really, really, really important. That's what he's doing. Whoa, whoa, whoa. So, truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it. And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

If anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

[18:25] You know, it's almost creed-like in its simplicity. And I have to think that not only, of course, in an oral culture like that would they have remembered words very well, but I wonder, I mean, this would probably be on one level easy enough to memorize, and you wonder if Jesus said it over and over and over again to his disciples when he was walking from one spot to another.

Because there's a rhythm and a balance to it. I tried to illustrate that right with my hands. Whoever loses his life, whoever loves his life loses it. Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. So we don't know whether the pagans wanted to come to see Jesus because they were impressed by his teaching or his miracles or whatever.

We don't know if they wanted to really just become his followers or if they were going to try to squeeze Jesus into their categories of thought and their systems of thought.

And what we can see here is that whatever type of, no system of thought that's developed purely by human beings will culminate in a place whereby God hanging on a cross, a man hanging on a cross, God hanging on a cross is a sign of the glory of God.

[19:57] No system of thought will say, okay, we begin here, we begin here, we begin here, we begin here, we come to there. No system of thought leads to that. And Jesus said, everything about me you need to understand is about the fact that I'm going to die.

And my death is accomplishing a very particular thing. And then many people are puzzled by, okay, well, look at verse 25.

What do you mean by whoever loves his life loses it? Like, shouldn't we be teaching people to love their life? You know, like, on one hand, what's a very common expression in Canada and in North America, maybe even in England, probably, in the English-speaking world?

Usually when they say it, it's in an ironic sense because it's not, they don't mean it, it's ironic, but they say, I'm living the life, right?

You could just imagine, you know, somebody who's doing something really boring at work and they're stuck in their cubicle and somebody says, how's life going?

[21:14] And they say, I'm living the life. Not, right? Because there's this sense that we are, like, living the life. Like, that's what we value in Canada. And living the life might be rock climbing or, I don't know, crocheting or doing anything other than doing something boring and sacrificial and monotonous.

And so why is it, he says, whoever loses his life, loves his life, loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life? Like, is the Bible telling us we should hate our life?

Some of you say, I already have that mastered. I hate my life, so this is the text for me. But that's not what it's referring to. Well, this gets us back a little bit about death to help us understand why it is that Jesus would say something like that.

And, you see, for many, many, many, many systems of thought throughout the entire world, the way that they would understand death is that it's part of the cycle of life.

It's just a cycle. You're born as a baby, and you live your life, and then you die. And, you know, we all know from plants and stuff is the death of plants helps with the soil and et cetera and helps new plants to grow, and it's just the cycle of life.

[22:32] And we often say that almost as if it's a good type of thing, but for the ancients and for people who really are enmeshed in that system, it's a terrible thing. You're trapped.

You're trapped. You're trapped. There's a movie that was very popular in the 60s amongst the hippies called *The Graduate*, *The Counterculture*.

And there's a scene in there. It's all about a young guy back then who was young, and he finishes his degree, but he doesn't want to go on with life. And he asks his parents, like, what's the purpose of, you know, going...

It's basic... Part of it is, what's the purpose of going to university? Well, the purpose of going to university is to make money. Well, what's the purpose of making money? Well, the purpose of making money is so that you can have a house and so you can marry and you can have kids.

And what's the purpose of having all of those types of things, having the money and the kids? Well, the purpose of all of that is that when they can go, they can go to university. And he says, well,

what's the sense of that if it's just all like this circle?

[23 : 30] And they didn't even bring in death, but death is all part of it. And so once again, we ask this, like, what is it about death? Why is it that on one hand, death is unbelievably natural and it seems as if it wins?

And yet on the other hand, in our deepest longings and yearnings, we think to ourselves that death isn't natural, that life is natural. Nobody in Canada would say, I'm living the death.

No, I'm living the life. That's what we want to live. We want to live the life. We don't want to live the death. And so you see, even, and for these pagans, in all pagan religions, this image of the seed that dies and bears fruit is part of that very imagery of the cycle, which is a cycle of fate and you're trapped.

Because the fact of the matter is, and the two movies that have come out over the last years that talk about this cycle, one of them was the Tom Cruise one. I can't remember the name of it right now. And he gets that alien blood on him and now he starts living this cycle.

He can't die. He just comes back and keeps going over and over and over again. And of course, the famous Bill Murray movie, Groundhog Day. And for people who are trapped, even in this cycle of coming back to life and death and back to life and death, it's experience as a prison, not as something rewarding.

[24 : 52] And their goal is to escape it. And you see, that's what the gospel does. We're going to talk about it in a moment. It's both, what Jesus is doing right now, he's going to explain in a moment, and he's even doing it a little bit by using this image of hating this life, to try to help us to understand why it is that on one hand, death appears to be completely and utterly natural.

On the other hand, we think it's profoundly unnatural. And why it is that our hearts do not long to be told about the cycle of we live and then we die and then somebody else lives and they die and somebody else lives and somebody else dies and then they die and it goes over and over and over and over and over again.

And our hearts long for that to break and there not to be a circle and there not to be a sort of a line that just goes a short length and then something or other cuts it so that we die, but there's something that endures, that we break from the prison, we break from fate, that fate is not to be our destiny.

There's something within us that longs for that, that tries to help us to understand why it is that death seems more like an enemy than the something that is just merely a natural thing.

And he starts to catch our attention with it by this little phrase about hating our life. And that will become a little bit more clear if we just go on with what he says next in verse 27.

[26 : 15] Now is my soul trouble. Verse 27, now is my soul trouble. He's just talked about the fact that he's going to die. And he says he's troubled by it.

This has been commented on by many people over many, many years. There's all sorts of people throughout history who have gone to the firing squad or execution like this.

The person who's, humanly speaking, most responsible for the book of common prayer under torture, he had renounced the Christian faith and then he renounced his renouncing of the Christian faith.

And he, because he renounced his renouncing of the Christian faith by embracing the Christian faith, he was going to be burned in the stake. And he asked that when he was burned in the stake, he reached out his hand, the hand that had signed the letter to renounce the faith, he reached that out that that would burn first.

And why is it that so many human beings have faced death and not been troubled? And Jesus is troubled.

[27 : 32] Look at verse 27. Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? And then he responds, but for this purpose I have come to this hour.

Father, glorify your name. Hallowed be your name. So, what's going on here?

Well, let's just start to unpack all of this in our last few minutes. If you could put up the first point, that would be really, really great. And the first point is this, is this, is Jesus, Jesus is the seed that died to bear much fruit.

That's the point of the story here. It's, if you look at it, he says it very, very clearly. Truly, truly, remember I said that means, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, even if you're falling asleep, whoa, whoa, whoa, don't, even if that's all you remember, just remember this.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit. And Jesus is that seed. He is that true and greater seed.

[28 : 40] On one level, you see, here's the thing, is if Jesus is in fact what he claims to be and we believe it's true, why? Because he defeats death, which we're going to talk about that in a moment.

He is the one who rose from the dead. He has defeated death. He has defeated that which causes death. He has done it not as a way to show how powerful God is, although it does show how powerful God is, but he does it for human beings, ordinary human beings like you and me. And that's what he's saying here. He did not come to not die. He came precisely to die. And his death isn't just some type of an illustration.

It's not something that bears fruit by inspiring all of us as to how remarkable it is that he died in such a way. It's not about that because the image here isn't that just, the image is that because the seed dies, there is fruit, much fruit.

Without, you see, the death of the seed means fruit comes into existence with life. That's the point of the analogy.

[29 : 50] It isn't that this inspires. It isn't that this can be used to teach. It is, although it can, it is that the death of Jesus will bring life and existence into existence for others.

You see, the fact of the matter is is that death wins. you and I are a cut flower. We are a cut flower. And what this text is saying is that as a result of what Jesus will do by his death and his resurrection, when we put our faith and trust in him, we have a life that comes from him that gives us life and existence in a way that we did not have and could not have without our faith and trust in him.

So it's not a matter of an example. It's a matter of actual fruit. The fruit, without the seed dying, and if it's a coin that dies, no fruit happens. If it's a rock that you, sorry, if you put a rock in the ground, nothing happens.

You put a coin, you put a \$1,000 bill, a \$10,000 bill. I don't know how big a bill, you know, you put that in the ground, nothing happens. It just stays there, but the seed dies and fruit comes into existence that wasn't in existence before and would not be in existence without the death of the seed.

[31 : 29] So that's what Jesus means when he says, truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit. But what is this about him being troubled and what is it about, well, if you could put up the next point, death is a sign and instrument of the Lord's judgment on the bent human desire to be God.

Death is a sign and instrument of the Lord's judgment on sin, on you and me who are sinners, who cling to our sin and cannot leave our sin, who have this human, this desire to be God, which sort of explains all sin, and we've bent our nature and our world, and death is a sign and an instrument of the Lord's judgment.

See, when the Lord made us, if you read the whole overarching story of the Bible, God made all things good and he made human beings to be at home in this world that he had made good. And he made human beings to be able to be naked and unashamed with each other and to be naked and unashamed not only with each other, but to be with each other naked and unashamed while they are naked and unashamed with God, who could walk with them in the cool of the garden, in the cool of the day, in a place that he had called for them to learn how to tend and to manage and to work and to cultivate and to make even more beautiful.

And that is how God made human beings to live and there would have been no death. And death comes into the world when human beings decide that they are no longer going to trust God, that they are no longer going to, in a sense, allow God to be God and them to be creatures, but that we human beings want to be the center ourselves.

We want to be the maker of our own lives. We want to be the definer of our own lives. We want to be God. Whatever happens to God, we don't care, but we all know that there can only ultimately be one God and that explains so much conflict that goes in families and schools and businesses and in this world and the United States right now, the Congress wants to be God and President Trump wants to be God and the Republicans and the Democrats and they all want to be God and there's fighting and it's not all fighting but it comes up so much and so often with ambition and whether it's sexual sins or intellectual sins or greed or whatever, all of it comes from our human desire which is a bending of who we were, a breaking of who we are that we desire to be God and what we see it is that desire that brings to be God to disconnect ourselves from God and be our own God.

[34 : 11] It is as a result of that that death comes into the world and all death is a sign of the fact that we are under God's judgment and in fact is the instrument of God's judgment and that's why on one level death is completely and utterly unnatural but we understand and experience it as not something that we want.

Our culture because we don't want to talk about it it doesn't give us any language so only the Christian faith only the Christian faith I think gives an account of this fundamental human experience of death being natural yet us not feeling it's natural and somehow wanting to avoid it because we want to avoid the Lord's judgment.

So why is it that Jesus understanding this why that helps us to understand something about why it is that Jesus did not on one level he did not want to come to this point of death because you see if Jesus is going to deal with death in a way that you and I can have life and existence in life Jesus can't just sort of somehow both defeat death he has to defeat that which causes the death if you could put up the next point that would be very helpful when Jesus died he bore every reason that you have been judged and the judgment itself when Jesus died he bore every reason that you have been judged and the judgment itself see the fact of the matter is that in many many many many things if we think about it for a second on one level sin is its own judgment its own punishment and we understand that there's a type of a fitness between it I just finished reading a novel and in the novel the bad character because I like novels where there's like you know murders and all that type of stuff and justice at the end but you have this sense it's written by a non-Christian it's just a very very common type of novel and in a sense the big evil of the man in his life is that he kills people and the particular protagonist the way he killed the protagonist's loved one was by throwing them out of a window on the 20th floor of a building and the person died to their death and he's an evil man and he's a bad man and when the judgment finally comes for this bad fellow how does he die he dies by being pushed out of a window to his death and the reader goes yes there's something fitting that the sin that he committed is the faith that he endures so you see there's two different images in John

I'll give you John's gospel in a moment but in and so why is it that Jesus in a sense is hesitant it's not that he's lacking courage but Jesus is going to experience something that he has never experienced in his entire life he is going to drink something that he has never drunk in his entire life something is going to touch his lips and touch his heart and touch his body that has never touched his entire life because you see while I have not been able to live my life without being bent and out being in rebellion against God and not without being able to sin the Bible tells us that Jesus lives the life that I could never live that Jesus lived his life and he never sinned he never fell prey to envy he never fell prey to the form of sin that is anger that he never felt he was never prone to pride that he never was prone to wishing murder for other people or being selfish that he was tempted by all of these things and he was able to resist the temptations another sermon as to all this means about the depth of human experience but he was able to experience these temptations without ever partaking of them and in several of the gospels the image which is given upon the time of Jesus death when he's in the garden of Gethsemane and he's struggling with what he's about to do the next day die on the cross and they use this biblical image of the cup and in the biblical image of the cup it's this old image that it's as if and we can just sort of think of it as a sorcerer or something like that in a fantasy novel that takes the evil out of a person's heart and the evil deeds that have been done and they take it out and they turn it into a type of a liquid that all goes into the cup and then somebody has to drink that cup and so the image is as if all of George's pride all of his anger all of his envy all of his sexual sins all of his desires at times that he wanted that wished that somebody would die or that they would be obliterated and all of those things that are so cling to me they are drawn out by God and as they are drawn out by God they are distilled into a liquid that goes into an unbelievably foul cup and in that unbelievably foul cup is not just George there's Louise and there's Jason and there's

[39 : 13] Shirley and there's Ross and there's Daniel and there's Christine and all of their foul stuff and the image is that when Jesus is dying on the cross that he takes that cup and his lips have never touched that and he drinks that cup and that's what he bears when he dies John's gospel doesn't use this image but if you go back and you read John from the beginning you'll see that the first way that Jesus is introduced is the same image but a different one behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world it's the same image the image is of as if God brings one of a you know that I lay my hands on a lamb and the image is that as I lay my hands on the lamb all of

those things I've just described my pride my anger my arrogance all of those things they come out of me and they go on the lamb and it dies and the image is as the son of man is in a sense every human being who's ever existed we one after another put our hands on

Jesus on his head and all those things that we have done are on him and he's been tempted by pride but never been tempted by sexual sin but never succumbed he's been tempted by anger but never succumbed tempted by greed but never succumbed and now he will taste and experience not the whole worlds and that's why he hesitates before his death you see when Jesus died he bore every reason that you have been judged and the judgment itself if you could put up the next slide that would be very helpful the good news of who Jesus is and what he accomplished for you calls you to hate your life in this world and follow and serve him the good news of who Jesus is and what he accomplished for you calls you to hate in quotes your life in this world and to follow and serve him some of you have heard me if you've heard me speak there's what we call idioms and I use the example you know a person's a few bricks shy of a load or they have a screw loose or you know and they're not really meant literally and hate here in the biblical text is an idiom and it's an idiom it's a way of expressing something very starkly which basically says to completely reject or to completely give a failing grade and so what Jesus is saying listen how do you respond I am going to accomplish something that you cannot accomplish for yourself I am going to accomplish the death of death in my death and I am not only going to accomplish the death of death in my death but the death of that which causes death will be dealt with in my death as I drink that cup as I bear in myself as the Lamb of God that which you cannot deal with for yourself and I'm going to do this all for you how are you to respond you're to respond by saying and I cannot do this by myself father but I know that my life my life capital M capital Y my life in this world where I am bent where I am far from you I reject that I that fails a life where death wins that fails I reject that and I come to you and I follow you and the language of service is the language of ownership you serve who you belong to and it's the

Jesus says you need to say to your life in this world it fails I reject it it is past I come to you I will follow you I will serve you because I am yours and that's how we respond just in closing you know there's this very look back I don't know if you can put it back up on the screen Rebecca verse 25 and 26 it says whoever loves his life loses it and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life see how that excuse me what that means and then it says if anyone serves me he must follow me so you begin by following and then the serving is it and where I am there will my servant be also if anyone serves me the father will honor him it's an image of what it means to be in the Christian life and for all eternity I am with Jesus and I am with Jesus being honored by my father my father in heaven that is the Christian life that begins now and goes for all of eternity we'll only be on the far side of death that once again we can be naked and unashamed with one another and naked and unashamed with our father and walk with him in the cool of the day and we walk with Jesus but that begins now the life I live now is with Jesus honored by my father as I follow and serve Jesus and just in closing you know that phrase I will follow how does it go again sorry if anyone serves me he must follow me Jesus says you know wherever you are it's very simple isn't it but it's very profound and hard to know what it means like if you are an assistant deputy minister and you are a follower of Jesus what

[45 : 10] Jesus says is as an assistant deputy minister follow me if you're a stay-at-home mom or stay-at-home dad follow me if you're retired follow me if you're a teenager trying to navigate high school follow me if you're in med school follow me if you work in construction follow me if you're unemployed follow me it doesn't tell you exactly what it's going to mean but on one hand it is a very very very simple profound thing that we can call out to the Lord about what it means you know if the Bible tried to say something about exactly what that looked like for both the assistant deputy minister and the unemployed person it would be ridiculous but we deal with the living savior and we can begin each day and throughout the day Jesus what does it mean to follow you right here where I am right now and I know I'm with you and you're with me and being honored by the father because you did everything that needed to be done that I might have life and you drank that cup I could not drink and died that death I could not die and gave me your perfect life that I could not live please stand just in closing you know for every single one of us it gets very easy to start to think as if we're doing this all on our own that somehow or another we're earning brownie points and that it's not just a matter of grace that Jesus has given us life he's given us existence and so it is a time when we gather on a Sunday morning in the presence of Jesus to once again say Jesus you are my savior I

will follow you I will serve you help me to do that better help me to know what it means as a single person or a husband or a wife or a person who's widowed help me to know what it means and for those of you who are here who have not yet taken that step there is no better time than right now that you say to

Jesus Jesus I hate my life I hate identifying with my sin and my rebellion my idols it will all just end in death I hate that Jesus I will follow you I will belong to you thank you that you will always take me there is no better time with the Lord right now let's pray father I I stand here at the front opening your word but I too have problems following you I know father I need to remember in every area of my life that I am to follow Jesus and I ask father I commit myself again to that and I'm so glad I can do that with my brothers and sisters here on a Sunday morning I ask that you help me to follow you that you would help me to trust that Jesus is the one who has made me right with you that even though

I stumble and fall as following you I am honored by you and I will be for all eternity and I ask that you grow that truth in me and grip me with that truth and I ask that for each person who is here and if there is any here who has not yet father made that that your Holy Spirit would move them towards giving themselves to Jesus or if there is any here who has done that this morning that your Holy Spirit would flood upon them with might and power and deep conviction and seal that as their new identity for today and forever into eternity and all these things we ask in the Amen