

# Will You Lay Down Your Life for Me?

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Preacher: Joshua Winters

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, this morning as we come to the Word of God, we're picking up where we left off last week. John chapter 13, verse 31. If you have a Bible, you're welcome to turn to it.

Jesus is in the upper room with his disciples, and they're eating the Passover meal. Jesus has just dipped the bread and given it to Judas, and now Judas has left the house, and it's night.

And we'll pick it up in verse 31 here. When he, that's Judas, was gone, Jesus said, Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him.

If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little longer.

Let's start by noticing the urgency, the immediacy of what Jesus is saying. Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

[ 1 : 17 ] I will be with you only a little longer. Can you hear the urgency in Jesus' voice? With Judas now on his way, and the betrayal now in motion, Jesus' time is virtually here.

It's a matter of just hours before Jesus is arrested and separated from them. And Jesus wants them to know that this is it. My time with all of you is about to come to an end.

It's interesting, the language that Jesus chooses to describe this time that has now come. He says, Now is the time for the Son of Man to be glorified.

We heard Jesus say this a little earlier when the Greeks showed up for a visit back in chapter 12, verse 23. And even hearing it again, it's a strange and unexpected way to describe what's about to happen to Jesus, isn't it?

We just don't usually think of what Jesus is about to go through as being glorified. Being glorified means being honored, being worshipped, being exalted, being lifted up.

[ 2 : 35 ] But what's about to happen to Jesus seems the very opposite. He's about to be shamed, humiliated, cursed, mocked, beaten, and trampled down.

So we're kind of forced to wrestle with this question. How is Jesus being glorified while he suffers and dies in this horrible manner?

And then without answering this, Jesus adds even more to the discussion. Not only is the Son of Man about to be glorified, but he says God is about to be glorified as well.

Both. And as we read this verse, it's kind of easy to get our heads all tangled up in this and to wonder who's getting glorified and by who and how.

The Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself and will glorify him at once. There's a lot of stuff going on in there.

[ 3 : 46 ] And it's easy to get tripped up in there. So let's see if we can just pick out some clear statements and untangle this a little bit. Here are five true statements that we can pull out of this.

First of all, the Son of Man, that's Jesus, is about to be glorified. Now the Son of Man is glorified.

Second one, God is about to be glorified as well. It's both. Number three, God will be glorified in the Son or through the Son or by the Son.

Number four, Jesus will be glorified by God. It's God who will be glorifying the Son in the moments ahead.

And then finally, number five, God will glorify Jesus in himself. I know you're probably wondering, well, what does that mean?

[ 4 : 53 ] Me too. So who's about to be glorified? We'll just see if we can kind of summarize it. Both Jesus and God are about to be glorified.

Who's going to be doing the glorifying? God is about to glorify his Son. And lastly, how are God and Jesus being glorified?

Well, God is about to be glorified by Jesus or through Jesus. And Jesus is about to be glorified by God. God is about to be glorified by God.

And in God, whatever that means. You know, sometimes Jesus said things that just kind of leave us scratching our heads. And I thought about trying to do a whole sermon just on these verses and exploring each of these five statements and what they mean.

But you know, this is just the way that God's truth has come to us in this place, in this part of the story. And think about how it was for the disciples that evening, seated around the table, as Jesus says this to them.

[ 5 : 59 ] You're about to be glorified and God's about to be glorified and in him and in you. And what are you talking about? What does this mean? Now, we could dig out the theology textbooks and we could listen to the mind-numbing musings of men going back and forth about all the possible meanings of these five statements and try to rule out a whole bunch of them and narrow it down.

About how God is glorified in the Son and how does God glorify Jesus in himself. But sometimes I think it's okay if we simply say, I don't know what this means.

What did you mean by this, Lord Jesus? And then just sit on it a while. We might have some good ideas about, say, number one, how Jesus is about to be glorified as he suffers and dies.

But then where do we get those ideas from? Are we just guessing? Or are we meant to just take Jesus at his word as best as we can and say, okay, somehow, in some way, I'm not sure exactly how or what you mean.

Jesus, you're about to be glorified in what's about to unfold. Would you show me how that works? Would you show me what you mean by that? And then just kind of keep that truth in the back of our minds as we continue reading and meditating on the word of God, day after day, week after week, month after month, and sometimes, eventually, these things become really clear.

[ 7 : 42 ] In fact, we may even realize that this is a major theme in the whole Bible. Let's consider briefly this first point, that Jesus is about to be glorified now while he suffers and dies in this horrible manner.

So we say, okay, I don't see it, Lord. Would you show me? And then maybe as we come along, reading in our Bibles in a different place, or we're looking up a scripture passage, we come along to Isaiah chapter 52, written hundreds of years before any of this took place.

And we read these words in Isaiah chapter 52, verse 13. See, my servant will act wisely. He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

Sounds like glorified. But then, just as there were many who were appalled at him, his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness, so he will sprinkle many nations and kings will shut their mouths because of him.

For what they were not told, they will see. And what they have not heard, they will understand. And Isaiah goes on. He was despised and rejected by mankind.

[ 9 : 09 ] A man of suffering and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised and we held him in low esteem. He was oppressed and afflicted.

Led like a lamb to the slaughter. By oppression and judgment, he was taken away. But then we come to verse 10.

Yet, it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer. And though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days.

And the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied. By his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many and he will bear their iniquities.

Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great, says the Lord. And he will divide the spoils with the strong because he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors.

[ 10 : 31 ] Now, this whole passage could do with a lot of study and meditation and a few sermons. But do you notice how side by side are these two truths?

That the servant of the Lord will suffer horribly, be treated despicably, and yet at the same time that the servant of the Lord will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted, rewarded, glorified through it all.

These are deep waters here, but not so deep that we could never learn to swim in them. This is just one other place where it tells us that Jesus will be glorified and exalted through the shameful humiliation of what he suffered.

This is just one other place where it tells us that God will himself glorify this one and set him above others. And a little bit of why.

What he has done that is worthy of reward, that is worthy of being glorified. Because he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors and bore the sin of many and made intercession for them.

[ 11 : 46 ] And so as we meditate here, this passage, it begins to fill up with meaning what Jesus said on the night of his betrayal.

What he said about being glorified now. And then there are other passages that we might discover over here and over there and over here and over there. that also fill up what Jesus said with meaning.

Not just for number one, but for all five of these. Could it be that we were never meant to have a guy just come up and stand in front of us and say, well, number one means this, number two means this, number three means this, and so on.

Could it be that we were all meant to go on the personal journey of searching these things out over days, weeks, months, even years? Growing in our understanding of who Jesus is and what happened to him at the cross.

Growing in our understanding of what's really going on between God the Father and God the Son. Growing in our understanding of how great and how worthy and how glorious and beautiful our God and his Son Jesus really are.

[ 13 : 06 ] I think Jesus is okay with us being on the journey. He's okay with us learning all along the way as we go through our lives.

So I'm not going to try and fully explain and apply each of these five truths because to be honest, I'm still on the journey myself trying to figure out what exactly these things mean and how this fits with what we're about to read in the story of John.

For now, I think it's a good place just to be familiar with what Jesus said. Jesus is about to be glorified as he is betrayed, arrested, and goes to the cross.

God is about to be glorified. God will be glorified through the Son, in the Son. Jesus will be glorified by God, his Father.

And God will glorify Jesus in himself. Now let's continue on with what Jesus said that night at the table. Verse 33, my children, I will be with you only a little longer.

[ 14 : 15 ] You will look for me and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now where I am going. You cannot come. So Jesus tells them that they're very soon to be separated.

Jesus and his disciples parted from each other. And though they have followed him everywhere for the past three years, they will not be able to follow him this time.

Where I am going, you cannot come, says Jesus. Jesus reminds them about how he said these very words to the Jews back in chapter 7, verse 34, and chapter 8, verse 21.

Where I am going, you cannot come. And then Jesus gives them a command, which we will look at more next week.

I'll just read it this morning. A new command I give you. Love one another as I have loved you. So you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.

[ 15 : 26 ] Verse 36, Peter says, Lord, where are you going? I love that. It's almost as if he just completely missed the command. He's still thinking about what Jesus said before that.

Where I am going, you cannot come. That's the track that Peter's on. Lord, where are you going? I think that the disciples are probably doing their best to follow along and to understand what Jesus is saying, but here we just, it's obvious that even Peter did not understand what was coming or where Jesus was about to go.

And so Jesus says it again to Peter. He says, where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.

And Jesus is being somewhat elusive in his answer. It's a place that you can't follow me to right now, but you will eventually. Peter asked, verse 37, Lord, why can't I follow you now?

I will lay down my life for you. Is it death that you're talking about, Jesus? That's the only place I can think of that I wouldn't be able to follow you. And if it's death you're talking about, then, my Lord, I will lay down my life before I let anybody touch yours.

[16:55] I will die with you if I have to. I will go with you to the realm of the dead. I will follow you there too, says Peter. Then comes Jesus' reply again, verse 38.

Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times. The answer of Jesus here to Peter is truly amazing.

First, we hear Jesus ask a question. Will you really lay down your life for me, Peter? It's as though Jesus is challenging Peter's declaration.

But actually, it's more than just a challenge, because it doesn't seem like Jesus is asking to know if Peter's really sincere, or if Peter really means it, or if Peter would actually follow through with it all the way to death.

The truth is, Jesus already knows the answer. Right after, he says, very truly, I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times. So no, it's not really a question as if Jesus doesn't know the answer.

[18:11] It's a rhetorical question, and it makes a statement, perhaps more like, Peter, will you really lay down your life for me?

Answer, no, Peter, you won't. Jesus is exposing what's really in the heart of Peter.

And then, Jesus tells Peter how it will actually go, what Peter will actually do when the moment of truth comes. Three times, he will deny him.

And it's here again that we see something truly wonderful and amazing about Jesus. Here's a man, Jesus, who frequently told people what was in their own hearts as if he knew it better than they did. I mean, think about this. From Peter's perspective, you're telling me how how sincere I am, whether I will or will not lay down my life for you.

[19:23] Jesus did this a lot. He told people what was in their own hearts as if he knew it even better than they did. He did it in Jerusalem on his first ministry visit to the capital city back in chapter 2.

He did it with Lazarus in chapter 3. He did it with the crowds in chapters 4 and 6. He did it with the religious leaders in chapters 5 and 8. And here he does it with Peter, his own disciple.

Peter, will you really lay down your life for me? No, Peter, you won't. You say that now, but it's not true.

When the time comes, when the rubber hits the road, when it counts, when you have the opportunity to put your life on the line with me, you will instead say that you don't even know me. Three times you will do this before this very night is through. And so I imagine that there was sadness in the heart of Jesus, even as he said this to Peter.

[20:34] There was Judas' betrayal, which troubled Jesus deeply. We heard about last Sunday, but then here there is very soon coming Peter's denial of Jesus.

I've said this a lot, but I want to say it again. Do you know that Jesus knows what's in your heart? What's really in your heart?

You can't fool him. you can't even pretend with him. He knows you even better than you know yourself. He knows every selfish, every dirty thought that has crossed our minds.

He knows you well enough not just to guess, but to know for certain why you're doing anything that you do. And so this was at times a very interesting relationship between Jesus and the disciples like Peter and James and John.

They couldn't hide things from him. He called their bluffs like here with Peter again and again. And yet even though he knew what was really in each one of them, he never pushed them away.

[22:00] He never said, I don't want to be with you guys anymore, bunch of sinners. No. He loved them even though he knew what was in them, that they were sinners.

I can't help but think that this is at least part of the reason they stuck with him even after all of their own sins had been exposed by him so many times because here's a man who knew them, who really knew them, and yet wanted to be with them and loved them, really cared about them.

There's something else in this question of Jesus that's amazing. It's the pronouns. It's a little difficult to see in English but in the original Greek the way that it's ordered, the words, and the form of one of the pronouns puts a special emphasis on them.

It sounds a little bit like this. The life of you for me, will you lay down? I think there's a fuller rhetorical answer to Jesus' question and it's subtle.

No, Peter, you won't lay down your life for me. I will lay down my life for you. Think about this.

[ 23 : 34 ] Imagine yourself there at the table with Jesus and the other disciples. You've just been fighting with them about which one of you is the greatest according to the other gospel accounts but now you're somewhat embarrassed again because Jesus has exposed your pride again saying that you need to humble yourself and serve one another stooping down to wash your dirty feet and then now you've been trying to prove your loyalty to Jesus amidst the clamoring of all the others as Jesus reveals that one here in the room is a traitor and people are saying all kinds of things and maybe you are too and deep inside maybe you're wondering even as you say it surely not me Lord I would never do that maybe you're wondering how far would I go with him would I be willing to die for him what's my price what's that point at which I would just not follow him anymore maybe thoughts of all the times you've blown it and disobeyed

Jesus over these past few years are beginning to flood into your mind Jesus has just called Peter's bluff what if he calls yours next if one of you is about to betray Jesus and one is about to disown Jesus three times what's Jesus going to say to you what does he know about you that you will actually do when the time comes as I said before we can't hide anything from Jesus he knows what's really in our hearts and yet he will lay down his life for us it's one thing to love something or someone that's already lovely it's not hard to love a beautiful flower or a fresh and juicy piece of fruit or a gorgeous sunset these things are easy to love because they're already lovely they're already worthy of appreciation and affection but it's another thing to love something or someone that is much less than lovely like a self-absorbed proud and selfish person who is there for you when it suits them and gone when it doesn't or a person who's impatient easily angered speaks rudely to you sometimes and talks about you behind your back but the amazing thing is Jesus loves people who are like that sinners like you like me he knows exactly what's in our hearts how less than lovely we are and still he will lay down his life for us he will die to save us so that we can be with him forever isn't that amazing I'm reminded of the words of the apostle Paul Romans 5 verses 6 to 8 you see at just the right time when we were still powerless Christ died for the ungodly very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person no for a good person someone might possibly dare to die but

God demonstrates his own love for us in this while we were still sinners Christ died for us perhaps this too tells us something about how the glory of Jesus can be seen in the midst of his suffering and death let's pray Lord Jesus we thank you for these words that you've given to us we thank you that you've allowed us to almost be there in the room see and hear what's what was said that night and we know that if we were there you would have loved us just the same thank you for paying the ultimate sacrifice for us for dying on that cross for us thank you that you want to be with each one of us with all of our faults all of our failures all of our sin it's amazing and we love you so much for it we give you glory we give you praise because that's your due amen