

Gospel Transgressions: Moving In

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Preacher: Kirk van der Swaagh

[0 : 0 0] well since Sunday morning last week Sunday evening and now this morning we've been considering what I've called gospel transgressions these are movements across sinful boundaries that the gospel presses us to cross and enables us to cross the first we looked at was Jesus pulling up a chair as it were and sitting down with tax collectors and sinners people who were considered inherently sinful not people who sin but people who are sinners much to the consternation of the Pharisees Peter, the next one, Peter the apostle when he went through the door of the household of Cornelius prompted by the Holy Spirit to go there but he knew that this was something odd he said you yourselves know he says to them that I don't belong here but through that Peter learned that indeed he was to count no one common or unclean and then this morning we looked at Philemon and Onesimus

Philemon the master, Onesimus the slave who had run away and now he's become a Christian and Paul sends him back to Philemon's household not just as a servant but as a brother in Christ all of these gospel transgressions and again these movements across sinful boundaries that the gospel presses us to cross enables us to cross all of these gospel transgressions find their impetus in the greatest gospel transgression of all the second person of the triune Godhead leaving the precincts of heaven to take up residence among sinful human beings like you and like me for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life who was this son?

we read at the beginning of that same gospel he is the word the word who was with God the word who was God the word who was in the beginning with God the word through whom all things were made and without him was not anything made that was made the word who became flesh and dwelt among us whose glory glory as of the only son from the father was full of grace and truth he was seen in this and numerous other passages in the New Testament we learn that this one was more than an altruistic human being who was extraordinarily kind and anointed with special powers to relieve sickness and oppression who pointed to a better way of living he was all of that but he was much more than that he was he is as we sung earlier Emmanuel God with us first we're going to ask three questions what did he leave to what did he come and why?

what did he leave? well when the second person of the Godhead left the precincts of heaven he left the place where he existed as a member of the triune Godhead meaning that as father, son, and holy spirit his divinity was full and unrestrained he was God secondly it was a place in which he shared the glory of God he prays that when he's about to go through his passion and return he says father glorify me with the glory that I had with you before the world was a place where he shared the glory of God third it was a place that there was no sin or effects of sin in that place they didn't exist we learn of this when we consider Revelation 21 about how in the new heavens and the new earth what is present there is everything but sin that indeed no more sorrow no more pain the second person of the Godhead dwelt in an existence that was pure and holy without sin but given what he's come to do most of all it was a place of love the apostle teaches us that God is love you might be familiar with some of this language from Jonathan Edwards heaven a world of love heaven a world of love for God is the fountain of love as the sun is the fountain of light and therefore the glorious presence of God in heaven fills heaven with love as the sun placed in the midst of the visible heavens in a clear day fills the world with light there in heaven dwells God the Father

God the Son and God the Spirit united as one in infinitely dear and incomprehensible and mutual and eternal love there this glorious God is manifested and shines forth in full of glory in beams of love and there this glorious fountain forever flows forth in streams yea in rivers of love and delight the second person of the Godhead left the place in which he dwelt in full divinity a place in which he shared the glory of God a place in which there was no sin nothing to mar that beauty and perfection

and holiness but most of all he left a place of love heaven a world of love that's what he left to what did he come he comes to the world now there's no problem with him coming to earth there was nothing inherent in that movement that was unusual messengers from heaven had been experienced by people previously it might not have been a regular occurrence but it happened and we could say that even God himself when we read at the very beginning came in a way it could be described he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day and we think of all the ways that God manifested himself to Israel while he journeyed with them in the wilderness heaven having contact with earth was to be expected

[6 : 30] God had created it and declared it good why the son of God coming as he does represents gospel transgression because of the condition of the earth or what John calls the world the world is a place where the hearts of those created to bear the image of God are deceitful and sick that's what Jeremiah says the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick who can understand it Jesus echoes this from within out of the heart of man he teaches come evil thoughts sexual immorality theft murder adultery coveting wickedness deceit sensuality envy slander pride foolishness ecclesiastes the hearts of the children of men are full of evil and madness is in their hearts while they live and after that they go to the dead and what does Paul say he says it of himself he says it of those to whom he's writing there in Ephesus you were dead in your trespasses and sins since once you walked following the course of this world following the prince of the power of the air the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh carrying out the desires of the body and the mind and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind

John says he came to his own and his own did not receive him John also says that the light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than light because their works were evil and those people those people were the Jews who plotted to kill Jesus and the Gentiles who did the deed for them see to say that God so loved the world that he sent his only son is to say God so loved his enemies that he gave his only son that's the place that he came to the world but why did he come well in heaven he entered into what theologians call the covenant of redemption a covenant of redemption is the agreement made between the members of the Trinity in order to bring us salvation under this covenant the father plans the redemption sends the son in order to save his people the son agrees to be sent to do the work necessary to save the elect and the spirit agrees to apply the work of Christ to us by sealing us unto salvation how does Jesus express it the son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many see this moving from heaven into the world is the gospel transgression that establishes the basis and the framework for our gospel transgressions at the passage from John chapter 13 we're going to do this under three headings gospel transgression as an act of love gospel transgression as an act of cleansing and gospel transgression as an example an act of love an act of cleansing an example let's look first as an act of love what Jesus does in the scene that we read there in John chapter 13 what he does in the scene is explained by John to be an act of love look at verse 1 when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of the world to the father having loved his own who were in the world he loved them to the end now this could be translated as love them to the uttermost but to the end encompasses that idea while pointing this incident to the cross the ultimate expression of his love as he goes on to say greater love has no one than this and someone lay down his life for his friends so love is what motivated

God to transgress the boundaries of heaven to enter into earth for God so loved the world greater love has no one than this love is what allowed Jesus to lay aside his glory and take on our existence love is what motivated Jesus to lay aside his place of privilege to serve others love is what motivated Jesus to lay aside his garments to be clothed as a slave and wash his disciples feet love is what motivated this gospel transgression and transgression it was in the eyes of the disciples that's evident when Peter responds as he does when Jesus comes to wash his feet Lord do you wash my feet Jesus answered him what I'm doing you don't understand but afterwards you will understand Peter says you shall never wash my feet why this response well when Jesus lays aside his outer garments he takes that towel ties it around his waist he pours water to base it and begins to wash the disciples feet he has assumed the lowest he has assumed the dress of the lowest rank of a slave dress that was looked down upon both in

Jewish and Gentile circles in fact the task was considered so low that it would be reserved for the Gentile slave in a household to do and not the Jewish slave let the goyim do it as Jesus will go on to

acknowledge they consider him both their teacher and their lord and yet he assumed this position and one person observes there is no instance in either Jewish or Greco-Roman sources of a superior washing the feet of an inferior and so their shock one commentator says at his voluntary to do this menial task is not merely the result of being shame faced it is their response to finding their sense of the fitness of the thing shattered it was gospel transgression he was pushing beyond the boundaries the expectations in order to bring the gospel we're told it was love that motivated this act gospel transgression as an act of love but from gospels from from highlighting from verses one through four we discovered that gospel transgression is also an act of cleansing look at some of this language if you have your bible open before the feast of passover when Jesus knew that his hour had come father having loved his own he loved him to the end during supper when the devil had already put it into the heart of

Judas Iscariot Simon sons to betray him Jesus knowing that the father had given all things into his hands that he had come from God and was going back to God rose from supper laid aside his garments taking a towel tied it around his waist that's the feast of passover isn't that the celebration of when God preserves his people from this act of wrath this act of judgment that he pours out upon Egypt it's a celebration of God's deliverance of bringing life into the midst of death Jesus knew that his hour had come this is a phrase that John uses that when Jesus knows why he's coming when the moment has finally arrived when he is to fulfill all that he had agreed to do in that covenant of redemption and then it says during supper the devil had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot Simon son to betray him this is going to be the mechanism by which Jesus would be betrayed into the hands first of the Jews and then to the Gentiles in order that he might be put to death and then he says knowing that the father had given all things into his hands that he had come from

[14:26] God and was going back to God he rose and laid aside his outer garments taking a towel see this act that he does of girding himself is done with the cross looming in the near future Jesus understood what he had been given to do and what he had agreed to do within the councils of heaven sin had to be atoned for sin had to be cleansed and blood his blood had to be shed it had to be his blood for he was the lamb of God he was the perfect sacrifice one without spot or had to be a man this time it would be a man and it would be Jesus this is what signaled in John's explanation that Jesus knew that his hour had come so transgressing the boundary between heaven and the world made this transgression possible it was why he had come so the washing of his disciples feet becomes a highly symbolic act one that they don't understand at the time but we the readers of

John are supposed to understand this change of garments this cleansing of feet acts that transgressed the boundaries of position and propriety was a prefiguring of the cleansing accomplished on Calvary through his crucifixion an act itself that transgressed the expectations of the Jews and for their Messiah and transgressed the expectations that his disciples had for their master think of all the times there was pushback when he announced what was going to happen to him but there he was at their feet washing them D.A.

Carson said he had come from God and knew that the father had put all things under his power with such power and status at his disposal we might have expected him to defeat the devil in an immediate and flashy confrontation and to devastate Judas with an unstoppable blast of divine wrath instead he washes his disciples feet including the feet of his betrayer so we have to picture this here are these men they're gathered around the table in the posture that they're there they're lying down probably on a mat on the floor and they're leaning on their left arm and suddenly during the meal Jesus gets up and he goes over in the corner he takes his jacket or whatever it is his outside garment off puts it off clothes himself as a slave would have closed himself picks up a basin of water and begins to wash their feet I would think that the room would have been dead silent until we come to

Peter and Peter makes his argument Jesus insists were there any other questions any other comments none are recorded and apart from this exchange with Peter there very well might have been nothing but silence for the duration of Jesus self abnegation what's going on what is going on well that's what we read to the gospel transgression as an example verse 12 see when he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place he said to them do you understand what I have done to you you call me teacher and Lord you're right for so I am see he just acknowledged the extraordinary nature of what he had done he acknowledges that the cultural even religious boundaries that he has just crossed and in this case the boundaries are appropriate but not prohibitive that's that's the point he says

I am all of those things yet I washed your feet he calls them then to gospel transgression he says if you then if I then excuse me your lord and teacher have washed your feet you also ought to wash one another's feet for I have given you an example that you should do just as I have done another commentator says the command to do just as I have done becomes all the more striking when it's remembered that humility was despised in the ancient world as a sign of weakness Jesus' command was therefore revolutionary in the sphere of human relationships see we're getting a gospel transgression over and over again remember what is that transgression it's moving over the boundaries that set up limits on what it is that we're comfortable with what it is that we can control what it is that makes us feel secure Jesus is pushing these guys pushing these guys pushing these guys

[19:23] Jesus' command was therefore revolutionary in the sphere of human relationships and Jesus affirms his actions in the strongest terms verse 16 truly truly I say to you a servant is not greater than his master nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him he understands he knows what the nature of the relationship is and that is the reality of things he is saying yet consider what I have done I have served you you need to serve each other for that is the way the kingdom of which I am king works and he says if you know these things blessed are you if you do them Jesus says to them to do the same we cannot lose sight of the symbolism of Jesus doing what he does he serves them yes and it does mean that to serve one another but the washing represents the washing that is his death the washing that his death will accomplish his actions are a call to serve but it's also a call to die he instructs them elsewhere doesn't he that to gain their life they must lose it they must pick up their cross and follow him pick up their cross and follow him how we have minimized that phrase oh man

I just twisted my ankle it's my cross to bear that's not what he's talking about the cross was this bloody reviled instrument of torture upon which he the king of glory would die in shame he's telling his disciples you gotta be ready you gotta be ready I've done this to you you need to do it to each other their following Jesus in gospel transgression will likely cost them their lives their deaths will not cleanse anybody from sin but but they will as the apostle Paul says fill up Christ's suffering to the gospel transgressions that we have been considering find their impetus in this the greatest gospel transgression of all this second person of the triune godhead leaving the precincts of heaven to take up residence among sinful human beings like you and I to live in the world he moves into the world and if we look back over the transgressions we've considered

I think we'd find that they were motivated first by love Jesus sitting with tax collectors and sinners what's the comparison that's being made in those accounts what's the dynamic going on there he is sitting with a bunch of people who need the healing that he can bring and there over on the side are the Pharisees looking at them with scorn and disdain and considering Jesus just what kind of a prophet is he but love brings Jesus to the table love causes them to transgress that boundary and sit down with tax collectors and sinners why because they need what he has he brings the gospel he brings eternal life so transgression as an act of love it shows up there I believe in that story that we consider with Jesus and tax collectors and sinners and gospel transgressions they brought cleansing not in a saving sense but in the live but the lived implications of the gospel for Peter to come to an understanding that he is to call no one common or unclean that's a cleansing that's a cleansing of his attitude that's a cleansing of his hard heart that's a cleansing of his self-righteousness he has been humbled he has been cleansed let alone for the fact that he's been brought into the household of Cornelius and as he's telling them the story preaching to them the gospel the Holy

Spirit falls on them and they know that these two have been made fit for the covenant people of God they have been cleansed gospel transgression brings cleansing and then even tonight as we look at Jesus washing the feet of the disciples it's certainly it's echoed in Philemon's receiving of Onesimus as a brother it's an echo of what we considered here this evening here he is now becoming a servant right Jesus he's the master they're the disciples they're the servants he understands the dynamic but that's precisely what happens when Onesimus carries a letter from the apostle Paul back to Philemon it's given to him Philemon opens up he reads it he says I find out now this man is no longer my slave he's now my born again brother in Christ yeah so that relationship that power relationship exists but the gospel transgression causes a shift all of a sudden suddenly there's a movement on the part of

Philemon to move away from that position of power and prestige and privilege and embrace Onesimus with grace and Jesus is the one who sets the example he is the one who provides the power he is the one who promises blessing and glory for following him and transgressing boundaries that keep people from true life in this age and eternal life in the age to come we are called by Jesus to follow him across these sinful boundaries to commit gospel transgression to say you know what I know that this is the way the world works but that's not the way Jesus works the world might think this way but Jesus doesn't think this way the world might act a certain way but Jesus doesn't act that way and I'm with Jesus I'm united to him and where he goes I follow when he crosses a boundary I cross a boundary now

[25 : 27] I've been urging this talking about it it's so hard to do it's so hard to do we get up and we live our day we already have enough on the plate we feel like you know just to get through the day there's work to be done there's children to be raised there's floors to be cleaned there's shopping to be done there's bank accounts to worry about there's all kinds of thing that comes with living in this fallen world yet nonetheless here we are redeemed by God plucked out of the mass of humanity to be numbered among God's covenant people for what purpose to commit gospel transgression we can't argue with it we can't argue with it we can't make excuses for it we can resist but it needs to be done and each one of us has a particular sphere a particular area in our lives where I suspect that this makes application or it will if we begin to think about it and are open to it there will be ways in which suddenly we'll discover oh I see I see that's how like Peter

I've considered these people common or unclean oh I see I see I have allowed my religious scruples to keep me from showing up where I need to show up in order to bring the gospel to these people or I've thought yeah you know to do that I'm going to have to give up my place of privilege I'm going to have to just be on equal terms these things are kind of the essence of what's been going on of what we've been talking about and I think we'll be confronted with them because that's what Jesus says he's doing he's come to seek and save the lost he's come to sit down with tax collectors and sinners he's come to bring the Gentiles in he's come to take away all the sinful proclivities of power and class to take them away why because his is a kingdom of love his is a kingdom of redemption of deliverance of salvation and we are his people we are the ones whom he has called to follow him into gospel transgression

I'm going to pray in just a moment but as I pray I'm going to ask that God help us to see to understand where it is that this might fit into our thinking and I've already asserted that it does so there I am me bold me telling you that you've got a problem and I've got a problem but what I'm going to pray is that if we have a problem we're going to see it and we're going to think about it and we're going to have thought of the grace to actually follow him across that boundary to where we need to go and it might be a very small thing it could be a big thing but I think it's what God wants us to do so let's pray first Lord Jesus I want to thank you for leaving a place full of love leaving the intimacy of your relationship the fullness of your glory no questioning or doubting about who you were or what your nature was or anything about you you existed in that glorious place and yet you came to the world to a place full of people who had evil and deceitfulness in their hearts people who plotted to destroy you people who who are just turned their backs on the

God who has created them and yet you came and you moved in to live among us we want to thank you for that and we want to thank you for being obedient to that which you had purpose to do within that eternal mystery council of redemption covenant of redemption that you would come and do your part to save God's people and so we thank you for being obedient or as Paul says in his letter to Philippians obedient to the point of death even death on a cross we thank you Jesus for doing that and what we're asking Lord Jesus is that you would help us to follow you as you press us to gospel transgression help us to see how we have as I've used an earlier term gerrymanded our lives created a place that we live where we're in control where we stay in power and yet we've got these people out there that you say are our neighbors and we need to be ready because we're supposed to love our neighbors ourselves so I pray you help us and Lord you know each one of us and if

I'm right if I've discovered anything or said anything or encouraged anything that is true that we all probably have some space somewhere that we need to be willing to transgress for the sake of the gospel for the sake of your glory would you show that to us would you lead us into that perhaps even now as I'm praying or as we think about this some more if we go back over some of the thoughts we considered over these last few services Lord that you would show us where it is and

that we would have faith to do that as an act of love as an act of cleansing that we might follow Jesus' example so that we ourselves out of love would bring the gospel that cleanses someone because they put their faith in the Lamb of God his finished complete sacrifice on their behalf so that they too might be declared righteous from a holy God so Lord be with us enable us to follow [31 : 17] Jesus wherever he leads and that we would do that probably with some trepidation but Lord please help us to do it with faith and with joy for God you are good you have redeemed us you saved us and we have reserved for us a hope heaven that does not fade away reserved for us a place so may we press on in this walk that you called us to following Christ where he leads to your glory in his name I pray amen