

# The Father's will and the Son's willingness

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 26 March 2024

Preacher: Julian Dobbs

[0:00] There is in fact so much that we could think about in this passage isn't there. We could think about Jesus' anguish. We could think about betrayal.

We could think about getting weary in the body in our labor for the Lord. There's one verse that I want to pick up with you today.

And so if you'd open your Bibles, it's on page 1012. 1-0-1-2 of the Church Bible in Mark chapter 14. I encourage you to open the Scriptures with me.

Here is Jesus. He says to the disciples, Sit here while I pray. And he took with them Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

And he said to them, My soul is sorrowful, even unto death. So here is Jesus.

[1:07] It's soon to be Good Friday. We're almost at the pinnacle point of history. And you can imagine the angels in heaven, if you can, holding their breath in amazement as they watch the unfolding events that are described in the Gospels.

What an incredible vision they must have had looking down upon earth to these events. And yet Peter and James and John fall asleep.

Imagine that. They fall asleep. Similarly, the Jews, the scribes, the religious leaders, the Pharisees, the elders, all having access to these events that are foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures, some of which were read to us today, all of what's transpiring in the garden.

And they too are ignorant of what is going on. Look with me if you would there in verse 34 of Mark's Gospel in chapter 14.

With all of that going on, Jesus began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, My soul is sorrowful, even unto death.

[2:33] So what do we, the followers of this same Jesus, on this Palm Sunday in 2024 at Holy Trinity, Syracuse, New York, learn about Jesus from this Gospel passage?

Let's, as best you can, take our minds back to the garden where Jesus is with the disciples. My soul is very sorrowful, even unto death.

Here's the first thing of three I want you to notice today. Jesus, he has a willingness towards sorrow here in the garden.

And it's so important that we understand this. Jesus must offer himself willingly. He must offer himself as a sacrifice voluntarily.

He must give himself as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world freely. We commit the sin, the Lord Jesus pays for that sin.

[3:46] That's how it works. He is not forced. He is not manipulated. He's not pushed into doing something that he does not want to do. For his sacrifice on the cross to be accepted, he must offer himself freely.

He must go there willingly. And Mark quotes the words of Jesus as he comes to reconcile this in his own heart, there in the garden of Gethsemane, as a result, my soul is very sorrowful.

The Lord's willingness to sorrow. He is bereft of compassion and of support. Even those closest to him fall asleep in this hour.

He's left on his own. He's sorrowful, even unto death. Sleeping disciples, well, not all of them, just a few of them at this point.

Others elsewhere in the garden. Jesus isolated. He's a lonely figure this night and this great transaction of redemption and salvation.

[4:53] He's by himself, bearing freely and bearing fully and single-handedly the salvation of his people. The Lord, our righteousness, yet we, his people, were his damnation.

Try and put yourself there in the garden. He says there, Abba, Father, verse 36, look with me. Abba, Father, all things are possible for you.

Remove this cup from me, yet not what I will, but what you want. So think about this for a moment. Could God Almighty in heaven have answered the prayer of Jesus and delivered him from the cross which was ahead of him? Could he have done that? Was it possible for the Lord to do that?

We're told here with a single word in the garden later, Jesus could summon not just one legion of angels, but perhaps, you know, five, which was perhaps five or six thousand warriors.

[6:05] He could summon twelve legions of angels. In fact, more than twelve. Tens of thousands of angels. In an instant, he could call out this great force to rescue him, to deliver him from this sorrow in the garden.

Think in the Bible about what we know about angels. Think in the Bible about the power of just a single angel. A single angel in the New Testament can do what?

Unlock a prison door. Set captives free. A single angel rolls a stone, we read on Easter Day, and sits on it as if to say, this is nothing.

It's nothing to God. Imagine what more than twelve legions of angels could do.

Of course it was possible for Jesus to be delivered from his suffering. Almighty God could save Jesus there in the garden. Of course he could. But if he had done that, he would not save you.

[7:11] He would not do both. Because the Bible reveals that divine justice, God's justice, requires that sin must be punished.

There's no way around this. Even in our comfortable 21st century age, either your sin will be punished in and through Jesus Christ, or your sin will be punished in you.

But punished it will be. And as a result, this cup of suffering before Jesus there in the garden that night could not pass from him.

It is as if Almighty God brings Jesus into the garden to the mouth of the furnace and bids Jesus to look over the edge into the mouth of that furnace to see what awaits him.

So that he, knowing what is before him, willingly, deliberately, lovingly, freely, chooses to endure the cross.

[8:19] This is how much he loves us. It's incredible, isn't it? In fact, words cannot be used to help us understand this. He says, as a result, my soul is sorrowful.

In fact, very sorrowful. even unto death. Let's look at the depth of Jesus' sorrow. Secondly, so he's willing to sorrow.

Secondly, the depth of his sorrow. This language is very peculiar. Look again in verse 34 of Mark 14. My soul is very sorrowful. Look what Mark tells us.

Probably the earliest of the gospel writers here. even unto death. Not just sorrow. Not just exceeding sorrow.

Not just great sorrow. Not just deep sorrow. But sorrowful even unto death. death. This is a sorrow so intense, so strong, so vast, so deep, so great, that it would swallow you and crush you and kill you.

[9:30] In fact, in Luke's gospel, as Luke develops the events there in the garden, we read that Jesus was in agony in the garden.

That's the word Luke uses. a tremendous force pushing down upon him. He's overwhelmed to the point of death, even we're told they're sweating like great drops of blood falling on the ground.

Think about agony for a moment. In the days of the New Testament when people would assemble for a contest, a sports contest or some great contest like that, it was called an agon.

In fact, you would sometimes even go to a place called agon to have these great battles and fights, a place of striving and agony, sports and chariots.

And it was agony. It was struggle. It was anguish. And Jesus knows he will be made sin for his people on the cross and he has this agony even to the point of death.

[10:48] In fact, you might think about this on Good Friday. Think about the words of Jesus on the cross. He says at one point, Father, forgive them.

Secondly, he says to the thief with him on the cross, today you will be with me in paradise. Thirdly, he says to his mother, woman, and behold your son.

Fourthly, he says, you can feel the agony building. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And he says, I thirst. I thirst. I thirst. On the cross, Jesus is in the flame of God's justice.

Think of, if you know your New Testament, which many of you do, of course, think of the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke's gospel chapter 16. What does the rich man say from the depths of Hades?

[11:56] The rich man calls out, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger into the water and cool my tongue for I am in anguish here in these flames.

In this flame. Sorrow. Agony. To the point of death. On the cross, Jesus will experience the flame of God's holy indignation, the naked and exposed anger of God, his Father, being poured out upon him, who is bringing the hammer of justice upon his head and it is his own Father.

He says, I am sorrowful. Sorrowful. Even to the point of death. Think about this for a moment.

This is his Father. His Father whom he cries out, Abba, Daddy. Daddy. He speaks to his Father.

He knows his Father. He pours out his heart to his Father. and he glances from the cross and it is the same Father who is bringing this agony upon him.

[13:19] Isaiah would tell us as was read to us, he was smitten by God and afflicted, pierced and crushed, chastised, oppressed, afflicted.

He opened not his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep before its shearers is silent. He's in the deep depths of the greatest anguish we can imagine.

My soul is sorrowful, says Jesus, even to the point of death. He's willing to sorrow. He's sorrowful, even to the point of death.

And thirdly, this morning, let's look for the love of Jesus in his sorrow. Approximately 30 or 40 years after this event in the Garden of Gethsemane, after Jesus suffers on the cross, he dies, he's resurrected, he's ascended to heaven, a letter is written and we still have it today.

It's written to some Hebrew people and the letter finds itself in the canon of the New Testament and we believe it to be the word of God.

[14:44] And in chapter 12 of this letter, the author writes, let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

The letter to the Hebrews tells us, for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross. What joy?

What is the joy that is set before him? Surely, the joy that is set before him is the joy of having a heaven that Jesus can share with every one of his people.

Those of us who name the name of Jesus Christ. And in fact, in John's gospel, Jesus said, Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory.

This is his joy. You are his joy. His joy is having his people with him for all of eternity.

[16:08] Isn't that beautiful? Say yes, Bishop. It's beautiful, isn't it? Because of that, Jesus goes to the garden.

Because of that, Jesus goes to the cross. So here in the garden, in the agony of his sorrow, we see the strength of his love for you and me.

It's beautiful. His love for his people. It's amazing. You're going to endure, Jesus, all of this agony for miserable sinners in Holy Trinity, Syracuse.

And the miserable sinner, the bishop. Because he loves us. It's what later, centuries later, moves the great hymn writer, Charles Wesley, to write, And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood?

Died he for me, who caused his pain for me, who him to death pursued amazing love?

[17:29] How can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me? And against the background of all that he will endure, for the joy that was set before him, he endures the cross, despises the same shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

And so, my friends here at Holy Trinity, my brothers and my sisters in Christ, as we begin this very holy week, through the account of Jesus in the garden, we see the costliness of our salvation.

Never forget that our forgiveness came at the highest conceivable cost that could have been paid. Jesus gives everything.

He gives everything. He gives everything because of his great love for you and for me and because he desires to have us with himself for eternity.

That's where we begin this week with him. Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, in your tender love for us, you sent your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, to take upon himself our nature and to

suffer death upon the cross, giving us the perfect example of his great humility.

[19 : 11] Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering and come to share in his resurrection. We pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen. Amen. So here's the thing, my friends, and your worship team is very courageous to do this today. Amen. Amen. Amen.