

John 12:20-33

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Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0 : 00] Amen. This is the word of the Lord. Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, you are the God who speaks.

! And we are gathered this morning not to listen to our own voices, not to hear from one another, but to hear from you.

So, God, I ask that you would speak to us this morning through your holy word, that you would speak to us this morning through your Holy Spirit, Lord.

God, we believe that you have a message for us to receive, one to be changed by, one to result in your glory. And so we ask you, Lord, to have your way in us, to build your church through your word, as you've been doing for thousands of years.

And do that this morning, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Well, good morning, church. My name is Mike, one of the elders here at Shoreline. And I want to ask you this morning, why on earth are you here?

[1 : 07] Why are you here? And I don't mean, why are you sitting here in this room right now, although it's probably a good question to ask yourself. What I mean is, why do you exist?

Like, what is your life meant to be? What does it look like for you to live truly? Does it look like, you know, figuring out what the best expression of you is?

Does that look like? Does it look like maximizing your comfort and your happiness in this life? Or the opposite, does it look like minimizing the pain and the suffering and the discomfort that you could experience?

What is your life meant to be? Now, right in the center of today's passage, Jesus says, verse 26, If anyone serves me, he must follow me.

And where I am, there will my servant be also. Where Jesus is, there will his servant be also.

[2 : 22] Now, from this little phrase, we're going to draw our main point today. And that is this, that true life is being where Jesus is.

Right, if you could advance the slides. That true life is being where Jesus is. Now, this begs the question, where is Jesus?

If true life is being where Jesus is, then where is Jesus? If we're going to be where he is, then we need to actually know where he is. Right? And so, in the rest of the text, we see where Jesus is.

So, we're going to walk through this passage together, and we're going to consider, where is Jesus? And in other words, I'm saying, like, what is Jesus doing? What is he saying?

What does this reveal about his heart and his attitude? Knowing that, you know, from the start now, that he's calling us to be where he is. So, verse 20, it says, So, remember, for the last two weeks, since John 11, 55, the setting of the story is Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

[3 : 39] And that was the annual festival celebrating Israel's deliverance from Egypt, right? Now, during this feast, numbers would swell as people poured into Jerusalem. It would be both Jews and Gentile worshipers of God from throughout Israel and from throughout the scattered world.

They would journey to Jerusalem to join in the celebration. And we see here that there are some Greeks, which is referring not necessarily to Greek speakers, but to Gentiles, to people who are not of Jewish descent.

And the fact that they've come to the feast, it demonstrates their fear of Yahweh, of Israel's God, right? It demonstrates their interest in the things of God. And now everybody's talking about Jesus, right?

They were saying, is he going to come to the feast or not? People are talking about Christ, and the interest of these Gentiles is piqued. Now, perhaps they had witnessed the second cleansing of the temple, which is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels.

And as we heard from Jim back when he preached on the first cleansing, that was done in the court of the Gentiles, the outermost court of the temple, which is the only portion of the temple the Gentiles could be at.

[4 : 51] Perhaps they had heard about Jesus' feeding of the 5,000. That occurred up near the Sea of Galilee, which is in a mixed area near the Decapolis region. Jews and Gentiles live there.

Or perhaps they were at the feeding of the 4,000, which was actually in the Decapolis region. A lot of Greek speakers were there. We don't know. But either way, they want to see Jesus, as we see in verse 21.

So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. Philip went and told Andrew.

Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. So these Gentile worshipers of God, you know, they're hoping to gain an audience with Jesus. So naturally, they first go to one of his disciples to make the request.

And Philip here is likely unsure how to handle this request. And the reason is, Jesus, he has been ministering to Gentiles here and there throughout his ministry.

[5 : 52] He has taught about God's love for the world. But the disciples did not grasp the full implications of this until much later in the book of Acts. So perhaps he's unsure.

He goes to Andrew. And why Andrew? We can only speculate. But consider this, that in the book of John, when we see Andrew, do you know what he's doing? He's inviting people to Jesus.

That's a picture that we see of Andrew. It's a beautiful picture. And I pray that we too would be about that business of bringing people to Jesus. So then, the request is brought before our Lord.

And verse 23, And Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. All the way back in John 2, the wedding at Cana, if you remember, Jesus' mother Mary approaches him with a problem, right?

They have no wine. And do you remember what Jesus says? He says, Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come. Right? And as we move through the story of John, Jesus keeps pointing forward to this hour that is to come.

[7 : 06] Right? What is this hour? When will this hour occur? And now, prompted by these Greeks, these Gentiles who are seeking him, Jesus declares, The hour has come.

It is here. And it's the hour of his glorification. That means that this is the hour in which a spotlight would be shown on Jesus Christ and all would see the beauty and glory and wonder of who he is. So the first thing, where is Jesus? He's being glorified. That's where Jesus is. Now, this makes sense, considering that he just wrote, last week's text, he just wrote triumphantly into Jerusalem, right?

The people are waving their palm branches and they're shouting, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel. But, as we saw last week, his glorification would not come in the way expected by the Jews, right?

For consider what Jesus says next. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

[8 : 24] But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Does anyone recall the first I am statement that Jesus made in John?

Anybody? I am the bread of life. The bread of life. In John 6.51, Jesus said, And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

And we talked then about that was pointing forward to the cross, right? His death on the cross on which he would sacrifice his own life. So here in John 12, he's picking up on a similar theme and a similar agricultural analogy, right?

In order for a grain of wheat to produce a harvest, it first needs to die. It needs to be buried in the ground. And if it is buried, it will in time produce an abundant crop.

So these Greeks have come to see Jesus, and Jesus is in effect saying, Before I'm able to minister to these Gentiles, I first have to die. I first must lay down my life.

[9 : 34] I first must bury it in the ground. And when I do, it will produce an abundant harvest. And that's a harvest of souls, right? A harvest of human souls that have believed in Jesus and received eternal life and salvation.

It's a new humanity that lives life truly. But for that to happen, Jesus must die. So where is Jesus?

Laying down his life. That's where he is. But we can't divorce verse 23 from verse 24. This is the hour of Jesus' glorification, and it's the hour of Jesus' death on the cross.

How do we make sense of that, right? Now certainly, we know the story, right? We know what happens after the cross, and certainly the glorification of Jesus would come through the cross, on the other side of the cross, because he would rise triumphantly from the grave.

Amen? And he would take his rightful place at the Father's right hand. But Jesus is saying more than that here. Jesus is saying that his glorification would be the cross.

[10:57] His glorification would come in the cross itself. And how can this possibly be? How can his death on the cross be his glorification?

And the answer, friends, is this. Because the cross of Christ is the ultimate display of God's unfathomable, steadfast love for his sheep.

The cross of Christ is the ultimate demonstration of the humility and the selflessness of God, who is willing to condescend to earth, right?

And then to sacrifice himself for the world. So we see that the cross of Christ is the clearest revelation of the heart of God.

As one commentator writes, it's the most dramatic case in point of the pattern of divine life that exists for all time. It's a pattern of denying self for the sake of the beloved.

[11:59] Denying self for the sake of the beloved. That's what we see in the cross. This is why the glorification of Christ would be found in the cross itself.

And then we see in the next verses, Jesus calls his followers to pattern their own lives, right? After that of the divine life. And we're going to focus on that later.

There's another way the cross is the glorification of Jesus, as we'll see clearly from the next verses. Verse 27, Jesus says, Now is my soul troubled.

And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this purpose, I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.

Where is Jesus? Jesus is submitting to the Father. Now the word troubled does not seem to carry enough force in the English language.

[13:01] We saw a similar thing in John 11. Jesus is saying here that he is in distress, that he is in anguish, that his soul is in anguish. Jesus is about to be betrayed by his so-called friend and disciple, right?

Jesus is about to be wrongfully accused and beaten, mocked, scorned, flogged almost to the point of death, and then crucified on a cross.

We can scarcely conceive of this pain this morning. And we cannot even begin to fathom the far greater cost of Jesus becoming sin for us, bearing the full weight of God's wrath for sin.

And then the Father, whom Christ has loved for all eternity, they've been one for all eternity. The Father turns his back on his Son, forsakes him there on the cross.

Yes, his soul is in anguish. Now, John doesn't include the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane in his gospel, but here he captures the heart and the prayer of Christ in the garden.

[14:15] Many actually believe that when Jesus says, Father, save me from this hour, he's actually saying it directly to the Father as his prayer. Just like in the Garden of Gethsemane when he prays, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. It's Matthew 26, 39. Even though Jesus' soul is in anguish over the cost that he is about to bear, he remains laser-focused on one thing, the glory of the Father, right?

The glory of the Father. Jesus' utmost desire is for his life to bring the Father glory, and so he willingly submits to the Father's will.

And so Jesus does here, and in the Garden of Gethsemane, what our forefather Adam could not do in the Garden of Eden, right? Jesus models what humanity was meant to be all along, what true life is meant to look like.

It's resisting temptation and submitting totally to the Father. And the Father answers in verse 28, Then a voice came from heaven, I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.

[15:38] Three times in the Gospels, a voice speaks audibly from heaven, attesting to Christ's identity. The first is baptism, right? When the Father declares, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

It's Matthew 3:17. The second, it has transfiguration before Peter, James, and John. When the Father declares again, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him. Matthew 17:5. And now the Father speaks directly to his Son, saying in essence, You have glorified my name, and you surely will again.

See, Jesus has lived his entire life in submission to the Father. We've seen this over and over again in the Gospel of John. He's lived his entire life for the Father's glory.

And now he's about to do the same by his death. Now the crowd we see in verse 29 is perplexed by this voice from heaven. To them, it's just noise.

[16:41] Not the clear, booming voice of the Father confirming the identity of his Son. And we see that their unbelief, it blinds them from reality. And we're going to discuss that more next week.

Jesus tells them in verse 30 that the voice was not for his sake, but for theirs. He's calling them to pay closer attention to what's been unfolding right before their eyes.

He's calling them to believe, to faith. And then Jesus says in verse 31, Now is the judgment of this world.

What is Jesus talking about here? Isn't his hour, his death upon the cross, the salvation of the world, right? Rather than the judgment of the world?

And doesn't he say elsewhere that he did not come to judge, but to save the world? Yes, in fact, he says that only 16 verses later in this text.

[17:40] Passage that Pastor Matt will be preaching on Christmas Eve. Yes, Christ has come to save the world. His death on the cross would be the salvation of the world.

But it also has the effect of judgment. Because it becomes not only a source of life, but a source of division. See, only those who look upon Christ crucified and believe in him become part of God's family.

Those who do not remain apart from God's family and objects of God's wrath instead of his unending mercy. And this is the sobering part of the gospel that we don't like much to talk about. But to not talk about it would actually be unloving to those who don't believe in Christ. The cross of Christ, it's not just a symbol of religion.

The cross of Christ is the means by which we are saved from the eternal fires of hell. And we are just discussing in our community group, hell is not the absence of God as we often think about it.

[18:53] If it's just the place where God isn't, you might think, then that's fine. Because I don't really want him anyway. No, friends. Hell is the absence of all that is good and gracious about God.

Hell is the presence of all that is angry and wrathful about God. See, right now, you may not realize it, you are receiving so many glorious benefits of God's presence.

His common graces like sunshine and rain and life and breath and family and friends and good food and drink, these are gifts from the Father of lights.

These are gifts from above. And he is standing. He's offering you salvation. And he is holding back his wrath. And it's just.

It's just wrath for sin. But one day, he will withhold that wrath no longer. His common grace will be removed.

[19:58] And only those who have believed on Christ will be warmly welcomed into his eternal, life-giving presence. So I implore you this morning, be reconciled to God.

Well, that's only the first half of the verse. Here's the second. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

It's putting it together. Where is Jesus? He's judging the world and the devil. He's judging the world and the devil. Now, the first half of the verse is the sobering reality of why you should believe in Jesus.

The second half of the verse is the invigorating, triumphant reality of why you should believe in Jesus. The ruler of this world is Satan himself, right? The prince of the power of the air, Ephesians 2:2.

The one with cosmic powers over this present darkness, Ephesians 6:12. The God of this world, 2 Corinthians 4:4. He is the one who lured our forefather Adam and his wife Eve to rebel against God, right?

[21:06] Bringing the curse that has affected every corner of this world and every corner of our hearts. And on the cross, friends, Satan has been dealt a fatal blow, one from which he will not recover.

He has been disarmed. He has been shamed by the triumph of the cross because his power and the power of sin has been broken.

And this victory was promised in the Garden of Eden back in Genesis 3 after mankind fell into sin. And now, after resisting temptation, submitting himself to the Father in Gethsemane, Jesus has gained the victory through his death on the cross.

See, the cross of Christ is like, it's like the storming of Normandy at D-Day, right? A triumphant, decisive victory was won. The end of the war is known.

But it's still going to be a slog until the inevitable conclusion, until the total and final defeat of Satan that we see in Revelation 20. I love it when we sing Martin Luther's A Mighty Fortress Is Our God. [22 : 25] You know, in verse 3 we sing, And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we will not fear for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us.

The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him. His rage we can endure for lo, his doom is sure. One little word shall fell him.

Where is Jesus judging the world and the devil? And lastly, let's look at verses 32 and 33. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. Where is Jesus drawing mankind to himself?

Now today we have focused much on the cross because the focus of Christ and of John in this text is the cross.

[23 : 38] And we've actually been pulling from these verses right here because these verses point directly to the cross as the means by which salvation will be won for mankind. Right?

The means by which that harvest of souls would be produced. Now already in the gospel of John, Jesus has used this language of being lifted up.

In John 3, 14, he used it with Nicodemus referencing how Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness and so he too, the son of man would be lifted up.

In chapter 8, verse 28, he uses the same language again to the Jewish crowd that's gathered before him at the feast of booths. But Jesus here and in those passages, he's referring not just to his own words earlier in his life, he's referring back further to Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering servant hundreds of years prior.

See, according to Isaiah, the suffering servant would be high and lifted up and shall be exalted. But this exaltation, it would come through rejection and sorrow and affliction.

[24 : 54] This is Isaiah 53. But Isaiah prophesies out of the anguish of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied. By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities.

The suffering servant would be, Isaiah 49, 6, a light to the nations that the salvation of the Lord may reach to the end of the earth.

And we see now that the suffering servant is Christ. And by being lifted up on the cross, he would make a way for the nations, right, for these Greeks that are now seeking him and for you and for me to be rescued from bondage to sin and to Satan and then to be united with Christ.

And in line with our Advent reflection today, he would become for us peace. Reconciling both Jew and Gentile to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

Having been gathered into the fold of God then, united with Christ and the saints forevermore, we are then free to live life truly as God designed.

[26 : 18] So where is Jesus? He is being glorified. He's laying down his life. He's submitting to the Father. He's judging the world and the devil.

He's drawing mankind to himself. And we see in this upside-down kingdom, that's the kingdom of God, this conquering King Jesus, he shows us that life comes through death, that honor comes through humility, that victory comes through defeat.

as he embraces his role as the suffering servant before being crowned in glory. So we've considered then where Jesus is and now we want to consider what that means for us.

Because remember, true life is being where Jesus is. And here's the first thing. Jesus empowers us to be where he is. He empowers us.

And when I say empowered, I mean two things. I mean one, that we are made alive and two, that we are motivated by his sacrifice on the cross. And we've already talked at length today about how we are made alive by the death of Jesus on the cross.

[27 : 29] We were dead in our sins. Ladies, you just looked at this in Ephesians 2. We were dead in our sins, but Jesus paid the penalty for that sin, breaking its power over us, right?

Uniting us to him by faith and in the power of the Spirit. So through his sacrifice on the cross, we are made truly alive, united to Christ to live life eternally in him, right?

We're made alive by his sacrifice. And the cross, it not only makes us alive, but it motivates. It motivates us to follow in Christ's footsteps, to walk the path that he walked.

See, if Christ was willing to endure such affliction for the sake of love for me, for the world, for you, right? For the sake of the Father's glory, then I am moved and willing to do the same.

The cross, we see, it becomes the rallying point for Christ's disciples who are stirred to display the same kind of selfless, sacrificial love for God and for others.

[28 : 44] So Jesus empowers us to be where he is. This comes first. This must come first. He empowers us. It's his doing. And then proceeding from that, Jesus calls us to be where he is.

He calls us to be where he is. Now I want us to return to verse 25 and 26, which we jumped over previously. Now remember, it's that little phrase in verse 26, where I am, there will my servant be also.

Where we're getting the main imperative of this sermon, which is to be where Jesus is. When right before that, he said, if anyone serves me, he must follow me, right?

And where I am, there will my servant be also. And since we've seen now where Jesus is, then we know where to be. And so the first thing, laying down our lives.

Jesus calls us to be where he is, laying down our lives. Verse 25, Jesus says, whoever loves his life loses it. And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

[30 : 00] Now this verse makes clear that when Jesus was talking about that grain of wheat dying and falling into the earth, he was not just talking about himself. He's also talking about his disciples.

And this is the connection. Now what does he mean, hate our lives? He's not literally calling his disciples to despise their lives.

He's calling them, as they replicate his own example, to deny self, to reject the self's claim to autonomy and to control, to die to self.

This is what Jesus says in the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Such denial of self, writes one commentator, opens one to receive the divine life that never dies.

And now, the laying down of our lives is not just something done once, a conversion, right? But like Jesus, it becomes the pattern of our discipleship.

[31 : 12] We were buried with Christ into death in order to, like him, be raised to newness of life, right? That's Romans 6, for the humility, the selflessness, the self-sacrifice patterned by Christ becomes then the very pattern of our lives.

The continual denial of self for the sake of love becomes our mode of operation. And I want to ask this morning to myself, to you all, could our lives be described as the continual denial of self for the sake of love?

Are our lives marked by humility and selflessness and self-sacrifice? A few life examples here.

Employees, are you more concerned with being perceived as competent or successful or as one who treats others with deference and in humility?

Spouses, do you view your marriage as the means to your own happiness or as a daily opportunity to share in the life of Christ through your selflessness and self-sacrifice for the good of your spouse?

[32 : 40] Husbands, are we leading in that? That's our calling, husbands. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

See, this is where Jesus is. This is where Jesus is in the laying down of his life. This is where his disciples are called to be. This is what true life actually looks like, laying down our lives for the sake of love, taking up our cross and following him, walking in his footsteps of self-sacrifice.

Now, the second is an extension of that and that is this, submitting to the Father. Jesus calls us to be where he is, submitting to the Father.

And consider again the example of Christ. His soul is in anguish at what it will cost him to go to the cross. And yet, he remains laser-focused on one thing, right?

The glory of the Father. And so he submits himself to the Father's will. That's where Jesus is. And so he calls then his disciples to be there too. Now, we submitted ourselves to the Father when we

first believed, right?

[34 : 01] And again, this becomes the pattern. This ought to become the pattern of our lives. But this is not easy to do in the nitty-gritty circumstances of life, is it?

Other paths are alluring. They offer the promise of ease and comfort. But Christ beckons us to walk his path, the path of total surrender.

The path where the Father's will and glory is paramount. in the life of the believer. Now, this takes on a million different forms in everyday life, does it not?

I just want to ask, are you willing to yield yourself to the will of the Father even when it doesn't make sense to you? Even when it's difficult, the way is unclear?

here? Are you willing to align yourself with his agenda, with his word, even when it doesn't make sense, even when worldly wisdom and logic would tell you to do otherwise?

[35 : 18] That's the path that Christ walked. That's where Christ is calling us to be. And there's a reason that he taught us to pray first, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done.

That is the start to the Lord's prayer. That ought to become the pattern of our own prayers. Make that, Christian, make that your daily prayer. Wrestle that prayer into the circumstances of your life, into the areas of your heart that you have not surrendered yet to the Lord.

That's where Jesus is. That's where we're called to be, submitting to the Father for his glory, no matter what the cost is. The last few, more quickly, resisting the devil.

Resisting the devil. Now, Christ has disarmed the power of Satan. We could never do that. He has disarmed his power. He has cast him out of the hearts of believers. So we, too, can resist his schemes like Jesus did.

See, true humanity rejects any rebellion against God. That's what true humanity does. True life, it lives in submission to the Father and in opposition to the enemy.

[36 : 41] James 4, 7 says, submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Paul says that by taking up the shield of faith, we can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.

The war has already been won. Amen? The war has been won. Satan's defeat is sure, but he continues to wreak havoc in this evil age, does he not?

And yet, we are able to resist his schemes. We are able to ensure that he remains banished from our hearts in union with Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, Jesus calls us to be where he is, drawing mankind to Christ. Drawing mankind to Christ. So just as we see Jesus drawing all peoples to himself through his death on the cross, we are called to draw all nations to him, right, through our witnessing of Christ crucified.

So this is a clear call to missions and evangelism, and it's also a tip for how to do it. The tip is this, focus on the cross. Focus on the cross.

[37 : 59] Now we can become so enthralled with evangelistic techniques and apologetics arguments, and those are certainly not bad. They have their place, but they can prevent us, even distract us from talking about the central thing in Christianity, the cross of Christ.

Or we can think, maybe you fall into this, that we simply just aren't articulate enough, right, that we don't have enough theological knowledge, we don't have the right words to say to effectively witness to our unsaved friends and family, but this isn't true.

Do you know of the love that Jesus displayed for you on the cross? Talk about that. Talk about that. Point to Christ and what he's done for you and his boundless love for mankind on the cross.

There is so much power in the cross. And friends, by drawing others to Christ, we are actually fulfilling the original purpose that mankind was created for, right?

To spread the life-giving goodness of God to the world by beckoning them into relationship with him. Now all of these lead to the final point, being glorified.

[39 : 17] being glorified. Maybe this comes as a surprise, but verse 26, Jesus says, 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. Now we've been saying today that where I am, there will my servant be also, is a call, right?

to be where Jesus is. It is also a promise. The promise is that those who deny self and follow Jesus, yielding their lives to the Father, get to be where Jesus is.

All the glory that we receive, all the honor that the Father bestows on us, is in connection with our union, with Christ, and in Christ. Now Paul captures this so beautifully in Ephesians 2.

We keep going there this week and today, but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved, and he raised us up with him, and he seated us with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

[40 : 46] Do you see the beauty there? Union with Christ, he has made us alive, he has seated us with Christ even now, church, even now, this isn't just a future promise, we are with Christ, joined to Christ, and we will receive the immeasurable riches of God's grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Can somebody say amen? This is the picture of true life, this is the picture, the way that it was meant to be from the beginning, enjoying fellowship with God that never ends, receiving unending goodness from the Father.

This is our glory, church. This is our honor, and it comes to those who have yielded their lives down at the foot of the cross, right?

It's to those who say, I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2.20. I just want to tell a brief story. William McChesney, as I learned a couple weeks ago, was a missionary who served in the Congo in the 1960s.

[42 : 08] He was seized and then beaten mercilessly, thrown into a filthy crowded prison. There he developed malarial fever, but that didn't take his life because he was killed.

Before leaving for Africa, he had written a poem explaining his desire for overseas missions, and he wrote, quote, I want my breakfast served at eight with ham and eggs upon the plate.

A well-broiled steak I'll eat at one and dine again when day is done. I want an ultra-modern! I want an ultra-modern home and in each room a telephone. This is the 1960s. Soft carpets I want my wardrobe, too, to be of neatest, finest quality with latest style and suit and vest.

Why should not Christians have the best? But then the master I can hear in no uncertain voice so clear, I bid you come and follow me, the lowly man of Galilee.

If he be God and died for me, no sacrifice too great can be. For me, a mortal man to make, I'll do it all for Jesus' sake.

[43 : 21] Yes, I will tread the path he trod, no other way to please my God. So hence forth, this my choice shall be my choice for all eternity.

See, William McChesney understood that true life is lived where Jesus is. A life of humility and self-sacrifice, a life yielded to the Father.

And as we've seen today, that kind of life, that kind of life comes eternal glory and honor. Through that kind of life comes eternal glory and honor.

honor. So yes, in God's upside-down kingdom, through death comes life, right? Through humility comes honor, through defeat comes victory.

And this is the path where Jesus walked. This is the path where true life is found. And he has empowered us to be there by his death on the cross, right?

[44 : 22] and he has called us to remain there. So, church, may we live where Jesus is for our own glory, for our own joy, for the joy and glory of the nations, and for the glory of God.

Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, this is a lofty calling, but it's one that you in sending your Son have walked first.

Christ has walked this path first. He has broken the power of sin. He has rescued us from the bondage that we had. And he has freed us to be alive.

He's made us alive. God, help us, strengthen us to walk this path of self-sacrifice and denial of self. And let us remember that this life is fleeting and temporary. And eternity and glory awaits. So, Father, may we deny ourselves in this life for your glory, we pray in Christ's name.

[45 : 30] Amen. We're now going to celebrate communion with the Lord's Supper together. As we've seen last week and this week, for Jesus, the cross would precede the crown, right?

before he revealed himself as the conquering king, he would first become the suffering servant. And so, again, from Isaiah 53, but he was pierced for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his wounds we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray.

We have turned every one to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. And becoming the suffering servant then, he would inaugurate a new kingdom.

A new kingdom in which the sin of all those who place their faith in him is forgiven. And forgiven sinners are then reconciled to God, made members of his family forever.

[46 : 47] And yes, one day, one day, friends, he will return as the conquering king to do away once and for all with the tyranny of sin and of Satan and to fully and finally establish his glorious kingdom on earth, one of everlasting love and peace and righteousness.

Now, these are the things that we remember and we celebrate when we partake of the Lord's Supper together. This meal is for those who have put their faith in Christ, but Scripture warns us, friends, that if we're living in secret, unrepentant sin, which is contrary to our calling in the gospel, that taking the bread and the cup is actually eating and drinking condemnation upon ourselves. So let us all examine our hearts this morning. Let's ensure that we're right with the Lord to receive this meal. And if you do not believe in Christ, the bread and the cup are not for you, but we again implore you to be reconciled with God today.

Today you can have life in Christ. So we're going to spend a few minutes in prayer. When you're ready, you can get up and take the elements on either side of the room, return to your seats, and then we'll take the bread and cup together.

Amen. Thank you.

[48 : 39] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.