

A Shattering Disclosure

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

- [0 : 0 0] Well, I don't know what to say except I'm very grateful for the cake and for the song. And I've come to the profound conclusion that it's not quantity of time, it's quality of time.
- So, but it is a bit distracting to have the quantity added up too. But there it is.
- And from where I see me, it's not apparent that I'm that old. But I imagine that applies to most of you too.
- So thank you very much. I've written a letter which Merv may actually, he may not let me send it out, but to go out with the cards this week to our mailing list.
- And if you're on the mailing list, you'll get one. If you're not and want to be, you should put your, give somebody your address so we can send you one.
- [1 : 1 9] And that sort of tells you how I feel about the fact that I think I've just come to the conclusion that this meeting here at noon on Wednesday is the most important event in the whole of the city in the whole of the week.
- The only difficulty is not everybody realizes that. And so I thought I'd tell you about that in the letter.
- If you want to read more about that in the letter, make sure you get one. I'll tell you about that in the letter.
- If you look out the window like this, you see. I don't know if the window looks like that. But if you look out the window. The very last verse before this verse 31 begins, you remember two weeks ago.
- And it was night. Now, it's interesting, you see, that when you look out the window, it's totally black out there.
- [2 : 4 0] But look how it begins. Now is the Son of Man glorified.
- So that you get this amazing contrast between the total blackness of the night and something in which God is glorified.
- So that you see somewhere over the hills, the sun is beginning to come over the horizon. And everybody else was aware of the night. And Jesus was aware of what you might call the dawn of our redemption.
- And he said, now he has gone. The Son of Man is glorified. William Temple sort of puts together like almost like a detective story what's been happening.
- And I found this kind of interesting, so I'm going to pass it on to you. You see, what he says, because earlier in the chapter, you know that the contract or the covenant has already been established.
- [3 : 4 9] That Jesus is to be betrayed by Judas Iscariot. That's already happened. And everybody knows that it's happened. At least Jesus knows that it's happened.
- And so, the temple says, the secret of where this last supper was to be held was to be kept from Judas Iscariot so that he didn't break up the supper party.

And so, when Peter and John said, where are we going to celebrate the Passover? Jesus said to them, and this is the plot thickens here.

You go into the city and you'll see a man carrying a pot of water. It's unusual because that's not a man's job.

Forgive me. I just wanted that. But, I mean, that was the way they used to talk about it. I don't know if they dare talk about it that way now or not. But a man carrying a pot of water and you follow him.

[4 : 55] And where he goes, you go there and say to them, make ready for the master is coming to celebrate the Passover. He will show you a large upper room and there make ready.

So, none of the disciples knew exactly where it was. The two perhaps most dependable of the disciples, Peter and John, were told to go and make the preparation. And Jesus would bring the rest of the disciples there in due course.

So, you see how nobody knew that. So, then you go on and find out that when they were gathered in the upper room, there was this kind of the possibility of betrayal because Judas had already contracted to do it.

And you see, the possibility was that that he could have been, I mean, this is conjecture of course.

But Temple points out that we know from the other evidence that there were two swords in the room. So, he says it was possible that Judas could have been tied up with ropes so that he couldn't go out and he couldn't betray Jesus.

[6 : 21] I mean, that was, that's the way people would normally do things if they knew that a betrayal was about people. But you see, that's not what happened. What happened is, Jesus who chose his disciples, loved them, loved them to the end.

And so, you had that magnificent picture at the end of the meal where Jesus takes the choice morsel and dips it in the dish and gives it to Judas. And Judas eats it.

And then Jesus says to him, what you're going to do, do quickly. And Judas goes out and it is night. And the rest of the disciples presumably wondered, as John's Gospel records it, they wondered why he went, whether he'd been sent on a message or what he was doing.

But Jesus knew what he was doing. And he turned to the disciples and told them what he was doing. When he said to them, in the first verse here, now is the Son of Man glorified.

And God is glorified in him. Now, what this means, I mean, that word glory is an amazing kind of word.

[7 : 32] Because, you know how life goes on, another day, another buck, you know. You know, that poem that the sun is up and up must die to wash and dress, and God knows why, ten thousand times I've washed and dressed and all to do again.

And there's that kind of boring persistence in life. It goes on and on and on. And nothing breaks with it. And everything you see, you've seen before.

And you no longer see it anymore. But then you see, into that scene, that monotony, so to speak, of life, breaks through, Jesus says here, the glory of God.

When he says, the Son of Man is glorified. And how is the Son of Man glorified? Well, it's interesting that they call him the Son of Man, because this is man in his humanity.

This is human kind in the person of Jesus, demonstrated, or being the instrument by which the glory of God is revealed.

[8 : 54] And how is it revealed? It's revealed by him becoming obedient unto death. Now, you know that your life and mine, we like to think that we live a life of obedience.

Obedience to whatever might best serve our interests. But obedience to God was what the Son of Man did in becoming obedient to death, as Philippians says, even death on a cross.

And so the glory of God and the glory of our humankind is demonstrated when Jesus, representing humanity, becomes obedient to death, even death on a cross.

And so the contrast is between our world in which we want to defy death, and the world which Jesus saw in which it was necessary for him, as an act of his own will, to become obedient to death, even death on a cross.

That's why there's that profound significance to the fact that Jesus died on the cross, but not as the result of the cross.

[10 : 27] In other words, Jesus gave his life on the cross. And you get that amazing record in the gospel that he's dead already.

You know, the strange reality that he didn't die as people thought he would. Because when they went to break the legs of the two other men, they found that he was dead already.

He died on the cross at his own will, having become obedient unto death, in obedience to the Father. And he says, that is why, when Judas goes out the door to betray him, that's why it says the Son of Man is glorified.

The drama has begun. The inevitable final act begins when Judas goes out the door. And he says, in this final act, the Son of Man will be glorified.

And God will be glorified in him. And you see, when it says that God is glorified in him, the whole of humanity, in every culture, in every ethnic group, wrestle with the awareness of God.

[11 : 49] And you get terrible, terrible monsters depicting the awesome power of God. And in many cultures and in many societies, this picture of God comes out again and again.

The unfathomable darkness, the endless and almost fruitless search to catch some glimpse of God is denied to human beings.

And left to themselves, sitting alone in the dark, their mind fills with horror, beyond human imagining. And somehow they identify those with God.

And you see that in all sorts of cultures and all sorts of religions, not least the Christian faith sometimes, when it gets that view of God. But you see, what John says here is that God is revealed.

In a sense, it breaks through. At this point, it says, this is who I am. Who is he? He is the God who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten sacrifice on the cross.

[13 : 03] So that man is glorified in Jesus Christ by his obedience to the Father. And God is glorified by the fact of giving his only son to die on the cross.

And so the heart of God is revealed. And the glory of God is revealed no longer as some horrible imagining in the depths of some dark page as man tries to penetrate the eternal darkness and discern the shape of God.

God makes himself wonderfully and manifestly clear in the cross of Christ by saying, this is who I am. And that's why Jesus says, when Judas goes out the door, now is the Son of Man glorified.

And in this, God is glorified. And God will glorify the Son by raising him from the death and vindicating him.

So you see, for Jesus, that when he said to Judas, what you're going to do, do quickly, he was saying to him in a sense, precipitate the final drama by your betrayal.

[14 : 28] And so he died. And he goes out and it's dark. And Jesus, as the darkness is seen through the open doorway, Jesus says, now is the Son of Man glorified.

So you get the beginnings of the dawn of redemption in the act of betrayal. Do you see what's happening? How it changes?

Well, then Jesus goes on to talk to them about a separation that's going to take place. He says, my little children. And you can see the affection in those words that he has for these, his disciples.

And he's trying to prepare them. One of the sort of poignant moments that I remember when I think of this is that my mother was a little girl in England out in a pony cart and her father came to her and said to her, he was leaving for Canada because he had, he was in business over here at the time.

And he said to her, I'm going away for a very long time. He meant several months, but actually, he died before they ever met again. So he said, I'm going away for a very long time.

[15 : 51] And those were the last things he said to my mother. I mean, this is a long time ago, but it's something of the order of what Jesus says to his disciples when he says, I'm going away.

There's going to be a necessary separation. My little children, I will be with you a little longer. You will look for me and just as I told the Jews, I tell you now, where I'm going, you cannot come.

Well, we know where he was going because he told them. He said, I go to the father. And that you can't come. And so what will separate us is the fact of my oneness with the father, which doesn't belong to you.

And the fact of my death, so that while you continue in time, I belong to eternity. And this will separate us for the moment, but it won't always separate us.

So that when you go back, when you go down to verse 36, you say, Jesus says, where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.

[17 : 01] I go to the father. You will follow later. He says, but for now, there is separation. And so during that separation, Jesus says to them, the thing that you've got to keep in mind is this.

I want to give you a new command. A new command. Look at verse 34, you see, love one another as I have loved you, so must you love one another.

Now, I've, that's how Jesus wants them to respond, wants to tell them how to respond to the fact that the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in his obedience.

And God is glorified by revealing to all of us that the fundamental reality of his relationship to us is one of love. And so he says, Jesus says to them, a new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you.

And with that statement, he tells us how human beings work. And I, you can substitute words for that sentence if you like. You can say, I, you know, that this is how human beings learn.

[18 : 27] You cheat one another as I have cheated you. You abuse one another as I have abused you. You lie to one another as I, you know, as I, these aren't Jesus words, but this is how we learn from one another.

That this is the sort of principle on how we work. We do what, what, what's been done to us. This is the golden rule without the, the golden, without the gospel.

Short change one another of I have short changed you. That's how it works. But you see, into that whole pattern of human behavior comes something totally new based on a totally different relationship to God.

The God whose glory has been revealed in the cross of Jesus Christ as being that the, that the fundamental character of the God who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to whom Jesus says, I go to the Father.

Fundamental character of him is love. And so he says, now, there's a new dimension coming in here. And you will appreciate it and understand it as you are enabled to love one another as I have loved you.

[19 : 43] Do you see what he's saying? And that's, that's the, that seems to me to be the climax.

One of the, one of the things that we all know is that this is the first and great commandment that you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

And the second is like unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. And with that in the background, Jesus says, a new commandment I give you that you love one another as, as I have loved you.

So there's, there is a new dimension here. This is not the same thing over again. This is Jesus talking to his disciples and saying to them, you may have been used and you may have been lied to and you may have been abused and you may have been cheated and you may have done all those things and your life may be simply a response to that reality but what I want your life to be from now on is a response to the reality that you have been loved by the God who gave his only begotten son.

You have been loved by Jesus who became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. That is the demonstration of the love of God and that's got to be the primary motive of your life in relationship to one another that because of that love you learn to love one another.

[21 : 20] Not to dislike one another as I have disliked you which, you know, it's the kind of thing we do that you are to love because this is a new dimension in your life and you the disciples knowing.

The rest of the world doesn't know it but you know it. And so it goes on to say in verse 35 by this all men will know that you are my disciples because of this new dimension the new dimension which they will see in you because you have love one for another.

Now I this my friend told me yesterday over lunch that he had been reading the Jerusalem Post and the Jerusalem Post had a rabbi write a story and the rabbi said God has promised us this land but because God has promised it we must wait for him to give it to us.

We don't go out and get it. We have to wait for him to give it. It's his promise it's his problem as how he's going to do that. But we've got to wait for him to give that to us.

We don't take it into our own hands and make it happen. We wait for God to do what he's promised. I found that very profound in the light of the Israel situation the Israel Palestine situation at the moment.

[22 : 58] The other thing the rabbi said that not only is he going to give a land but he's going to prepare a people for that land. Are we that people? And he raised that I mean that you see that I found that helpful and meaningful when I was reading it because it says by this will all men know that you are my people that you are my disciples because the characteristic thing about you is that you love one another.

I gather that the rabbi was somewhat cynical and said the characteristic thing that I see among our people today is that a hundred thousand people turn out to see Madonna.

he says that can't be the people that God is preparing for this land. And so you see the work that God does in history but the work that God does in people by demonstrating the love and saying you are to love one another as I have loved you and by this shall all men know that you are my disciples because you have love one for another.

And then wonderful wonderful Peter comes along and says Lord where are you going? And Jesus replied where I'm going you cannot follow now you will follow later.

Peter asked Lord why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you. And Jesus answered will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth before the rooster crows you will disown me three times.

[24 : 45] Well you see the kingdom is not made up of good intention. The kingdom is not made up of high aspiration. The kingdom is not made up of idealism.

You know I will lay down my life for you. The kingdom is not made of that kind of human generated enthusiasm or loyalty.

it simply doesn't work. And if you go back to Luke and look at this same story you find what Jesus has said to Peter on this occasion when he says to him Simon Simon Satan has asked to sit you as wheat.

And it's like Job remember when Satan asked the Lord let me try him and I'll show you what he's got in him. And Jesus says to Peter Satan has taken hold of you and he wants to test you and to try you.

And I think what he means by that I mean you can consider it at least. I think what he means by that is that the basis of you standing up Peter and saying I will lay down my life for you is the untested untried part of Peter.

[26 : 15] It's foolishness to think that he could do that in his own strength. And preachers are always asking people to do that when they know that they themselves can't do it and the people they're talking to can't do it because of the power of Satan who tests us and puts us through the mill because interestingly enough when it says when it says that Satan has asked to sift you as wheat you and the rest of the disciples have been through that and you as the disciples will go through that but then you see Jesus says I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail that in this testing you will survive not because of your high idealism but because I have loved you and I have prayed for you and your faith will not fail and there will come the moment when you come back and when you come back he says can you see that's that's the word for conversion that's the word for repentance it's the word turning back it's not when you make this high boast

Peter but it's when you've been tried when you recognize that you can't do it in your own strength and then your faith has not failed and you turn back then he says then you can strengthen your brothers love one another and you see that really is what we're dependent on we're dependent on the fact that God loves us and therefore we are to love one another no matter what the other circumstances of our life might be that's the dominant reality is the love of God for us in Jesus Christ there's that then there's the fact that our Lord Jesus who ever lives to make intercessions for us prays for us that our faith will not fail it's not our strength it's his prayers that sustain us and we come back when we come back recognizing his love for us his sustaining power and prayer holding us up that we reach out to strengthen one another and to love one another and demonstrate that we are the disciples of Jesus you see when I told you about the first and great commandment

William Temple says and I found this very helpful and I thought about it a lot in connection with us too as a group when it says a new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you when the church learns that the world will learn to love the Lord their God with all their heart mind soul and strength and their neighbors themselves so you see how the whole purpose of God breaks open the sort of dawn of God's ultimate purpose begins to break open love and Judas walks out the door and Jesus says now is the son of man glorified and the father is glorified in him that this thing that God is doing for us and among us with us is the reality of our life and that's as far as it can be expressed in terms of what do you do about it what you do about it is to strengthen one another that strength comes from loving one another as you have been loved in

Jesus Christ let's pray our father we very much we want to get away from Peter and the sifting of Satan and the pride that we have in our own accomplishment we want you to do in us that which is pleasing in your sight we want to learn to love one another as you have loved us our God help us to open our hearts to your love and then to open our hearts and love to one another to learn that obedience as Jesus learned become obedient unto death even death on the cross thank you that you take each of us so seriously help us to take ourselves seriously in our relationship to you we ask in Jesus name amen who would have you to them or if they they have no never

ANDREW oh