

Wednesday: A Day of Messianic Preparation

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning, everyone. It's good to be here with you. Please turn with me to John chapter 13, please.

Or John chapter 12, sorry, John chapter 12. We are back kind of in a new season, starting off our fall. And we are continuing our series on the life of Christ.

In case Dave's Bible reading didn't tip you off to that. Am I on? Am I on? There we go. Do I need to start over again or did you hear that first part?

Okay, all right. So we're back to the life of Christ sermon series. If you're new visiting, what we're kind of doing is going through the chronological life of Jesus Christ.

Looking at the humanity of Jesus Christ. Not so much focusing in on his deity or, that's not true, but not so much his teachings, but the context which his life and teachings took place in.

[1 : 0 8] I've got two goals for this sermon. One, that you would come to a deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who walked on this earth, who was a living man and a living God at the same time.

And my second goal of this sermon series was that you would come to trust your Gospels as a reliable historical document that teaches the truth of Jesus Christ.

How this text is applied to your life, I'm leaving over to the Holy Spirit. Usually when you're at seminary, we are taught, we're supposed to expose, illustrate, and apply the text.

I'm really just doing the exposition here. And I'm trusting on the Holy Spirit to lead you in how to apply the text. But if I had to tell you how to do it, I'd say look for a deeper way to love Jesus, which will lead you to a deeper worship and understanding of all things that are God.

Amen? So that's my goal, and those are my prayers. So just to give you guys a quick review, the last time we were in the Life of Christ series was at the very begin of July, so it's been over a month, well over a month.

[2 : 2 7] So a quick recap, we've kind of divided the life of Jesus into four separate events, right? The first, by the time he was born, till he was baptized. That was kind of the first phase of his life.

His baptism kind of marks the transition from his private life now to taking on a public ministry. So the next phase was a one and a half year timeline as he spread the gospel throughout the land of Galilee, where he spent in the northern part of Israel primarily.

His whole goal was to preach that the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, and you need to repent and believe the gospel. The third section of his life is what we entitled the private preparation.

It was after we understood that the Jewish leadership rejected Christ as Messiah, and he moved to not so much sharing the gospel and teaching to the public, but more towards his 12 disciples, because he had to prepare them to take that gospel.

And we looked at various stories where he went, and a couple of the key questions that he asked them, if you remember, who do the people say that I am? And Mark 8 and finally said, Peter, who do you say that I am?

[3 : 51] He said, Christ, you are the son of the living God, right? And that's who the disciples needed to understand. And then now we find ourselves in the final aspect of the life of Christ, and that is the Passion Week.

So Ryan's got a slide that he's going to put up for us. And as you all know, we kind of divided the Passion Week, and it's going to go from Sunday to Sunday. Sunday we learned about the triumphal entry, that when Jesus came into with great fanfare and applause, the crowd was behind him shouting glory to all God, because they understood he was the fulfillment of the prophetic messages of Psalm 118.

On the Monday we read that Jesus went into the temple, his temple, and cleaned it out. And while he was cleaning out, he taught the gospel, but not only that he preached with an authority, but he also healed again, proving that he was the Messiah.

And if you remember, my last sermon on the subject was about Tuesday, when the Jewish leadership challenged him. They challenged his authority. They challenged what he said.

They challenged why he was there. And every single time, he proved over and over again, that not only was he wiser, but that he was indeed the Son of God.

[5 : 18] If you remember, I kind of titled it, it was like a boxing match, a main event as the head of the Jewish leader. So that Monday and Tuesday is kind of a special day in the life of Christ, because those were the days that he ruled in his temple.

That was his temple. And for those two glorious days, he ruled supreme in his temple. At the end of that day, he pronounced woes on the Jewish leadership.

And he closed off that day by teaching specifically to his disciples. So this morning, I want to concentrate on the Wednesday.

Wednesday. The Wednesday. Wednesday is kind of the hinge day of the week. In fact, the biblical record is actually silent on the Wednesday.

You can take the slides down, Ryan. But before we move any further into Thursday, there's a point that I want to revisit from my last sermon.

[6 : 37] And one of the major points from my last sermon is, what we have in the Gospels is real drama. Okay?

It's real drama. These are real people. This is happening in real time.

These are people that have real feelings, real emotions, real thoughts. The Bible does not represent them as being parables or fables or some ideas.

The words that we find in these Gospels is a drama. It is a story. And we are supposed to see it as a drama.

So almost half of all the Gospels is actually dedicated. The pages that we have written in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are dedicated to this last week.

[7 : 44] And what's interesting is that the details in here are so important. And sometimes they seem so obvious. And at other times, we don't even understand what's really going on unless we begin to think of these events as a drama.

That this is a real event. It's not just a story. Now, I believe I have been presenting the story of Jesus Christ with the dramatic impacts of the event.

But I haven't really used that word until this last sermon. So now, as we know, every drama has characters.

This morning, I want to unfold four major characters for you. And we really need to understand where these people are.

I'm not going to say people. These characters are on this quote-unquote silent Wednesday. Because if we really are able to grasp what is going on in the heads of these major characters, because we all know a good drama's got good characters, right?

[8 : 56] There's a story. There's a kind of the yin and the yang, the black and the white. There's a struggle in people's hearts. And any good drama shows us these things.

So there's the four characters that I want to teach about or talk about this morning. The first one is the crowd. The crowd, the common person who followed after Jesus Christ.

The second character that I want to look at is the Jews. And remember in the text, whenever it says the Jews, it's talking about the religious authorities. The third character that I want to unpack is the disciples.

Those who've been following Jesus. And obviously the fourth character and why we are here on this Sunday over 2,022 years later is because of Jesus Christ.

What's interesting about these characters is each one of these characters shows up at the moment that Jesus Christ is baptized. The crowd was there.

[10 : 06] Remember, they were with John the Baptist and they began to give their allegiance to Jesus Christ. We understood that after John the Baptist had baptized Jesus, the religious leaders started coming over and started asking questions.

Then obviously the disciples were there. And then obviously Jesus Christ. So I'm going to read you a verse out of Luke 22 which begins to set the scene. The first person or first character I want to talk about is the crowd.

But before I go any further, let us pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, I'm just asking that you would give us an understanding of the humanity of these characters.

that we are human beings. We think, we feel, and there's an element in this story that is so powerful that is seen in these characters.

And they're meant to represent sometimes it's us, sometimes it's the general public, sometimes it's the false teachings of our day.

[11 : 21] And of course, there's just the one true representation of you. Father, I pray that you would just give us a glimpse into their lives and how they thought and how they felt and how they, how Jesus Christ truly changed everything for them.

we ask you these things in your most holy and glorious name. Amen. If you remember, it's the time, Luke 22 tells us, verse 1 and 2, it says, now the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover.

So we all know that is the timeline. Jerusalem is filled with hundreds of thousands of people who've come to celebrate this Passover. but not only that, Jesus Christ becomes such a central figure in the land of Israel.

More and more people are coming to see him, to engage with him, to bring people to be healed, to hear his teaching. So there's this, there's this, it's like this powder keg that's going on.

And verse 2 says, and the chief priests and the scribes, that would be the Pharisees, were seeking how to put Jesus to death.

[12 : 40] For they feared the people. So it's interesting when we learn about this crowd, the crowd is actually what keeps Jesus safe for the moment.

When he goes in, he's about to go to the cross right now, he's just finished teaching, the religious authorities are hating him but it's this crowd that is keeping him safe. If you remember from previous sermons, Jesus expertly moved the crowd around.

He knew how to travel with the caravans. He knew when he healed, the comments that he made would create such an attraction. Just his healings. Remember Lazarus.

Six weeks before this event, he goes and he raises Lazarus from the dead and he almost does it and we believe purposely to create an event that people are still talking about it as he enters into Jerusalem.

All the miracles that he did were well known. But there was a point that I wanted to make about the crowd last sermon and I don't really believe I did a good job at doing it.

[13 : 53] The fact of the matter is we know as we go through the gospels that the crowd is kind of a fickle group. Last sermon when we looked how Jesus taught the woes. Remember Jesus Christ was teaching these woes against the religious authorities.

Much like he did on the Sermon on the Mount. There's one thing that Jesus Christ makes very clear and this is the point that I need us to understand about the crowd. He's always saying you need to in order to follow me you need to unfollow them.

Right? You can't have both. Okay? And now that's a huge tension. The fact of the matter is you cannot embrace the teachings of Jesus Christ and this rabbinical Judaism which they taught.

And what's interesting is that same message of Jesus Christ the same challenge for us today is it not? We all love Jesus. The fact of the matter is there's probably nobody in this world that really doesn't like Jesus.

What's there not to like about Jesus? Great teacher. He's loving. He's wise. He's kind. But he starts to grate against you when he says you can't have those other gods and me too.

[15 : 10] You can't have that life that follows after the world and me too. You can't have those things that make you feel good that make you feel important that run contrary to my word and have me too.

We do not want to turn from what makes us feel good about ourselves. We do not want to turn away from what we think earns our righteousness. But think for a minute for a first century to follow Jesus meant turning your back on your entire heritage.

Remember the synagogues and Dave even talked about that in the synagogues. The synagogues is where they worship. Remember the temple they celebrated the feasts but the synagogues were these places of teaching that were all over the land and the Pharisees and the scribes would be there and those places become a point where families would come together and they lived in tribes, right?

All those little villages most people would have been related in them and they would come together and if you were to deny the main teachings that was going on in that synagogue nobody wanted to befriend you.

You were outed as a family member you were outed like remember your workplace would be attached to that. These were the guys you'd either farm with woodwork with whether you were stonemason whatever you did these are the people you did everything with.

[16 : 50] In fact John 9 tells us this amazing story of this blind man who's healed by Jesus and the Pharisees don't want to believe that he was actually born blind.

So they put all this pressure on the parents to say that he was always not blind, right? You guys know what I'm saying. He could always see and it says his parents said go ask him he's of age ask him and it says why did they do this?

Because they feared the Jews for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ he was to be put out of the synagogue.

So the safe way to like Jesus was to say he was a prophet. He says good nice things it's kind of the same thing we hear today right? All the false religions say that Jesus is a prophet but Jesus said no, no, no I am the Messiah.

I am the son of God in living flesh. So when Jesus would be teaching against the religious authorities to the crowds he'd be pointing you can almost picture him pointing on that false religion that condemned God's people to hell.

[18 : 17] What would you do as you sat there as a Jew in that first century? The mood I would say is one of being perplexed.

Right? There's advantages to both sides. You got Jesus who's healing everybody he's doing these incredible miracles but at the same time you've got your whole social circle religious circle that has existed for 400 years.

Do you lose that? Or do you follow this man Jesus? So that's the first character. When we go into Thursday the crowd is somewhat perplexed.

the second group the second character is the Jews. Now remember when I say the Jews I'm not talking about everyday Jewish folks that lived in Israel but when the text says the Jews they're talking about the religious authorities and remember the religious authorities were made up of two groups.

You had the high priest the Sadducees who found their power in the temple so when people came to worship in the temple that's who you'd have to pay a temple tax and they'd make money off of various enterprises that they had whether it was selling sheep or any of those type of things and then you had the Pharisees and the Pharisees were the teachers that existed within the community.

[19 : 50] One distinction that I really haven't really made that much is the high priests were kind of friendly towards Rome. Why? Because Rome was the one who chose who the high priest is.

Did you know that? It wasn't them who got to decide but Rome decided who would be that high priest so they would have to act in the best way according to Rome and that's where the gravy train came right?

That's where the money was in so your whole goal is to continue the favor of Rome even though they were Jewish that's where their money came from and then you had the Pharisees who hated Rome.

They hated that Hellenization. They hated anything that came so they'd have these two competing groups politically but now they're together in hating Jesus.

Before we got to this point in history everybody the high priests were somewhat ambivalent but as Jesus put pressure on them as I read in Luke 22 they wanted to put him to death.

[21 : 02] Now just think of that scene in the temple Jesus Christ comes in he answers their questions he throws them out the crowd would have been cheering and all of a sudden how do you think they would have felt at that moment?

all their respect all their privilege all the positive thoughts that people had for them going away.

This one man Jesus is tearing apart their whole quote unquote religious industry. I believe they would have felt fear concern would they have a place in society?

Would the crowds allow them to live? Even if the crowds went and made Jesus king then that would mean Rome would need to respond.

He could make a new high priest they could go and kill everybody. So there's this group of people that have this power and on mid Tuesday evening I believe they are experiencing fear.

[22 : 24] Until that moment they hear Luke 22 3 says Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot who was a member of the 12 he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them.

Verse 5 tells us and they were glad and agreed to give him money so he consented and sought an opportunity to betray Jesus to them there's an important word in the absence of the crowd.

So the whole tension is they want to hate him they want to get him but this crowd is protecting Jesus so all of a sudden you have this mood change right you had had this perplexing question how do we deal with this problem until they hear the knock and now Judas presents them with an opportunity to get to Jesus and they are glad so their mood goes from glad to from fear to glad so on that Tuesday night and people argue whatever happened on Wednesdays I want to tell you what happened on that silent Wednesday I'm going to tell you as briefly as possible so the priests the Jews have three goals one they have to arrest Jesus without the crowds right they've got to arrest Jesus without the crowds two they have to try Jesus they need to bring Jesus before a court system before without the crowds and then they must sentence

Jesus before the crowds get involved and Sabbath appears Friday night so in order to accomplish these goals they need to get Rome on their side in fact in case you did not know it Rome did not allow them to have a standing army they were allowed a temple guard so in order to do any arresting or to do any death sentence against somebody you had to get Rome with you so they needed to get Rome to agree to put down any rebellion and protect themselves right because they didn't want to go somewhere that was going to lead to their death and doom so they needed to get Rome to say hey if you do this you still need to agree to protect us they needed to organize the courts they needed to get Jesus in front of a Roman tribunal who would sentence him to death and none of this happens unless Pilate buys into their plan so they need to convince

Pilate that Jesus Christ is somehow some great danger remember remember that Rome more specifically Pontius Pilate fears most than anything at all is a full fledged rebellion because if he cannot control the people he will be replaced obviously they are successful John 18 3 the Bible tells us or the Gospel of John that the chief priests and Pharisees when they went to arrest Jesus had a cohort of Roman soldiers to arrest Jesus this is essentially 400 to 600 soldiers so the plan is set I believe by this point their attitude is moved from hopeful to giddy and then there's the disciples so we have the crowd that is waiting they don't know what's going to happen we have the

[26 : 29] Jewish leadership with this plan in place to destroy Jesus and then the disciples I was trying to think of the word that best describes the disciples and I keep landing on this word clueless Luke 18 31 34 tells us Jesus Christ takes the 12 and he says to them he says see we're going up to Jerusalem and everything that is written about the son of man by the prophets will be accomplished for he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon and after flogging him they will kill him and on the third day he will rise verse 34 of Luke 18 says but they understood none of these things right they just didn't get it the text tells us that these sayings were hidden from them and they did not grasp and why would they just think when they leave

Tuesday night the crowd loves Jesus the crowd is protecting Jesus how on earth are these religious authorities going to take out Jesus he's the greatest thing in fact they believe that Jesus Christ is going to establish his kingdom and we're going to learn on Thursday they're actually fighting amongst themselves that who's going to have the greatest authority in this kingdom that Jesus is setting up right Jesus just told them hey I'm going to get killed hey man can I have the seat on your right how about the left right can I can I have this position authority that's where their minds are and the truth of the matter is this drama unfolds they are there but they do not seem to grasp what is going on in fact in many instances they are doing the exact opposite in fact we're going to read their responses are utterly heartbreaking in many ways to

Jesus but they can't get over the fact that these crowds love Jesus they've seen Jesus overthrow the religious authorities with his ability to speak they've seen Jesus heal hundreds if not thousands of people throughout Israel they've seen Jesus stop storms with the word they've seen Jesus provide food for thousands and their question is who can stop Jesus and then of course we have our primary character Jesus Christ Jesus Christ has two goals this week the first goal is to die on the cross to save the world from their sins and the second goal is to prepare these disciples for their role in the kingdom

Jesus knows what he has to do Jesus knows what's coming but how do you suppose he is feeling now I know that's an easy question for women to ask to answer right whenever we tend to ask men how do they feel we really don't get much of a response but I want you to see that Jesus Christ definitely shares how he's feeling so let's look at John 12 starting in verse 35 so please just take out your Bibles and look at John 12 35 I want you to see these words in the text that John wrote verse 35 begins so Jesus said to them the light is among you for a little while longer walk while you have the light less darkness overtake you the one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going while you have the light believe in the light that you may become sons of light when

Jesus had said these things he departed and hid himself from them though he had done so many signs before them they still did not believe in him how would you feel in that moment think rejection would be one of them but not rejection because your pride is hurt but you would show despair because these people are lost the text tells us in John 11 that Jesus wept over Jerusalem you see God had always loved his people he provided them heroes like Moses and Joshua he provided them rulers judges to come and save them over and over again he gave them kings

[32 : 20] Saul David Solomon and when they were spurned God sent them prophets Isaiah Ezekiel warning after warning after warning warning after warning after warning and still God's people rejected him so now we have the son of the living God before them who's done the miracles he's saved people he's healed people and yet they still reject him how heavy of a heart would you have at that moment but there's more there's this interesting often overlooked text take a look at verse 20 still in

John Dave read it this morning these Greeks these come that are obviously believers in Israel's God's wish to see Jesus and they're asking him they're engaging him and notice verse 23 and I want you to pay attention and even when you go through I would encourage you to read as we are going through to continue reading the stories that we read in the gospel this passion week but notice it says the hour has come for the son of man to be glorified we're going to hear that statement multiple times and I believe it's a statement that means we've reached a turning point we've reached a point of no return in the story so every time we hear that turn it's like the next act of a play the curtain comes down on the one and the curtain rises again it says truly truly

I say to you unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains alone who's he talking about he's talking about himself right just think of this story it's a sad story right unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains alone but if it dies it bears much fruit whoever loves his life loses it and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life if anyone serves me he must follow me and where I am there will be my servant be also if anyone serves me the father will honor him now take a look at verse 27 he says now is my soul troubled and he says and what shall

I say you ever felt that kind of pain that there's no words to express the emotion that has overcome you he's just pretty much describe what's going to happen in two days time but my soul is troubled what shall I say and notice he says and it's got it in quotes father save me from this hour is that what I'm supposed to do it's a it's a foreshadowing what's going to happen in the garden of Gethsemane remember father if you could take this cup from me it's almost this Shakespearean soliloquy right whether it be Hamlet or one of the actors he's just kind of talking to himself my soul is troubled save me from this hour there's this deep emotional intensity and he says but for this purpose

I have come to this hour my whole reason to be is because of this hour and here's that term once again father glorify your name I believe at this moment that Jesus is terrified he's terrified now if you don't have room in your theology that Jesus could somehow be terrified I think you've been missing out that Jesus is in fact fully human amen he is living a real life he has real feelings real emotions some critics have stated that for Jesus to feel this way means that

[38 : 02] Jesus was a coward to be terrified but the truth of the matter is if Jesus ran away would he not be the coward Jesus is terrified but he still walks towards that cross I contend that if Jesus weren't terrified he'd either be insane or some sort of robot right it would be meaningless than the cross if he were not terrified now let me ask you all a question what is it that you think terrifies Jesus the cross right here's another question for you what is it about the cross that would terrify Jesus would it be the pain of carrying it to Golgotha would it be putting his hands out and having the nails go into his hands and into his feet would it be the crown of thorns that would be shoved into his head or perhaps the spear driven into his side the fact the matter is the cross is one of the ways that man can die yet

I do not believe it is the cross that Jesus is terrified what about death the problem with asking about death is he fearful of death is we that believe that physical destruction is death but the Bible clearly teaches us that we have a soul that goes beyond our bodies right even though there's death in our bodies we still live on whether in heaven or in hell the fact of the matter is we do not cease to exist so I do not believe it is death that Jesus fears I do not remember I do not believe it is the pain of the physical suffering that Jesus will experience that he fears what could it be here's a hint remember Adam in Genesis he was told that if he was to take a bite of the forbidden fruit he would die do you remember when he bit it do you know when he died 938 years later did he die yes he did before he ate that fruit

Adam experienced the most wonderful relationship that man could ever have the Bible says that Adam walked with God in the cool of the day to be able to fellowship with God you see the death that Adam experienced was spiritual death he had a perfect walking talking relationship with God it is why he was created but when Adam sin so did this guilt shame and estrangement came upon him that he actually wanted to hide from God the reason why Jesus is terrified is because he knows he's going to become sin for us that God will pour out all his wrath of sin on him and Jesus will be for the first time since eternity separated from his father fellowship will be broken and his relationship will cease the fact of the matter is

Jesus love for the father is perfect and it is why he can clearly say father glorify your name so how does Jesus move on towards the cross let's take a look at verse 28 after Jesus says father glorify your name then a voice from heaven calls out I have glorified it and I will glorify it again who's that talking first time since the baptism Jesus Christ father cries out to him in this moment of anguish I have glorified it and I will glorify it again I believe that as Jesus as feeling this weight so does the father verse 29 the crowd that stood there and heard it said that he had thundered others said an angel had spoken to him but it was

God the father loving his son in this deep time of distress Jesus response this voice has come for your sake not mine what that means is if Jesus does not glorify the father you and I can't be saved if Jesus is not glorified we're hooped but the words of God to his son Jesus is the promise that Jesus Christ takes to this cross is a promise that the father will be glorified if remember last week there was a simple statement in 1 Timothy 1 15 it says the saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners amen and Paul said of whom

[44 : 20] I am the foremost and all glory goes to the father the reason I'm covering these characters is now I hope that you get a sense for the heavy emotional weight that is on each of these groups of people because now that we understand that we're going to be able to understand what happens on Thursday and Friday and hopefully I'll be able to point out some little details that will be almost more magnified in what's going on in this narrative as we expose the life of Jesus Christ let's pray dear Lord heavenly father sometimes it's very hard for us to relate to something so beyond us first of all it's a love that is so beyond us that you have for us a love that you would send your son to die on the cross for us a love that is manifested in the son who loves you so much father that he does this to glorify your name that our salvation his death actually glorifies you to him the greatest expense father as we begin to read ourselves into this text these next couple of weeks

I pray that we will be able to see these emotions as they're being poured out I wonder how Jesus felt as he went to celebrate Passover and the disciples are fighting over who is the greatest all the while knowing that that night he will be arrested it's an incredible story it's incredible drama and I pray that you would just give us some understanding of it in order to understand you better oh lord and not only to understand you but to be thankful for you thankful for all that you have done may you be glorified in our sermons that we hear and in the lives that we live in your most holy name

God's people said amen