

Christ's Attitude to His Troubles

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[0 : 00] Especially verses 27 to 28, where we find Jesus saying, 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. Then a voice came from heaven, I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. We know that Christ is more than an example to us.

We know that his life was very much an example as to how a human life should be in this world. But we needed more than to have Jesus as an example.

Because trying to follow Jesus, the perfect example, for us to try and follow that in order to, as it were, enter or earn salvation or meet with God in a way that he would be pleased with, because of our sin, the Bible makes it clear that that is obviously impossible.

We needed Jesus and need Jesus primarily as our substitute, as our sacrifice. So he is an example, but much more than an example. And he is an example to us in a supreme way.

[1 : 14] And he is an example to us here. And we can look at the study of this evening, looking at Christ's attitude to his troubles.

Christ's own attitude to his troubles. Because he begins here, verse 27, Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? So he is bringing before us, or John is bringing before us, the Lord's own revelation here as to how he faced his troubles as the cross became nearer, as he's now nearing the end of his public ministry, which in John's gospel you find at the end of chapter 12.

After that, it's only to the disciples that he speaks prior to his trial and the cross itself. So here is his attitude to his troubles.

We're really getting a window into the mind or the soul of Jesus as he faced up to the enormity of the task that faced him, that was still ahead of him as he had to face the cross.

Sometimes you find the ferry, if you've had an example I'm sure of something like this, you find a ferry that leaves port. Perhaps it's more obvious in other port where you've got a longer distance of trial before you're out into the open sea.

[2 : 31] And sometimes it seems that it's pretty calm, and it doesn't seem as bad as the weather forecast was saying. And I find some people who are not maybe used to travelling by ferry, relaxing and saying, ah, this is much, much better than I thought.

But of course then, it's very soon out of the shelter, into more choppy water, and then it's down out into the open water, which sometimes can be much rougher than it was when you were leaving port.

And I sometimes feel that you can take the Lord's life on earth as something like that. All illustrations, of course, are inadequate to describe Jesus and his ministry, but it's something like that.

When he left the port of heaven, his own home port, if you like, and he came into this world, and you find him as a child being raised in that home of Mary, his mother, and Joseph, and then coming at 12 years of age to face doctors in the temple, those who were experts in the law and so on.

And then from the time of his baptism onwards, he's ushered into his public ministry. And as you read through the Gospels, you can see that the pressure increased all the time, and especially as it got nearer to the cross itself.

[3 : 45] And as that happened, the sufferings multiplied. He was more aware as time went on, as he understood himself and his position more through the Scriptures, through the Holy Spirit in him.

We can see that the choppy waters gave way to the very rough, open water culminating in the cross itself. Hebrews chapter 5, verse 8 reminds us that though he were a son, a very son of God, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered.

It was as he went along into greater and greater demands and sufferings that he actively learned obedience and kept up in his obedience with the developments and the demands of his life. And here in verse 27, we have this window into the mind of Jesus as he faced his troubles. Now, the word troubled here is actually a very strong word in the text here. It's now is my soul troubled. It's such a strong word that it really includes something you could say. You could go as far as to say it's really equivalent to horror. Something that has filled him with trepidation.

[4 : 59] And there's a very close connection between this and Gethsemane, which is not recorded in John. And we mustn't take it that this is the equivalent of what the other gospels call Gethsemane.

I'm revealed to be Gethsemane. But it's like it in terms of the language that's used and of the experiences of Jesus himself. Because he has come here to this stage in his ministry where he is looking into the cup of suffering that the Father has given him. And his attitude to it has opened up for us here when he says, Now is my soul troubled? It's really facing and looking starkly into this horror that faces him. And in his holiness, but also in his humanity, he recoils from that as perfect humanity does in Jesus. It's the only perfect humanity anyway where you find that. And so he says, Father, save me from this hour. Now Jesus obviously faced the worst that anyone could throw, that any human being could have thrown at him.

[6 : 14] He has taken the sin of his people to himself. And he's carrying it. And he will pay the full price and penalty of it.

And he says, That's a reminder to ourselves, isn't it?

That the more we love, as we indeed must. The Bible clearly tells us we must seek to increase in love for one another.

And love in every way we must exercise it. But the more we love, the more inevitable it would be that we invite pain into our experience.

That's not to put us off from loving and from loving one another and from loving others. But it's a reality that the more our heart goes out in love, the more prepared we must be to be hurt.

[7 : 37] And to face disappointments. And to face being let down. To face crushing issues that we might not have expected. That's what Jesus is in perfection.

This perfect love. This wonderful heart that's full of love. For God his Father. For his people that he must die for. And even towards lost sinners who are not prepared to accept him.

And as he goes through in the greatness of his love. And expressing his love. So he meets. So much pain and trouble on the way.

So what is his attitude to the troubles? And what can we learn of Christ's attitude as we face our own troubles? Well, you notice he's first of all asking this question.

Now is my soul troubled? And then the question. What shall I say? Now we usually ask things like. Why is this happening to me? What's the purpose for this?

[8 : 38] Why does it happen to me just now? Could God not have done something different? And why is it not like this in other people's lives? And there are a whole lot of questions like that.

That inevitably and understandably we ask of ourselves. And we ask of others as well. And their sufferings too. But that's not how Jesus faced it here. As you can see.

He doesn't ask that. He asks. What must I reply to the source of this horror? To this pain that I must suffer? To this cross that's ahead of me?

What must my attitude be to that? How must I face that? How must I actually yield myself to that? What will the benefits of this be?

What do I need in order to go through with it? And you know, that's really the essential question for yourself and for myself as well.

[9 : 36] The essential question is, what must my reaction, my attitude be to the troubles in my life? Not to ask questions such as, well, why has God done this to me?

Or to seek in some way or other to wish it were other than it is. That is all so natural to us. But this is the essential question we learn from Jesus. How should I face this?

What does this require of me? What attitude must I have? Now is my soul troubled. What shall I say?

And his answer to a question that he poses himself is very interesting because it sheds further light on his mind and his attitude. He says, Father, save me from this hour.

And the very first word that he used there is so full of significance. The fact that he uses this word, Father, to begin his response to the question that he posed for himself shows his state of mind.

[10:44] Remember, as we said, that Jesus has now entered into the open sea, if you like, of his experiences. He's facing the waves of malice and of fury and of wrath, though they will culminate eventually in the cross and in the agony of the cross itself.

But even already, these waves are breaking over his experiences, his head, if you like. But he doesn't see these things as meaninglessness. He doesn't see this as some act of cruelty. He doesn't regard this as blind fate. He doesn't just say, well, I must accept it and that's it. Let's just get on with it. He saw all of this in relation to Father.

Father, save me from this hour. And you can say that the word Father there is itself sufficient to tell us this is Christ's attitude to the forces of evil and of sin and of death itself.

Because he brings all back to this relationship he has with his father. He brings it back to the way that the father has put him where he is. That the father is pleased with what he's done.

[11:58] And that he must be pleased with what he's doing now. He's taking all of that in relation to the father that sent him. And the meaning of the word father for himself.

And how much of a lesson, friends, that is for ourselves today. Whatever troubles we have, and we have all kinds of troubles. And we have troubles maybe different to others.

Some of us have troubles that are deeper or painful than others. And we need to deal with one another in love and compassion and patience and understanding and all of that.

But here is Jesus telling us, you bring your troubles and the source of your troubles and the shape of your troubles. You bring them back to Father.

You bring them into relation with God as your Father. You are trying to understand them in the light of fatherly compassion. Fatherly love.

[12:58] Fatherly wisdom. Fatherly sanctification of you. Fatherly concern for you. Fatherly promises. What shall I say, Father?

And the more we learn that, and I'm no better at learning this than you are yourselves. I'm just looking at the scripture and saying, this is what I learned from this passage tonight.

That when I ask, I have these troubles. And I ask, what shall I say? Well, the first thing I must try to say is, Father. Father, Father, you know about this.

Father, this is your plan. Father, this is your wisdom. Father, this is your mind. Father, this is what you have purposed for me from all eternity.

Father. What a rich, rich word that is. Especially in a context like that. Father. How precious is that word.

[14:01] The very sound of that word. When we live in a world where sadly so many children don't really know the meaning of father. Because they've never had a loving father.

Or even a loving mother. But here is the essence. The epitome, if you like, of the meaning of father. That Jesus can turn to father in the midst of his troubles. And that he can do so knowing that that's the source, not only of what has planned out his life for him in this world.

But it's the source of his information, of his comfort, of his guidance. And it's the source of satisfaction and soul for him.

Father. Father. And then he says, Father, save me from this hour. Now there's a question mark in our translation there. As if this were a question. And it can be taken that way. But some interpreters take it as better as actually a prayer.

[15:02] And if we see it as very close to what happened or his experience in Gethsemane later on. We can see that it's probably better kept as looking at it as a prayer rather than a question.

So that this is his response really to the question, what shall I say? And what he's saying is in the form of a prayer. Father, save me from this hour.

If you compare Gethsemane, when he came into Gethsemane, and you remember his prayer there was, Father, if it be possible. Again, it's Father. Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

There's a real, earnest, deep desire because of the nature of the sufferings that he's facing, the troubles that he's facing. A very real and honest desire that if it be possible, that this cup would pass from him.

This cup that's filled with such suffering. But then there's immediately keeping up with that. Nevertheless, not my will, but your will be done. And that's what you find here.

[16:05] The horrors that are facing him that he summarizes and saying his soul is now troubled. And he says, what shall I say? He says, Father, save me from this hour.

But for this purpose, I've come to this hour. So at the same time as he mentions the troubles and his soul being so troubled, he at the same time simultaneously, without, as it were, a break at all, to contemplate something different for himself.

He says, for this purpose, I've come to this hour. It is a wonderful comfort to us, then, that Jesus, not for a single second, changed his attitude to his troubles.

Changed his attitude to bearing the sin of his people, to bearing the suffering that that entailed. Now is my soul troubled? Father, save me from this hour.

It's not save me from these troubles. It's more, if it be possible, let it pass from me. Yet not my will, but thine be done. And it really shows us the reality of Christ's humanness.

[17:21] When he's facing hell, and facing that hell that he must experience as the penalty for the sin of his people. When he's realizing increasingly that that's what's in this cup that the Father has given him to drink.

You might expect that being a very real human being, yet a sinless one, that there would be some measure of reluctance. There's some gap, if you like, between saying, I know it's the cup my Father has given me, but do I really have to go through with it?

I hesitate to go through with it. I don't want to go through with it. There is no gap. There's just simultaneous, nevertheless, not my will, but the use be done.

The obedience of Christ, always kept up with the demands the Father's will placed upon him. And that belongs to the very foundation of our salvation.

Because if there's something wrong at this stage, the whole thing falls to the ground. If there's something of a crack in the obedience of Christ, or in his response to the Father's will and to the troubles of his soul, then it calls him to question his commitment to his people.

[18:47] There never is such a thing. And you can rest assured tonight that your present and your future through faith in him is on this foundation of his perfect obedience, of his unflinching obedience to the demands that were made upon him.

This is his attitude. Father. And it's, Father, save me from this hour. Nevertheless, it's for this purpose that I've come to this hour.

And then you notice what he next says. Father, glorify your name. Father, glorify your name.

Father, glorify your name. And that's what it says. The guiding principle of his early life, when he's in the temple, disputing with the experts in the law, as we mentioned recently, I think, you see that it's the glory of God, the glorifying of God, that dominates his mind, his attitude, his thinking.

It's not himself. It's not his own ability. It's just simply the fact that do you not understand he said that I must be about my father's business that glorifying my father is the be-all and end-all of my life it's the guiding principle all the way through his early years and you know the thing the wonderful thing is that now that he's come to this point it's not any different despite the fact that his sufferings have increased that he's facing these terrible troubles experiencing these troubles to do with the bearing of the sin of his people the guiding principle of his life has not changed as he now looks into the cup of wrath and the cup of death that's facing him the cross that's now drawing so near his attitude is not any different the guiding principle of his life is not any different to what was when he was a boy father glorify your name and you know that's much more than just a simple or a mere acceptance if you like um of the father's will for him of course there's a full acceptance of the father's will but it's the father's will accepted by him in a way that is constantly deciding and seeking the glorifying of that god of that father of the one who sent him into the world okay so we're at the point where Jesus was saying father glorify your name and we've said that that's that's really been the guiding principle of his life and it's no different now but it's not a mere acceptance of the father's will as if he's just saying well I know I must accept this I know this is what my position is I know this is what must be the case and that's it and just has a uh that kind of stoical if you like acceptance of it no he's accepting the father's will all the way through including now in a way that desires the father's glory through that and that's enormously challenging as an example for ourselves it's much easier for us to say well I accept that because I know it's God's plan and I know God is sovereign but it's not immediately obvious to me sometimes that I'm doing that or saying that because my great desire is to glorify God through it and that's really what Jesus is doing here for this purpose I've come

to this hour father glorify your name glorify your name through what i must do through what's required of me now and in the future and then the voice that comes in verse 28 a voice comes from heaven which says i have glorified it and i will glorify it again now three times we know that that voice came from heaven um they're recorded in the other gospels two of them at his baptism that very significant moment when he's entering into his public ministry and then also on the mount of transfiguration another significant moment in the experience of jesus and now here as well another significant moment towards the end of his public ministry and the voice that's come here in these previous times is a voice that really amounts to you could say it's equivalent to the father's stamp of approval of him i have glorified it and i will glorify it again in other words he's he's saying to the lord himself to the son everything you've done up to now i've glorified my name through that and everything that you will yet

[24 : 20] do i will be glorified through that too i will glorify it again but i want you to notice and again it's hugely challenging that all of this is really set in relation to the previous verses because uh um when these uh others came to him philip and andrew uh went and told jesus about these people that were looking for him and wanted to see him and jesus response in verse 23 was the hour has come for the son of man to be glorified truly i say to you unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains alone now that's firstly to do with his own death unless he dies there'll be no fruit following but he then goes on to apply it the same principle to those of his disciples whoever loves his life will lose it 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 my servant be also you see we say to about that similar to what we saw recently elsewhere that following jesus does mean taking up your cross and following him and denying yourself and denying yourself and the troubles that go along with that are in many ways related to those of jesus himself so it's in a context of him defining the need for us like the grain of wheat to die to self to die to sin so that the fruit of righteousness and holiness will then proceed from that and there is the incentive that jesus here is actually setting for us in terms of following himself because this is what he did for us this was his attitude to his troubles this was how he related them to father to the hour that was set for him and to the whole principle and activity of glorifying the father's the father's the father's the father's reputation and for us is there any greater reward than father's approval surely not whatever rewards there are in terms of what we call rewards or benefits of the christian life of following jesus of seeking to be true to him your greatest reward and i hope my greatest reward too is in our father saying i approve of you i approve of what you're doing i glorify my name through you through the ability i have given you through the grace that's yours every day so when you ask father glorify your name through your obedience through that which god enables you to do for him be assured tonight that that brings glory to god even if it isn't obvious to you it's red in heaven father sees into your heart and the father who has set the plan of your life is the same father who assures you that he glorifies his name through such people flawed as we are people like yourself and myself you you you you you you