

Winning the War Within
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John 12:27-28
March 23, 2014

Please turn with me in your Bibles to the 12th chapter of John, John 12. We're going to be continuing to look at the prayer of Jesus in Verses 27 and 28. The title of the message this morning is 'Winning the War Within'. What we have in this passage, in this prayer of our Lord, is really the unveiling of Jesus' heart. It is really extraordinary that He spoke out loud what He spoke out loud. It is God's grace and mercy that He did so. He could have had these thoughts quietly in His own soul. "Father save Me from this hour." He could have thought that in His heart, as we often have personal reflections in our hearts without voicing them, but the Lord led Him to voice it for our benefit, and He underlined the significance and the importance of it by having God speak out of Heaven. "I have glorified it and will glorify it." It is one of those passages that I think the Lord intends us to see in a special way. All of Scripture is profitable, all of Scripture is God-breathed, and all of Scripture is profitable, but there are places in passages where it seems that the Lord lifts things up, or focuses with a little more clarity.

You see this really as you follow through the Bible, when you read carefully. Let me just give you an example. I mentioned this passage I think last week, Exodus 34:7-8, where Moses said, "Show me Your glory," in Chapter 33, Verse 18, to the Lord, and God says, "I will show you My glory." Remember that? And we see the Lord, what He hears is the Lord, compassionate and gracious, abounding in loving kindness and truth. Well, as you read through the Psalms, it is astounding how I think the psalmists are looking at that passage continually because you will find this couplet, '*lovingkindness and truth*' over, and over, and over again. At times you will find, like Psalm 51, when David is confessing his sin, you find each attribute that Moses talks about in succession.

Now what does that tell us? They realize that this moment was a moment when God was disclosing Himself in an abundantly clear way, that this was a moment, a mountaintop, it was on the mountaintop, this was a mountaintop experience for the people of God. So keep your eyes on this, this is God saying, "This is who I am." I think there is some analogy here with this passage, by the Father speaking out of Heaven which happens three times in the New Testament—the baptism, the transfiguration, and here right before the cross. God speaks out of Heaven, the Father speaks out of Heaven to the Son. The Lord is saying, "Pay attention to this." What we see in this is the unveiling of the glory of Christ. The unveiling of the



glory of Christ, and really such an encouragement for us as we try to follow our Savior, and follow our Master which is the calling of the Christian life. We are called to be disciples. That is, we are called to follow Jesus. As we look at this, we are going to see that, as we view the Savior unveiling His heart, unveiling the extraordinary mental conflict that is happening in His soul. We see, as we saw last time, we focused on this part last time, that we find in our Savior someone who understands, He understands our conflict that goes on within is, because He had very real conflict of soul.

This anticipates, this passage in John 12 anticipates the even greater experience of conflict at Gethsemane that would come a few days after this, where He says to the Father, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.” He prays three times that way, “Father if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” The anguish is so great that He, Luke tells us in Luke 22:44, that Jesus sweat drops of blood, a medical condition where under extreme, excruciating anguish, the capillaries close to the skin can burst and blood can come out of the sweat pores. He was in incredible anguish, His soul was troubled, and in that we find a dear friend when we are troubled. We saw that last time. But not only do we find a friend, we find our Lord and Master who will lead us as a shepherd leads His sheep to victory. We follow His path, we follow in His footsteps. He has even told us in the passage, as we’ll read in a moment, “My people are those who serve Me, and if you are going to serve Me, you follow Me.” He is going to show us how to follow Him in this passage, to triumph and victory. From that inner conflict to victory. So that is why the title of the message is ‘Winning the War Within’, and we are going to read Verses 20-36 to get the context.

*John 12:20-36 ~ Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; 21 these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” 22 Philip *came and *told Andrew; Andrew and Philip *came and *told Jesus. 23 And Jesus *answered them, saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. 26 If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.*



27 “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came out of heaven: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” 29 So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, “An angel has spoken to Him.” 30 Jesus answered and said, “This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. 31 Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” 33 But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. 34 The crowd then answered Him, “We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?” 35 So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.”

These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

Let’s pray.

Father, we pray that the law of the Lord might be that which revives our soul this morning. That Your Spirit might make Your word alive in our minds, and in our hearts, and might it have its perfect effect in accomplishing Your purpose for Your glory. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

‘Winning the War Within’. We’re going to have three points to the sermon, and I’ll just tell you what they are right now. They are—talk to yourself, offer yourself, forget yourself. I think that is what Jesus models for us. That is what He does in this passage. But before I get to those, I want to make three preliminary observations. Before I get to the three main points, three preliminary observations that we need to see. The first is that this passage, the first preliminary observation is we see in this passage with great clarity, the true nature of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we see that He is fully human in this passage. Now this is important. The Church has struggled throughout history with times of great heresy where people would rise up and begin to teach false doctrines about Christ. One of the patterns of heresy that the Church has struggled with concerns the nature of the person of Jesus, and the natures of that person. What we believe, and was established in 451 at the Council of Chalcedon, the Bible teaches that Jesus is fully



God, and He is fully man. There were times where they taught all kinds of different variations, that He was only God, and He only appeared to be a man, Docetism. There were other times where they taught that He had a human body, but His soul was divine. This was something they were dealing with in the 5th Century, which led up to the Council of Chalcedon where they affirmed that the Bible teaches that God the Son became a man, and the man Christ Jesus, the person Jesus Christ, has two natures in one person. There are two distinct natures united perfectly in one person. He is the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten in two natures. This is some of the language of the Council of Chalcedon. He has these two natures without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation. The properties of His humanity being preserved, unaffected, and the properties of His deity being preserved, unaffected, so that He is fully man. You see this clearly in this verse, Verse 27, “My soul has become troubled.” He had a human soul. I could tell you this, God’s soul has never been troubled. The divine soul is never troubled. God does as He pleases in the Heavens and on the earth. He is filled with joy at every moment. He does not know what it is to be troubled, but the Lord Jesus Christ, in His humanity, was troubled. His soul, He had a human soul. That is the first preliminary observation.

The second, this passage teaches us that the Christian life is hard. Anyone who tells you differently is lying to you. The Christian life is hard. It is hard to be holy. Now it is all of grace, it is all of God’s power, but God has willed it to unveil His power, and dispense His grace, through the agonizing wrestling with the flesh. We have to battle for holiness. It is a war, requires strenuous effort. Passage after passage in the New Testament teaches this. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Work it out, labor it out, Philippians 2:13. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Paul likens the growth in grace, growing in holiness, to running a race, to training for the marathon. He says, he uses a couple of words in that passage, “Anyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things.” The word ‘*compete*’ is the Greek word ‘*agōnizomai*’. We get our English word ‘*agonize*’ from that. Compete, strive, struggles, agonize. Then he says in Verse 27, “Therefore I buffet my body, so that lest after I have preached to others, I myself should not be disqualified.” The NAS translates it as ‘*discipline*’ actually. “I discipline my body...” but the word literally means ‘*punch*’. In fact, the word ‘*hypōpiazō*’ has the idea of the location of the face as part of the word. The cheekbone underneath the eye. The idea is punching in the face, trying to punch in the eye. Paul says, “I have to punch my flesh in the face on a daily basis. It is a fist fight, a bare-knuckled fist fight to be holy.” You see that in our passage in John 12 because Jesus has this anguish in His soul. He must wrestle. He who was sinless, who never



gave in, who never sinned, had to wrestle. If He, then how much more we? Then that leads to the third preliminary observation.

First we see the true nature of Christ is true humanity. The second observation, the Christian life is hard. And the third observation is that mental conflict in itself is not sinful. This is clear because Jesus was in conflict, but He did not sin. His conflict was intense. We said this anticipates the intense anguish at Gethsemane, yet it was without sin. To experience conflict is not sin. Now for us, we have a sin nature, and conflict leads us to be sinning much more quickly along the way, but to wrestle in yourself, to have thoughts that come and press upon you in itself is not sin. It is what you do with it, does that lead you then to neglect your duty to Christ? Does that lead you to do the things you ought not to do? That is the question—how do you handle the conflict? So those are the three preliminary observations.

Now, let's look at Jesus' triumphant victory in His conflict, and in this we find a roadmap out of the conflict in our own hearts. We find a strategy, a game plan for winning the war within. Last time we would say we could add this as a preliminary, that we learned last time that when you are in anguish, when you are in conflict, the first thing is to go to God, to go to Christ. So we talked about He is a loving, understanding Savior. He does not have His arms crossed wondering how you are going to do, He is interceding for you, He is pulling for you, He understands what you are going through. He says, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden." So the first thing is to go to Him. We saw the psalmist did that, in Psalm 42 when he says, "Why are you in despair, oh my soul?" But then he says, "God, I'm in despair." You see? You run to God, you don't sit there and try to figure it out on your own. You run to Him and you begin the dialogue with Him. Now that is kind of from last week. Now we're going to come to the three points this week. There are basically three directions to this roadmap.

1) Talk To Yourself:

The first is: *Talk to yourself*. Most of the time, not out loud. Although I think it is actually helpful sometimes, when you are alone, to talk out loud. It just seems like something about saying it, hearing it. Reading Scripture out loud is a great thing to do because you say it, you hear it again, the brain is processing it over and over. In fact, the word for meditate, the Hebrew word means '*to mumble*'. So the idea is you are mumbling the Scripture. You are speaking it, you are hearing it. But we are talking about in the inner conflict, when the war within is happening, you are to talk to yourself. Look what Jesus does in Verse 27, He talks to Himself.

John 12:27 ~ “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’?”

He poses a question. “I feel like I want to say, ‘Save Me from this hour.’” But then He answers His own question. There is a dialogue going on in the soul of the Savior. This tells us, this is the way that we should respond in these situations. We need to talk to ourselves because that is what He does. He talks to Himself. He then says, this is what talking to yourself means. I’m going to share a quote with you in a minute from Martyn Lloyd-Jones, where he says basically our problem as Christians is that we listen to ourselves when we should be talking to ourselves. What he means is, when go through something, and these thoughts start coming, they are coming from self. I mean, Satan can get in there too, but basically almost all of our thoughts come from self. Our flesh, our own desires, and so these things start bombarding us. What do you do? Do you just keep listening to that, and keep entertaining those thoughts, or do you start speaking to yourself like the psalmist did in Psalm 42. “Why are you in despair, oh my soul?” This is what Jesus does, “But for this purpose I came. Wait a minute, I’m saying, ‘Save Me out of this hour.’” Wait a minute, I came for this hour!” That passage we read earlier, twice the psalmist, I pointed it out, twice he says, “Why are you in despair, oh my soul? Hope in God.” This is what Lloyd-Jones says in his book Spiritual Depression, he is actually referring to Psalm 42, the passage we just talked about, Verses 5 and 11. He is talking about when you are really depressed, and weighed down spiritually, but this applies to the Christian life in general. Listen to what Lloyd-Jones says:

The main trouble in this whole matter of spiritual depression in a sense is this: That we allow ourselves to talk to us instead of talking to ourselves. Am I just trying to be deliberately paradoxical? Far from it. This is the very essence of wisdom in this matter. Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you at the moment you wake up in the morning, you have not originated them, but they start talking to you. They bring back the problem of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking, who is talking to you? Yourself is talking to you. Now this man’s treatment (The psalmist, Psalm 42) for that dilemma was this: Instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. “Why art thou cast down, oh my soul?” he asks. His soul had been repressing him, crushing him, so he stands up and says, “Self, listen for a moment. I will speak to you. Now do you know what I mean?”

Lloyd-Jones writes. “Do you know what I mean? Can you relate to this?” He says:

If you do not relate, you have but little experience in the Christian life.

He goes on to say:

The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul, “Why art thou cast down? What business have you to be disquieted?” You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself, “Hope thou in God.” Don’t go on muttering in the depressed, unhappy way. Just letting self keep the dialogue going. Then you must go on to remind yourself of God, who God is, and what God is, and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do. Then having done that, end on this great note, defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil, and the whole world, and say with this man (Remember all the other people saying, “Where is your God?”) you defy them, all the skeptics, and you say with this man, “I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. Who is also the health of my countenance and my God.”

He was saying earlier, when he was in despair, his countenance was downcast. There are times where it is just impossible to smile almost, right? You are so in agony, and you know you don’t want to let everybody know. You are out in the public and you don’t want to let them know how unhappy you are, but you can’t control it. Your soul is downcast and it brings your face down. Well God is the help of your countenance. So we have to learn to talk to ourselves, and Jesus did that. He reminds Himself of why He is here. In His humanity, as He contemplated the agony of the cross, remember the question is: Greeks want to see Him. He knows when that request comes it is like a bell going off. “The Gentiles are seeking Me, there is only one way they can come to Me. I must die.” That’s why He says, “A grain of wheat must fall to the earth. Unless it does, it abides alone. If I want to receive those other grains of wheat to Me. I must die.” And as He thinks about that, it weighs upon Him. The shadow of the cross comes upon Him, and in anguish He cries out, “What shall I say? ‘Father save Me from this hour.’” But then He says, “No,” He upbraids Himself, and He speaks to Himself, “For this hour I came. Father, glorify Your name.”

Let me just say this real clearly, too much talk about spiritual warfare focuses on Satan today. When Christians are preoccupied with Satan, they are preoccupied with the wrong thing. I'll prove this to you. Think about how little is said in the Bible about Satan. It is there, don't get me wrong. I believe there is a real devil, there are real demons, they are tempting, they are all around, there is a war going on, but Ephesians 6, some passages in Daniel, 1 Peter 5:8, one verse out of all of 1 Peter, God doesn't want us to be preoccupied with the devil. Many Christians are trying to create this preoccupation with the devil. "Rebuke the devil everywhere you go." You don't need to rebuke the devil, you just focus on the Gospel and focus on your own heart surrendering to Christ, and you win over the devil. It is the Gospel that wins. Spiritual warfare, turn with me to 2 Corinthians 10. It is really an excellent passage on spiritual warfare. What is the nature of true spiritual warfare? Verse 3, what does spiritual warfare look like? He's talking about war here. He's talking about spiritual warfare. Paul says:

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 ~ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

He says that spiritual warfare is a real thing, and we have divinely powerful weapons, but what's the nature of this warfare? Look at Verse 5:

2 Corinthians 10:5 ~ We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,...

You see, the spiritual warfare happens in your mind. That's where your battle is in the mind. You battle to believe the word of God. You battle to turn away from the lies of Satan that are all around us, the fiery darts he hurls at us, the world system that surrounds us, that lies to us, and our own flesh, our own self which comes speaking to us all kinds of lies. And the way you win is you start speaking to yourself the truth of God, and you start believing what God says over what you think. That's the path to victory. I mean, think about this. If a person is depressed, they look at their life, their circumstances, and they have thoughts like this coming up in their soul: *Why has God forgotten me? It's just like the Psalmist did. Where's God? Why has He done this to me? I was seeking Him and everything was great, and then He's allowed this, and this, and this, and this to happen.*

They're beginning to look at their circumstances, and they're beginning to listen to themselves, and they're beginning to do a process—this is what we all do—of sort of mental calculations, and we start making judgments based on the data that we have, and we start initially even not saying it but start really believing it: *God has not been fair to me. God has not been good to me. God is not right.* How quickly those things come. Isn't it amazing how quickly they come? I remember a number of times where I've heard about someone else's suffering, somebody just had say a report of cancer comes in for someone, and I've had this thought before: *Really? On top of everything else they're dealing with?* Have you ever had that kind of thought? *Lord, what are you doing?*

Then I step back for a minute and, "I need to talk to myself. Who do I think I am, and how much do I know?" Do I have access into the secret counsels of God? Do I see what He's doing in all these circumstances? Can I stand and say in my little pea-brained mind, "You are wrong"? It's like an ant talking to me, telling me I'm wrong to be spraying spray around the house. "Who are you to do this?" "I built this house." I mean, I didn't build the house but I had the house built. [Stomps on the ant.] It's even worse for us to accuse God. The Lord knows what He's doing, so we have to let His word that we've put into our minds and we get in His word and we start speaking to ourselves, and we start reminding ourselves. We start going back to those high points in Scripture.

I'm wondering if God is good. I'm wondering if He is angry with me. I wonder if He's trying to just mess up my life. If you let yourself keep listening to yourself, you get worse, and worse, and worse, and worse. You become embittered and hardened, and your countenance can become cast in iron, as it were, in a frown. But if you remember, you have to choose am I going to believe what the world says about God, this world that is under the power of Satan, the ruler of the prince of the power of the air? Am I going to believe what this world has to say about Him? Am I going to believe what people around me have to say about Him? Am I going to believe what my own mind reasons out based on my understanding of circumstances, or am I going to believe His own self attestation of who He is? Am I going to believe what He says about Himself? Am I going to believe what He says in Exodus 34? "The Lord, the Lord, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth, who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin, who will (after he says all of that) by no means leave the guilty unpunished. Am I going to believe that God is not good like Satan told Eve in the garden? That's essentially what he said if you just unpack it a little bit. "Has God said you should not eat from any tree of the garden?"

He only eliminated one tree, but Satan's acting like you can't eat from any of the trees, can you? He's questioning God's goodness, and then he says the reason God said that is because He wants to keep you back. He's not out for your good. He's out to squash you, to hold you back. "You see, He's not good." That is the lie. Are you going to believe the lie or are you going to believe what God says about Himself? Are you going to believe this perfect Book, that from Genesis to Revelation is absolute perfection, written by 40 different men, 66 books, in three different languages, on three continents, and it hangs together perfectly? Are you going to believe this or are you going to believe the muddling of your own mind? That's what we have to do to ourselves. *I'm going to believe this Book. I'm going to believe what God says about Himself. I'm going to believe what He says.* I mean, we could have had enough in the Old Testament, but now we have the cross. *Do I believe God is good? Do I have trouble believing God is good?* If you're struggling with that, look at the cross. God has written it in red in the blood of His Son. He is good. He is merciful. He is gracious. So we have to talk to ourselves. And then the second thing we have to do once we talk to ourselves is we have to:

2) Offer Yourself:

The Lord Jesus talks to Himself: ... *for this purpose I came to this hour.* Then He says, "Father, glorify Your name." That's offering Himself and essentially what He's saying is, "Father, I have the desire to protect Myself from the agony of the cross." Remember we talked about this. Not just the physical agony, but He's thinking much more about the spiritual agony, when He becomes sin. When sin is credited to Him and poured out upon Him so that the guilt and the pollution of sin, He bears in His own body our sins upon the cross, and when He experiences the wrath of God, the unleashing of God's wrath which is to pull back His hand from His Son and to allow Satan and evil to ravage the Holy Son of God on the cross.

As the sin-bearer, there He is enveloped by the darkness. In agony He experiences hell, and so as the Lord of life thinks about hell, He trembles at it, and He was saying, "Father, save Me from this hour, yet it's for this hour I came. Father, glorify Your Name. Forget what I've said about what I want. I want what You want. I want what brings honor to You over everything else. That's what matters to Me." That is the linchpin of victory, and when you know that God is good, when you've talked to yourself and you've reminded yourself that He's good and everything He does is right, the only logical thing is to offer yourself to Him.

In fact, everything else is insanity. It is insane not to offer yourself to Him. Now, the world thinks it's insane to offer yourself to Him. I've been reading Charles Spurgeon's sermon on this. He says there will come a day when those who thought it was insane for us to offer ourselves will see that they were the ones who were incredibly insane as they suffer for all eternity reminded that they are the ones who despised the sane thought. Offer yourself.

In Romans 12:1, the apostle Paul at the end of his eleven chapters of glorious doctrine, the presentation of what God has done for us in Christ, he turns the corner. The hinge of Romans is Romans 12:1 which tells you how do you live out the Gospel, and it starts off this way:

Romans 12:1 ~ Brethren, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies a living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable, which is your spiritual service of worship.

He says, "I urge you to offer your bodies to God as a living sacrifice. That is a continual sacrifice. Offer yourself, and then offer yourself, and then offer yourself. Keep offering yourself over, and over, and over again. This is the Christian life." This is when we want to live for ourselves—we want what we want, and God points out to us, "You're listening to yourself." We start talking to ourselves, and what we need to ask ourselves is the same question Jesus asked Himself. What was the question He was basically asking Himself? He didn't voice this question exactly, but this is what was behind what He said. "Father, save Me from this hour. But for this purpose I came to this hour." He asked this question: *Why am I here?* That's what Jesus asked. "Hey, wait a minute. Here I am having all these thoughts wanting to go this direction away from the cross," and He says, "Why am I here?"

We need to ask that same question. When you and I find ourselves overrun with these thoughts and our self is talking to us and encouraging us to turn away from obedience, the question is: *Why am I here? What did God make me for? He made me for His glory.* Isaiah 43:7 says He created us for His glory. Westminster Confession of Faith summarizes the chief end of man, the purpose of man, to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Why am I here? I'm here to glorify God. As Jesus said in the passage earlier in Verse 25, I'm here to learn how to hate my life in this world so that I keep it to life eternal, where as He says in Luke 14, "I'm here to learn how to die daily, to take up my cross and follow Him," that as Romans 8:35 says, "I am to consider myself as a sheep to be slaughtered." This is the path. This is why the world thinks we're crazy.



On the surface it does sound a little crazy, doesn't it? Come and follow Jesus means dying, but in reality it's the most sane thing in the world, because if you hold on to the stuff you have in this world, you lose it. Even if you think you're holding onto it, when you die, you don't take anything with you, and you've lost everything. But when you lose it for Christ, you find everything. We need to remember that we're not our own. In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, the apostle Paul in exhorting us to put away sexual sin, says, "Do you not know that you're not your own? Flee immorality, for every other sin a man commits is outside the body, but the man who commits immorality sins against his own body. Do you not know that you're not your own? For you were bought with a price."

This is the kind of talk we have to do. *Wait a minute. I don't own myself. I don't have a right to think the thoughts I want to think. I belong to Jesus Christ. He purchased me. He bought me.* And the reality is that if I will die and offer myself right now, what I will find is I gained everything. I want this sin right now, I feel like I need this sin right now, but if I will lay it down because I belong to God—He bought me. I can't do that. I give myself up to You. I'm looking at You, Lord Jesus. You gave Yourself for me, You died for me, and therefore I ought to live no longer for myself but for Him who loved me and gave Himself for me. I give myself to You, and in dying, in the agony, what I find is a Savior who runs to me and reveals Himself to me.

This is I think what Paul is talking about in that interesting verse, Philippians 3:10, when he's talking about this one thing I do, and he says, "What I want to know, what I want, the one thing I want is to know Christ," and he says, "and the power of His resurrection." Now, this is where most Christians today or most professing Christians in America say, "Yes, I want to know the power of His resurrection," but you've got to read on. Paul says, "...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformed to His death." When do you get to know Jesus? It's when you experience the fellowship of His sufferings, when you know what it is to lay down that which is precious to you, that which feels like it is life to you. You want to go this way and God says, "No, lay it down," and you lay it down as an offering like Abraham laid Isaac on the altar. You lay it on the altar before God. You lay yourself on the altar before God and you find a Savior that meets you there and communes with you.

In fact, what we need to see, the moments where we have these opportunities to die are opportunities to fellowship. Lord, You put Your finger on something that hurts really bad for me to lay this down. I feel like I have a right to this, but You're telling me to lay it down. Your word tells me I don't have a right to this. I'm a

slave. I don't have a right to this. I'm to lay it down, and in laying it down, I'm doing exactly what Jesus did. I'm following my Savior. Unless a grain of wheat dies, it abides alone. And like He said in John 12, right after He says, "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me," then I'm going to follow Jesus and we find His glory. You talk to yourself, then you offer yourself, and thirdly:

3) You Forget Yourself:

This is the path to effectiveness, and this is the path to happiness. As Ted said earlier, what a wonderful lead-in when talking about the Dalai Lama: Be happy? No, be holy. But the irony is that when you lay down your happiness, when you say, "Lord, I don't want to be happy. I want to be holy and I want You to be glorified. I don't want it to be about me. I want it to be about You," when you do that, what you find is you are of all people the most happy. There is no happiness like happiness with Jesus. There is nothing in this world that comes close to laying it down before Christ for His glory and knowing that you are in His presence and that you have done what He wanted you to do, and you've done it by His power, and you know that He's at work in these circumstances that He's orchestrated in your life to bring you to the end of yourself, and this pain that you're going through is actually a loving invitation. It's like a party.

If someone lays out a wonderful anniversary celebration—a man and wife have been married and the man wants to spend some wonderful time with his wife, and so he plans and he lays out a plan, and takes her away on a trip, and he thinks about what he wants to do—we need to do this again soon [to Patti]. That's conviction. We did something for our 20th, but we didn't do anything for our 25th, so I'm... anyway, moving on. You lay out the plan and you orchestrate it because you want to have this special time with this person that your soul is knit to, and so you lay everything out, and so then the person, the woman sees that and what she sees in that is love. This is my husband wanting to know me. This is my husband wanting to love me.

Listen, Jesus is doing that every day in your life. He is orchestrating the circumstances in your life. He's bringing you through difficult, dark times. He's giving you moments of gladness and joy, but especially those dark times are when He's saying, "I've prepared it. I want to spend some time with you. I've laid it out," and if we learn to see it that way, then we become grateful for those moments. It takes a minute, and we're always going to naturally say, "Oh no, not again." That's our self talking. Did it really have to happen like this?

We've got to catch ourselves and start speaking the truth. *Wait a minute. God's at work here. He's sovereign. He knows what He's doing. In everything give thanks. Lord, I thank You for this. Help me. I don't see what's good in it right now. Help me. I'm hoping in You.* And as you keep doing that, then suddenly as you keep seeking Him, He's going to put His finger on what you need to lay down, and as you lay it down, you're going to find Him, a God who is working, ordering every detail of your life so that you can walk in holiness. In Ephesians 2:8-10, Paul says, "For by grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves. It's the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." We're saved by grace alone, but then in Verse 10 he says, "But we are His workmanship in Christ, created in Christ Jesus to walk in good works which He's prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

What he's saying is your life is then, after you're saved apart from works, you're saved unto works, you're saved unto opportunities to keep on glorifying and magnifying Christ, and it's all planned out. It's not haphazard. How wonderful that is. How beautiful that is, and this is why God makes things hard. He knows that it needs to be hard. If it wasn't hard, we wouldn't seek Him, but He loves you and me too much to let it be easy. He knows what we need more than we do. He gives us what we need, not what we want, and when we find out that we've got what we need, we find out we've really got what we really truly wanted. What could we want more than Jesus? What could we want besides Jesus? Is there anything that compares with knowing Him?

So our gracious Savior is working every moment of every day to draw you, if you're His, into a closer relationship with Him, and no matter what comes, you can know that, and you can speak that truth to yourself, and you can offer yourself to God, and you can forget yourself, because when you offer yourself you forget yourself. Jesus, after He offers Himself, we find Him then talking to the crowd and saying: ***Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*** You see, He's seeing God's glory. He's no longer thinking about Himself and how He was afraid of what was ahead of Him. He's now thinking this is the decisive moment when Satan's rule is broken. Because He offered Himself, He sees clearly again. This is the moment that all redemptive history has been pointing to. This is the hour. And then He comes back and wraps it all the way back around to what started it in the first place. *Can we see Jesus?* And Verse 32:

John 12:32 ~ And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.



The Savior is pointing the way, and so when you and I lay down ourselves, offer ourselves to God, what happens is we forget ourselves. We're wrapped up in our love for Him, our contentment in Him, and we find ourselves serving others. That moment that was going to be an explosion of anger becomes a moment of humble service, loving tenderness, because of our great Savior we love. This is the way of God. How good the Lord is to show us by giving us the author and perfecter of our faith who goes before us. Really that is so true, isn't it? We follow in His glorious footsteps all the way to heaven. Hallelujah, what a Savior.

Let's pray...

Father, we are so grateful that You have given us such a glorious revelation of who You, the Triune God, are. You have shown us Your character in Your dealings with Israel. You've shown us Your character in every page of Scripture, and You've shown us Your glorious character supremely in the revelation, the unveiling of Your Son, and we see that He is the radiance of Your glory, the exact representation of Your nature. How amazed we are that You are like this, that You are truly a God of compassion, and grace, lovingkindness, slow to anger, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin. You're one who always invites the repentant sinner to come to You and You're inviting people in this room today to come to You. You've unveiled Your character through Your word and You're saying, "Stop believing the lies, and believe what I've said about Myself. Come to Me." Grant them grace, Lord, to come, to run to Jesus, to turn from their sin and living their lives for themselves, and to cast themselves upon the sufficiency of a Savior who died for them and who rose again, and who lives to commune with them. Father, we pray that You would help each person in this room to make more of Jesus Christ every day of our lives, just to have our heart's desire become more and more single in wanting to magnify, and exalt, and glorify our Savior. All praise and honor, all adoration should be toward Him. We are nothing. He is everything. What a joy, Lord, to see that. We pray these things in His marvelous Name, Amen.

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