

48. Humanistic ignorance and divine triumph

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Like many of you, I've seen and met many people who call themselves 'spiritual.' Their idea of being 'spiritual' has nothing to do with the biblical concept of spirituality, rather something they would make as they go. It is their own hodgepodge religion to appease their spiritual hunger temporarily.

The range of their hodgepodge spirituality has a wide gamut – from the same ideas of the old TV series of the Twilight Zone, to the Eastern philosophy Zen with the New Age twist, to 1-900-PSYCHICS.

The worst part of this humanistic spiritual ignorance and confusion comes from the hard hearts of the people who do not care to know the truth of Jesus Christ. Why do they not want to know the truth of Jesus? We already got the answer from John chapter 3:

John 3:19-20 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

In other words, when it comes to the truth of God, people choose to be ignorant for the sake of their carnality, not because they have no way to learn the truth.

This morning we encounter Jesus who shows us not only the vulnerability of His 100% human, but He also displays the determination, purpose, and love for His Father in heaven as a 100% God. In the meanwhile, the people around Him, including His disciples were clueless.

A. MY SOUL IS TROUBLED

John 12:27-28 "Now My soul is 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 from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

January 12th, this year, a few hours before my daughter Michelle was about to deliver her son Micah, she was in a lot of pain. As her daddy, I could not do anything for her other than praying that the delivery would be smooth for her. I knew very well that even if I could take the labor pain for her, I could not handle it, because I am a total wuss when it comes to pain.

Now I understand a tiny bit of what a mom goes through – carrying a child for nine months; delivering a baby through that excruciating pain; and taking care of the baby once he or she is born, I tell ya, gentlemen, we have made it in the shade. When a mom says to her kids, "I brought you into this world, I can take you out of this world," she has every right to say so.

You can say that Jesus' labor pain of delivering the human race from the bondage of sin and death was starting to increase here, if you will.

We somehow think that going through what Jesus went through for us in His earthly ministry from His birth to the resurrection was a breeze to Him since He is God. If

that is how we think, we are wrong, very wrong. Yes, He knew that He would overcome the death and rise from the dead; yes, He had the power to stop this journey to the cross anytime. But He chose to go through it, because He had something very important in His mind.

Does it mean that Jesus had anxiety like we often do? Absolutely, positively. Remember, He was a 100% human while He was a 100% God. The cross, which had cast a shadow over the entire life and ministry of Jesus, would now become a reality in the life of Jesus in a matter of a very few days.

Think about this: It would have been enough if Jesus had endured the crucifixion just one time on the cross. But do you realize that from eternity past He knew every single detail of His crucifixion? I wonder how many times the very thought of the crucifixion went through His mind? With perfect knowledge of every detail that would happen at the cross, in anticipation mentally He must have been crucified ten thousand times ten thousand.

Jesus didn't die without feeling. He felt every single pain that there was and every bit of the curse of sin that it should have been for us. We realize that when we came to Jesus, all of our sins have been forgiven. Our Lord cancelled all the record of our transgressions and iniquities. But Jesus didn't have that luxury. He was not dying having sins forgiven, rather He was bearing our sins upon Himself and He became totally guilty for us. He died as the vilest sinner of the mankind that ever lived.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

There was no power in the universe that made Him go to the cross other than His love for us so that He could glorify the Father in heaven. He was totally engulfed in giving glory to God the Father and the Father was totally engulfed in giving glory to His Son Jesus Christ.

Some may wonder, "How did the bloody cross and crucifixion of Christ give glory to the Father in heaven?" An excellent question. Think with me. The greatest manifestation of the attributes of God in the history of the universe took place on the cross:

- Was ever the love of God for His people more clear?
- Was ever the wrath of God against sin more clear than at the cross when He judged His own Son to death?
- Was ever the grace of God more clear than when He substituted Jesus for you and me?
- Was ever the mercy of God more clear than on the basis of Christ's death He forgave you and me?
- Was ever the wisdom of God more clear than in such a master plan as that the sly devious satan had no idea what was coming?

Every attribute of God became singled at the cross in one event – Jesus' death.

Jesus wanted to glorify the Father with everything He had and we need to follow the example of Jesus. That is the only reason why we exist.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

In response to Jesus' prayer, the Father instantly replied in audible voice for the third in 400 years since the last prophecy by Malachi, the Italian prophet. God the Father

spoke to His Son and gave Him a double assurance: the Son's past life and ministry had glorified the Father, and the Son's future suffering and death would glorify the Father.

It is significant that the Father spoke to the Son three times: at the beginning of the Son's ministry right after He was baptized by John the Baptizer in the Jordan River according to Matthew 3; as the Son began His journey to Jerusalem, on the Mount of Transfiguration according to Matthew 17; and now as the Son entered the last days before the cross. Our Lord always gives the word of assurance to those who willingly suffer for His sake.

B. STILL CONFUSED

John 12:29-30 Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." 30 Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake.

One group said, "It was a thunder," while the others said, "Angel spoke." This is nothing new because people never do really hear the voice of God. God is not silent; rather people are deaf. No, let me rephrase that: People don't want to hear the Lord, because they don't want to be convicted by God and they don't want to know how to listen to God.

If you are a born-again Christian and you don't know how to hear or recognize the voice of God, I will tell you a secret at no extra charge. Read and meditate the Word of God daily; memorize the verses from the Bible instead of some silly country song lyrics. You will realize that how much you can hear from the Lord through the Bible.

DO NOT rely on the TV evangelist who claims that he had a lengthy conversation with Jesus and he has the words of new revelations for you that are not recorded in the Bible. There are Hebrew words for that – In pig's eyes.

A word of caution when you think that you hear from the Lord – He never, never contradicts His Word the Bible. If whatever you thought that He spoke goes against the Word of God in context, you promptly ignore what you thought you heard. It might have come from the bad enchiladas you had last night.

Jesus didn't need this audible confirmation from the Father, but it was for the benefit of the people around Him, especially His disciples.

C. THE DIVINE TRIUMPH

John 12:31-34 Now is the judgment of 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 peoples to Myself." 33 This He said, signifying by what death He would die. 34 The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

From the understandable anxiety of Jesus, we now can hear the anticipation of Jesus' triumph through His crucifixion in His voice.

Hebrews 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The people around Him thought He was coming to offer them a material kingdom with great wealth, but He offered them a spiritual kingdom that was physically impoverished. And so they didn't want Him and that was the key in turning their "Hosanna" to "crucify Him."

Jesus couldn't give them a kingdom until they became citizens of a kingdom. They couldn't enter a kingdom until they had become righteous. They couldn't become righteous until somebody who was without a sin paid for their sin. He couldn't pay for their sin until He died. So Jesus had to die to pay for their sin, to make them righteous so they could have the right to enter the kingdom.

The doom of the world was sealed by their own rejection of Jesus Christ. When Jesus died on the cross, it looked like the world and satan won and God lost on this one for good. But in three days, they realized that they were the ones who lost when Jesus was resurrected from the dead.

Colossians 2:14-15 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

"The ruler of this world" can be none other than satan. The same title is used in John 14:30 and 16:11. There are parallel expressions in apostle Paul's letters in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and Ephesians chapter 2 and 6. The cross and the resurrection of Jesus spelled satan's defeat.

Satan was motivated by self-will; Jesus, by the will of the Father. Satan's power brought destruction and death; Jesus' power imparted renewal and life. Though satan is still active, his action is only the desperation of futility and his time is limited. I like what I heard about satan: "When satan reminds you of your ugly past before you came to know Jesus as your Savior and Lord, remind him his future in hell."

The verb used for 'lifted up' is 'hypsoo' in Greek which has a deliberate double meaning. It means both a literal and physical elevation on a cross and exaltation in rank and honor.

We have seen this phrase in chapter 3 and 8 in John already. We also see this in Isaiah 52:

Isaiah 52:13 Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

"All peoples" does not imply that everybody will ultimately be saved like the Universalism people would like to believe. Rather, it means that Christ draws men to himself indiscriminately, without regard to nationality, race, or status. He said this in the presence of the Greek Gentiles so that they could realize that Jesus could be their Savior as well.

These Jewish people had been taught only the passages from the Old Testament which speak of the triumph of the Messiah. They were virtually unaware of the verses that speak of His suffering, such as Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53.

This crowd who greeted Jesus as a political conqueror with such enthusiasm didn't want to consider His sacrificial death. It didn't fit in with their idea of what a Messiah should be. So they rejected and crucified Him.

D. APPLICATIONS

1) We, believers and unbelievers alike, should not think that God's truth will go away or lower its standard if we ignore it long enough. His truth is eternal and immovable.

2) There are many doctrines in Christianity that are not worth arguing, including the eternal security of salvation. But the doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ should not be compromised under any circumstance. Jesus is the **ONLY** way of our salvation, no other way.