

Do You Wish To See Jesus

by Tim Conway

This sermon delves into John 12, exploring the concept of truly seeing Jesus by following Him, dying to self, and embracing the path of suffering and sacrifice. It emphasizes the necessity of hating one's life in this world to gain eternal life, challenging believers to make decisions that may seem foolish to the world but align with Christ's call to die daily and bear fruit. The message underscores the transformative power of genuine faith, which involves a deep commitment to Christ and a willingness to follow Him on the difficult yet rewarding journey to glory and eternal life.

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Scripture: John 12:24, John 12:25, John 12:26, John 3:16, John 6:47, Matthew 16:24, 1 Corinthians 15:58

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Description

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Transcript

I would have you open your Bibles to John 12. Now, some of you may know, I'm preaching through John 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Commonly called the Upper Room Discourse with the High Priestly Prayer tagged on the end.

And when I started this series, I wanted to do just kind of a preamble to the series and look at some of the thoughts that were kind of coming, especially in chapter 12 leading up. So, I did a piecemeal sermon. And you know, there was one point that I did and I thought I want to extract that and I want to make a full sermon out of it.

So that's what you've got today. And this kind of comes out of John 12. I want you to turn to John 12, v. 20.

Now, I'm going to read this text. And you know what it's like when you read a text right before the guy preaches and boom, you just kind of go through it. And then you wait for him to say some stuff that's novel and interesting and impactful.

So you don't maybe pay a whole lot of attention, but pay attention. Because especially if you pay attention to this, you know this if you've read your Bible any amount of time. Jesus constantly says what you don't expect.

Do you ever just stop and say, okay, if I was asked that question or if I was in that situation, how would I have answered? If you just tried to blank your mind out and say I don't know how Jesus answers, how would I have answered? You know this as well as I do. Many, many, many times, the way Jesus answers is not the way you would answer. Or me.

Or anyone. Why? Because He spoke like no one else spoke. He said things and that's what you have here.

I mean, just feel this. To me, this portion of Scripture feels awkward. And you have to admit it.

Because He says what you don't expect. Now watch. Verse 20.

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast, of course, we know this is Passover. We know that within 24 hours, Jesus is on the cross. So we recognize where this is at.

I mean, I say within 24 hours. Within 24 hours of the beginning of chapter 13. And we're moving through 12 right here.

But Jesus is very close to gathering His guys together and pouring some last words into them before His trial and His sufferings. Verse 20, Now among those who went up to worship at this Passover feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

Now, so far, nothing strange. Philip went and told Andrew. That's not strange.

That's something we would do. Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Okay, right until there, the whole thing makes sense.

We all could put ourselves there. No problem. And Jesus answered them.

Okay, now that's great. Jesus is going to answer. The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

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. Whoever loves his life loses 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.

If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. Now if I'm honest, if I'm honest, there are certain parts of Scripture that as I read through my Bible each year, I come across and they disturb me or they make me stop in my tracks. They make me think especially hard.

The head covering is one of those. But anyway, if I'm honest, I think that v. 24, and you see it there, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. If it dies, it bears much fruit.

That verse probably has made me as uncomfortable as any verse in my Bible over the years. And there's a reason, obviously. It confronts me.

It challenges me. And you know, it's easy if you read that and you say, well, Jesus is talking about Himself. He's talking about the fact He has to die.

Well, then, we can kind of dodge it perhaps, but I have not been able to dodge this. I can't get away from it. It convicts me.

It's a difficult passage. And I never preached on it until just recently there in Manchester. And you know what one of the problems is? We have this native element in us that fights for life.

And yet, there's something here in these verses about dying. You know, we don't die easy. Look at this.

Look at v. 20. You've got these Greeks. Okay, now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.

Now, that is an interesting statement. Why? Well, for this reason. It's kind of prophetic.

You remember how Caiaphas back a chapter earlier, he said something about it being better for one man to die rather than this whole nation. He's basically better that this one guy die for the people. So you've got this prophetic thing going on.

Then the whole nation perished. But you know what? This seems to be prophetic too because in the verse right before, notice v. 19. What's it say there? You see, here the Pharisees are talking.

It's not the high priest Caiaphas, but it's the Pharisees. Doesn't it seem to be prophetic again? What are these guys saying? Look, the whole world's gone after him. And it's almost like v. 20 is in answer to that.

It's not just random. Not arbitrary that they say, look, the world's gone after him. And then what? It's Passover.

What have you got here? You've got proselytes. These guys are Greeks. And you know what? We might think, well, Greece is way over there on the Mediterranean and that's by Israel and so it's not that far away.

But you know what? If you look at a map and you figure out they either had to walk there. They didn't have airplanes back then. These guys came a considerable distance.

Why? Because they were participating obviously in the Passover. They were far from home. And you know what's interesting? Up to this point, Jesus' ministry was mainly to who? The Jews.

And here you've got some Gentiles. You've got these guys popping up. Verse 21, "...So these came to Philip..." We get that.

Philip was one of his inner circle. They're hitting on him. He's from Bethsaida in Galilee.

"...Asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew, Andrew. And Philip went and told Jesus. Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

And so here's the question. Did they get to see Him? I think that's a good question. Or not? And I think if we're honest right here, the narrative takes a little bit of an unexpected twist.

You see it? You know what? You know what I expect? Don't you expect this? That Jesus would at least acknowledge that these Greeks existed. Do you recognize? He never even talks about the Greeks. Do you notice that? He never mentions them by name.

And it's like they come to Him. Lord, you've got these Greeks over here. They want to see You.

And you expect Him to say yes, I'll see them, or no, I won't see them. But He always says these unexpected things. And notice v. 23.

Those first four words at least in the ESV. "...And Jesus answered them." You know what? If it wasn't for those four words right there, you would almost get the idea that Jesus just totally ignored the fact that these Greeks wanted to see Him. That's how I feel when I read that.

Everybody on board there? Doesn't it feel that way? Am I the only one? So, it feels disconnected. These Greeks interested in seeing Him. What happened to that? Jesus' answer.

Look at v. 23. Jesus answered them. That's helpful because we know that He's at least answering them.

We know that there is a context here and it's got to do with what these guys just said. The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. But it's almost like, what? Wait.

Wait a second, Lord. Didn't You just hear what they said to You? And where does this come from? This almost comes out of the blue. What sort of answer is this? Which kind of brings me back to the question, does Jesus show Himself to them or not? Did they get what they wanted? We wish to see Jesus.

Did they? Or did Jesus just ignore them? And you know what? Jesus' answer makes it feel to me that He does reveal Himself to the Greeks. The same exact way we sang, show me Christ. If Christ shows Himself to you this day, this time, how does that happen? It feels like the same way.

The same exact way. You know what? I want to see Jesus too. Did anybody sing the song and say, yes, show me Christ? I really want to see Him.

They wanted to see Him. But instead of showing His physical self to them, you see what He does? He gives them some truth. Some propositions about Himself.

He answers in words. Isn't that how you and I see Christ today? Isn't it through what's written in this book? That seems like what's happening. It's like if you want to know Me, if you want to see Me, I'll tell you what to look for.

That's what's happening here, folks. He altogether heard exactly what that request was. And He says, okay, you want to see Me? Here's a truth for Greeks who want to see Me.

And here's a truth for anybody at GCC that wants to see Me. Here it is. The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

I'm on my way to glory. I'm going to be so glorious, you better believe there's something here to see. Like these Greeks, they're right in asking to see Me because I'm going to glory.

And let me tell you something, I'm going to be altogether marvelous and glorious and beautiful to look at, and you better believe, not only they, but anybody that is in their right mind is going to want to see Me

because I'm headed on my way to glory. Oh, the hour is at hand for the King of glory. And you know what He's going to do? He's going to die and He is going to rise.

And then He, 40 days, He is going to ascend. And you know what Psalm 24 says. That King of glory.

And He is going to enter in. Who is that King of glory? Who is He? Oh, He is glorious. And those gates are going to open up for Him and He is going to take His seat on the throne.

That's what He's saying here. If those Greeks knew what they were asking, they would really, really, really want to see Me. I mean, that's what's going to happen.

They don't even know this is going to happen. It's like Jesus is saying, are those Greeks right in wanting to see Me? You better believe it. The sight of My glory, that's really going to be worth seeing.

The fact is, we heard it. Isaiah 53. You know what? No more rude out of dry ground, folks.

No more lacking this comeliness and this beauty and just despised and rejected man of sin. No more of that. No more.

Yeah, they're right to want to see Me. To really see Me. I will altogether be worth seeing.

You know, the answer seems to me that the Greeks, they saw Him. Not the way they probably intended. You can imagine that these guys went back to the Greeks and said, well, here's what Jesus told us.

They're going to relay something here. It's as though Jesus is saying, and you see where this goes. It's like Jesus is saying, when they see Me, if they really see Me, they'll want to be identified with Me if you really see Me.

But identifying Me with Me doesn't... It's not always so nice as people think. He wants to be truthful. You know what it means to really want to see Me and identify with Me and serve Me and follow Me? You really want to know what that's like? You really want to know what it means to see Jesus? That's where He's headed with this.

Let's just see if they really want to see Me and identify with Me and serve Me and follow Me. That'll be proven after we first talk about what it means for them or us to really see Him. Watch what happens.

Verse 24, and this is the verse. It stretches me. Truly, truly, I say to you... Now, you've got to get this in flow.

They want to see Him. Son of Man is going to be glorified. And then He says this, and He obviously is moving right into this truth about Himself.

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. And I would say this again.

Jesus continues to say what we don't expect. Why? Because He's pronounced He's going to be glorified. This doesn't sound glorious.

I mean, I recognize there's much fruit at the end. Maybe that sounds glorious. But the fact is, He says something that doesn't hardly seem to fit with glory at all.

What? Wheat falls into the earth and it dies? How does it go from being glorified to falling into the earth and dying? Well, there's only one answer. John 12.24 right there that we just read is the path to glory. That's the answer.

Tell the Greeks this, I have a hard work to do in order to make me worth really seeing. Tell them that. Tell the Greeks, I can be only understood in light of death.

Tell them that. Take that message to them. My hour has come.

It's here. I've got to drink this cup. I'm going to this bloody cross.

And if I don't die, then the seed is going to be a total failure. And it's not at all going to be worth seeing. That's basically the message being communicated.

I don't want to bear much fruit. What kind of fruit? Well, look down at v. 32. That kind of fruit.

The kind of fruit that gathers in guys like the Greeks. That kind of fruit. Like drawing almond to me.

Saving Greeks, saving Americans. I must die. Tell the Greeks that Jesus, what they want to see is a dying Jesus.

Go tell them that. That's the path to glory. Tell them that.

Tell anyone who wants to see Me. They must come face to face with My death. Tell them that.

And I'll tell you this, folks, this is the heart and the center of the Gospel message. And the people, look down at v. 34. They obviously are not getting it.

Look at what the people then were saying. We've heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. You see, the people missed it.

How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? Ha, you know who this is. This is the Son of Man who is going to be glorified. But on the way, on the way, I've got to be like a grain of wheat and fall in the ground.

Otherwise, nobody's coming with Me to glory. Otherwise, there's not going to be any fruit. That's it.

There'll be no fruitful harvest among Greeks or among Americans or among the British or among the Napoli folks. No fruit unless the seed dies. If you Greeks would see Me, you guys want to know Me? Well, then you've got to see Me through this lens.

That's what he's saying here. If I avoid Gethsemane, if I avoid that trial, if I avoid the scourging, the crown of thorns, if I avoid that bloody cross, if I avoid those three hours of darkness when I'm forsaken of My Father, then nothing happens. The seed stays in the hand of the sower.

Nothing. Nothing. No fruit.

But if I go, then I'm like that seed that goes into the ground and dies. And there will be an abundant fruit from all the nations. And the question is this, what do the Greeks think of that? What do they think of the cross? These Greeks are trying to get to Christ.

How? They're trying to get to Christ by go-betweens. Well, they go to Philip, and Philip goes to Andrew, and then they go off to him. No, no, no.

We don't go that way. What he's saying is this, you can come directly to this picture. See the Son of Man as a seed that falls into the ground and dies.

Come face to face with that. See me bleeding, suffering, drinking the cup, death. But now watch what happens.

Now you Greeks, if you really want to identify with me, then here's what's next for you. Look at v. 25. 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. Where I am, there will My servant be also.

If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. And again, I say, wait a second. Jesus, You were just talking about Yourself.

You were talking about You being glorified. And then You were talking about falling into the ground like this seed and dying and bearing much fruit. How do You all of a sudden in v. 25 get to this? You were talking about Your glory and Your path to that glory.

And He suddenly jumped to talking about whoever loves His life. Folks, do you see what just happened? Sometimes you just have to stop and say, wait a second, there was a shift right there. Jesus was talking about Himself.

How did He all of a sudden come to talking about me? Or whoever? Isn't that the word? Whoever. There it is. Do you see what happened? The truth in v. 24 about Jesus, it suddenly just morphed into a truth about the Greeks themselves and us.

Isn't that what happened? You don't want to miss the significance of this. This is huge. Here's the question.

Do I want to see Jesus? Do you? Well, you see what happens. If so, Jesus will show you Himself the same way He shows Himself to these Greeks with a truth about Himself that becomes a truth about you and me. Same truth.

V. 24 applied to Him because v. 23 ran into that. But then v. 24 runs into v. 25. It's a truth for Him.

It's a truth for you and me. That's the reality. Do you see it? Look, this is so critical.

I can hardly emphasize this enough. What Jesus is saying is this, if I reveal something of Myself to you, that revelation is going to confront you head on, right between the eyes about who you are. That's what's happening here.

You can't get away from it. You know what happens? The revelation of Jesus Christ, you want to see Him? It will challenge you about who you are, what you're living for, the direction you're headed. The revelation of Jesus to you, it will always challenge you about you.

That's what's happening here. You Greeks really want to see Me? Anyone here really want to see Him? Well, know this, you know what He's saying here? You cannot be a spectator. No sitting on the sideline here.

You can't simply look. None of that. A sight of Jesus will challenge you to the depths.

You Greeks really want to see Me? Let's see if you really want to see Me. There may be more involved than just standing at a distance and admiring Me or My words. A sight of Jesus will challenge you to the depths, folks.

What's true of Jesus in these verses confronts every single one of us. You just can't get away from that. An encounter with Christ is forcing something as to an encounter with ourselves as well.

You see how these verses unfold here. And you know what will always happen? When Jesus comes and He shows you Himself, and He says, look, behold Me suffering. Behold Me emptying Myself and doing My Father's will.

Look at that. Look closely at that and recognize what that is going to mean about your life. And I'll tell you what happens.

One of two things always happens. And you know this full well. What happens is we're either driven away in unbelief.

Oh, my Jesus isn't like that. No, Jesus is a baby in a manger. I mean, come on.

Sweet little harmless death. What's all this about? And my death, if anyone? All of a sudden, He's turning this on me? You see, what will happen is you will either be driven away in unbelief saying that Jesus in that passage right there is not my Jesus. Don't want any Jesus like that.

Or what will happen is you'll embrace Him by faith and you'll follow Him. One of two things always happens when we're confronted by Him. And that's what Jesus... He's not playing any games.

He said these Greeks really want to see Me? No games here. Here it is. You want to see Me? Behold Me dying.

Be prepared to do this very same thing yourself. Isn't that precisely what's happening here? I mean, you see the flow. I'm not making this up, folks.

You can see it right there. You see, we can run around. We do this.

And we do need to be careful because we can glibly say, I want to see Jesus. I want more of Jesus' presence. Don't we say that? I want to see His glory.

And you know what He's saying in these verses? Do you really? If you mean it, if you really want to see Me, your path to glory is going to be no different than Mine. That's what He's saying. Jesus makes this truth about Himself a truth for His followers.

The path Christ takes for our salvation is also a path that clearly He's laying down for our imitation. So, I really want you to feel this. Just follow the flow here.

Verses 23, 24, 25, 26. We've got four verses here. And you can see that each one of these verses, there's a direction.

Just for instance, verse 23. But the point here is that these are moving somewhere. Jesus says the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Okay. Okay. Where is Jesus moving to? Well, He's moving to glory.

That's a good thing. That's a desirable thing. Glorified.

We see that. But, the hour has come. Did you get that? The hour has come.

You see, the time for Christ to experience glory is very soon. But what's not so obvious exactly in this verse 23 is the path to the glory. Well, the key is found in those words the hour has come.

And the answer is down in verse 27. You see it? Now is my soul troubled? What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. You see what's happening? Jesus' path to glory is soul troubling to Him.

Why would He even say, Father, save me from this hour? Now, He's asking a rhetorical question here. What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But why would He even be talking here about being saved from this hour? Well, obviously, because everything about this hour was screaming at Him to be saved from it.

Father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from Me. We know what's coming. What's my point? My point is this.

You can't get away from this. There's glory in the end. But the path to it is an hour that He doesn't want to go through.

Okay, move to verse 24. Notice what happens. 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. Okay, my point is this. At the end of verse 23, there's glory.

How do you get there? Through a path that's rough, painful. Okay, this verse. What's the goal at the end? Fruit.

What's the path to get there? Death. I mean, you see it. You see, folks, the point in these verses is there's no shortcuts.

We all want the glory. We all want the fruit. We all want the eternal life.

We all want to be with Christ. We all want to be commended and honored by the Father. But you see, there's a path in every one of these four verses that you can't get around.

It's like verse 24. Victor gave me this einkorn wheat. It's not genetically modified.

And so, before our brother went to be with the Lord, he brought me a bag of this. You know full well, if I were to let that bag of einkorn wheat sit on my shelf in my shed, I'd have never got a harvest. I had to take those grains and throw them into moist soil where it was going to whatever happens to seeds.

Jesus says they die. You can't find them again. They turn into something else.

They sprout into this plant. But if they're left in that packet, what happens? They remain alone. That's what Jesus says here.

But if you put it in the moist ground to where it's gone, what do you have left? You have a wheat, a blade that comes up, and then the fruit and the head. And there's fruit. We're the fruit.

Greeks will be the fruit. The destination that we want to get to in this verse, it's fruit-bearing. And I'll tell you, there's no question, and he's applying this to himself, but this is the pivotal verse.

Because in v. 23, he's talking about himself. In v. 25, he's talking about us. And this verse falls right in the middle.

So you know, this verse goes both ways. This speaks back to v. 23 and forward to v. 25. It speaks about Him and how He got to fruitfulness.

But you know what? It also speaks to us. And you know what the question is? Jesus is saying, if we're going to follow Him, and this is the path, we've got to die to what He wants us to die to in order to be fruitful. What do you need to die to? Notice next, v. 25.

Whoever loves his life loses it. Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Well, now again, what's the desired destination at the end of this verse, folks? What do you want to get to? Eternal life.

Remember, no shortcuts. How do you get there? And we see it here. Folks, Jesus is not speaking to radical missionary types like Matt Wilkinson.

He is speaking to him, but folks, this is Christianity 101. There's a path that leads to hell. Tell me from v. 25, what's the path that leads to hell? You've got your Bibles right there.

Again, I'm emphasizing, I'm not making this up. This is Jesus speaking, not Tim Conway. Yeah, there is a path in v. 25 that leads to hell.

And there is a path in v. 25 that leads to life. I hope you all see and I hope you all recognize very quickly that the desirable end in that verse would be eternal life. Let me ask you, how can you miss eternal life? And you know what? The fact is, this many people in this room, there are people in this room that are going to miss eternal life because you're not going to take this seriously.

What does this verse tell us? How can you miss eternal life? What do you have to do to miss eternal life? Love your life. Hmm. The path to this life is hating our life in this world.

That's what it says. Hating your life in this world. Self-hatred.

Here. That's what it says. What's that mean? Notice carefully those three words because you've got to get the prepositional phrase here.

In this world. This isn't ultimate hatred, folks. This is actually doing the best thing you could possibly do for yourself.

It's just in this world. You see those words. There's a time and a place for this.

It's not for good. It's not forever. Self-hatred is what a seed does when it throws itself into the ground and dies.

That's it. What is it? You know what it is? It's you looking at Christ and saying, yeah, I want Him. And I want to identify with Him.

And you know what? Whether it's in Gethsemane or whether it's Golgotha, whether it's throwing himself into the ground, I want to be where He is. I want to walk with Him. I want to walk that path with Him.

I want to be where He is. He's worth it. And what happens? Do you know what that means? To hate your life here? It means you are purposely making decisions that from the watching world, they look at it and they say, well, that's a really stupid thing to do.

Why would they do that with their money? Why in the world would Matt Wilkinson want to take all his little kids over to Nepal? That is so stupid. Don't you know the air is dirty over there? The guy has a bachelor's degree. He could work a job.

He could have a nice house. He could have a nice garden in back. Why would he want to pack up his family and go over there? Or, I looked yesterday.

Darren and Kelsey. Why do you want to go adopt a little kid from the Ukraine? Handicapped? Don't you know what that's going to do to your life? You see, that's dying. That's throwing ourselves in the ground where it looks foolish to this world.

What are they doing? Don't you know you're supposed to try to get your best life now, live for retirement, store it all up, have a comfortable place in the end, have lots of money in the bank? Don't you recognize all that? You know what this is about? It's Christians making these very strange and very unusual decisions, self-denying choices, doing things with their life, with their time, with their money that just seem way out there in left field. Like, why would they give their lives to that? Why? Looks strange to the world. When we make decisions that are dangerous.

Like, my daughter wants to go to Lebanon. And you know, I'll admit, brethren, I'll tell you this, there are times that I want to pack up. Now, you can say, oh, it's not that hard being over in the UK.

From a standpoint of, no, we're not in Pakistan. But you leave your children at home back in the United States. Leave your church there.

There are times when the sorrow that Ruby and I feel, and I've told the church over there, when my daughter was in the hospital and our little grandchild almost died, if there was ever a time I wanted to pack my bags and move back here, why do people make decisions like that? Why do people do things with... And then Joy, she wants to go, Dad, can I go to Lebanon? You know what? Is there hesitation in my soul when she asks that? Yes. Why? I don't want her to get kidnapped. I don't want something to happen.

But at the same time, there has to be that letting go. Why? Because Christ is worth it. Yes, Joy, you can go to Lebanon and serve Christ and the Gospel there.

And this is risk-taking. That was just uncomfortable. Folks, we're talking about what it means to be a seed thrown in the ground and dying.

And it's only then, and I've thought this through the years, we're going to see fruit here. Brethren, I think so much of the fruit here, it has come from people dying. Just through the years.

People like James taking up the Men's Grace House. Alex Dufresne taking up... It's people dying. You remember Jeff telling the story about the first time he got hauled off to the prison up there in the northern Michigan Upper Peninsula? He's like, who wants to do that? Who wants to go to a prison? Give your time to that.

You get a bunch of felons in there? Isn't that a nice place? Why do people do things like that? And it's risk-taking. That which is difficult, sometimes painful. It's dying to your self-decisions.

But you know what? That is exactly the path to fruit. Not only for Christ, but for us as well. And then next, verse 26, if anyone serves Me, he must follow Me.

Oh, and where I am, there will My servant be also. Anybody like the sound of that? Okay, just count all the desirable things in this passage that are our goal, that we want to get to. What? Where I am, there will My servant be also.

My Father will honor Him. There's two things right there. Serving Christ.

You see what he says here? Serving Christ means following Christ. Go tell those Greeks that. Go tell them all that.

Where's He going? Where's He going? At this point, where's He headed? He's headed to Golgotha, folks. He's headed to being forsaken by His Father. You know what it says.

Isaiah 53 says, crushed. Psalm 22 says, poured out like water. He sweats as it were great drops of blood.

This is no cakewalk, folks. And you know what he's saying? You want to be a Christian? There's no sitting in the boat. You've got to be like Peter.

You've got to get out. You see what he says? If you're going to serve Me, you've got to follow Me. You see that? You can't serve Jesus off the path He walked.

You kind of get that from these words? That's what he's saying. You want to serve Me? You've got to follow Me. You can't hang out over there in the nice, safe place.

You know what this is a call to? Embrace suffering. It's a call to Tawfiq in the midst of his suffering. Cling faithfully to Christ.

Be faithful. Move on. Do the hard right at such an hour as this.

That's it. We count it all joy. And what's going to happen in the end? Can you imagine the Father is going to honor you? You see the destination here? Honored by the Father close to Christ.

With Christ. Is it together with Him on the cross? And I don't mean physically on a cross, but just that dying, that dying. Together with Him in that? Together in the pain? Yes.

And then together with Him forever in the pleasure of that eternal life, paradise, joy unspeakable. Can you imagine? The Father is going to come. You served My son when it was hard.

To Tawfiq, He's going to say, you served My son when it was hard. Well done. I am going to honor you now.

Look, the goal in these four verses, what is it? Glory? Fruitfulness? Being with Christ? Being honored with the Father? But you see it. You see the path. The pathway to it all.

Death? Hate your life in this world? Follow Christ on the road He Himself walked. That's what we're faced with. When Jesus calls a man, calls a woman to Himself, He calls them to die.

That's all I know. How are we doing in that? Where are we at? Where am I at? You see, this is why this is so haunting to me. Because we know this, as we walk, it's like yes, we die to things.

But you notice what the promise of the New Covenant is. He's going to cleanse us from our idols. And you know that doesn't just all happen on the first day we follow Christ.

Do you ever notice this about yourself? This horrible tendency to accumulate idols along the way? You're being called to die to these things. Brethren, the thing about all of it is the glory at the end, the fruitfulness in it all, compensates for all the hardness and all the difficulty. And even in the hardness and the difficulty, He's promised not to leave us.

He's promised not to forsake us. Even then, He speaks peace. You're forgiven.

You're My child. I'm calling you to a rough path for a little season. But it's only a little season.

It's momentary light affliction. See, folks, we're being called to make a decision. This is the life of all lives.

Folks, this is the best life. To take the hard path, following Christ, because you see where it goes. Look, we're being called to make a decision.

We all have to make decisions, and He's calling us to follow Him. That's what Jesus has to say to these Greeks. Let me just ask you all this, what do you think? Does this sound like the way you all want to live the rest of your life? Moving forward? Is this it? Remaining years of your life? Is that how you want to live and how you want to spend eternity at the end of it? The path I want to be on won't be easy.

You know what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount? There's not many on that narrow way, folks. Right, it's not very appealing to people that want to get it all here and want comfort here. Do you want to see Jesus? We say we do.

We're not always saying we do. Okay, Jesus says this is Christianity. Not some super upper echelon Christianity.

This is it. The least of His people. This is the path.

This is the narrow way. Few there be that find it. It's a hard text.

I feel it with all my being that it's hard. It confronts me. But isn't it glorious? I mean, there really is some glorious fruit here, folks.

I just ask you this. What are you living for? You want more success? Is that it? More power? More money? Nicer car? Kind of move up through the ranks in your workplace? And I'm not saying having a house is wrong. I'm not saying trying to be the best you can in your job and get promotions.

But what are you living for? Longer vacations? Is that it? Brethren, do you want your life to count for something? Anybody want that? I think you see the formula. We can't get away from it. This isn't some special kind of Christianity.

It's just being a Christian, period. Now, where are we at? How long have I preached? Just listen. What I would say right here is this.

What about John 3.16? James quoted it. What about a verse like this? John 6.47 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes... did you get that? Whoever believes has eternal life. This is my question.

Are you comfortable with the way that verse 25 says that we get eternal life? Notice it again. Whoever loves his life loses it. Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Let me ask you this question. Do we get eternal life by hating our lives in this world? Hmm, that's a good answer. Yes.

Doesn't the Bible teach in certain places that eternal life is to be had by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ? Yes, that's a good answer. So does John 12.25 contradict John 3.16 and John 6.47? What say you to this? Listen, I hope you recognize there's no contradiction. This is God's way of showing us that believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is something much deeper and more life-changing than many people realize.

Folks, Jesus is not nullifying or negating faith when He says that we must hate our life in this world in order to keep our lives for eternal life. You see what He's doing? Jesus is defining faith. He's showing us what true faith looks like.

That's what's happening here. He's describing the things that faith does. He's describing the way true faith lives.

So what do you think? Jesus can attach the same promises to eternal life, same promises to hating our life that He attaches to faith. Why? How? Well, the reason is both are true. Hating your life in this world is what faith always does.

It's the way faith lives. It's the evidence that faith is real. That it's alive.

So, do you want to see Jesus? The biblical Jesus? You know what we often mean when we say we want to see Jesus? What do we mean? Do you mean when you say that, I want to throw myself into the ground like a little seed and die? Is that what you typically mean when you say that? It's not. You know what you want to feel? You want to sing the hymn and feel fuzzy, warm feelings move through your... Isn't that what we want? Like we want the glory. But you see what He's saying.

There is glory, but just realize that if Jesus reveals Himself to you before you get to the glory, there is this. There is this life. This life is hard.

The Christian life is hard. Don't try to make it anything else, folks. Not if we're living it the way that Jesus wants us to live it.

The man of sorrows calls us to follow Him. Oh, there's great joy in it. There was a joy set before Him.

Yeah, that's all true. But you know what? We want to see Jesus. Jesus will confront you.

He will challenge you. That's what's happening here. The truth about Him must become a truth about you. Rich young ruler, Matthew. You see these two guys? They were confronted. Matthew, he left it all behind. Leave that franchise behind. Leave the money on the table. I'm out of here.

I'm following Him. I'm trusting Him. It doesn't matter how hard this road might be.

I'm going to follow Him all the way to the end. And that's what he did. Other guy, look, go take it all and sell it.

Sell it all. Give it to the poor. You come follow Me, which is exactly what we're being called to do here.

That's exactly what he told Matthew to do. Both of them are told the same thing. Follow Me.

Just exactly. You want to serve Him? You've got to follow Him. You want to be where He is? You've got to follow Him.

You can't stand off the path somewhere. You can't stay over there in the boat in a safe place. He's calling you to get out.

You want to be where Jesus is? Peter's a great picture. He got out of the boat. He went to where Jesus was.

You want to be where He is? You see what he's saying. You've got to follow Him. You've got to walk that path.

That's what's happening. And you know what happened? That rich young ruler? Nope. I'm not doing it.

I'm not doing it. He sold his soul. Not doing it.

Jesus said, you'll have treasure in heaven. Matthew, yeah, he got up. He came.

You know what Paul said? I die daily. What does that mean? You know what that means. There are things in this world that look good.

There are things that would make life a little softer. There are those things that tug at us. Paul even talked about lawful things.

The writer of Hebrews waits. You know what Paul did? He looked at the things that would kind of take the edge off being a soldier. He said, no, I'm not going there.

He buffeted his body. You remember that? He said, no, body, you're not going to sleep too much. You're not going to eat too much.

The kinds of things in this world that tend to make us fat and lazy he wasn't going to go there. Nope. He wasn't going to get bound up.

Folks, hear me. This is no call to ultimately hate yourself. It's not that.

You're choosing the momentary light affliction of following Christ that ends in paradise with me. You'll be with me in paradise. Do you ever just stop and think about that first moment when you see Him as He is?

I'll tell you this.

Ladies and gentlemen, you will never die in vain if you die daily for Christ and His Gospel. Never will it be in vain. Would you see Jesus? Be bold.

I want to see Him, whatever the cost. Jesus would have us see Him. Really see Him.

Follow Him. Die with Him. Have eternal life with Him.

Joy unspeakable. Be where He is. I mean, isn't that where you want to be? It's where I want to be.

This is the way I want to live. You know what? I turned 58 this year. I moved down here when I was 28.

John has not changed. Seriously, heaven looks exactly the same as when I first came. Isn't that right, Craig? It's like He doesn't age.

He just keeps going and going and going. Just as sharp as ever. But folks, I realize I'm 58.

I want the next chapter to count. I'm hit by this just like you are. How am I going to die? And I feel like over the last three years, brethren, don't count it a light matter.

I know Ruby and I have had to die to all sorts of things. We've had to die to sunshine. We've had to die to being among the brethren here.

We've had to die to the things that are special about grace. We've had to die to the kind of interaction with family that we used to have. We've had to die to Mondays with Papa.

You can say don't count those things light until you walk that path. And I know others have given up far more. When I read Adam and Iron Judson, but I just know this, we want to be fruitful.

You want fruit here. You want fruit in your family. You want fruit in this church.

You want fruit in your lives. We want fruit over there. You want it here.

There's a path that we're called to have that. And in the end, it will be worth it to be where He is in honor of the Father. That's it.

I don't know how you want the next chapter of your life, but folks, don't you want more souls? More help? More, more, more, more, more men raised up? More grace? More, more, more? And so the final question of the hour is this, what in me, what in my life must I die to in order to bear fruit like Jesus bore fruit? I'm challenged. I'm confronted. And I trust You are too.

Father, I pray for us. We want to see Jesus in all that that means. And we ask, show us Jesus.

Show us Christ. Amen.

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