

Part 2: Good Friday Motivations

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As we think on Good Friday and the hope of Resurrection Sunday we ought to take great hope in all that was accomplished for us in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

This Sunday we will look at John 16:33 where Jesus says that in the events of his death and resurrection he has overcome the world. In that overcoming we can see many things that Jesus accomplished. On Sunday we will see three things in specific. That is in Jesus we have unshakable joy, in Jesus we have the love of the Father, and in Jesus we have overcome the world.

But there's far more than those three things that were accomplished on the cross. Let me list a few. It was on the cross where Genesis 3:15 was finally realized, the head of the serpent was crushed though it struck the heel of the son of Eve.

Colossians 1:14 shows us that Jesus atoned for us by canceling the record of our debt by nailing it to the cross. John tells us in 1 John 2:2 that Jesus became the propitiation for our sins that is he absorbed and satisfied the wrath of God by substituting himself in our place. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:18 that the cross ransoms us from our futile ways of sin, freeing us to live new lives empowered by the Holy Spirit. And Romans 5:9 says that by the blood of the cross we have been justified, that is declared not guilty before God despite our legacy of sinfulness.

We can, we should and we will talk about what Jesus accomplished for us in the Easter events which give us the substance of the good news we call the gospel. But tonight I want us to consider why Jesus did what he did?

I made the mistake of reading a Wikipedia page about Easter this week and I was reminded of how misunderstood the cross and the resurrection are. If you're new to Christianity or maybe still figuring out what Christianity is, the events of the cross may seem odd and out of place. One such critique which has come up lately is the claim that the cross is cosmic child abuse.

The cross was where God the Father sent his Son to die, even to save people, but such an act is nothing more than a loveless and calloused action towards his own child.

This would be a compelling reason except for one thing: Jesus tells us why he went to the cross. Jesus did so willingly and motivated by something far more than fear or external pressure.

The author of Hebrews makes it clear that despite the pain and sorrow Jesus would feel in his final hours, what motivated him was joy. What was the substance of this joy?

This is what we are going to look at briefly tonight as we examine the heart of Jesus in the Last Supper he shared with his disciples. The Last Supper was the meal Jesus shared before he and his disciples moved the Gethsemane where Jesus was arrested and it spans two chapters in the gospel of John, chapters 13 and 14.

Tonight we are going to look at the first verse and the last verse of this passage and in so doing we are going to see the bookending motivation of why Jesus went to the cross. What we will see in short is that he did so because of his heart towards those whom he loved and his heart towards his Father.

Let's begin by looking at the motivation which is presented in **John 13:1**.

Knowing full well that Jesus was in his last hours his motivation and purpose in his actions was not just love for his own, but love until even the end.

This is our first point tonight **The Cross and Jesus' Love for His Own**.

What motivated the cross was this loving desire to love his own brothers and sisters. Which means that if you want to see Jesus' love for you, you look here, at the cross.

I love the intensity in which John describes Jesus' heart here. Not only did Jesus love those who were his, but he loved them to the end.

Remember this is the waning moments of Jesus' life. Not only is Jesus about to walk into the most tragic experience he will ever know, but he's hanging out with the very people who are requiring him to march to Calvary. He's about to wash the feet and pray for the very people whose wickedness, sin, and debt of death would drive the nails into his very hand. And yet, he did so with no frustration.

How often are we asked by our spouse to do something that we would rather not do and we go and do that very thing but we let them know while we are doing it that you're not happy that you're doing it!

How much more in moments of costly sacrifice do we at least have the smallest twinge of resentment towards those who required that sacrifice to be made.

Even more, how many of us in our moments of trial or suffering, or even imminent death consider it the time to be served, catered to, or left to one's self.

But here, towards the very ones whose sin would inflict the greatest pain he would ever know, Jesus refused to be motivated by anything but love. There was nothing begrudging in Christ our brother.

No sideways looks, no rolling of the eyes, no huffing under his breath only the privilege of loving them to the end. If you've ever wondered what it's like to come to Jesus here we see his heart. Love, love to the end. Love not just for those in the room with him, but love towards all those who are his own.

Jesus' love was for his own, it was effective for his own. Look at how Jesus spoke of this in **John 6:37**.

It was Jesus' joy to love to the end because he knew his love would accomplish something for his people. He it would save those who were his. It was powerful love potent love. It was not a passive love, but a divine love, a definite love, a peculiar love.

Jesus went to the cross because he loves those he was going to save and he was going to save those whom he loved. You can't disassociate his love from his salvation. To be loved by Jesus is to be called to faith in Jesus, it is to belong to him. But to belong to him, is to be loved by him. Loved to the end.

Yes when we see the cross we ought to mourn over our sin for it was our sin that demanded it, but upon the cross Christ also calls us to see his love, love to the end!

It is as the hymn writer Isaac Watts expressed: "Love so amazing so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all."

Jesus embraced the cross so that he might embrace the sinners who come into his mercy.

But this is not the only love which drove Jesus to the cross. Look at the way in which Jesus closes his teaching at his last supper: **John 14:31**.

The obedience which Jesus is referencing here is the obedience which lead him to the cross. It is the obedience Paul talks about in Philippians 2 that is obedience to the point of death, even death on a cross.

But why did Jesus obey unto the cross? Not only because he loves us, but that we might also see his love for the Father. This is our second point tonight: **The Cross and Jesus' Love for His Father**.

In preparation for this Easter series I read the book of John front to back a handful of times and every time I encountered this verse it stopped me in my tracks.

Jesus' love for the Father is something I often don't think of when I think of the cross. This is partly due to aspects of good theology and Bible study. We just read in Isaiah that it was God's will to crush the Messiah. Luke tells us in Acts 7 that the cross was the predetermined plan of God. Paul tells us in Ephesians that this was God's plan for the fullness of time.

Yet Jesus here obeys the Father willingly, and jointly agrees, celebrates and rejoices in the plan not only because he loves the Father, but more specifically he wants you to see how much he loves the Father.

What's interesting is that following this statement Jesus leaves with his disciples and goes to the Garden where he prays what is called, "The High Priestly Prayer." In that prayer in John 17 Jesus pulls back the veil of the eternal Trinitarian love shared between the Trinity.

It speaks of God's love for Jesus and how Jesus brings us into that same staggering and eternal love.

But it is only here, in speaking of his obedience to death that Jesus actually speaks to us about his love for his Father.

Part of Jesus' love for you is that in this costly act of obedience you would see his immense love for his Father.

Why would he do this? Why would he care that we know he loves the Father? Because here in Jesus affection in the face of the world's greatest trial we see how cosmically captivating God the Father is.

I remember when our family was driving to San Diego and we stopped in Sarah's old hometown along the way. I had heard lots of stories of what life was like in the wildlife preserve that was at the end of her street and the tales of her and her siblings riding their bikes and building forts in what sounded like a child's outdoor utopia.

When we go there and she began to walk us around she showed us all the things as if to say: "Isn't it wonderful!" Her love for it was meant to strike our love for it.

So too Jesus in the most miraculous and cosmic way is here inviting us to such an adoration of his Father. Where Sarah pointed to the hills, Jesus here points to the cross and says: "Isn't he lovely! Isn't he worthy of all of it?!"

Jesus is the one who knit the fabrics of the galaxy by his own hands. He established the world on a pedestal. He is the one who painted the wings of the butterfly and forged the full color spectrum out of thin air. But what captivates the heart of the one who captivates us with his creative beauty is his heavenly Father.

Not only should this snap us to attention with a loveliness we often take for granted, but don't we here see in our battle for obedience how love drives us deeper than obligation or effort ever could. Obedience becomes joyful with a Father as lovely as this.

It was the cross where Jesus was going to be crushed, but knowing his Father's promise he was also to be glorified. It was on the cross where he would be abandoned in his humanity but cherished in his divinity by the Father. No act of obedience was more costly than what Jesus willingly chose to do on the cross and yet Jesus though crushed, suffered no loss. Though mocked, was raised the name above all names.

Jesus wants to show you his love for his Father because he wants you not only to share in that love, but because he wants to equip your obedience, even in the face of hardship, with the same delight.

On Good Friday it is right and proper to reflect on our own sin and on the justice of God which was poured out on Jesus. But the privilege of the believer is that because of the cross, both of these give way to love. Jesus love for us, and the love he had for his Father.