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# JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

## *SUBJECTS OF A SUFFERING KING*

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A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter  
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on April 22, 2017

## INTRODUCTION

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There are glorious promises in the Gospel of Jesus Christ! The King of glory offers eternal life, present companionship with Himself, and honor from God the Father. But there is also a disturbing paradox among these pleasant words in Scripture. Christ earned these blessings for His followers at the troubling hour of His crucifixion. Christ beckon His disciples to suffering as they follow Him. Christ's servants become partakers of everlasting life by hating and losing life in this world. In this message, we shall consider this paradox in the Gospel message to those would be subjects of a suffering king.

## MESSAGE MADE SIMPLE

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Jesus said, *"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; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour."* (Jn. 12:25-27).

There are glorious promises in the Gospel of Jesus Christ! The King of glory offers eternal life, present companionship with Himself, and honor from God the Father. What joy must fill the heart of anyone who contemplates such rewards as these! Only consider what you (and every sinner) deserve from God, and these promised blessings will become ever so sweet.

And yet, the astute reader will notice a disturbing paradox among these pleasant words. When was it that Christ earned these blessings for His followers? It was at the troubling hour of His crucifixion! Where does Christ beckon His disciples to follow Him? It is to suffering He calls! How is it that Christ's servants become partakers of everlasting life? It is by hating and losing life in this world!

May God grant to us all the fullness of His blessed promises in the Gospel of Christ, and may He empower us to follow the Savior with selfless abandon.

## **JOHN 12:20-36 (ESV)**

20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast [Passover (v1)] were some Greeks. 21 So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “*Sir, we wish to see Jesus.*”

22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, “***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 *Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.* 26 ***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.***

27 “*Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.* 28 ***Father, glorify your name.***”

Then a voice came from heaven: “***I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.***”

29 The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “*An angel has spoken to him.*”

30 Jesus answered, “*This voice has come for your sake, not mine.* 31 ***Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.*** 32 ***And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.***”

33 He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. 34 So the crowd answered him, “*We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up?*”

***Who is this Son of Man?***”

35 So Jesus said to them, “*The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going.* 36 ***While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.***” When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

THE POINT I’M AIMING AT TODAY

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**Christ offers glorious victory through suffering and life through death.**

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

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(1) THE GLORIOUS PROMISES OF THE GOSPEL

(2) THE DISTURBING PURPOSE OF THE SAVIOR

(3) THE INGLORIOUS PROPOSITION OF DISCIPLESHIP

(4) APPLICATION: CHRIST CALLS US TO BE SUBJECTS OF THE SUFFERING KING

## MESSAGE

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(1) THE GLORIOUS PROMISES OF THE GOSPEL (6 IN THIS PASSAGE)

*1. Judgment of this sinful world*

- “**Now is the judgment of this world...**” (v31).
- God’s judgment against this sinful world is sure and imminent... Christ’s first Advent was not to bring final condemnation (Jn. 3:17), but to announce God’s judgment against sinners (Jn. 3:19-20).
  - Jesus said, “**For judgment I came into this world...**” (Jn. 9:39).
- Furthermore, Christ will come again to bring about final judgment.
  - “**Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end**” (Rev. 22:12–13).
- Friends, do you believe that the *judgment* of sinners is *part of the Gospel*?
  - *If you are not a Christian, and if you do not believe* there is any *final* and *divine judgment* to fear, then I wonder what you think about *all of the injustice in the world...*
    - What will come to *murderers* and *tyrants* and *human predators* who are not caught or captured in this world?
    - *Are there not* many people who have *oppressed, harmed, and even destroyed* others *without* receiving any due *penalty* in this world?

- ***If you are a Christian***, but you have ***a tough time*** thinking that the ***Gospel*** has any ***bad news in it*** (i.e. judgment), then I wonder what you think about those ***people*** who ***reject*** or ***disbelieve what Christ offers*** in the good news...
  - Isn't the Gospel a message of hope... ***only to those who believe*** or ***trust in Christ?***
  - So then, ***isn't the Gospel*** also a ***message of warning*** and ***threat*** to those who remain on the path of death?
  - AND, ***isn't it really good news*** that every ***wrongdoer*** will get ***perfect justice?***
    - God will ***ensure*** that ***no one*** will ***escape*** His justice.

## 2. ***Satan conquered***

- ***“now will the ruler of this world be cast out”*** (v31).
  - The serpent crushing seed of Adam is victorious (Gen. 3:15)!
    - ***“Through death [Christ] destroyed the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil...”*** (Heb. 2:14).
    - ***“God disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Christ”*** (Col. 2:15).
  - Friends, do you know that ***you are powerless against*** this ***ancient foe?***
    - Don't you remember what ***Jesus told Peter...*** that ***Satan would sift him*** like grains of wheat falling between his fingers?
    - Ah, but do you also remember how ***Jesus comforted Peter?*** ***“I have prayed for you,”*** Jesus said.
    - There is ***nothing*** to fear from ***Satan***, if you are ***in Christ!***
    - He has ***no authority*** over you, because he has been ***vanquished by Christ!***

### 3. Sinners are brought near to God in Christ

- "...where I am, there will my servant be also" (v26).
  - This is a reversal of the penalty for rebellion – separation
    - “**You, who once were alienated** and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, **[Christ] has now reconciled** in his body of flesh by his death...” (Col. 1:21–22).
  - *Do you ever get the sense that your guilt* keeps you from being welcome before God?
    - *If this has never occurred to you*, then let me say that you should certainly feel a sense of guilt for your sin.
    - *I can think of no greater punishment* from God *in this life* than for a sinner to no longer feel guilty for sin.
    - Oh, *may God grant* us all grace to *feel the crushing weight of our guilt* before Him!
  - Do you *hear this promise* of the *Gospel*?
    - *You*, guilty sinners... *You* who deserve every bit of God’s judgment against you... *You* may be *welcomed* by God... *brought near to Him* in/through Christ!
    - Luther: “So *when the devil throws your sins in your face* and declares that you deserve death and hell, tell him this: ‘*I admit that I deserve death and hell*, what of it? *For I know One who suffered and made satisfaction* on my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God, and where He is there I shall be also!’”

### 4. Honor from God the Father

- “If anyone serves me, **the Father will honor him**” (v26).
  - God not only reconciled sinners to Himself through Christ, He honors sinners!
    - “**But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our**

trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and **raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places** in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages **he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace** in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:4–7).

▪ *Can you imagine it?!*

- Once I was a wretched sinner, as odious and detestable to God as my wife would feel about a spider on her hand.
- BUT, in Christ... through the Gospel of His work for me... God utterly reverses His posture towards me!
- He decided to honor and love that thing (me) that was once disgusting and loathsome to Him.
- AND He intends to honor me throughout the coming ages, in order to show the immeasurable riches of His gracious grace!
- Do you believe that?
- Do you believe that’s true about you?
- Doesn’t this change everything?
- Ah, but there’s more!

## 5. Sonship

- “**believe in the light, that you may become sons of light**” (v36).
  - Sinners become beloved sons of God
    - “to all who did receive [Christ], who believed in his name, **he gave the right to become children of God...**” (John 1:12–13).
    - “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, **that we should be called children of God**; and so we are...” (1 Jn. 3:1).
  - *What can we say to this?!*

- I just wonder, *if you are not a Christian...* or if *you think* you are a Christian, but *this isn't stirring* unspeakable *gratitude* and *worship* in your heart *right now...*
- *Do you hear what I am saying?* Oh, may God give us ears to hear!
- *Every moment* we have *arrogantly* either *neglected* or *refused* to live a life of *wholehearted gratitude* and *worship...* we have *showed our hostility* toward God.
- *And yet,* that same God *welcomes* guilty sinners, *honors* them in His presence, and *adopts* them as His very own *sons!*

## 6. Eternal Life

- “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world **will keep it for eternal life**” (v25).
  - This is a summary statement of all that the Gospel promises
    - Life is what was lost in Genesis 3
    - Life is what sinful humans simply cannot maintain
    - Life is what all humans desperately want
    - Life... eternal life... abundant life... glorious life... that is what Christ promises sinners in the Gospel!
    - **“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live...”** (Jn. 11:25).
  - Friends, *simply put,* the *Gospel* promises *all of the glorious things* your *heart* truly *longs* for...
    - *Justice... freedom* from all spiritual opposition... *nearness* and *honor* in God's presence... *adoption* as a son of God, with all the *accompanying benefits...* and *life... everlasting life.*
    - *Now those are glorious Gospel promises*

(Segue) *But, how does Jesus gain such glorious treasures for sinners?*

## (2) THE DISTURBING PURPOSE OF THE SAVIOR

*“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose **I have come to this hour**” (v27)*

- **Christ’s “hour” is His death**

- At the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus said to His mother, “**My hour has not yet come**” (Jn. 2:4).
- The Jewish leaders wanted to arrest Jesus, but “**no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come**” (Jn. 7:30).
- Jesus even taught openly in the temple at Jerusalem while the Jewish leaders wanted to stop Him, but “**no one arrested Him, because His hour had not yet come**” (Jn. 8:20).
- Now, Jesus says, “***I have come to this hour...***” (v23)!

- **Christ earned Gospel blessings at the cross (suffering)**

- “***But for this purpose I have come to this hour***” (v27)
- “**And you, who were dead in your trespasses... God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by **canceling the record of debt** that stood against us with its legal demands. This he [God] set aside, **nailing it to the cross**” (Col. 2:13–14).**

- **But the crowd didn’t like that idea**

- “**We have heard** from the Law that **the Christ remains forever**. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? **Who is this Son of Man?**” (v34)
- Who is this suffering Son of Man? That is not the kind of Messiah we expected...

**Summary: Christ purposed to suffer and die, thereby securing glorious Gospel promises for all who trust/follow/believe in Him...**

(Segue) *And Christ calls sinners to FOLLOW Him!*

### (3) THE INGLORIOUS PROPOSITION OF DISCIPLESHIP

- “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**; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him” (v25-26).
  - *Discipleship is following Jesus*
    - Jesus said His “servant” is “with” Him and “honored” by the Father, and **anyone who is a servant “must follow Him”** (Jn. 12:26).
      - Jesus spoke of following Him in terms of **hearing His voice** and **abiding in His words**:
        - “**My sheep hear my voice... and they follow me**” (Jn. 10:27).
        - “**If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples...**” (Jn. 8:31).
    - *Following Jesus requires self-abandon in this world*
      - “**Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life**” (Jn. 12:25).
        - Jesus also said, “**If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple**” (Lk. 14:26).
      - John spoke more about this in his NT letters:
        - “**Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him**” (1 John 2:15).

- **Why? Because Jesus' words are going to sound crazy... often!**
  - “Hey everybody... Here’s my plan for saving people from suffering and death... I’m going to suffer and die.” (Jn. 12:27)
  - “If you sign up to follow me, you are guaranteed to suffer, and I can’t promise that you won’t also die... maybe even painfully... even if you are serving me really well.” (Jn. 12:25-26)
  - AND, don’t forget that the purpose of discipleship is to be like Christ...
  - “I know your life is a mess, and I have a plan to work this out... I am going to slowly and agonizingly strip away your sinful desires, your self-confidence, and your disbelief... the good news is, though, you will enjoy it!” (Col. 3:1-17)

Summary: **For all who are in Christ, the glorious promises of the Gospel are ALREADY theirs...**

(Segue) ***But, we also await the completion of these promises that are NOT YET delivered in full.***

#### **(4) APPLICATION: CHRIST CALLS US TO BE SUBJECTS OF THE SUFFERING KING**

##### **1. Christ did suffer and die for sinners**

- a. Do you believe this?
- b. If you do not, then how do you plan to face God on the day of judgment?
  - i. Hasn’t your mouth, today, gotten a bitter taste of what is to come?
- c. If you do believe Christ suffered and died for sinners, do you believe He did that for you?
  - i. Does your mouth savor the sweet taste of those glorious Gospel promises?

## **2. Christ calls His disciples to self-abandon in this life**

- a. If you believe Christ suffered and died for sinners, then are you clinging more tightly to Him than you are to this world?
- b. If you are a disciple of Jesus, how does your life show that your treasure... your desire... your love... is Christ?
  - i. Is your time spent any differently than your non-Christian friends spend their time?
    - 1. Or is Christ high on your priority list?
  - ii. How about your finances? Do you spend your money pretty much the same way your non-Christian friends spend theirs?
    - 1. Or do you spend money as though you are merely stewarding Christ's money?
  - iii. How about your skills? Do you cultivate and use your skills in pursuit of the American Dream, like your non-Christian friends do?
    - 1. Or do you pray and seek for ways to show love for Christ and love for neighbor with your skill?
- c. In short, I am asking you if any of your closest friends would say that you live life in this world as though you were a citizen of another world?

## **3. Christ promises His disciples glorious victory**

- a. Galatians 6:7–9 – “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for **whatever one sows, that will he also reap**. For the one who **sows to his own flesh** will from the flesh **reap corruption**, but the one who **sows to the Spirit** will from the Spirit **reap eternal life**. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for **in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.**”

**Major Point:** Christ offers glorious victory through suffering and life through death.

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES

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*The Coming of the King* by Russell B. Smith

[http://thirdmill.org/articles/rus\\_smith/NT.Smith.John.12.html](http://thirdmill.org/articles/rus_smith/NT.Smith.John.12.html)

*For this Purpose I have Come to this Hour* by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/for-this-purpose-i-have-come-to-this-hour>

*Sir, We Would See Jesus* by P.G. Matthew

<http://www.gracevalley.org/sermon/sir-we-would-see-jesus/>