Comfort In Troubling Times

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Date: 29 August 2021

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[0:00] John chapter 12, 27 through 34.

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. Father, glorify your name.
Then a voice came from heaven. I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, an angel has spoken to him. Jesus answered, this voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out.
And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, excuse me, will draw all people to myself.
He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him, we have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever.
[1:27] How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is the Son of Man? May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? You know, I was blessed to grow up in a Christian home with a Christian mother and father who were devoted to following Christ and to raising up children to walk in his ways.

During our childhood, they provided so much strength and encouragement and stability to my sisters and I when we faced adversity in our lives.
Whether that adversity came in the form of having to deal with a bully, having to deal with a breakup, having to deal with acne, or finals week, maybe getting cut from a team, or any of the other kind of hardships that a young person might face.
My mother and my father were always present and always providing us with a sense of stability in our troubling times.
And they still do. My father is a godly man. And growing up in our home, he was our leader, our protector, our lead discipler, and someone who rarely ever showed when something was troubling him.
[3:06] But there were moments when life presented difficult circumstances and they caused him to trouble.

not to lose faith, but to be forced to endure an unexpected situation. And it's troubling when someone who is seldom troubled and who provides so much stability to others is troubled.
Isn't it? But truthfully, what person hasn't been troubled? Even the most stable of us experience times that cause us to trouble.
In life, we experience all kinds of circumstances that cause us to be troubled. giving us troubling thoughts which keep us up late at night into the early morning hours filled with worry, with trouble. in this passage, we see Jesus, our Lord and our Savior, troubled.
[4:32] He knows that the hour of his death is at hand. He had never known sin, but on the cross, he would take our sin upon himself.

He would endure God's wrath against it. Jesus had only known perfect, unbroken fellowship with the Father from eternity past, but as he became the sin bearer, he would be forsaken by his Father as he paid our debt, as he became a curse for the cursed, so that by faith in him, we are forgiven of our sins and clothed in his righteousness.
You know, I wonder if we understand how much trouble Jesus truly endured to save us. forgiveness. I wonder how often when we recite the portion of the Lord's prayer, forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us, if we ever stop to truly think about the price that God paid to purchase that forgiveness.
How often do we reflect upon the fact that God the Father was willing to forsake his only son, that Jesus his only son was willing to endure that forsakenness so that we who have been saved by him

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will never experience it.
[6:17] Those who have been saved by God's grace will never experience what it's like to live outside of that grace, to live outside of his presence, to live outside of his love, his forgiveness, happiness, and his peace are ours to have eternally in Jesus Christ.

But Jesus was led outside of the gates, and he was nailed to the cross, and he was forsaken there, but again, so that you and I who trust in him will never ever be.
And Christ will never know that kind of eternal trouble and torment. And so in that way, I don't think we'll ever truly know just how much our salvation cost.
For we will never truly understand, we will never truly experience what Jesus went through momentarily on the cross when he was separated from his father during those hours as he suffered and was made sin for us.
But while we can't fully understand it, we can't understand parts of it. And we can understand parts of it because the Holy Spirit has disclosed that revelation to us in our Bibles.
[8:00] And so this scripture today gives us some insight and it also provides us with some instruction revealing how we can be comforted when our souls are likewise troubled.

And so here's the insight and this is the main idea for this morning's sermon. Jesus provides hope to the troubled. Jesus provides hope to the troubled.
But someone might ask, how can someone who is troubled provide hope to the troubled? Well, simple answer is because that person is Jesus Christ.
And so as we walk through this passage, what I hope is to unpack that answer and I've been praying for you that the Lord would reveal Himself in it to you.
That you would see the hope that you have in Him, Christian, that will give you peace in knowing that you'll never experience that kind of everlasting trouble.
[9:19] But again, I have no doubt that there are things that are troubling you this morning. Things that are troubling you on a personal level.

Things that are troubling you on a national level. Things that are troubling you on an international level. the fact is there are so many things.
There are copious amounts of things for the Christian heart to be troubled by these days. And so my prayer again has been that the Spirit will provide understanding through this text that will give you hope in Christ for your troubled soul, for your troubled mind, and that He would put your troubled heart at ease.
this is the Lord's desire for you. Just as it was His desire for His disciples when that hour of trouble was finally at hand in John 16 33, He said to them, I have said these things to you, speaking about His impending crucifixion and then subsequent resurrection, that in me you may have peace, in this world you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world.
And so despite your trouble this morning, brother or sister in Christ, take heart, take heart, our Lord has endured that troubling hour and He has overcome the world.
[10:57] So again, let's walk through this passage and pray that the God of peace will give us peace through it. Let's pray.

Father, speak to us. Reveal truth to us. Open our eyes, open our ears, give us understanding.
Lord, you know the heart of every single person in this room. You know whether they are saved or not. You know what kind of trouble they are facing currently. You know the things that have been keeping them up late at night or the things that right now are bugging them, are stressing them out, are causing them to feel worried.
Lord, please speak to us through this word and remind us and fill us with the hope that we have in Christ Jesus in whose name we pray.
Amen. The first thing we see in this passage is that Jesus is troubled. Jesus is troubled, truly troubled. Again, verse 27, he says, now is my soul troubled and what shall I say?
[12:16] Father, save me from this hour, but for this purpose I have come to this hour. So I've already talked about it, but again, we need to understand and answer the question, why was Jesus troubled?

When you read the gospel accounts of his earthly ministry, you see that Jesus encountered all kinds of circumstances that would cause others or did cause others and would cause us to be filled with an immense amount of trouble, but he wasn't.

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For example, if you recall, Jesus, when he was in the boat with his disciples on the Sea of Galilee, and he was asleep in the stern of the boat, and a storm came and the waves were crashing into the boat, and the disciples were terrified, they were troubled, and they woke up Jesus in the stern, and they said to him, teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?
And Jesus woke up, and what, he's running around, what's going on? Paddle quickly to safety, no, what did he do? He got up, he rebuked the storm, it stilled, and then he rebuked his disciples for their lack of faith.
You see, when you read the gospel accounts of Jesus' life, you will rarely ever see him troubled. And in just a short while after the events of this passage, he tells his disciples again about his impending death, and he instructs them in John chapter 14 verse 1, do not let your hearts be troubled, trust in God, trust also in me.
[13:57] Jesus doesn't want you to be troubled, he wants you to trust him. But still we might ask the question, how can he say here in verse 27 of chapter 12, now is my soul troubled because after what you've just said, and what we've just seen, that statement seems inconsistent with his life and with his instruction.

instruction. If you recall from last week when the Greeks who came to worship and celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem, they requested an audience with Jesus.
And if you remember, he was struck by that news in a very strange way in verses 20 through 23. To Jesus it served as a sign to him that the coming hour of his death, which prior to that moment he had been talking about in the future tense was now at hand.
And so our Lord begins to reflect upon the reality of his looming death in which he would bear our sins. And this troubled him.
But we've also seen that it also caused him to rejoice in the reality of what his death would accomplish, that it would bear much fruit.
[15:19] And he goes through that in verses 24 through 25. And so these Greek visitors served as a sort of first fruits of the many Gentiles who would eventually come into faith in Jesus Christ through his death, his burial, his resurrection, and his ascension to the Father.

But in order for that fruit to be born, he first had to die. And you know, as excruciating as the physical kind of death that takes place in crucifixion, what troubled him most, I believe, wasn't that, the physical death, the physical kind of death, but the spiritual kind of death that he would endure. again, for all eternity, the Son of God had never known one second of unbroken fellowship with his Father. He had never once sinned.
He obeyed God's will at every turn, in every way. He fulfilled all that the law demands. He lived absolutely perfectly. But on the cross, he who had never known sin became sin and endured the spiritual death of being forsaken by the Father on the cross.
All of the gospel accounts show that as the cross drew near the reality of awaited him there greatly troubled Jesus, especially in the moments just prior to his being captured.
[17:14] when Jesus was in such agony in the garden of Gethsemane that he sweat drops of blood. This week in one of the books that I have to read for my class, in fact, it was written by our instructor, he wrote a passage that stirred me.

The book is called Dying to Preach and this passage is one about the cross. It's lengthy, but it's great. And I want to read it to you. Jesus walks into Jerusalem.
Like no one else, he knows what awaits him there. So in Gethsemane, he falls on his face. The task is too great. And in a moment of writhing transparency, he buries his knees in the dirt, claps his hands, looks up to heaven, and begs his father to remove the cup of wrath from the table of tomorrow.
If ever there was another way than to take up that biting chalice, he would take it. But heaven is silent and he knows what he must do.
So he stands and walks away, so thirsty for the father's pleasure that he drinks the cup of his wrath for others.
[18:46] Only the grace of the father can sustain him, and this is why he prays. But tonight he feels alone. This is not a light cross. He can't run.

He must bear it, and he must bear it alone. So he allows himself to be stripped of all that is dignified, of all that is attractive. he willingly puts himself in the most vulnerable position.

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Seeing the faces of those who torture him, he remains undaunted. Falling to the ground under the weight of the cross, he lifts his corpus off the ground and rises to communicate God's love.
Then he stretches out his hands and he dies. In a thousand ways he wanted this to end, but he stays. And as life is being drained from him, there is something taking place that no one else can see.
From eternity past to eternity present, sins are being forgiven, debts are being cleared, atonement, sweet atonement is being accomplished.
[19:55] From all the putrid stench of hell, from all the wickedness of Satan's children, up from the grotesque composite of trillions of sin, the ravishing lily of the valley is in full bloom.

Life has come. So he screams the conclusion of his homily of heaven and hell from the pulpit of his cross. It is finished. And soon that buried life will rise again to prove that the spiritual reality is a physical one.
Life from death, death for life. The exchange produces the pardon of sin. Oh, the sweet vicarious suffering of Jesus that won us our salvation.
Amen. If the realization of what Jesus was willing to do to be forsaken for you and to be crushed by the wrath of God for your sins, if that does not move you to mourn over your sin and rejoice in Christ, then I tell you, and I mean it sincerely, I grieve for you because you are on the path that leads to destruction, an everlasting separation from God in hell, a place reserved for Satan's eternal torment and for those who have foolishly rejected their only hope of rescue.
How horrible, how terrifying hell must be that the thought of being forsaken by God caused our Lord to trouble and to tremble and to sweat drops of blood.
[21:58] But it was for this purpose that He had come. There were no shortcuts. There were no detours on the road that led to the cross.

Without the crucifixion, the gospel would be emptied of its power to save. Blood must be shed for sins to be remitted. A sacrifice must be offered to bring us peace with our Creator.
And God in His grace has provided His only begotten Son as that sacrifice. You know, for me, having a son, I couldn't ever imagine forsaking him.
I could never imagine giving him up to serve the death penalty of someone else who I knew was guilty. but I know by faith in Christ that God has given His Son for me and He has saved me and I know that I'll never experience ever in my existence what it must be like, what it must feel like to be forsaken by God.
And the reality of that gives me great hope in troubling times. Now, how about you?
[23:28] Can you say the same? Jesus was troubled but He's also resolute. The next thing we see in this passage is that Jesus is resolute.

in verse 28, despite His troubles, what He says next reveals how resolute He was to proceed with carrying out His Father's will.
He was resolved to die because He knew what His death and His resurrection would achieve. believe. And so Jesus, though He's troubled, He prays.
And it's a short prayer. Father, glorify Your name. Jesus knows that His death will be horrific to endure, but He is resolute to endure it because He knows that it will glorify His Father.
How so? Well, we know that Jesus reveals the Father. Father. If you want to know who God is, then look at His Son.
[24:44] He perfectly reveals who He is. Yesterday, after Jack's football game, we were at Egbert's, and there was a gentleman sitting across the way from our table, and Jack was sitting next to me, and he was joking with us, but he said, is that your son?

And I said, yeah, that's my son. He's like, oh, I couldn't tell. And he was being facetious because it was clear to him that we look so much alike. And we do look alike, but Jack also looks like his mother.
We look similar, but we don't look identical. Jesus is identical to the Father, and that's what Scripture says.
You want to know who the Father is? Jesus reveals Him. Colossians 1.15, speaking of Jesus, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
And then in verses 19 and 20, for in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.

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[25:51] Jesus' death has glorified the name of His Father just as He prayed that it would, and it has done so in the following ways. His prayer was answered first because it reveals the just nature of God.

God is glorified in that. Romans 3.26, it was to show His righteousness at the present time so that He might be just, speaking of the cross, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ.
I know I've shared this with you before and many of you who know me know that I'm a fan of true crime books and TV shows.
And the part that piques my interest the most is whenever it comes time for the accused to be put on trial. But it's always gut wrenching whenever the accused person, and though the evidence clearly indicates that they are guilty, guilty, but because they either have a lot of money, or because they're famous, or the combination of both, and they're able to use that influence to influence the jury, maybe even the judge, sometimes even using their money to pay them off, sometimes even using their power to kill a key witness, and they get away with murder.
It's happened. And when that happens, it's outrageous, isn't it? We are angry, we are indignant, because an injustice has occurred.
[27:38] There is a debt to society that hasn't been paid. There is a debt to the victim's families that has not been paid. The guilty has not been brought to justice, and it infuriates us, doesn't it?

Case in point, O.J. Simpson. The Bible says that all sin is committed ultimately against God.
That all sin that we commit is rebellion against God and His sovereign rule. And God will not sweep sin under the rug.
He will not act as if it didn't happen. He cannot be bribed. He's holy. He will not turn a blind eye.
God is just, and His justice is of the holy kind. And so if God was to forgive sins, then someone capable of bearing such a high price who had never sinned themselves must be the one to atone for it, must be the one whom He would have to send.
[29:07] A price that steep and so great could only be paid by God Himself. He would God and so Jesus was sent, the Son of God, and willingly endured that punishment.

He absorbed that debt so that God would be just and justify those who have faith in His Son.
sin. You see, in salvation, a transaction takes place. Christ takes your sin and you receive His righteousness. And in this, the Father is glorified.
And we praise God for His great mercy. Secondly, the death of Christ glorified the name of the Father by revealing His great love for helpless and hopeless sinners.
Romans 5, 8-9, but God shows His love for us and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God.
[30:26] You know, the image that best portrays the love of God for sinners is the cross. It tells us that God has saved us by Himself, from Himself, for Himself.

And it's a love not based on who we are or what we have done. As 1 John 4-10 says, in this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation, to be the payment for our sins.
God is glorified in His willingness to love the unlovable. to desire the undesirable. In love, Jesus was forsaken on the cross so that you and I who have trusted in Him will never ever be.
And you know, truly you could write a book on this subject. There are so many ways that Christ's death achieved God's glory, but I want to share just one more. The death of Christ on the cross glorifies the Father because it reveals His infinite wisdom.
1 Corinthians 1, 22-24, for Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.
[31:58] salvation isn't dependent upon how smart you are or how good you are. The cross is the only sign and only wisdom that we need to see to view how good God is, how gracious God is, how loving God is, how forgiving God is, how merciful God is to save sinners.

Jesus knew this and though he was troubled, he trusted and he was resolute to carry out his father's plan.
What about you? What about you? Is your soul troubled right now? It's likely that if it isn't, it will become troubled in the days ahead.

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It's just part of what it means to live in a world cursed by sin. But what is the best thing that you can do when your soul is troubled?
Well, Jesus shows us. Imitate him. He was troubled, but he prayed. And what he prayed for was that God would be glorified in his trouble.
[33:34] His prayer was short. Father, glorify your name, but it's powerful and it's helpful for you in your times of trouble to pray in the same way.

Let's analyze it. First of all, the first word is Father. Jesus prays Father. You know, when my kids are scared or when they get hurt, they run to Danny and I, calling out our names, Mommy, Mommy, or Daddy, Daddy, and then running into our arms, they feel comforted, they feel a healing and a reassuring embrace.
And before too long, those tears stop, and that heavy breathing slows down because they're in the comforting arms of someone whom they know loves them.
So when you're troubled, when your soul is troubled, run to God, your Father. That's the best place to start.
The next part of that prayer is a little bit more difficult. He says, glorify your name. And again, now here's where we often go astray, for we often want to substitute your name with my name.
[34:57] Instead of saying, Father, glorify your name, we say, Father, change my circumstances. Father, I hate what's going on. I doubt your goodness and your grace.

We may not say that expressly, but we're feeling it and thinking it maybe in our hearts. We seek for a change in circumstances instead of looking for what the Lord has to teach us in that trying moment and how he might be glorified in it.
So again, do you pray like Jesus when you are troubled? You know, often it's after we've prayed for a change in our circumstances or have tried taking matters into our own hands that we finally give up on ourselves and our abilities and we turn to God with that prayer.
Lord, I'm troubled. I trust you. Be glorified in this. And I know personally for me there's been many times where I've been troubled and my first thought has been to worry about it and to think about what can I do to change this?
or to pray and to express my displeasure to be going through such a troubling time.
[36:23] But there have been times where the Lord has broken through to my hardened head and dropped me to my knees.

overcome with the trouble I'm facing and the reality that there's nothing I can do to change it.
And just to pray in that moment, even not even with words, but just with the groanings of heartbreak, but with a desire and a knowledge that God will use it to be glorified.
And I'll tell you in those moments when I have stood up after that prayer, though my circumstances haven't changed to my knowledge, my heart has, my mind has, my soul has, my demeanor has, my attitude has, my language has, because in those moments God has reminded me of the hope that I have in Christ, who will never leave me, who will never forsake me, because he was willing to be forsaken for me.
Next we see that Jesus, though he was troubled, he was resolute, and he's also confident. Jesus is confident. Verses 31 through 33.
[37:53] He was troubled but confident. Look at those verses again. Now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all people to myself.

And he said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So Jesus is confident because he knows that his death is not in vain but that it will accomplish victory. It will accomplish victory over this evil world system.
It will accomplish victory over Satan who will be defeated. And we know through his death and his resurrection that that defeat has already come, that he will be cast into the lake of fire, that his influence will be gone completely.
But finally there is a positive victory that Jesus points to and that is the fact that when he is lifted up men will be drawn to him, that people from all tribes and language and tongues, they will hear the good news of Jesus Christ.
They will be drawn to the reality of his grace and by faith in him they will be saved from their sins.
Jesus was confident that his death would not be in vain but would achieve great victory and that confidence should likewise give us hope during our times of trouble because our king lives and

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reigns and is victorious over our greatest foes.
[39:14] But sadly we get to the fourth thing we see here and that is that the crowd remains confused. Jesus has been clear though he's been troubled, he's been resolute and confident but they remain confused even though they've heard from him, even though they've sensed the father answering his prayer audibly in some way in verse 28, they still are confused and then when we get down to verses 30 through 34 we see how confused they are.

In verse 33 he said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die so the crowd answered him we have heard from the law and the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the son of man must be lifted up?
Who is the son of man? And though it's been clear they remain confused. They'd heard Jesus preach, many of them had seen Jesus perform miracles, they heard that supernatural sound thundering in answer to his prayer but they remain confused.
Why? Because they couldn't reconcile the image of the Messiah that they had crafted in their minds with what they saw and heard from Jesus, their true Messiah.
They interpreted the scriptures for themselves without seeing Jesus as the interpretive key and they were confused. confused. And so we must be careful not to do the same, not to fall into the same trap.
[40:50] And you fall into that trap when you allow your opinions and your feelings and your thoughts to supersede what God has revealed of himself in his word. What he has revealed of himself in his son.

But some remain confused. And in their confusion they reject the only hope that they have for salvation. Without Christ there is confusion.
If you feel confused and troubled today it's because you don't truly know Christ. But in Christ there is hope. And we know that hope because again we know what he was willing to endure.
That he was troubled. But he was resolute and confident in knowing that we would be rescued from our sins.
That we would never know what it's like to be forsaken by God. But what about you? Do you have that same assurance this morning?
[41:56] Do you know that you'll never experience what it's like to be forsaken by God? Because you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Three questions of application.

Again tonight Evan's going to preach. I encourage you to come to that. But I do ask that you would take time today or later this week. Come back to this passage. Come back to these questions and do some work with the Lord in your life.
Question number one. How do you typically respond to troubling times? Think about how you typically respond to troubling times. And then do you deal with your troubles like Jesus?
Do you deal with them in the way that Jesus did as your example? Question number two. How has God used past troubles to reveal His glory to you?
How has God used past troubles to reveal His glory to you? Sometimes it helps me just to go back and think about the struggles that I've had and how God was faithful in them to bring me through them and that gives me great encouragement.
[43:00] And then question three. What is troubling you today? What is troubling you today? And how should this text encourage you to become more like Jesus?

I'm going to give you the opportunity. If you're troubled today and you realize it, don't wait until later this afternoon. Don't wait until you get home.
If you're troubled, and there are many things to be troubled by, I encourage you to come and pray and do what Jesus showed us to do. Come to the Father and ask that He would be glorified.
Be reminded of the hope that you have in Christ. And if you're here and you realize that that trouble is because you know that you don't know Christ and that you will be forsaken of God eternally without Him, and you realize your need for Him, then I want to know, and I encourage you to come and find me either now or sometime soon, because I'd love to talk with you and pray for you and have you be in this church to disciple you.
Let's pray. God, we're so thankful to know the hope that we have in Christ. Lord, there are so many things that cause us to trouble on a personal level, on a national level, on an international level.
[44:25] Lord, there are numerous things that can preoccupy our thoughts and take our attention off of the cross and the finished work that you completed upon it. Lord, help us.

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Help those of us this morning, Lord, who are troubled, whose heart is breaking, whose soul feels heavy. Lord, remind them that you are the good and gracious shepherd who bears our burdens and who ultimately bore our burdens on the cross.
And that because you are willing to be forsaken, we'll never know what that's like. And so, God, may we always be hopeful in knowing that our Lord lives, reigns, and will return.
God, may we live our lives filled with hope and rejoicing in you. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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