

Christ Glorified: Love and Humble Sacrifice

SCOTT HOEZEE

The writer, Samuel Johnson, once observed that a death sentence has a way of focusing a person's mind. Others in history have observed that when people know that the end of their life is coming soon, they reveal who they really are. Did they really have the stalwart faith they always claimed; or in the end, do they divulge how fearful and doubtful they have been all along? Or conversely, if someone had seemed a little wobbly in her faith, sometimes in the end, such a person reveals a spiritual clarity it turns out she had had all along, she dies full of faith and hope. Well, in John's gospel, as the end of Jesus' life approached, Jesus also revealed who he truly was and what the heart of his ministry had been all along. Today on *Groundwork*, we will think about this. Stay tuned.

DAVE BAST

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Dave Bast.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Dave, this is now program four of a seven-part series we are doing on the Gospel of John. So, it might be a little surprising to some people to see that already now in this fourth episode, we are already arriving in the upper room on the night of Jesus' betrayal.

DAVE BAST

As we said before in this series, the Gospel of John breaks into roughly two major sections. So, there is a prologue at the beginning in Chapter 1, there is an epilogue at the end in Chapter 21...we will be looking at that...but in between, there is the book of signs, which starts toward the end of John 1 and goes through John 12; and then the book of glory, 13 through 20. We are just entering now the book of glory section.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; we will catch the end of Chapter 12 here; but right, then we get to Chapter 13...so, we've got...John, you know, crams in huge swaths of Jesus' teaching in that upper room. I mean, we will really have five full chapters up there...13 through 17. Who knows if Jesus really concentrated all of this teaching on that same night, or if John is just locating it here. I mean, I think the disciples would have gotten really sleepy after a Passover meal with a little wine late into the evening, but John presents it all there, and we will be moving into that, but first, in John 12, John tells us about the triumphal entry...the entry into Jerusalem...that is in all four of the gospels, of course; and his telling of that is pretty standard, so we are not going to go over that, but then right after Jesus enters into Jerusalem, some Greeks approach the disciple Philip, and they say they want to see Jesus.

DAVE BAST

Right; one of the things you will see if you read the whole gospel yourself, is that Jesus refers from time to time about what he calls his hour...kind of the moment...and in John 12 we find out that the hour has arrived. So, Jesus says: ²³"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me."

SCOTT HOEZEE

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me for this hour?’ No, it was for this very [reason I came to this hour.] ²⁸Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd that was there heard it and said it had thundered. Others said an angel had spoken to him. ³⁰Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the prince of the world will be driven out. ³²And when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

DAVE BAST

So in the gospels...in the synoptic gospels...there is this scene where Jesus is baptized and the Father speaks from heaven: This is my beloved Son. John doesn't show that, but he shows this rather amazing moment when Jesus prays to the Father to glorify his name and the Father replies: I have done that, and I will do it now in a spectacular way; and not everybody gets it. Some people look around and they say: Hmm, maybe there is a storm coming. I think I heard thunder...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

While others are puzzled, and say: Maybe an angel spoke; but no; this is God the Father's testimony to Jesus similar to what comes in the other gospels at his baptism.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And it is important, Dave, that God the Father speaks at this juncture. He is putting his stamp of approval on everything Jesus just said, which is important because when these Greeks come up to Jesus, the things that Jesus says here, they go right to the central dynamic of the gospel, which is through a death life will come...

DAVE BAST

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Through sacrifice, salvation will come. This is the paradox of the gospel, it is sometimes called. Jesus is going to be lifted up, but on a cross. The seed has to fall into the ground and die to grow into new life; and so, here is God the Father saying: Yes, I approve of all of that. It doesn't sound right to a lot of people. It sounds backwards...paradoxical...this shouldn't work; but it is going to work, and I [God] am going to be glorified and I am going to glorify you, my Son, through it.

DAVE BAST

0:05:28.4] And there is also the paradox of Jesus' little analogy with a seed, because a seed, if you look at it, it looks like it is dead...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

It is dry, it doesn't have anything coming out of it; and yet, when you plant this apparently dead thing in the ground, new life...transformed life...springs from it. Paul would use the same analogy in describing the resurrection of our bodies, because of Jesus' resurrection; but Jesus is saying here, speaking of himself: I have to die; unless I die, there cannot be this new life that will come pouring into the world; and so, there is the paradox of life coming out of death, and there is the paradox of glory, which we usually think of in terms of height, you know, exalted...lifted up...and Jesus' glory will come via the most shameful imaginable way you could be lifted up; as a common criminal; naked, nailed to a wooden post, and stuck up for everyone to

look at and laugh and mock. It is just profoundly moving, this section in John 12.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And there was the belief in the ancient world that seeds were either already dead or they died after you buried them in the soil. We now know that seeds are just sort of potential life; they don't actually die, they germinate when they go into the ground and get the right conditions. The seed Jesus is talking about is his whole body, and it is going to be actually dead. It will actually be laid into a tomb. We will see that scene in a future program, but he really will be dead in every sense; and yet, God the Father is going to raise him up. You know, to the disciples, what happens to Jesus looks like a terrible accident. This is not the way it is supposed to go. You know, in the synoptic gospels, the disciples repeatedly push back whenever Jesus says: I am going to have to die. So, it looks like a terrible accident...a sad ending for this rabbi from Nazareth, but again, God the Father's voice here says: This is not accident. This is the plan...this is the plan all along. So, that is how John Chapter 12 ends, and now we are going to get ready to go to an upper room, where right off Jesus is going to show the true nature of his ministry, and it is going to involve washing a lot of dirty feet; and so, we will look at that next.

Segment 2

DAVE BAST

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we are digging into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Dave Bast.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Dave, as we prepare to go now into John Chapter 13, let's remember something we said on earlier programs. This is now...as you said earlier, too, on this program...now we are turning to the book of glory; and the book of signs was the public ministry of Jesus, now we enter a more private phase, just Jesus and the disciples for chapters on end here in this upper room. Again, all the way through Chapter 17, we are going to be in this room; so that will include this program and the next program in this series. We are just going to be in the upper room...

DAVE BAST

In the upper room; right, yes. The first thing we are going to see in John 13 is an incident that he describes in detail that took place before the Passover—the Last Supper—the communion service, and only John, as so often is the case, describes this incident. So, we read: ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part in me." ⁹"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "Not just my feet, but my hands and my head as well!" ¹⁰Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet, their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

SCOTT HOEZEE

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

So, the foot washing scene, Dave, you said unique in John's gospel. It is not in Matthew, Mark, or Luke...very, very famous worldwide, but it is striking...we sometimes forget how it starts. So, in verse 3 here of John 13, we are told that Jesus knew that the Father had given him *all* power; and therefore, he stooped low and did the work of a servant. How different that is from how we react if we are given power.

DAVE BAST

Yes, absolutely. I mean, for us, power, whether it comes through political office or a great wealth or influence, translates into a life of ease and comfort, you know. We have helicopters to fly us wherever we want to go; we don't have to sit in traffic jams. We have a limousine to drop us off at the restaurant door and pick us up again when our meal is finished. We have people who do things for us. We have a whole stable of flunkys and gofers, you know. That is what power means in the world; and Jesus turns it all absolutely upside down and takes the role of the meanest, lowest servant who is going to wash these dirty, dusty feet in their sandals as they have been tramping around the roads all day. No wonder Peter says to him: No, you cannot do that to me. You are the rabbi; you are the master; and Jesus says: I better do it to you or you don't belong to me.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, I mean, Peter found it embarrassing to have his master do this very menial task, which was a standard task of hospitality in those days. I suppose some people have wondered why hadn't any of the other disciples offered to do this...

DAVE BAST

Yes, right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

They didn't have any servants. They didn't have much money, those thirteen people...Jesus plus the twelve; but nobody else was doing it, but there it is again, Dave. We saw it in the previous segment of this program, in Chapter 12, that central paradox of the gospel, that through humility and sacrifice and service, that is where the life of the cosmos will come from. So, Jesus does this, knowing that he has all power. That is my favorite line that we don't often emphasize enough; but of course, in the history of the Church, and to this present day, Dave, a lot of people literally reenact this. Sometimes at ordination services, or I know the president of my seminary, when he had his installation service at Calvin, he washed the feet of some staff and students. The Pope in Rome on Holy Week always washes the feet of a poor man...

DAVE BAST

Right...on Maundy Thursday.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; but of course, most cultures don't actually have this as a ritual of hospitality anymore. It is not really a living sign of humility in service; and so, the question we could ask in the Church today is: What would be the equivalent of foot washing today? What kinds of things can pastors, elders, other leaders, do that would be the equivalent of foot washing? We could get kind of creative with that, I suppose.

DAVE BAST

Yes; you know, if we want to pause and ask: What is the meaning of this thing that Jesus did...this foot washing? On the one hand, there is a kind of symbolic meaning clearly, because that is what Jesus is getting at in his exchange with Peter; and that is a little bit puzzling, maybe. What exactly does he mean by a bath, and by saying they are clean; but it certainly must have something to do with forgiveness, and the fact that, okay, we need to be forgiven every day. We don't need to be washed totally because that happens once and for all, symbolized, in our baptism, but also by faith. So, there is that meaning, but the other thing that Jesus clearly points to is, it is an example: I have left you an example. The servant, as he said elsewhere, is not higher than his master. You need to do this, and not just symbolically on Maundy Thursday every year, but actually daily in your life if you are a leader.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; so, it means service to others, and that could take lots of forms. It might mean the pastor of a church helps do dishes after the potluck, and you know, gets in the kitchen with the other volunteers. It might mean

that all of us take the side of the vulnerable. We serve them, we stand up for people who are exploited. That might not always be popular, marching for justice, or something; standing up for the marginalized and serving them in that way; but maybe those are the ways that we follow this example; and indeed, Dave, you have mentioned that fact that this is now called Maundy Thursday, and the reason for that is where Jesus grounds all of this ultimately in verse 34 of John 13: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”³⁵ By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

That is where we get the word *Maundy* for Maundy Thursday...

DAVE BAST

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It is from *mandé*, from the Latin *mandatus*...command...

DAVE BAST

And that is the new commandment, right; and it is also important, I think, to see that new commandment in the context of the foot washing; because when Jesus says: I want you to love one another, he doesn't mean: I want you to feel warm towards each other; I want you to have this emotional, nice, sentimental attitude. He means I want you to serve one another. That is what real love is; real love is measured by its actions. So, that is what Jesus calls us to, and shows us the example; but, as we have noted before, there is a lot of material that follows and flows from this in the upper room, and we are going to look next at a famous passage at the beginning of John Chapter 14.

Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, along with Dave Bast, and you are listening to *Groundwork*, and this fourth program in a seven-part series on the Gospel of John; and we are in the upper room already in this fourth episode. We just saw the foot washing scene, Dave, in John 13, and Jesus' new commandment to love one another, and as you just noted at the end of the previous segment, that doesn't mean a hallmark...lovey-dovey. It means serving one another, laying down our lives.

Now we are going to move into John 14, but before we do, we need to remember how John 13 ended. It is so easy for us because we've got these chapter headings. You just dive right into John 14 and you totally forget what just happened. Judas has now fled, and has, you know...Jesus has said: One of you is not clean. You are going to betray me. The disciples' skin is still tingling from that revelation of a traitor in their midst, and then Jesus turns to the sort of de facto leader of the disciples, Peter, and predicts that he is going to deny Jesus up and down, forward and backward, left and right, every which way—he is going to deny him; and now the disciples are doubly shocked. So, as John 13 closes and we go into what we now call John 14, I think it is almost like a Thanksgiving Day meal that went really bad, and it is extremely awkward.

DAVE BAST

Yes; maybe the family started squabbling or quarreling around the table, and somebody wanted to hit Uncle Harold with a drumstick, but yes; so, there is this rather abrupt, awkward ending to the Last Supper in John, and then we turn right to John 14 and these wonderful words of peace and comfort, where Jesus says:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.”² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

SCOTT HOEZEE

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and you have seen him.”

⁸Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” ⁹Jesus answered, “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you for such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”

DAVE BAST

Yes, wow; so, “don’t let your hearts be troubled,” Jesus begins; and you want to ask: Are you kidding? This is a very confusing time for the disciples. He has just broken bread and poured out wine and said: You know what? This is going to happen to me. This is my broken body, and my blood is going to be poured out; and by the way, I am leaving, and you are going to be on your own. Of course our hearts are troubled; they are confused; they are frightened; they are worried...

SCOTT HOEZEE

And one of you is going to betray me and the other is going to deny me, and you are all going to fall away, but don’t be troubled. It is like, Jesus, we know what trouble looks like, and this is it. If ever there were a night to have troubled hearts, this is it.

I actually, Dave...I often have suggested that...the Bible never tells us how people say certain things...but I kind of think that Jesus probably had tears streaming down his own cheeks. Maybe his chin was quivering. He is troubled. I mean, he is sad about Judas. He is sad about Peter. He is not real thrilled about what is coming up for him. So, I think he says these words, “Do not let your hearts be troubled,” with tears in his own eyes; but how wonderful that even so, Jesus is able to point to hope.

DAVE BAST

Yes, but notice also, because this slides by often. I think we don’t stop and pay due attention to it: Believe in God, believe also in me, he says to them...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DAVE BAST

So, what are they supposed to do? Well, put your trust in God, but, oh, by the way, trust in me, too. This man who is shortly going to be arrested and beaten and crucified and dead and buried, but then he will rise again. So, all of this needs to be understood in light of what is going to happen ultimately.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; and here is one of the famous I AM sayings in John’s gospel: I am the way. Follow...follow me, he is saying again to Thomas; I am the way. Well, the way Jesus is going to go over the next twenty-four hours is not any place anybody is going to want to follow. In fact, they don’t, including Peter, of course, who will deny Jesus. Then there is the shocking revelation in the exchange with Philip that if they have seen Jesus, they have seen the Father all along, which...you know, sometimes in movies, Dave, you know, a kid is getting ready to go to college and as the kid leaves the door the father says: Son, remember all the good times we had while you were growing up; and then you see inside the son’s mind and he remembers when his dad used to push him on a swing and play ball with him and go to the movies with him. Well, that is sort of, I think, what happens to Philip. Jesus says: If you have seen me, you have seen the Father; and Philip remembers: Wait a minute; I have seen you fall asleep in the back of boats; I have seen you get food stuck in your teeth; I have seen you laugh at jokes and cry at Lazarus’s grave; and that is God?! We have been seeing the Father in that?! That had to be a tough one.

DAVE BAST

Well, but also remember the other things they had seen in the course of Jesus’ life, and heard. They heard him speak graciously to a Samaritan woman at a well, and welcome her among his followers. They had heard him say to a sinful woman caught in adultery: Neither do I condemn you. They had seen him walk on water and multiply loaves and fish. So we come back to that statement early on in the very beginning of John’s gospel: The Word became flesh and we beheld his glory. Both God and humanity combined perfectly in

Jesus, and revealing to us exactly what God is like, not just in power but in compassion and in humility and in love for us—grace—that is what they had seen.

SCOTT HOEZEE

That is right; full of grace and truth, John said in John Chapter 1, and that also is indeed the Father. You know, Dave, in an earlier program in this series, when we saw Jesus turn water into wine at just sort of an ordinary wedding reception, we were told that that was the first revelation of his glory, and we pondered that at the time. We said it doesn't seem that glorious, just to turn, you know, a little parlor trick...you turn water into wine at an ordinary wedding; but we said at that time the glory of God can pop up almost anywhere, in the most ordinary circumstances; and indeed, that is what they have been seeing, too. The glory of the Father when Jesus is laughing at a joke, or being kind to an outcast, or speaking words of forgiveness to anybody who comes along; that is glory, and we can find that glory in our everyday lives, too, that means.

DAVE BAST

And notice, you cannot separate Jesus and the Father. There is sometimes a tendency to say: Well, the Father, he is the angry one, and Jesus is the nice one who kind of shields us from the Father's anger, but that is a caricature. Jesus is the way to the Father, and the Father is revealed perfectly in him; and Father and Son together are gracious, and are determined to save us; and they are going to do whatever it takes, and that is reason to say thanks be to God.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Indeed. Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Scott Hoezee and Dave Bast, and we hope you will join us again next time as we study Jesus' upper room discourse in Chapters 14 to 17.

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