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JOHN 12:27-46

John Series: Get a Life in Jesus

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we thank you for your grace today. We recognize that your grace is something that we really can't live without. We need it every day. I pray for those students who are in school and trying to live their lives for you in the midst of teachers who might even mock Christianity. I pray for young people who face so many temptations today and challenges that you would provide them with the inner strength that comes from your grace. So we rely on that, Father, to deal with any problem that we're experiencing. And we know that your grace is demonstrated through salvation, certainly, that we can trust you as our Lord and our Savior through grace. We also recognize that we need that grace every day to live our lives. So today, Lord, I'm asking that you would make that grace a very personal thing to each person here. That we'd view that grace as the energy that you give us to live life to the full. Lord, this morning I'm just asking that your Holy Spirit would fall on this place and that your grace would permeate our hearts in a way that would make us different people. To that end, Lord, we open your word knowing that you speak to us. We're grateful that your word is and provides for us as well. In Jesus' name, amen.

One hundred and sixty-six Christians were asked some questions. These are their answers to the little tests that they took. When I hear the word 'love' it makes me think of...God. When I'm looking for advice on love, I'm most often turned to...the Bible. When I'm having relationship problems, the first thing I usually do is...pray. Those sound like all good Christian answers, answers that we all want to say if we thought about it a little bit in our lives. But I'm impressed with the numbers. Do you see the numbers there? About 50% or 53, 42, 49% of Christians made that statement. There's lots of answers that you could have to those questions and you might not immediately think of spiritual things when you answer them. But the point I want to make here is sometimes I think we don't take Jesus home into our lives. We don't take Jesus into every area of our lives.

My goal in my teaching with you and my work with you is to help you have handles on theology, that it would be practical for your life. That you would have applications from God's word that you can take home and you can apply them so that they impact every area of your life including the love of life that you have. So that when you consider whatever it might be in your life that you're recognizing that Jesus is a part of that. A very significant part. That's why when we look at God's word each week, we're asking the question how can we take Jesus home?

I trust that today you're going to get something out of this message that you'll be able to use in your own personal life. Whether you're a young person or older person, married, single, male, female, whatever life stage you're in, that you'll be able to take away something from God's word because it's relevant. It's relevant and practical to all of our lives.

Scott Turansky - Calvary Chapel Living Hope

So let's look at a passage of scripture that we come to now and we're going verse by verse in John 12. Would you stand with me as I read our passage for today? In your Bibles I hope you're following along there, but if you didn't bring your Bible then you can read up on the screen the verses I'm about to read that begin our passage this morning.

Jesus is speaking here, I want you to know, when He says these words: *"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!"*

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

You may be seated.

It says – *My soul is troubled*. We're going to talk about the cross in just a moment, but before we do, I want to talk about pain. Pain. There's lots of different kinds of pain that we experience. This week I reached over and touched a hot pan on the stove and my brain said to me, "Scott, you shouldn't have done that. That was not a good idea." It was pain that communicated this message. Pain creates this aversion, this sense of don't do that thing again. And so pain gets this message that says stay away from that activity. Some pain.

But then there's the pain I experience when I go to the gym. It's physical pain. But there's something about that pain that doesn't say stay away from this, but it says this is part of something bigger. Something that isn't just about a little pain that I'm experiencing. Something bigger where my muscles are growing, or however you want to look at it. There's something bigger that's going on that allows me to endure the pain in that situation.

Now those are two examples of physical pain. But I think sometimes when we start looking at relationship pain, the pain with your husband, wife, parents, young people, friends, whatever it might be, we start thinking about relationship pain then sometimes we get those two kinds of pain mixed up. There are some people who say, "I was in a relationship years ago, but I got burned, I got hurt, and so I don't want to have anything to do with relationships." There's some people who go so far as to say, "I don't want to have anything to do with people. Just keep me away from people because I've been burned by this." So sometimes we get them mixed up, the ideas that pain communicates, whether it's relational pain or emotional pain or spiritual pain that we experience.

We're going to learn a lesson today to deal with pain because Jesus it says was in pain. He was upset. We all get upset. So today what we're going to see is how the cross of Christ deals with our pain. This is a real practical message that looks at the cross of Jesus Christ or Jesus Christ's experience in the death of His physical body and our pain in our own lives. That's what we're going to look at today.

Let's jump into our passage and start right with the first verse because Jesus says, "*My soul is troubled.*" The word *soul* there, the Greek is *psuché* where we get our word 'psychology' from. So His psychology was all kinds of challenged and messed up. It was troubled.

Often psychology will take you on a different path than God will take us in our lives. So I'm not saying psychology is bad necessarily, but sometimes it gets on a sidetrack that leads us into a place that just spins around. I would just say that sometimes counseling focuses... You know if you go to some counselor, they'll focus on your past and try to find the hidden reason why you are having this current problem that you're experiencing. They'll help you dig around inside this pool which sometimes can be a bottomless pit because it never ends. Our worlds are so complex, our persons are so complex that you start digging around down there and it almost makes it worse because you're stuck in the midst of all this psychological stuff inside of your *psuché*, which is where Jesus is describing here, and we end up with a challenge.

As you know, I counsel or I coach parents and I coach coaches in my work at the National Center for Biblical Parenting. Right now I'm in Week 4 of an eight-week training program. It's a master's level program training coaches to work with parents. All the coaches are having parents that they're working with.

The question yesterday was, "Okay, this is great what we're doing, but when do we help a child go into the reasons why they're doing this? You know, abandonment issues or angry father or whatever." So they've got these issues. So I said I don't think we're going to do that a lot here. I think we're going to focus on where we're going. Because if we help people (and this is the premise of my whole work in the counseling field), my premise is if we start helping people moving forward, we start doing the right thing, that often healing takes place in our lives we're practicing doing the right thing and God is taking us in the right direction.

So if I'm dealing with someone in marriage counseling, for example, if they come into my office for that, I don't start and say, "Okay, why don't you tell you me your problem, tell me your problem. Let's figure out where you came to..." I don't do that. I say, "Okay. Let's practice. Let's practice doing the right thing. Let's practice communicating. Let's practice affirming. Let's practice understanding and accepting each other. Let's practice." And what happens is many times the healing takes place in the midst of that.

Now it's true that sometimes we find ourselves hitting a roadblock going forward and we need to go back and deal with something in the past. So if you're trying to deal with some soul searching...taking that word soul searching in your life, I don't want to minimize what God might do in your life in that regard. I would just suggest that Jesus now is in the midst of some soul searching and He's experiencing some pain.

He uses the word *troubled*. *My soul is troubled*. That's the word *tarasso* which means to be upset. Sometimes we can define it. I'm angry or I'm afraid or I'm anxious or I'm discouraged. So we can define it. But sometimes it's just I'm upset. I don't even know what it is. Or I've got a bunch of those emotions at the same time. That's what Jesus is saying. *My soul is troubled*. So here is Jesus troubled. His soul is troubled.

I really am convinced that if we can understand this troubled soul that we experience in our lives and tie it into the death of Christ, then something happens in us that allows us to live. That's not

just me saying this. I'm going to take you to 2 Corinthians 4:10-12 which says this (then we'll come back to our passage): *We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.*

There's this sense that the death of Christ has some relevance to our personal lives right now. Jesus is going to take that idea of being troubled in His spirit and He's going to help us understand how He processes. I'm going to suggest we're going to process it in a similar way. We want to learn from what Jesus does here. He's going to use this as an example to help us know how to deal with the pain that we experience in our lives.

I think we want to ask ourselves this question many times. He says, "*What shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'?*" Take me away from this problem I'm experiencing? *No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.*"

In this case what Jesus is saying is there is something bigger involved in this pain. There's something that God is doing in my life, we can say, or that God might shine through me as a light to other people. Or He's building character in me or the present circumstance, the present challenge that I'm going through is part of something that God is doing. And therefore I'm not going to say get me out of this problem, Jesus is saying.

Just two chapters later He takes this word *troubled* and He uses it with His disciples to tell them about how they should handle themselves. Let me just take you there real quick. We'll come right back to this verse. He says in verse 14 – *Do not let your hearts be stirred up.* What's the solution? What's the key here? *You believe in God; believe also in me.* So there's something about faith that drives us into an area where we take our pain and we tie it to the cross and God does something in our lives. That's a very practical thing that we each can be doing. How can we do that? We're going to come to some of those ideas in a moment as Jesus continues the dialogue.

But notice that Jesus' response when He's in this dialogue in verse 28 back in our passage. He says, "*Father, glorify your name.*" I think that's going to be a very practical thing that we're going to do. If you have a relationship with Christ, you're trying to grow that relationship with Jesus, then you're going to say, "Okay Lord, whatever the situation is here, glorify your name. I want to be used by you. I want you to work in my life. I want to move forward here."

I'm doing some writing for a new book that's coming out. I'm just one of the authors in this book. It's principles for young people in order to help them be successful. I've identified four things that I want the readers to be able to read. One of them is young people need to recognize this. Young people between the age of ten and twenty-five (that's the age of adolescence today) need to recognize that my present challenges are preparation always for something else that God wants to do. My current struggle that I'm facing right now in my life is doing something in me that's a preparation for the future. If you're living with an annoying brother right now, that's preparation for the future. Maybe you'll work in an office with an annoying person and you'll have some preparation. So there's this idea that I'm trying to communicate is I think a godly one that we all need in our lives. Not just adolescents, but we all need this idea that we need to say,

“Father, glorify your name. Use the current situation in a way that will bring glory to you and honor.”

Now the conversation here we have Jesus giving some affirming words. So there's a message that comes to Jesus that I think we're going to like because I think this is what we want. So in the midst of the challenge we have affirming words that are coming from the Father to Jesus Himself.

Watch these words. He says – *Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine.”*

You know there's this affirmation that comes into your heart when you know you're doing the right thing. And there's this voice that comes from heaven and says okay. He says, *“I've glorified it, and will glorify it again,”* in response to Jesus' words. You remember early on when Jesus was in His baptism, words came that I think we all need to hear. *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* Wow. This is my beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased. That voice from heaven that is so affirming that we can appreciate and enjoy.

Isn't it interesting that Jesus heard this message clearly, but the people around heard it fuzzy. Do you get that impression here from the verse? They heard like a thunder sound, another one said an angel spoke to Him. So they didn't get the whole message. I would suggest that sometimes when God speaks to us in that very clear, affirming way, that at the same time other people might hear it in a fuzzy way and we're able then to share with them here's what the message was that was going on in my own heart. There's something about the cross of Christ that is very powerful for us in our own pain and our own suffering.

In different traditions of Christianity, there's different looks and feels for the cross. I mean if you have an empty cross like this, then the emphasis of the empty cross is the sense of victory. That there's nobody on the cross anymore. That Christ is gone. He's been victorious over death. And so we have an empty cross.

In other Christian traditions we have Jesus on the cross. I think there's some benefit to this kind of imagery because it reminds us of the suffering of Jesus. When we're reminded of the suffering of Jesus, it does something inside of us that helps us deal with our own pain, helps us deal with our own forgiveness. In fact dealing with the cross helps us deal with this in a number of different ways.

Let me give you four different benefits of the cross and zeroing in on it from God's word. One is that the cross reminds us of God's love. God demonstrates His love for us in that *while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* So when we see the cross, we're reminded of love.

The second one that I think we need to see from God's word is that the cross represents power in our lives. *The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God.* So this cross is something very important for us and represents power for us. I think power internally in our own struggle to be able to deal with that.

The third one is it represents life. *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* So the cross represents life.

And one more. I'm sure there's many more, but just for the sake of time, here's a fourth one that the cross represents humility for us. *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.* So there's this crucifixion or dying to the world that I have, but I'm glorying in God. I'm not boasting in anything except the cross. It's about Jesus. Everything is about Jesus. It's what He's doing in my life. That's just a real important emphasis that the cross provides in our lives.

Well let's go in our passage to the next verse in John 12 because now we have this dialogue and it gives opportunity for Jesus to speak in some very practical ways to the people. It says – *The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?"* So Jesus is going to enter into a dialogue here that becomes, again, very relevant and practical of our lives no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in.

Jesus told them in verse 35, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

Now He takes this illustration of light and darkness. Here's the thing about light and darkness. Light is a thing. Darkness is not a thing. Light you can measure today. It's a something. Darkness is not a something. Darkness is an absence of a something. When you have no light, you have darkness. So He's describing the relationship with God in terms of light and darkness. Think of what you have as a Christian. You have a light and someone who doesn't have the light is in darkness because they're missing something in their lives. That's the design here. God designed it.

Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. So the person who's in the dark who doesn't have Jesus Christ is a person who's kind of wandering around trying to figure out what they think is best. They've got their idea of what they think is best. They might even try to communicate to you what they think is best. But there's darkness there. If you're a believer then you have the light. You have something inside of you that is Jesus Christ Himself and He does something inside. He brings His light inside that is amazing and really penetrates the darkness.

If you're going to deal with darkness, then you're going to add some light. That's the idea here. So Jesus is describing this relationship of being children of light that we experience. When you accept Jesus Christ into your life, you're a child of the light. How is that going to apply to your life? is going to be the important question. What are we going to do with that fact that He is the light?

Let's go on. I'm going to read some more in the passage here and then we'll talk about it. It says – *Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.*

So there's a wrestling going on inside the human heart. I hope there's a wrestling going on in your heart. If you haven't given yourself fully to Jesus Christ yet, you should be wrestling inside. There should be something going on. Jesus is saying here there's lots of signs in His presence, but they still would not believe in Him. There's this wrestling. They wouldn't make the decision. We'll see that wrestling a little bit more and Jesus is going to describe it in this prophecy from Isaiah.

He says in verse 38 – *“Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”* (This is a prophecy from Isaiah.) *For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.”* Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.

So there's this prophecy about that now John is looking back and seeing this Old Testament prophecy. Oh this is true. They've got Jesus right in front of them and they're unwilling to embrace Him. Maybe they view their religion as a Sunday thing. Like how do you integrate that into your school work or into your job or into your family? How do you integrate Christ into the very center of this place of who you are?

Notice the wrestling in the next verse 42. *Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him.* So they're wrestling. Some are believing, but they're having still this internal struggle. *But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue.*

Here's what happens when you become a Christian. When you become a Christian and you get committed to God, your world is different. It changes. They're afraid of that. They're afraid of the public opinion. They're afraid of being cast out of the synagogue. Their life is going to change and that causes them to be hesitant about the truth and the light that comes in.

That's what I think really is an important thing for us to understand. That when light comes into a person's life, it provides illumination. It provides color. It provides this brightness. You're no longer stumbling around, but you have direction. All of those things are described in this same idea here.

Notice verse 43 – *for they loved human praise more than praise from God.* I pray that that would not be said of me that I'm making decisions based on how many likes I get on Facebook or what people would suggest about my appearance, but that my heart is really sold out to the Lord.

One of the challenges we have in grades with school, for example, is if you got a B or an A, but you might not be doing your hardest work. It's an external motivation. It's not measuring what's inside of you. But if you're doing your whole job, if you're doing the best you can to get a C, somehow that would be measured as something good and valuable in a person's life. There's a difference between the internal and the external here, and I think sometimes we act to please people instead of doing what God would have us do which is deep inside of our own hearts.

So then Jesus cries out. So you've got to picture this. This is like the summary of the story. The Lord cries out means He makes this loud statement to the whole group, to the crowd that's

around. So this is like the final point where He pounds the pulpit, where you've got to get this before you leave idea.

Then Jesus cried out, "Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."

There's darkness all around us. There's darkness at your workplace. There's darkness at your school. If you try to blend into the darkness, it gets really challenging because you're wrestling inside: "I know this isn't right, but..." And you have that internal witness that's saying, "I've got to be careful here. But I don't know what to do." So we get stuck in the midst of this.

One lady said, "I really hate my job. It has got to be the darkest place I've ever worked." But she was really ministered to by her friend who said, "You know where you put a light? You put a light in the dark place. So it looks like God is doing something in your life to be a light and learn how to be a light in a dark place.

That's very difficult today. When students are in college for example, the challenges they face are really difficult because it's not just tolerated to be a Christian anymore. You are put down. If you're a Christian, then you're viewed to be someone who's old-fashioned, or someone who's out of date or someone who's not with the times, or someone who's a bigot, or whatever else word you want to use. It's very hard sometimes to be in a situation where there's not a freedom to be the godly person that God has called you to be. There could be darkness in your neighborhood. Or wherever you are, there's that darkness. But one of the things that Jesus says is there's light. And that light comes by knowing Him.

How do you work that in your life? How are you going to be challenged in your own heart and your spirit to be a light in the midst of your challenge? As you're doing the soul searching and you're doing the troubled spirit kind of thing that happens in you at times, there's a light that wants to come in and say, "I'm going to show you how to deal with this." There's an affirming voice from heaven that says, "Hey, I'm going to help you with this." And that's what we're seeing in this passage.

I think this is what we need because I think we find ourselves troubled in spirit more often than we're willing to imagine sometimes. And when we're troubled in spirit, we need to go back and ask the question, am I taking Jesus home? Am I allowing God to be a part of this? Or is this something separate? I'm just kind of doing the Sunday thing and then is Christianity over there and over here in my life I'm relying on something else. I think when we're troubled in spirit, we need to recognize that there's light. Jesus Christ who lives inside of us who wants to illuminate, He wants to do something, and that brings the peace in this troubled spirit that we have. That's what brings the hope, the living hope to be the people of God. That God has something for us that He wants us to embrace and enjoy. That comes from making a choice not to live in darkness, but to choose the light. That's Jesus' message.

Can you choose the light in the midst of your challenging situation as you're relating to your spouse, your kids, your parents, and all those people around? The light. Can you be the light and receive the light to do that special thing inside of your heart?

It takes us back to the cross and that's really the central message here today. We owe it all to the cross of Christ. Because when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He brought us a living hope. When He rose from the dead, He brought us this living hope. And that's what we need inside of us. We owe it to Him.

So this next song we're going to sing is going to talk about the cross and how much we owe Jesus because of what He's done. I hope you feel that presence in your life. I hope you feel that experience that you make that commitment to Jesus and allow Him to impact your heart in a way that transforms you into something different.

Let's stand together and pray.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we come before you now and ask that you would make your cross just so meaningful, not just a decoration that we hang on our wall or around our neck, but that we are making it a very real part of our lives. Lord, I just thank you for the example of Jesus here and for the message that He has. Lord, we need the hope that you offer and you provide, so we're asking you to give that to us today. In Jesus' name, amen.