

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

January 8, 2017

SPEAKER

Dave Owen

SERIES

Fully Alive

PART

36

TITLE

Come To The Savior

SCRIPTURE

John 13:21-30



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Good morning Providence. It is a joy to be with you via video here, and grateful that you are able to join us this morning. I hope you are staying warm while you watch this. We were contemplating having fireside with frost again. Two problems, there's no fire, and there's no frost. Brian and Georgia in India, they may even be watching, so hello to them as well. We have to ... so now you're left with devotions with Dave this morning. I'm excited about our text this morning, but before we get to it, I want to encourage you to not waste the time at home with the snow. What I mean by that is this, that Isaiah 1:18 says specifically, "Though our sins are scarlet, that he, God, through Christ washes our sins away, makes us white as snow." So let the beauty of the snow point you the beauty of Christ and be reminded, even of the gospel in the midst of playing in the snow, watching the snow, seeing the snow.

Then, use this as an opportunity to live on mission. What I mean by that is to be the house where all the kids in your neighborhood, or the apartment where you live, be that place where you are inviting folks over, and you're serving all the hot chocolate. Be that house, be that place where all the sleds are out, and you're just inviting folks to be a part, and be in your house, because for the majority of you, you probably aren't traveling anywhere, and so to be able to have neighbors, friends come over, it's a great opportunity to display the love of Christ in a very practical way. As a way of exhortation, consider those things.

Now, if you've got your coffee, you got your breakfast, maybe your hot chocolate, and your families for gathered, your friends have gathered, you're ready to go through the word with us, I want to invite you to take your Bibles and you can turn them on, or you can open them up to John 13:21-30. I want to say a special welcome to those that maybe have just joined us, that aren't a part of Providence, and maybe you're not a Christian, and you're new to the Bible, I want to encourage you, we're studying through the book of John. If you maybe have a Bible, but you're not sure how it works in a sense, I would encourage you to find John 13, the 13's the larger number, and then move down in that chapter to the smaller number, 21, you'll see a number, that's the verse, 21, and then we will read from there. This is what we do each week, just read through this great word, walk through this word in hopes that it would read our soul, and walk through us in a sense.

If you've gathered around, and you're ready to go, let's do this. John 13:21-30, "After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, 'Truly, truly I say to you, one of you will betray me.' The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. One of his disciples whom Jesus loved was reclining at table close to Jesus, and so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, 'Lord, who is it?' Jesus answered, 'It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.' And so when he had dipped the morsel he gave it to Judas the son of Simon Iscariot. Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, 'What you are going to do, do quickly.' Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that because Judas had the money bag, that Jesus was telling him buy what you need for the feast, or that he should give something to the poor. So after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out, and it was night." Oh was it night.

Let's pray together as we walk through this. Father, we do bow and ask that you would help us, help us learn from this passage, help us grow from this passage, help us to see things in this passage that would stir our hearts to believe in Christ, to stir our hearts to love Christ. So God, we commit this time to you. We ask for grace to abound. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well for the last 20 years, since I've moved to Raleigh, it has been a joy to play in multiple basketball leagues. I had the privilege of playing basketball in college, and as I moved to this area, it's known for its hoops, it was an incredible opportunity to play in multiple leagues, city leagues, YMCA leagues, and as I played over a decade, I began to have multiple knee injuries. I've had three specific knee surgeries. I'm in the need for another one, but I'm holding out as long as I can. On one of these particular knee surgeries, the doctor was a friend of mine. As we were talking through it, I've always been fascinated with medicine, and so I wanted to watch the surgery, but not feel the pain of the surgery. As we discussed this, we decided to go with an epidural, so hello moms who've given birth, I feel your pain, in some way. But I got an epidural instead of being put to sleep. As I was numb from waist down, I had orthoscopic surgery on my knee. Basically that's where they drill three holes in your knee, one's for the light, one's for the camera, and one's for the action to take care of cleaning up some torn cartilage.

So I'm laying on the table, talking with doc. Doc is looking at a TV screen, it's right over both of our heads of the inside of my knee. He actually gives me a tour of everything that's going on inside of my knee. What things are working well, what things don't look too well, and we began to have the surgery. He does the surgery, I'm watching the surgery. But what's fascinating about that moment, and that time, was that was in the OR, I was close to the doctor, I was close to the surgery, I knew what was going on, but I felt nothing, because I was completely numb. What we see in the text today is a man who is extremely close to the Savior, but his heart is numb. He feels nothing for the Savior.

It's a scary text in one sense. See, sin can numb your heart in such a way that your body can be close to Jesus, and your heart miles away. You can be in church physically and yet spiritually, your heart could be so far from God. Just like Judas, and his heart becoming numb, so it can be with us. This morning, what I want to do, I want to show you three truths about Jesus that I hope melts our hearts, and moves us into deeper belief in Christ. Sort of a thesis this morning is this, is Jesus is moved by our sin to have both patience with us and perseverance for us.

So I'm going to break that down into three simple points this morning. The first point is this, Jesus is provoked by our sin. Jesus is provoked by our sin. Verse 21 says, "Jesus was troubled in his spirit." Now we've seen that language in John 12 weeks ago, that he was troubled because he knew the hour, his hour, was coming. What hour was that? It was the hour of the cross, where he would die for our sins. On that cross he would take God's wrath upon himself, that was the hour that was coming. But we see again, that he's continuing to be troubled in his spirit as verse 21 says. I think this troubling, this troubling is a little uniquely different than the troubling in chapter 12.

I believe this is a troubling that's even deeper, because not only is he headed to the cross, and not only is he going to be betrayed, but he's going to be betrayed by a friend, by a friend.

I mean, Jesus in the early part of chapter 13, he's washed the feet of Judas. I mean, I'm asking myself this question, did he spend a few minutes longer on those feet, those feet that would walk and betray him? Did he spend a little longer on those feet? Did he ponder the pain that those feet that he washed would cause him? Did he in essence, the one who had created those feet, did he cry a tear over those feet as he washed? Oh he was troubled in his spirit, he was provoked in a sense by this. This is a friend. One who'd been with him for three years probably. Can you imagine, Judas, listen, Judas is not a rebel out in the world making war against Jesus, he's watched Jesus, he's worshiped around in some capacity with others worshiping Jesus. But he didn't know him, he wasn't truly converted and regenerate like the rest of the disciples. He was at the dinner table with Lazarus, who had been dead, and then was raised to life by the Savior. He has witnessed this, Judas has.

Yet, sin, sin had such a grip on his heart that he not only betrayed a friend, he betrayed the son of God. I mean, sin is so deceiving. We don't give it enough credit. It takes you ... Listen sin will take you further than you ever want to go, it'll cost you more than you ever want to pay, and it will keep you longer than you want to stay. Listen, the fruit of betrayal by Judas is found in the root of greed in his heart. The fruit of betrayal by Judas is found in the root of greed in his heart. It's fascinating in studying this week, that Mark 14 and Matthew 26 record the story of Mary pouring out expensive, a one year's wage expensive, oil on Jesus. They record that. We studied that even in John. John records that.

But in Mark and in Matthew, 14th chapter of Mark, 26th chapter of Matthew, what's interesting about they wrote their gospel, their eye witness account, is that they put the story of Judas betraying Jesus right after that. Not this particular story of this ... there are no ... we read in those accounts that Judas ran out. I believe he was probably so mad and angry of what he saw was waste, because really what he wanted to do was take some of that, and steal some of the profit that he could've probably gotten from selling that oil, that ointment, he runs out and makes a deal with the chief priest to sell the Savior for 30 pieces of silver.

Listen, one scholar said he thinks they were put back-to-back in those gospels to really show, to compare and contrast Mary and Judas. One captivated by grace, and one held captive by greed. Listen, Judas knew the price of everything, but the value of nothing. Oh this is so dangerous, to be this close to the savior and not know the Savior, because sin had so entangled and gripped him. See listen, we need to be killing sin, or it will kill us. The way you do this is that you turn, and you trust in the one who was killed for our sin on a cross buried, rose from the dead, and claimed victory over sin and death. It's Jesus, we trust in his victory.

Listen, as a believer, let me just speak directly to you for just a moment, you don't just ... no more sin, no you live, and you fight sin. Even as a believer, temptations come, but you live, and fight against sin from victory, not for victory. It's because of what Christ has accomplished that we have the resources to move forward in this war. If you're not a believer, and you're held captive to your sin, I would encourage you to consider trusting in the finished work of Christ. Don't buy into the lie that you can fix yourself, cause you can't.

What's fascinating is that most in our culture desire to downplay sin, and not define sin. If you downplay sin, it will always dampen your affections for the Savior. If I'm not that bad, he's not that great. But with a robust understanding of our sin comes a magnifying of the savior. Sin at its very core, its very essence, is preferring anything and anyone over God. Choosing to not follow and love God. The Savior, he was crushed by God's wrath for our sin. This is serious. And the depth of your understanding of sin affects the height of your worship of the Savior. The sin is just rooted in really three categories of desires. We oftentimes talk about the fruit of sin, but we have to deal with the root of sin, these desires of the flesh and desires of the eyes and the pride of life that the scriptures explain to us all throughout starting in Genesis 3. And the scriptures are so clear in understanding what these things are.

Listen, if you get a CAT scan on your body for cancer, you don't want the doc to downplay the seriousness of the report. You wanna know. The Bible in a sense is a spiritual CAT scan. It says our hearts are a mess and that the wages of sin is death. Listen, let's be clear here. The means of death comes in multiple ... wars and famines and cancer and you name it, heart disease. Yes. But the reason, the wages of sin, is death. Different means, yes, but the wages. The reason we all will die physically one day is because of our sin, and Jesus is the one who has come, the only one who has come, who has overcome both sin and its wages, death, by coming out of the grave in the resurrection. He's the only one who can satisfy our hearts, forgive us of our sins, give us the righteousness needed to enter into heaven, free us from the power of sin, provide a way to escape God's wrath, and ultimately bring us to God.

Oh, we are fools not to turn to God. Jesus was provoked by our sin, and rightly so. So a way of application, listen. Three simple things: don't underestimate the power of sin. Judas, to be at a table where a dead man had been raised by the man sitting beside him, and still betray him, what could be said of you and I? Don't underestimate the power of sin. Second is let's be troubled by our sin. Let's be troubled by our sin and confess it to Jesus. And third, if you've been betrayed, and I'm sure many watching have been, it hurts, especially when it's a friend or a family member, but let Jesus heal your heart through the gospel. If you've been betrayed, yes, it hurts. I'm not downplaying that. But let Jesus heal your heart.

So the first truth of Jesus, he's provoked by our sin. But the second truth is this: Jesus is patient with our sin. Oh, he is so patient, is he not? And we see this in verse 26. We see how he dips this morsel into this cup of a certain foods that are made to celebrate the Passover. And by evidence of him giving it to someone close by, we calculate from that that Judas is probably on the left, John's probably on the right, and we need not to imagine Leonardo da Vinci's picture painting of the Last Supper.

That's probably not the case. They're probably not all on one side in chairs. It's probably more of a U-shaped table. There's couches, there's a low table to the ground. They're reclining against one another, just celebrating this Passover, and Judas is not at the end of the line. He's beside, probably, the Messiah.

And then, these particular types of meals, when the host, and in this sense Jesus, dips this into this common bowl and gives it to a guest, it's a mark, in a sense, of honor and friendship. And he passed it to Judas, and it says, "demonstrating a final gesture of his love for Judas, even though Judas would betray him." All the patience. And he knew this would come. He knew this was coming. And yet he's still patient with Judas. Even Matthew 26:50 says even at the arrest that night, Jesus calls Judas "friend." He calls him "friend." Oh, Jesus displays a godly patience even towards the one who would ultimately turn on him and betray him and show the guards, this is the one to be arrested with a brotherly kiss.

Oh, the patience, the patience that the Savior has. I have so little patience. I'm gonna just ... this is an opportunity to confess my sin to you. This is how sinful I am when it comes to patience. When I leave this parking lot at Providence Baptist Church, onto Glenwood Avenue, this is the way I think as I'm driving toward the stoplight, the stoplight that's right here with Panera on the right and Starbucks on the left, and I have to do a U-turn at that light. I start calculating the time it's going to take to do the U-turn. So here's how I calculate it. If the turn left arrow, red arrow, is on, and the other lights are green to go straight, I count the number of cars that are at the light with the arrow. If there's no cars there, I'm thinking to myself that they've just gone, and so I need to go straight through and go down and do a U-turn where there's no light and come back. If there's four or five cars there, I know they've been waiting awhile, so I know it's getting ready to turn, and so I'll swing over and wait.

And here's how messed up I am. If I go through a green light and do a U-turn, and then I notice a car that's sitting there as I go through it. If I notice a car that's sitting there, I get competitive and I've gotta beat that car. So I go down and do a U-turn, as I come back and the light's green coming back this way, I have the audacity to look over at that car and smile as if I've won some competition. That's sick.

Oh, the patience God has with us. Psalm 103 says, "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovekind." 2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some understand slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance."

Listen. I want to show you quickly the effects of one who has received this grace of Jesus compared to Judas, who rejected this grace offered by Jesus. In verse 23, I want you to notice how John describes himself. We know in the book of John, any time we've seen the word John, it's John the Baptist. John never uses his name to describe himself. But he does use this to describe himself, in the sense that he, in verse 23, one of the disciples whom Jesus loved. This is how we know this is John. He's describing himself as this because he'll do it four more times through the end. But this is the first time. And how fascinating that the first time he describes himself, this is not a boasting.

I believe in light of the hardness of heart that he is remembering, remembering he's 50 years out, he's looking back on these events, writing these events as he writes the book of John, he's remembering the hardness of heart by Judas, and it melts him. In humility, to the point where, no, he doesn't insert his name. Cause when you read 23, it could say "one of his disciples was reclining at the table close to Jesus." But parenthetically he puts there, "whom Jesus loved." I believe he's overwhelmed with the truth that he was loved by the Savior. I think he's overwhelmed in light of the hardness of heart in Judas that God in his kindness had melted him, because the sun that melts the ice hardens the clay, and by God's grace he has been melted by the love of the Savior to the point that he begins to describe himself as the one whom Jesus loves.

Oh, the comfort this brought John. The comfort it could bring you and I, that his patience with us is evidence by his love for us. So in a way of application, a way of application here, be thankful. Be thankful for the patience Jesus has shown you. Be thankful for the patience that he's shown.

Second, trust Jesus. Trust Jesus for salvation while there is still time. Listen, trust Jesus for salvation while there is still time. If you're hearing this, if you're hearing this and you're not a believer in Christ, know this is the patience of God to be able to allow your ears to hear that God created you, he made you, and yet you rebelled, you turned against him as all humanity has done, and he sent his son to live a righteous life, a life that you and I could not live, and his son died a death you and I deserve, was buried and rose from the dead, and when you repent and turn from sin and trust in Jesus, he saves you and he gives you freedom from the penalty and power of sin and forgiveness and a hope of eternal life. And so if you haven't responded to that, know that's the patience of God in your life if you're hearing that today. And so trust him while there's still time, because there will be a day that comes when his patience will run out. It's either the day you die or the day he returns as judge.

And then third in the way of application, take the gospel to the nations while there is time. Take the gospel to the nations while there is time. Time in your life. Don't waste it on trivial things. Listen, we know Matthew tells us that the end of history will fold up and come when all people groups have access to the gospel they've heard, and one of every one of those have repented and come to faith. We know there's people groups in our world, in our planet, on our earth, that don't know. They've never heard of the name Jesus. And so leverage your life, your job, your vacations for the sake of taking the gospel to the nations while you still have the time to do it. And be a part of ushering the quickness of the return of Christ back.

Oh Jesus, listen. He's provoked, yes, by our sin. He's patient with our sin. But third and last, Jesus is persistent for our sin. He's persistent for our sin. What I mean by this in verse 27, he tells Judas to go and go quickly and do what you have to do, because he has set his face toward a hill called Calvary. He has set his eyes toward the cross, and yes, there's turmoil in his soul, but for the very purpose he has come, he's ready to go. And 2 Corinthians 5:21 says this, "For our sake he, God, made him, Jesus, to be sin." He's persistent for our sin, because for our sake, he made, God made Jesus, to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Jesus we might become the righteousness of God. This is the greatest exchange on the planet.

And think about the context of this persistence that's evidence. At the very table, at this very dinner table where treason would take place by one of his own disciples, Jesus explains the truth of the Passover meal. Treason is taking place by a disciple and he explains the truth of the table. This is not any table. This is not any dinner. No, listen. This is the Passover meal where they're celebrating, they're celebrating the deliverance of God by his hand of sparing life. The death angel came years ago in Egypt, where the Israelites were held in bondage, captivity. And on this particular night as the death angel came into the land, if there's blood over the door, the death angel passed over the door, and for centuries they are celebrating that night of deliverance, and it's that type of year, it's the feast of the Passover. It's that time of the year in Jerusalem on this particular night, and the Passover lamb who would be slain for the sins of the world is at the table celebrating Passover. And it's at this table all the irony of events at this table, betrayal on one end, and yet beautiful forgiveness being offered on the other. What a place of collision, in a sense.

Oh goodness, what a scene. It's the essence of elation on one hand as life will be given by the Savior, and yet emptiness on the other as life will be taken by the one who betrayed Judas, would be so empty after the sale of the Savior that night, that he will throw the coins down and kill himself before the sun rises the next day. As one poet says, "Still as of old, men by themselves are priced. For 30 pieces Judas sold himself and not the Christ." Listen, the persistence, perseverance that Jesus displayed is remarkable.

My brother lives up in Virginia, is one of the most persistent dudes I know. He had six kids, he used to run triathlons, eventually he qualified for the Iron Man down in Florida. My brother is four years older, four inches shorter, swam 2.3 miles in the ocean, got on a bike, rode 112 miles, and then got off the bike, and in the same day ran 26.2 miles. And I'm thinking to myself, they have boats for the water, there's a particular word in "motorcycle," the word "motor," that helps you where you don't have to peddle, and then I would just drive the 26. But here's the reality of the Iron Man. Many don't finish that race that they start. My brother endured for 14 hours and finished because of the joy he knew that would come in knowing that he accomplished it.

Listen. Listen this morning. Maybe lean in to the screen for a moment. Jesus endured not a race, but a cross. And he set his eyes on the joy that would come in redeeming sinners from every nation and the praise of God's name will continue to grow as each redeemed voice is added to the fold. And Satan himself can't stop what Christ has started. Oh, the text tells us in verse 27, "Satan entered into him." He's entered into Judas to carry out the greatest efforts of hell to stop God's plan, and it spreads God's plan. What he's doing is ... actually happening is the carrying out of the greatest effort of heaven to rescue sinners, not the greatest efforts of hell to stop the rescue of sinners. The tragedy of the cross was actually the triumph of Christ.

Oh, the irony in those moments. Genesis reminds us what you meant for evil, God can bring good. So in one of the most devastating betrayals throughout the scriptures, we see God in his sovereign ways, unbeknownst to us, use them for the rescue of sinners. Cause that betrayal would lead this man Jesus to a cross, who would die for our sins.

And so in way of application, thank Jesus. May your heart be full of gratitude. May it be full of gratitude. Thank Jesus for his persistence in taking care of your sin. And second, let's persevere as a people in humility. Let's persevere in leading one person to know Jesus in 2017. Would you consider these things this morning? Would you consider these things? Jesus, yes, he was provoked by our sin. He was patient with our sin. But he was persistent for our sin. What a great, great Savior. Believe on him this morning. Let not your hearts be troubled. But believe on God. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for this opportunity. Thank you so much for this opportunity, God, to open your word, to read it together throughout homes, scattered all over this city, maybe folks around the world. To be able to read it together, to sit under it together and walk through a few things as we hope many of these things have walked through us. So help us to not just be a people who are informed on these things, but be radically transformed by these things. God, thank you for the grace you've shown us in Christ. We pray in his strong, strong, powerful name, amen. And amen.



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