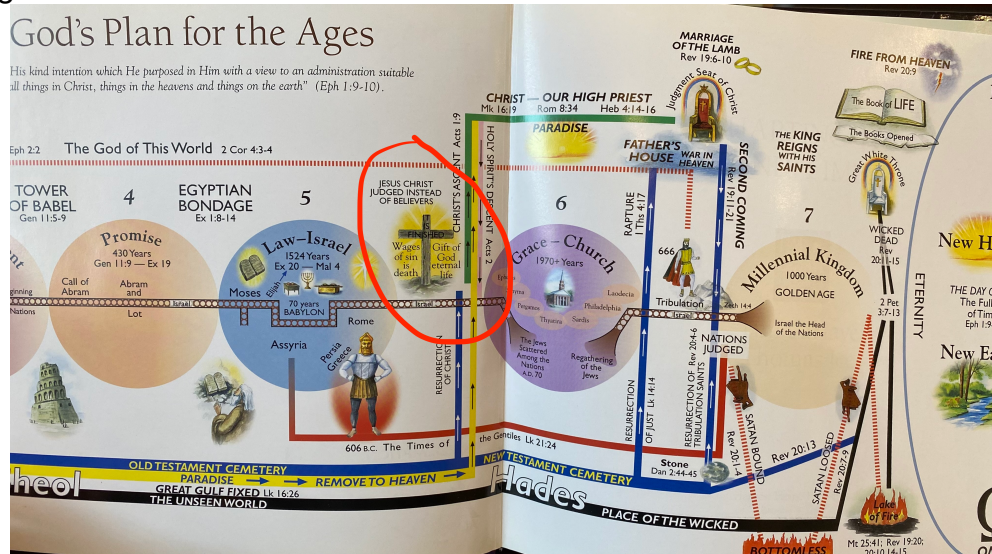


## John 14:28-31, "Why Jesus Went to the Cross"

3.12.23

I love studying Scripture and love studying history and how they go together. As we've said, "History" is "His Story." Here's a chart from a book I have on history from the beginning to the end... "God's Plan for the Ages"...



What have I circled in the middle? The cross. It's the cross that separates/divides time. There's "before" the cross and "after" the cross. It's BC and AD. And this makes me think about the disciples in the upper room and the fact that they were trying to understand all that Jesus was telling them...about His dying...which was BEFORE THE CROSS...and how hard that had to be.

But for us, on this side of the cross...looking back...we understand that Jesus had to die. It was His death on the cross that bought our salvation. And so, we can look back at the cross and celebrate it. We put crosses on jewelry and t-shirts...logos...

 **Mount Pleasant Baptist Church**

They would have never used a cross. It was something heinous and awful that was used by the Romans to execute criminals. I know it sounds weird, but would you wear a small electric chair or noose on a chain around your neck?



**Here's a silver one and a gold one you can get on Etsy! NO WAY!**

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But, to us, the cross is a picture and symbol of our salvation. We come in here, the church, and we celebrate Jesus every week and so much of that is centered around what He did on the cross. Think about it...when we come together to worship, praise, rejoice; so many of the lyrics we sing are about the cross. We were just singing: "Thank You Jesus for the Blood." And think about when we have communion...we're acknowledging the cross by way of Jesus' body and blood. We can read in our Bibles, for instance, what the apostle Paul said, "I preach Christ and Him what? **Crucified.**" A cross.

**1 Corinthians 2:2**

**<sup>2</sup> For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.**

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**Galatians 6:14**

**<sup>14</sup> But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which<sup>[b]</sup> the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**

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Yes, we can look back on the cross and rejoice, because ours is a historical faith...but not for the Apostles. They couldn't grasp the cross...they couldn't see the cross at all. All they could see was a throne and a Kingdom and a Messiah sitting on that throne. The idea of their Messiah's death was absolutely foreign to them. Remember, they didn't have the New Testament yet. The Gospels would not be written for another decade. They're on the other side of the cross. When Jesus talked about death they said, "No, no, Lord; that's not going to happen." They couldn't fathom a cross.

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That would be a tragedy of tragedies. So, to hear this talk of "going away," placed the disciples in deep despair and deep sorrow. They're scared to death and that's why Jesus kept saying, "Stop letting your hearts be troubled." It's why He said, "Peace/Shalom is what I'm going to leave with you. Stop being afraid." But, they're weak and they're struggling. Watch how Jesus offers more comfort.

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**John 14:28-31**

**<sup>28</sup> You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. <sup>30</sup> I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, <sup>31</sup> but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.**

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As I studied and prayed over the passage, it struck me that so much of what Jesus had been offering to the Apostles (as we've read in this chapter 14) wasn't really sinking in. He had offered them so many promises of comfort: He had told them He's going back to heaven to prepare them a room in the Father's house. He had told them He's going to send a replacement for His physical presence with them by sending the Holy Spirit who would live inside of them forever. He's told them that He's going to leave them SHALOM, peace that's not dependent on our circumstances...a peace that comes from God that comforts us in the midst of chaos and trouble. Have you been living in Shalom?

Well, it seems all of that wasn't enough. Look at verse 28 again...

**John 14:28**

**28 You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.**

You know what Jesus was saying? He was saying: "You ought to be happy for me, guys! I'm going home...I'm going back to my Father...and if you really loved me...you should be rejoicing for me...but, all you can think about is yourselves." You know, before I throw rocks at the Apostles for their selfishness, I have to remember I live in a glass house, and boy, can I selfish in my love for Jesus. It's so easy just want Him for the blessings! We want Jesus to make everything easy, safe, comfortable...and if there are hardships or struggles...(and we all know they'll come)...we get frustrated...even angry. "Why is this happening to me?"

I believe that's how the Apostles felt. I believe they wanted Jesus to stay with them and keep doing exactly what He had been doing for the last three years. Provide for us. Take care of us. Give us what we need. One commentator I read calls the Apostle's sorry a: "selfish sorrow," thinking only of how the Lord's death was going to affect them...their sorrow being a self-centered sorrow...leading to Jesus saying: "If you loved me, you wouldn't feel this way."

And you say, "Well, didn't they love Him?" Sure, they did...but, their love was being exposed as a love that said: "**What's in it for me.**" Do you know people like that? People who hang around as long as there's something in it for them. People who show up when it's all about them...but, when the tough gets going and true commitment and dedication is needed for the moment...they disappear. Not enough in it for them. They're gone!

As I get older and I look back on my grandparent's generation and then to where we are today, I've come to a sobering conclusion. We're pretty wimpy people. For many Christians today, their level of commitment is about as deep as a mud puddle. We don't do many "hard things" anymore. It scares me. Because one day, when the really hard times come...I'm afraid many will bolt. Because we've not been trained to do anything hard. If it's hard we just don't do it. And I see this a lot when it comes to the things of God and to church.

If it's Sunday morning and it's inconvenient, many just won't come. That's issue #1. But, issue #2 is the fact that even when we do come and go another step deeper and commit serve in a certain area...again, if it's inconvenient, we find a way out. Church, how are we going to be willing to do something really hard...like being willing to lose a job if the company wants us to go woke...if we can't even do something as menial as honoring God on His day, by coming to church and serving.

But, you know what, I do see so many work so hard. So many come early to get ready for this day:

- Praise Team people...staying all three services.

- Choir members staying all three services.
  - Sunday school teachers and workers, who prepare so hard each week.
  - Hospitality Team members fixing and serving coffee for three services.
  - Guest Services/Welcome teams...all three services...
  - Parking team and security team folks...freezing to death for Jesus...for His kingdom! Riding us on golf cart at 6:45 in the morning. Wow!
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Jesus smiles from heaven and sees His soldiers...His children serving so faithfully. **And then there's you**...those of you who are older and could stay home because your body hurts...but, you come...families with small children, it's not easy...but you're teaching...you're training...it will be worth it. You are doing hard things and your kids will remember it! I promise! **The point is this:** none of this is a selfish love...it's a life of discipline by disciples of Christ. I'm so thankful and proud of our people...our families for how you grind it out for Jesus! Praise His Name! Yes, Jesus was preparing them for HARD!

But there's something else in verse 28: look at the first part of the verse again:

**John 14:28a**

**<sup>28</sup> You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.'**

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Oh, He would...in three days...He's coming to them...and with a longer view...when He goes back to His Father...He's coming back to take us to the Father's house...where He has built a room for us! Jesus was saying: "Your sorrow is going to be temporary. It's not permanent." But for now, the disciples...they couldn't see it...they were consumed with fear and selfishness...(remember, they had been arguing about who was the greatest)...they were consumed with their own needs and hopes and desires and ambitions. They were showing by their actions that their love for Jesus was pretty selfish. They loved Him because of what He did for them and what He could do for them by setting up a kingdom and putting them in charge.

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Yes, I believe they were sad because Jesus was leaving...yes, but I also believe they were sad and disappointed because they weren't getting what they wanted out of the deal.

**Can I ask you a question: Why do you serve Jesus?** Is it because you love Him, or for the blessings? If it's for the blessings, we're going to spend a lot of time angry at the Lord for not doing what we want. Because this life is full of full of trouble, sorrow, pain. Yet, remember from last week, it's in that trouble and in that sorrow and in that pain we experience the Shalom...the peace of Jesus...the Prince of Peace Himself. Are you at peace today? If not, you're probably insisting on your way...give that up...surrender...trust Him...love Him for Him! Just for Him...with a thankful heart!

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One last point from this verse. The last phrase... Jesus said:

**John 14:28c**

**<sup>28</sup> I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.**

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What does that mean? "The Father is greater than I?" Right, I thought they were equal? They are...in the Trinity...but, in their roles...in their persons...the Father (as the One who sent Jesus to earth) is "greater" in authority and leadership than the Son. That's why Jesus obeyed His Father. That's what sons do, right? They obey their daddies...not the other way around. [But, to look at our culture, I sometimes wonder.] The Athanasian Creed reads this way:



**“Christ is equal to God as to His Godhead, and inferior to God as to His manhood.” Athanasian Creed**

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Jesus taking on human flesh, came to this earth to be one of us...He humbled Himself; and yes, even though He was in the form of God, (Phil 2) He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (held on to)...but instead, He emptied Himself (not of His deity, but His glory) taking the form of a servant...humbled Himself, even to death on a cross.

And so, you see, Church, in that role, He obeyed His Father. Jesus obeyed. Are you? Are you obeying God? As the old songs says: “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.” Watch verse 29...watch how kind and long suffering Jesus is...so patient:

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**John 14:29**

**<sup>29</sup> And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe.**

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Remind me class...when will all of this make sense for the disciples? After the resurrection, right? “I’m telling you this now...so that when it happens...you WILL BELIEVE.” Because right now they’re struggling to believe. But listen...when Jesus shows back up in that upper room and shows them His hands and feet...they’ll get it then! They’ll finally grasp it all.

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Church, think with me, could you imagine if Jesus had never told them He was going to die? They would have been absolutely shell-shocked by His death. It was going to be hard enough as it was. But, He’s been dropping hints for months. Matthew records one such instance in:

**Matthew 20:17-19**

**<sup>17</sup> And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, <sup>18</sup> “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death <sup>19</sup> and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”**

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Jesus had been trying to prepare them for months. Jesus said He would die, and He did. He said He would rise, and He did. He said He would ascend to the Father, and He did. He said He would send the Holy Spirit, and He did. Everything He said He would do, He did. Every prophecy, every promise, fulfilled in exact precision, and Jesus prepared them for all of it!

And I’m telling you church...this would give the Apostles such great confidence. Jesus was preparing them like a coach does for a championship game. He left no stone unturned. He prepared them well for what they would face...because they would face a lot, wouldn’t they...they would eventually face tremendous persecution...but, their preparation led to confidence in their Savior to carry on...even to death...which they all endured martyrs’ deaths, except John. They tried to boil him to death in hot oil, but he survived. They could carry on because of how He prepared them.

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Did you know that you’re being prepared as you sit here today? You’re being trained. That’s my job. The Bible says in Ephesians 4 that God gave “shepherds/teachers (pastors)”:

**Ephesians 4:12**

**<sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.**

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You’re being prepared...trained to do the work of ministry for Jesus. That’s your job. You represent Jesus in your home, your school, your job. On the ballfield, in the boardroom, in the classroom, in

the locker room. His message most go forth...and you've been prepared to share it. The question is: will you?

Well, Jesus abruptly says: "There's no more time for talking." Watch...verse 30...

**John 14:30**

<sup>30</sup> I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me.

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Who is the ruler of this world, church? Satan! He's the god of this age, the prince of the power of the air. Listen, Jesus said Satan is coming...He didn't say the Sanhedrin was coming. He didn't say the Romans were coming. He didn't say Judas was coming. He said Satan is coming. Because who has Satan embodied... Judas. He entered Judas in that upper room and Jesus then told him to get out and go do what he was going to do. **And Judas then, possessed by Satan,** would come to Jesus in matter of minutes now to the Garden of Gethsemane with betrayal on his mind. Luke records that when the Temple Guard showed up with the torches and swords...Judas leading the chief priests...Jesus said, "This is the power of darkness."

**Luke 22:53**

<sup>53</sup> When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

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Satan was going to take Jesus out...something he'd been trying to do since He was a baby. Remember that? Herod made the decree to have all the two-year-old boys killed. Satan, then tried to tempt Jesus to worship him, submit to Him...right after Jesus had been baptized. Satan had continuously sought to derail Jesus by way of the Pharisees and the religious leaders. But, Jesus was always in control. That's why Jesus said, "Satan has no claim on me." No power over me!

Yes, ever since Satan was kicked out of Heaven, he has shown his hatred and disdain for God, for Jesus. And you'll remember, it was in the Garden of Eden that God cursed Satan and told him, (which is the first Messianic promise) in Genesis 3:15...

**Genesis 3:15**

<sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring<sup>[e]</sup> and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

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Satan thought he had Jesus when Jesus was hanging on the cross...that was the "bruising of Jesus' heel," but three days later...Satan had to be shocked when he saw Jesus was back. That's when Jesus crushed the Ancient Serpent's head. And that was all part of the plan. What plan? The plan of Jesus to destroy Satan and death at the same time.

**Hebrews 2:14**

<sup>14</sup> Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.

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Jesus destroyed death and the devil at the cross. Scripture teaches: greater is He (Jesus) that's in us, than he (Satan) that's in the world. And what that means is: **we don't have to give in to sin.** Listen, Satan is not stronger than Jesus, period. And because of that fact, Satan is not stronger than you...unless you let him be. Unless you give him a foothold that turns into a stronghold. Don't say, "The Devil made me do it." You did it. Listen, you and I allow Satan to do what He does...but church, positionally speaking, because of the fact that we're crucified with Christ, we have the power of Christ, through the Holy Spirit living within us to overcome. That's why we're more than conquerors in Christ. No! Satan has no claim on Jesus, nor us! Hallelujah!! Last verse...verse 31.

**John 14:31**

**<sup>31</sup> but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.**

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This is the only place in the New Testament where Jesus explicitly says, verbatim: “I love the Father.” He has said: “I obey the Father, I do the will of the Father, I see what the Father does and I do it.” But this is the only place where it’s recorded in the NT: “I love the Father.” Now, we know Jesus loved the Father, and I’m sure He said it all the time...but, this is so poignant to say here...in this moment of tension and awkwardness and fear...in that upper room, knowing what the disciples were going to face.

But think about what Jesus was going to face. He’s going to hang on the cross alone...His Father turning His back on Him because He embodies sin...and yet, Jesus says, “I love the Father.” Jesus wanted them to know that He loves His Father. Church, do you see now why Jesus went to the cross? You say, “He went to the cross because He loves us.” Yes...that’s true...but, there’s more. Let me read it again. See verse 31 again...

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**John 14:31**

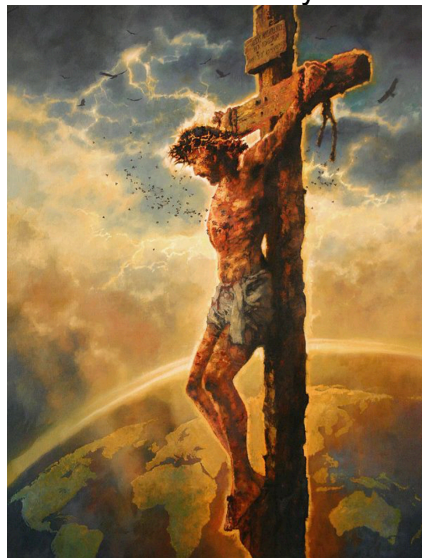
**<sup>31</sup> but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.**

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Yes, Jesus went to the cross because He loved us...but, He also went to the cross because He obeyed the command of His Father and He did that because He loved His Father. Do you see? The Father commanded the Son to come into the world and be the sacrifice for sin. Jesus was the Father’s chosen lamb to bear the sin of all who would believe. That was the Father’s will and that’s what Jesus chose to obey, because He loves His Father.

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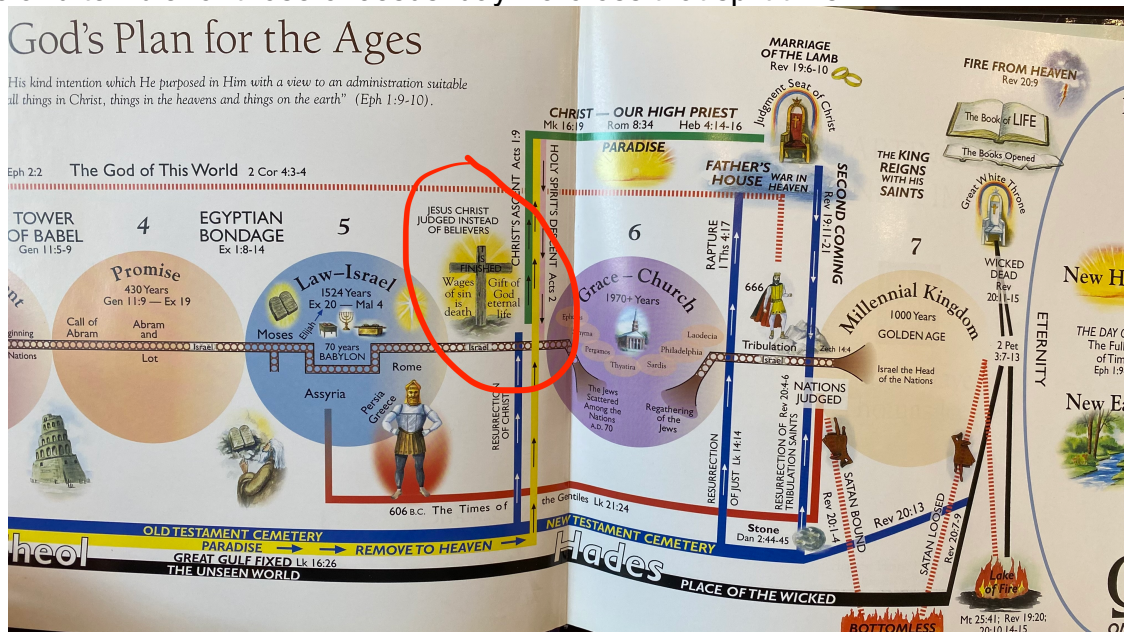
That was what Gethsemane was all about: “not my will, but yours be done.” Jesus was obedient and it is obedience that demonstrates love. Obedience always demonstrates love. See the screens:



That’s what obedience and love looks like. **Love obeys**. Jesus obeyed His Father...and Jesus says to us...if you love me...you’ll keep my commandments. So, here’s the test of love for you and for me: “Will we do what Jesus commands?” If you will, it will require a cross. That’s why Jesus said, “Take up your cross and follow me.” Let’s stop being lazy...let’s start doing hard things...let’s be committed, dedicated, honorable people.

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And so, we close with Jesus' words from the end of verse 31: "Rise, let us go from here." He would leave that upper room and go to Gethsemane and then to the cross... A cross...yes...something gruesome and terrible for those of Jesus' day...a cross that split time...



a cross that we look back to on this side of it and see as our victory, knowing that the One who died on that cross, stands at the end of time as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords... He deserves our love and our obedience, just like He showed to His Father.