

Gethsemane

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[0 : 0 0] for a short time this evening friends I'd like us to consider words that we have in verse 39 and going a little further he fell on his face and prayed saying my father if it be possible let this cup pass from me nevertheless not as I will but as you will well friends it truly is or at least ought to be such a joy and a privilege for us to gather here together this evening I alluded to that in prayer for us to come together and to worship we hear that word often worship there are many words that we use in our ecclesiastical vocabulary if you like that are commonplace and we maybe don't give much thought to but as we gather here on this Friday evening in March in carloy fleet church we might ask ourselves a question why why are we here to worship at all now that might seem like a question of which the answer is very easy to come to it might seem like a very simplistic question but when we really pause and stop and and think when we reflect upon who we are as Christians if we are Christians and and even our experiences in the week that has gone by I think if we're honest it's so easy for us to lose sight of why it is we worship why we're here tonight what the meaning and the purpose of our whole gathering over these next few days is why are we here well I think as we come to this portion that's set before us and as we come to the portions that we're going to look at of scripture in the days tomorrow and god willing on Sunday what I'd like us to do is to be reminded you and me with you to be reminded of why it is we come and we worship why we give up our time to gather with gods people why we have that desire to bow our hearts before the king of kings for us to meaningfully consider the person and the work of our savior and not only that but to to to bring something of this work into focus to bring into focus something of of what your redemption and what my redemption has cost our savior because as we gather here tonight friends as we worship we worship a god who has bought for us a salvation that was far from shape and as we reflect upon the cost of our salvation friends we we might think that in order to to see that cost we cost we immediately need to go to the cross where we where we see that that cost paid in full the balance paid in full and certainly that is the

place where we see that cost dealt with god willing will come to the cross tomorrow night and on the Lord's day but tonight it's not to the cross that I'd like to take you friends it's not to Calvary but rather to a place that has been referred to as the shadow of Calvary that place that lies before Calvary that place that is of great significance in the whole narrative of Calvary where am I talking about the garden the garden of Gethsemane that garden within the reality of what it was to be the sin bearer was laid firmly at the door of the heart of Jesus like never ever before you know when we think about the crucifixion when we think about about the sacrificial act of love we we go straight to that cross but what we see here friends tonight is a pain and an agony that comes to the fore not at the cross but at the mere thought of the cross where was this garden well it was across the book Pruke-Kedron from Jerusalem it was in the western slope of the Mount of Olives it was of course the clues in the title there it was an olive grove it was it was a place it was a secluded retreat a place where Jesus and his disciples love to go they would go to the the garden of Gethsemane to fellowship one with another to to pray one with another to spend time with one another this was a place that Jesus and the disciples they they associated with blessing with security with safety are even if you like but as we come friends tonight back to the garden of Gethsemane we see that this time things are different the context of the chapter here shows us that Jesus and the disciples they've just partaken of what's known as the last supper Christ is now coming closer and closer towards that one event for which he was born of course the last 33 years years of his life had very much been lived in the the context in the shadow of the cross are a reality that that ever loomed on the horizon of of the earthly timetable of the one who became flesh and dwelt among us he was always aware of that he knew why he was born he was born to die but get up until this point it would appear at least that the stark reality of the consequences of being born to die of being born to be the sin bearer had had in a measure at least been kept from him yes we know he'd he'd been subject to that the humiliation and and degradation of of being God incarnate of becoming man of dwelling in this world growing up in this world as a perfect sinless man amongst sinful humanity to be born to be conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary and to be born as a child dependent upon his mother we know that in all of that there is such humility and condescension

but still until this point he had been spared had he not he had been spared the the a foretaste of of the depths of the anguish that was to be his it is of course until now let's look together at verse 36 and 37 then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane and he said to his disciples sit here will I go over there and pray and taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee he began to be sorrowful and troubled then he said to them my soul is very sorrowful even to death remain here and watch with me as they find themselves in the garden once again we don't see a time of joy and blessing and fellowship as such what we see is a a savior who's deeply troubled we see one whose soul is being described as a sorrowful even unto death what is this sorrow well we need to remind ourselves it's so easy for us friends to to impose emotions that we read often scripture that are shown by Jesus to impose them on how we ourselves express emotion and of course in many ways Jesus expressed emotion in the same way as we did as we do that was what made him human but when we see this distress of soul here this this sorrow of soul we have to realize that this wasn't any kind of sorrow this wasn't a change of emotion brought on by by some unfortunate or or undesired providence we've seen this before with Jesus we saw that at the grave of Lazarus he wept we saw that he he overturned the tables in the temple but what we see here is something far deeper something that in its very essence is mysterious something that tonight friends isn't ours to go into but yet it's here for us to see what do we see oh we see do we not God in his humanity so vulnerable just look at these words friends remain here he says and watch with me he doesn't want to be alone the son of God longing for his companions to stay near he doesn't want them to disperse he wants them to be close to him his friends those whom he loved in the world he needed them at this very point and so we're led to ask questions we're led to wonder why what is the cause of such sorrow it was Ari Finlesson who said that Gethsemane is not a field for intellect it is a sanctuary for faith there was transacted something that brings us completely out of our depth yet something that has such a distinct bearing on redemption that we dare not pass it by so friends although we cannot even come close to to fully grasping

the extent of the anguish that we see here in Gethsemane nonetheless nonetheless we dare not pass it by because as we stop as we pause as we look upon Christ in this garden what do we see do we not see tonight friends the the tiniest glimpse of what it was for Jesus to be sin better my soul he says in verse 38 is very sorrowful even to death here we have a man who is disturbed to the very core of his being a man who is perturbed in his spirit but why what is it that is pressing upon the Lord so much and this is where you and I come into it we're part of this if it is this sorrow is a sorrow that was felt for us it's relevant it's so relevant for us tonight to ask why well a cursory knowledge of the narrative a reading of the narrative might surely give us an answer he's going to be crucified he knows he's going to be crucified that's true death by asphyxiation was one of the most cruel and barbaric ways to die he knew that victims would be subject to to lingering prolonged pain and agony as they died the slowest and most painful of death he knew all of this and so of course he was sorrowful you and I would be sorrowful it stands to reason that he's sorrowful not necessarily because although we by no means minimize the pain the agony that accompanies crucifixion and martyrdom but the fact is friends that thousands of martyrs have faced the most agonizing of deaths without so much as a grown let me give an example archibald steward one of the covenanters was one such example he was tortured for his faith he was to be executed and you would expect him in such a state to be exceedingly sorrowful but before he was to be executed he uttered these words I bless god for all that he has done for my soul and for the way he has taken me in carrying me to the land of praise where I shall sing that sweet song throughout the ages of eternity which shall never have an end oh I long to be with him and I see this man archibald steward he was upon the scaffold

I see he was waiting can you imagine just waiting there to be hung waiting to take your last breath in this world there he was on the scaffold hard singing the second song kiss ye the sun lest in his ire ye perish in the way if once his wrath begun to burn blessed all that in him stay and not only that he was heard quoting the third chapter of malachi and that they shall they shall be mine says the lord of hosts in that day when I make up my jewels and I will spare them as a man spares his own son that serves him what a testimony and you know friends many similar testimonies can be given of sinful saints facing death without fear so why not Jesus why was the son of man not afforded the grace of this point to face the cross he's an agony he's at his wit's end and it's as he's in agony at his wit's end that we see the answer to this question we see the true reason the real reason for the pain of his soul verse nine and going a little further he fell on his face and prayed he had no no one else to go he had nothing else to do what an example for you and me friend

[17 : 08] I often do we fail in this respect we have anguish we have nothing we praise god compared to this but we have our own crosses to bear our own particular troubles our own struggles our own heartaches and sometimes and I speak for myself sometimes the last place we come is to the lord yet this is our example when we have doubts when we have fears when we even struggle with unbelief what do we do we take this example in all of its powerful simplicity and we make it our example and I know it's easier said than done but sometimes friends don't we complicate what it is to be a Christian even in terms of casting ourselves on the one who cares for us we feel that we have to present ourselves in a certain way before and before he'll hear before he'll answer our prayer that's not what we see here though we see Jesus the son of god he comes and in his agony the reason for which we'll see in just a moment in his agony what does he do he falls on his face to the ground the word that had become flesh is brought to the very dust of the earth that he has created isn't that a wonderful picture of humility that's our savior and that's what he desires for us to do to come and just to fall at his feet and sometimes all we can cry out is help lord help me lord he knows he sees he reads the desires of our hearts he knows our struggles better than we know them ourselves and so struggling Christian friend tonight I don't know what you're going through but if you are remember the powerful simplicity of casting yourself on him and then we come and see the reason for this not the physical crucifixion of course that in and of itself was enough to fill one's soul with sorrow but look at these words my father if it be possible let this cup pass from me my father my father this is the crux of the matter this is the marrow of his pain the lord Jesus Christ eternally begotten son of the father the one who has known nothing but but uninterrupted eternal sanitarian communion the depths and the glories of which are not ours to go into yet here he is about to have this cup of bitter providence thrust into his hand that's what's causing our lord such recoiling pain and anguish peering into this cup as he puts it gaining a view of ingredients that are so repulsive so disturbing so unthinkable that that the very thought of our savior having to drink it it's

pain enough itself the sheer ugliness of what it's going to mean for him to be sin-bearer to suffer to die in the room and the place of his people that the reality of the consequence of our sins being imputed to him so that his righteousness could be imputed to us so that we could wear his righteousness so that tonight as we sit here tonight we are clothed in nothing of ourselves but the glory and in the wonder of the one who cried out it is finished they want to took to himself the hell that should have been yours and should have been mine he's getting a glimpse he's getting a glimpse of the prospect of something different in his experience something that's new to him something that's foreign territory to him something that's unthinkable to him what is that the unrestrained unfettered wrath of god the father that was soon to be unleashed upon him a wrath that would mean that he could no longer say oh my father but my god my god a wrath that reflected something would reflect something of the sinfulness of sin this is a root of his suffering for you and for me what love would boundless love friend that's why we're here tonight that's what it is to worship how often do we lose sight of this how often do we minimize this how often do we make this secondary in our profession of faith this is central to who we are and what we are and where and who we hope to be and you know this reaction that we see here it's necessary because if christ of jesus have got a glimpse into this cup of of god's fury of of god's wrath if he had if he had seen into this cup of trembling as we read in isaac 51 if he had looked into this cup and had been at ease if he'd looked at it and thought well i don't much like that but okay i'm going to take it if he barely even flinched at the horror of the prospect of the wrath of god that was to be unleashed on him you or i wouldn't be here tonight there would be no salvation there would be no redemption it had to cost man sinned and adam and man had to pay the price for sin divine justice you know this had to be satisfied that's why god became man that's why we here see christ and so what we see here is a christ's reaction and getsemane only affirms to us the humanity of our savior the legitimacy of this sacrifice

and so of course she's in agony of course she sweats as it were great drops of blood as we see in luke's account an agony that leaves jesus so weak that he has to be strengthened by an angel and agony that leads jesus to to ask please please can this cup pass from me that's a wonder of this shadow of calvary friends as we see the son of god peering into this cup we begin to see just the tiniest of glimpses of what it would mean for you and me if we were not saved to have to drink that cup ourselves this was the only way he knew that nevertheless he says not as i will but as you will had the father answered such a prayer had this cup been taken from him had christ been freed from the horrors that lay ahead there would be no salvation and so tonight friends we praise god that there was no other way we praise god that christ endured the pain yes of the cross which will come to but the pain of getsemane for you and for me we praise god that christ endured the pain of the glimpse of this cup that's why we're here this weekend don't we lose sight friends isn't it so easy for us to become bogged down as god's people as the church we allow our vision of the cross to be obscured to be overshadowed satan that loves nothing more than to to bring distractions in to take us away from this very point where we reflect upon the agony of our saviour that's why we're here this weekend because not only would christ look into this cup but he would go on to drink it dry why because he wanted to he wants a people for himself and he was willing to do whatever it took to ensure that today as a child of god you would be his whatever it took that's perfect love the perfect love that casts out fear a love that put everything else into perspective as we reflect upon the horror of the scene that is before us a scene that is only a foreshadow of the horror of calvary perfect love i wonder do we all know that perfect love tonight and if you don't know that perfect love why don't you as tom has said at the beginning do you love the lord is he not lovable more than anyone else as the old preachers would say the cheapest among ten thousand the one who is all together lovely and so yes just look look at the

horror that he's been so willing to face for you and for me so that you yourself might never have to face it that's true love maybe you do love him we can never pay him back never ever ever will we be able to reciprocate that love in a way that is worthy of what he's done for us but we can in the smallest of ways friends show him we can show him yes my love for you is broken my love for you is not what it should be my love for you it fails day by day but still i love you because you first loved me and because i love you the very least i can do is come and do what you have called me to do to remember your death until you come again why friends why do we complicate this so much why do we make this into something that scripture itself does not make it why are we waiting for signs from heaven you have every sign from heaven you need in the word of god this is a revelation from god to you for god so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life do you believe in him do you well if you do your place is with his people as one who puts their hand up to say i am a sinner that is true but i'm a sinner saved by grace and i come to this table not pleading my own merits not showing forth how good i am because i'm not i come to this table and i do so in the safety of the knowledge that i am in christ you come friend and i don't say this to try and emotionally blackmail or anything of that sort i am just merely sharing with you what scripture itself shares that as we reflect upon the horror and in the pain of Gethsemane if we can say that what's for me that this is our place to be amen let's join together in prayer we give thanks oh lord for the wonder of your life giving word a word that affords to us freedom and liberty a word that reveals to us the very purpose of our being and as we reflect upon the shadow of calvary this evening as we look upon the love of god through christ that can be seen even there help us oh lord to come not only over this weekend but in the days and months that lie ahead with that true and right spirit of service and of worship because truly you are worthy go with

us now we pray forgive us for all our many sins and all we ask we ask in the precious name of christ and for us sake amen