

At the very heart of the Christian faith is the cross—every other work of our Savior (His incarnation, perfect life, resurrection, ascension, and intercession)—all find virtue as they relate to this—the cross is the grand work of our Savior and thus, was at the very heart of our Savior's mission...

All that He did had an eye to the cross—His entire life was always leading to and focused on, the cross—it always remained before His eyes—and thus, this passage before us, allows us into His thinking with regards to this event—what did Christ think of the cross—what was His perception or perspectives of the cross—well, I want to suggest, we find in these verses, our Savior viewed the cross from at least five perspectives—as a return His Father, a fulfillment of prophecy, a defeat of His enemies, obedience to His Father, and a public expression of love to His Father...

But, before we come to these, let me begin by briefly reviewing a few things—for the past several weeks we have been considering our Savior's final sermon (often called the Upper Room Discourse)—this sermon is found in chapters 14-16, and within it our Savior fundamentally does two things...

[1] He provides comfort for His troubled disciples—our Savior is ever mindful of His disciples' fears and troubled hearts, thus again and again our Savior provides reasons why they should not be troubled but instead be glad...

[2] He promises provision for His needy disciples—again and again our Savior provides promises that He, by the Spirit, will be with them, enabling and empowering them to stand against their enemies, and take the gospel to the ends of the earth...

This then brings us to verses 28-31 and to our theme—Five Perspectives on the Cross—within these verses our Savior provides us with His own viewpoint concerning the cross—how did our Savior view the cross that loomed before Him?...

I. Five Perspectives of the Cross

A. A return to His Father—v28

1. Our Savior again informs His disciples of His departure, and the fact that they would see Him again soon (either a reference to His coming to them by the Spirit at Pentecost, or else, a reference to His second coming)...
2. He describes His departure as "returning to the Father"—"If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, I am going to the Father..."
3. If they loved Him, they would rejoice at His return—because—"My Father is greater than I"—this is the reason why they should rejoice...
4. In other words—the fact that our Savior was about to return to the Father was something that was good for Him...
5. The phrase "My Father is greater than I" has been terribly abused by all sorts of people to argue Christ wasn't God..
6. But, by this phrase, our Savior simply means—"My Father is presently in a far greater condition that I am..."
7. That is—our Savior is referring to the fact that He was presently in state or condition of humiliation and shame...
8. As the GodMan, in a humble condition, He was presently in a lower state than the Father who was in heaven...
9. John Calvin—"Christ does not here compare the Godhead of His Father with His own, nor His human nature with the divine essence of the Father, but rather His present condition with that heavenly glory into which He was soon to be received..."

10. It's for this reason the disciples should rejoice for Him—they should be glad for Him—He is returning to the Father...
11. In other words—the disciples should rejoice because He was returning to the Father, and to a better state (condition)...
12. [1] His humiliation would end—that is, His time of suffering would come to a final end, never to be repeated...
13. Historically, we distinguish between Christ's state of humiliation and exaltation—His humiliation began in His incarnation and ended with His resurrection...
14. His humiliation included—assuming fallen human nature, sin excepted, being born into a poor family, being rejected and despised, beaten and abused, crucified, and buried...
15. Thus, while our Savior spoke these words to His disciples, He was presently in a state of humiliation that would come to a head at His crucifixion...
16. And so, His disciples should rejoice, because that was soon to come to an end—He was about to leave this world...
17. Brethren, I truly believe we rarely give His humiliation enough thought—God Himself, came to earth in the form of a Servant...
18. [2] He would be enthroned at His Father's side—His humiliation was not only to end, but then His exaltation would begin...
19. This began with His resurrection, ascension, and session (or the fact that He would sit at the right hand of God)...
20. Thus, again His disciples should rejoice because He would soon be resurrected, glorified, and exalted to a throne...
21. [3] He would be returned to His Father's joyful presence—this, I suggest, is at the very heart of our Savior's words...
22. His disciples should rejoice, because He was about to return to the Father, and the joy He previously knew...
23. Ps.16:9-11—"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; in Your presence *is* fullness of joy; at Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore (Heb.12:1-3)..."
24. The NT quotes and applies these verses to Christ (Acts 2:25-28), and express His confidence of His resurrection...
25. He knew that after the cross and grave, He would be resurrected, and return to the joyful presence of His Father...
26. V11—"in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore"—these are amazing words...
27. This is why our Savior wanted the disciples to rejoice at His departure—He was returning to the joy of heaven...
28. Obs.1—Proper reflection on glory (heaven) will enable us to endure hardship—this is the example of our Savior...
29. Heb.12:2—"who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross despising the shame"—the joy of returning to the Father..
30. He endured all of the pain and shame of the cross, as He reflected upon the joy of what awaited Him in heaven...
31. So too—let us endure all the pains, sorrows, and hardships of this life—knowing what awaits us in heaven...
32. Dear brethren, I fear we think of heaven far too little—this life is passing away—the life to come is eternal...
33. Obs.2—Proper reflection on glory (heaven) will enable us to endure bereavement—that is, the death of a loved one...
34. When a Christian loved-one dies, we shouldn't so much weep for our loss, but rejoice for their marvellous gain...
35. Phil.1:21—"For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain"—for those who die in Christ, death brings eternal gain...

36. Have you ever thought of this verse in regards to Christ—death brought gain to Christ as well—He returned to His Father...
37. And death brings with it gain for every true Christian—in fact, if anything, we should actually weep for ourselves...
38. There is no reason to weep for them—dear brethren—they have entered into the very joyful presence of God...

B. A fulfillment of prophecy—v29

1. V29—"And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe"—that is, I have told you that I will die, rise again, return to My Father, and come again...
2. Our Savior is not only the subject of prophecy but also its author—that is, He Himself foretells future events...
3. And of the future events that our Savior foretells, none are more often repeated than His death, resurrection, and second coming...
4. Matt.16:21—"From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day..."
5. Matt.17:22-23—"Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up. And they were exceedingly sorrowful..."
6. Matt.20:17-19—"Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again..."
7. Thus, for our Savior, His death and resurrection, were fulfilled prophecies that validated His claim to divinity...
8. V29—"And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe"—that is increasingly believe I AM who I said I AM...
9. It's not that the disciples did not believe before, but our Savior's fulfilled prophecies would strengthen their faith...
10. As Christ would die and be resurrected, the Holy Spirit would remind them of these prophecies, and strengthen their faith...
11. Obs.1—Fulfilled prophecy validates the divinity of Christ and Scripture—one mark of divinity is the knowledge of the future...
12. God distinguishes Himself from all false gods, by stressing the fact, that He Himself infallibly knows the future...
13. Thus, in the OT, if a supposed prophet predicts a future event that fails to happen, he was stoned as a false prophet...
14. As a result, for our Savior, His death and resurrection validated His claims that He was one with the Father...
15. This also underscores the fact that our Savior went to the cross willingly, fully knowing all that it would entail...
16. Obs.2—Fulfilled prophecy strengthens our faith in Christ and Scripture—most of us have heard that lying whisper of our enemy—"has God truly said..."
17. Well brethren, among other things, let us remember fulfilled prophecy, so that our faith will be strengthened in Christ and Scripture...

C. A defeat of His enemies—v30

1. V30—"I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me..."
2. Our Savior knew that His time was short—He would no longer speak much with them—He was about to leave them...

3. [1] Who is meant by the "ruler of this world?"—I trust it's evident, that by this phrase is meant Satan himself...
4. Elsewhere, the Scripture describes him as "the prince of this world," and "the god of this age"—he governs this wicked and evil world...
5. Now of course, he rules this world under the sovereign purposes and supervision of God, who is the true RULER of this world...
6. But Satan has been given this rule as a punishment from God, because of man's rebellion to Him and His word...
7. [2] What is meant by the ruler of this world "coming?"—by this our Savior is referring to Judas, the Jewish leaders, and Roman soldiers...
8. Satan was influencing these wicked men, to betray, arrest, beat and crucify Christ our Savior—though they acted freely, they were governed by Satan...
9. Thus, our Savior perceives His crucifixion as an assault of Satan himself—an attack of His arch enemy—"the ruler of this world is coming.."
10. Yes, He came against Him at His incarnation, and yes He came against Him at the beginning of His ministry...
11. But, now—the gates of hell will be opened, and Satan and all of his demonic hatred will be unleashed against Him...
12. Lk.22:53—"When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness..."
13. Notice our Savior describes this time as both their hour and the power of darkness—this means, though they would be acting freely, ultimately speaking, there were more powerful and sinister forces at work in His betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion...
14. [3] In what way did the ruler of this world "have nothing in Christ?"—"the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me..."
15. Simply put, our Savior means—Satan can find nothing in Him so as to stop Him—so as to deter Him from success...
16. There was nothing in Christ, that Satan could appeal to—there was nothing in Christ for him to lay hold of...
17. For example, think of a rock climber—a rock climber climbs a rock because there are places to put his hands and feet...
18. But a rock would not be able to climb if it was perfectly smooth—he would have NOTHING to take hold of...
19. So too, the enemy could find nothing in Christ to hold on to, He was perfectly blameless—He was perfectly sinless...
20. [a] There was no guilt—there was no just cause of His condemnation, for the simple reason, there was no sin in Him...
21. Pilate said—"I find no fault in Him at all" (Jn.18:38)—that is, he knew that Christ was innocent of all charges...
22. Thus, our Savior is saying—Satan is working in the hearts of these men, who will betray, and condemn Me to death...
23. But, in fact, Satan has nothing in Me—that is, he has no just cause to condemn Me because I am free from guilt...
24. The Jews would condemn Him—the Romans would condemn Him—Satan would condemn Him—but not justly...
25. [b] There was no fear—there was no weakness in our Savior—He was never tempted to turn back or disobey His Father...
26. Our Savior never viewed the cross with hesitation—He set His face like flint, to endure the agonies of the cross...
27. There was nothing within our Savior, that Satan could get a hold off, to tempt or encourage Him to turn back...
28. Obs.1—Behold our obedient Adam—I suggest, lying behind this passage are the echoes of Adam in the Garden...

29. Although Adam was created without sin, he was created with the possibility to sin—there was something in Adam Satan could appeal to...
30. This is evident for the simple fact that, Adam gave heed to the serpents temptation, fell into sin, and brought humanity with him...
31. Rom.5:19—"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous..."
32. Just as the sin and guilt of Adam was imputed to his posterity, so too, the obedience of Christ is imputed to His posterity...
33. Obs.2—Behold our victorious David—I also suggest behind this passage, is the imagery of battle and warfare...
34. Our Savior says—"the ruler of this world is coming"—and then He says in v31—"Let us go from here"—that is, Let us go and meet the enemy...
35. This of course was shadowed in David—who went out and met Goliath in the battlefield, in the name of the LORD...
36. Well, now is the time for our greater than David, to go out to the battlefield, and defeat one greater than Goliath...
37. Dear brethren, have you ever thought of the cross as a battlefield, wherein Christ defeats all of our enemies...
38. Jn.12:31—"Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out"—that is, He will receive the death blow...
39. Oh dear friends, I trust you do know, that the battle has already been won—your enemies have been defeated...
40. Behold in this passage, your obedient Adam and your victorious David—perfectly obeying and powerfully defeating...

D. An obedience to His Father—v31

1. Here I'm thinking of the last half of v31—"and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do"—that is, I do the commandment of My Father...
2. [1] When He was commanded—this commandment was given to the Son in eternity past, in the covenant of redemption...
3. [2] What He was commanded—simply put—He was commanded as the incarnate Son, to live and die for sinners...
4. Thus, this commandment includes His incarnation, sinless life, teaching, miracles, and substitutionary death...
5. Every thing Christ does as the Mediator, He does in compliance or obedience to the Father's eternal commandment...
6. Jn.10:17-18—"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again...This command I have received from My Father..."
7. Jn.12:49—"For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak..."
8. [3] Why He was commanded—He was commanded because He was viewed as the obedience GodMan Mediator...
9. Thus, technically speaking, it's not so much, the Father commanding the Son, but the Father commanding Christ...
10. Thus, we must think of this commandment as if Christ was unwilling, and needed to be commanded by His Father...
11. Let me put this a bit more theological—this commandment of the Father was a covenant of works for Christ...
12. Just as the Father gave a commandment to Adam, so too, He gave a commandment to Christ, as the Last Adam...
13. This is why this covenant, made between the Father and Son in eternity past, is described in terms of a commandment...

14. [a] It's perfect obedience, Jn.8:29—"And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him..."
15. [b] It's loving obedience, v15—"If you love Me, keep My commandments"—that is, love is expressed by obedience...
16. [c] Its joyful obedience, Ps.40:8—"I delight to do Your will, O My God, and Your law is within My heart..."

E. An expression of love to His Father—v31

1. Here I am thinking of the first part of v31—"But that the world may know that I love the Father...I do"—in other words, our Savior obeyed His Father's commandment, in part, so that the world may know He loves Him...
2. Put another way—Christ's obedience to the Father, in going to the cross, shows the world, that He loved the Father...
3. In other words—one purpose of the cross, was to make known to the world, the cross was an expression of His love...
4. JC Ryle (paraphrases v31a)—"I do all I am doing now, and go to the cross voluntarily, though innocent, that the world may have full proof that I love the Father who sent Me to die, and am willing to go through everything which He has commanded Me to go through..."
5. Thus, the cross is an expression of the Son's love for His Father, and that He expresses that love in obedience...
6. But—Christ did not merely want the world to know that He loved the Father, but that He also loved the world...
7. Thus, while the cross makes known Christ's love for His Father—it also makes known His love for poor sinners...
8. Because remember, at the heart of the Father's commandment, was that Christ would die on behalf of sinners...
9. Furthermore, the cross not only displays Christ's love for His Father, but also, the Father's love for the world...
10. In short, the cross is the public expression of love—in love the Father gave the Son a commandment, and in love, the Son obeys that commandment...
11. Oh dear friends, let me in closing, apply these final thoughts to the two types of people present this morning...
12. [1] Dear saint—if you are ever tempted to question the love of Christ, merely look upon that agonizing cross...
13. For it's there, that Christ has most fully expressed His love, both to His Father, but also to His beloved people...
14. The cross teaches you—glory follows suffering, Scripture is trustworthy, your enemies are defeated, and it also teaches you—you are loved both by the Father and Son...
15. [2] Dear sinner—herein lies your salvation—Christ died and rose again so that if you trust Him, you will be saved...
16. He suffered in our place, defeated our enemies, so that those who believe on Him, will not suffer, and will be liberated from rule of Satan...
17. Never question Christ's ability or willingness to save you—all you must do is believingly look to the cross...
18. Look to that one who bore your sin, fulfilled prophecy, defeated your enemies, and lovingly obeyed the Father...