

George Balko - Consider Him

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Brethren, our thoughts today are going to be focused on a scripture that is given to us by the Apostle Paul, and he presents this scripture in the form of good, sound advice to Christians, to all Christians, and I'd like to read that, and that is Hebrews, chapter 12, verse 3.

For consider him that endured such contradictions of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Now, although Apostle Paul is tying this verse and the thought of considering him to when we're feeling bad about ourselves in this Christian walk, but he's not necessarily connecting it and marries it to that thought, it's always good for us to consider our Lord and what he did as often as we can, and it uplifts us, and it may help stem off or help fight back some of those feelings that we get when we're in this narrow way, and sometimes our burdens become a little heavy for us.

But it's not the only time that we should do it. What did our Lord do that we should consider Him? Well, that's obvious. We could have conventions, weeks in discussion, volumes written about what he did for us. But in short, he took on that task.

God offered him that task, and that was salvation for mankind. No small thing. He left his heavenly home, and remember, in his heavenly home he had life eternal. Not immortality and life eternal, he could live forever.

He gave that up and he took on a lower form of life, man, which again, he could have lived forever, but he chose to give that up in the most brutal way that man would take it. Died on a cross so that you and I could have salvation someday.

He did this for one reason, one reason only. He did it for the love that he had and has for our Creator. But that's not was the love he had and shared for the creation of God, which includes you and I.

Today I'd like to look at a lesson that took place, an account that took place in our Lord's life near the end of his life. But what we want to do is take a deeper look. Because when we look at the Lord's sacrifice, when we look at what the Lord did, the magnitude of what he did, we look at it and it tends to be overshadowed, and I'm not saying it's wrong. It's generally overshadowed by his being nailed to a cross in that most horrendous way and dying for our sins in that manner.

It tends to overshadow anything else that he had done. Not completely. There's a lot that he accomplished, and my impression today, or my desire today is to just show a few of those other things that he accomplished so that he could pay that ransom for us.

We know that the life's. The life of our Lord was chronicled for the most part historically in the Gospels. We call them the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Although he's spoken of by the apostle Paul, extreme to great extent, as well as the other apostles that wrote the Bible.

But his life, the times that it was more historical were Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and we're going to look at two of those instances that record the same event. The reason we're doing this is because, as we know from past studies, the way the Lord had designed this is that each one of the writers of the Gospels wrote it from a slightly different perspective. So when John says one thing, maybe Matthew sees it at a different, slightly different angle and gives us a little more insights. We want to contrast and compare two of those books.

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And that's Matthew chapter 26 and John chapter 12, and we're going to start with John, chapter 12, verse one.

And I'll read from the King James Version. It says then Jesus, six days before the Passover, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised up from the dead. Okay, so what we want to do is we want to establish a couple things here. We want to establish the fundamental concepts of what our Lord is doing. This is near the end of his life.

Near the end of his life, he is at the age of 33 and a half years old. He comes to visit to the home of Lazarus, whom he had just raised or whom was recently raised, and it's going to take place, it says here, six days before that Passover, and what was to take place after that? Passover on the same day that Passover, at this point in his life, he was about to give his life and die on a cross, which he knew.

So let's first kind of paint the scene. Where's he at? And I actually have to tell you, brother, and I, I was a little bit surprised at what I found out, and it's a very. Probably common to all of you, but we know that he came to a land called Judea.

What I didn't know was Judea was a Roman province. I always thought that was set up by the. Established by the Jews, but it's not. It was set up by the Romans. Judea was like.

Judea was like what we call today's counties. It's a big area. Orange County, Seminole county, if I have that right, Westmoreland county, back in my hometown, where little West Newton is and so on. Judea was a big area, and at the center of that area was Jerusalem, and what's so special about Jerusalem?

Well, everything. This is where God had decided to place the hub of all Judaism, or the faith of Jews, was in the land of Jerusalem. He built the temple there. He had that guarded city, that walled city. But because of that, at the time that they lived under the Roman Empire, the rule of the Romans, because of the influx of all the Jewish people, as well as a trade center, there was a lot of people there.

The Roman government established a hub in the city of Jerusalem. But this is not where he's at. It says he comes to the home of Lazarus. So where's that at? Well, we find through the Scriptures that it's a little town called Bethany.

Bethany would be. Well, I don't know. I can't really speak to that. But some of you have been outside of a bigger city and I, and if for some reason my mind is drawn to the little town of West Newton where I live, imagine that.

And it's just a small, little rural type area. That's what I picture when I picture Bethany. Now, I know Bethany exists today, and there's what I read, there's 20, 30, 000 people that live there. But in the day of our Lord, it was much smaller.

But what was unique about Bethany, it was two miles outside of the city of Jerusalem. That's the first point I want to make. I want to underline this. So where do we find our Lord, who's about to give his life for mankind to pay that price in the most horrendous way, being nailed to a tree.

Where do we find him? Do you find him out in the countryside? You find him on a voyage across the Mediterranean? You find him in the area where he is about to give his life six days before that,

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and I'm reminded of the readings in Isaiah, chapter 53, when it says he was He.

He brings himself like a lamb led to slaughter. How true that was. That's the first point. There was. You realize that there was no manual, as silly as that sounds, absurd as it sounds, there's no manual for someone coming and giving their life and paying that corresponding price.

Oh, sure, there's the Scriptures and they set up the details. This is what has to be done, and this is. But our Lord had to see to the details so that could be accomplished, and this is the first one we want to highlight that he comes to that area where he's about to die.

He doesn't have to be sought out, armies don't have to hunt him. He's right there at the age of 33 and a half years old. Now, I want to contrast or compare. I should say Matthew 26, chapter 26, verse 2, and it says, ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of a man is betrayed to be crucified.

Now that actually almost sounds unrelated, but if you read the following verses, especially up to verse six, you will realize this is the same instance. It both of these catalog, for lack of a better word. They, they write down. They, they. They chronicle the.

The very instance of our Lord's life when he is at the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha and they prepare a feast, and these are the both the same instances. But for some reason Matthew says he. He makes a comment that it's only two days until the feast of the Passover and the Son of the Lord, the Son of God is going to be crucified. I have to tell you that I found that a little bit of a challenge trying to.

Trying to place these two events, that these are the same events. One of them has the Lord coming in. If my math is correct, my subtraction is correct. He's here on the 8th of Niacin, and the other one places them on the 12th of niacin. Okay, still could be the same time.

But I pondered this for a while. But I had a really wonderful discussion with a brother that you probably all know and love very dearly. That's our dear brother George Patius. Many years ago I had this discussion with him, and he said, George, it's very simple.

And it was once he said it like that. He said, the Lord came to the area of Bethany which is adjacent to Jerusalem. He would conduct his business during the day in Jerusalem and simply walk back to Mary and Martha's home with Lazarus and spend the time there. He came and never left. So when Matthew says that he's there, he's there two days before he's had been there several days already.

And it just actually adds to the flavor of where something we're going to discuss about the relationship that he had had with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Also in Matthew 26 chapter, verse 6, if you look at it says he comes to the house of Simon and the leper. Now that kind of threw me too, because I'm still trying to correspond. Are these two situations the same? Simon the leper?

I really had no obvious answer. I went to the Reprints. Brother Russell had an article which I thought was very enlightening and very simple as well. Page 2743 in the reprints. 2743.

And if you read it, he explains his rationale, not written in stone, but his rationale of why it's designated Simon the Leper. First off, and it happens today, in today's world, a household is generally named after the oldest male or ownership of the male who owns that house, like the yike household, the McLennan household, the Balco household, which we're spending time at this weekend, and so it's assumed that Simon the Leper had something to do with the ownership. But

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Brother Russell suggests that maybe he already died. He was a leper.

Maybe he had died. We also don't know that maybe the Lord healed him. We don't know. But there was a connection in that household, and it is indeed the same household. But Brother Russell's thoughts, and it's very simple.

Brother Russell said there was probably a relationship with Mary and Martha. Quite possibly he had died shortly before and he was either Mary or Martha's husband. That seems to make sense. We can't say that's written in stone, but it makes sense. It makes logic as to why he was at that household.

Or they named the household Simon Lepers, and I know it seems insignificant, but I'm still trying to piece together where he's at at this point. At a glance, it sounds like in the. In the writings of John that he comes and they sit down to this wonderful feast that Mary and Martha decide to put on. But we realize now that he's been there for several days and the feast occurs in both, even two days before.

So let's regress just a moment. We know that in the last days of our Lord's life, in the last few weeks of our Lord's life, and probably at least the last few months of our Lord's life, he was extremely, extremely busy. He had a lot to do, and there's a very practical reason for that. He was on a compressed schedule.

On the 14th day of the first month of that particular year, he was going to give his life and would no longer and ever be the man Jesus, and he had a lot to accomplish and he had lots to see to. So he was doing all this. So instead of there being large gaps in between the miracles and the accounts in Jesus life, now we see him being compressed at one day, next day, another day, and a lot, a lot of is taking place, and I want to bring that up because the Lord, it's obvious the Lord was just in Bethany, this little town adjacent to Jerusalem, just a short time ago.

In fact, my calculations is probably one week before that he was in Bethany, and if you turn to chapter 11 in John, I think you'll see the story unfold, and this is the. The situation when Lazarus, his friend, had died and the Lord comes back and he raises him to life, and we're going to go through some of the details.

I know it's a little bit repet. Repetitious for us, but it's good to know and we have a point to make from that lesson. Mary and Martha and Lazarus, all devoted servants to the Lord.

All realize he is the Son of God. All realize he is this promised Messiah. All realize that he has a hope and an offering that they can't pass up, they can't find anywhere. They are devoted servants. They also have a kinship to him, which we'll look into just a little bit.

But it was closer than just them desiring to serve the Master. It was more personal. It was more like a family. I would go as far as just terming it as a brother and sister relationship. Mary and Martha had a.

They looked towards him as an elder brother, and I think Lazarus looked at them as a brother as well. But I also think the Lord reciprocated and looked at them as family, as his immediate family. So Mary and Martha all of a sudden hit, I'll say panic, for lack of a better word, their brother Lazarus, and it seems to have come on in the snap of a finger.

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Their brother Lazarus gets deathly ill all of a sudden. It's not a prolonged, drawn out event. He gets deathly ill. Now, the Lord is not anywhere in the area at the time it says. In fact, I think it's in verse seven.

It implies that he's two days away by foot, two days journey away. But nonetheless, Mary, Martha sent word to the Lord. Why? Well, they know that he can heal. They know that he could save his life.

They trust in that. That's a picture of faith right there. But I also think it shows that this hadn't happened in our Lord's life. When he came upon a stranger that needed help. He would heal him at that moment.

But now the Lord's being called to leave what he's doing and come from there as only a brother or sister, a family member might do. To me, that implies it. But the Lord knows the situation, and in verse six of chapter 11, he says, I'm gonna. I'm not gonna go for the Benefit for the greater reason, for the.

From the plans of prayers of God that he might glorify God in a. In a whole different way, and it's obvious that the angels of the Heavenly Father are ministering to our Lord. They're telling him the condition of Lazarus. In fact, it's communicated to him while he's two days journey away that Lazarus dies.

Lazarus succumbs to whatever that was, and the apostles are saying, well, how's Lazarus? He says, well, Lazarus sleeps. They said, well, that's good. You know, he.

He needs some sleep. He's been sick for a while. No, no, he's. The truth is, Lazarus is dead. He was referring to the sleep of death.

You know, it was hard for our Lord to take on the infirmities of man. Matthew, chapter eight. I realized something now that I didn't many years ago is because the Lord had a very unique relationship with the Heavenly Father in that he had the Holy Spirit without measure. There was nothing withheld from him when it comes to God's spirit. But we also know that one of the blessings that our Lord received from the Heavenly Father, from the Holy Spirit, and not because he was a perfect man, was that he had an ability that no other had, that was to read someone's heart.

He could tell by conversation what was in your heart, what you were thinking, what you were thinking, what I'd be thinking. So think about that. When he healed somebody, yes, he. His virtue left him. He felt it leave him.

But what else was happening? He was feeling the emotion of what was taking place in that point, whether it be a heart, heart problems, leprosy, cancerous, whatever it is, he felt that. He took on that emotional understanding. He took on that experience. He was moving towards becoming that sympathetic high priest.

He really felt it. So anytime someone was suffering and he healed him, it. It hurt him. But I said Lazarus was different.

Lazarus and Mary and Martha, they had a very unique relationship with the Lord. Very unique. Different. More like a family, and we know that this hurt the Lord.

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Think about what he did. He allowed Lazarus to die. He purposely waited outside of the area. He delayed his. His coming back and to.

To being with Mary, Martha and Lazarus, the dead one, He. He withheld that time or he slowed that time down so that he could have a greater opportunity to magnify God and all his power. So he allows Lazarus to die. That's. That's.

I want to say harsh, but it's not harsh. He allowed Mary and Martha to experience that death of their loved brother. He knew it would hurt them.

He also experienced it himself. He took on that experience of what it's like to lose someone so close, like you would call him brother or sister. He felt that all for the greater good of God. Verse 35 of chapter 11 makes it very clear. Says he wept.

Jesus wept and hurt him. When he finally came back to the grave. He does make it back, and he does indeed raise Lazarus from the dead. You know, in the past, when Jesus raised someone from the dead, it was usually right after they died. But this was not the case with Lazarus.

He purposely waited, and we see the wisdom in it now is that he allowed him to lay in the grave for several days. It says four days he was dead. We all know our basic biologies and the natures of flesh, and after four days, it becomes very apparent.

He started to. He started to decompose. He was. There was no denying that Lazarus, this man Lazarus, was dead, and when Jesus came and he called him out of the tomb and Lazarus came forth, it could not be explained by any other means than the powers of the Almighty God.

And a true miracle in every sense. True miracle in every sense.

I have a. An account. I want a lesson I learned some many years ago, and I want to relate it to you. I didn't get anything else out. This is this one thing I wanted to get out to.

And it deals with the situation of Lazarus being resurrected, Although not directly Lazarus, but many of you remember a dear brother who came to us from England, and his name was Brother Holiday, I believe it was Donald Holiday. Yes, and I don't know if he's finished his course yet or not. He has.

What a dear brother. 30, 40 years ago, he spent some time in the United States giving discourses at our generals, doing some pilgrim service. When he had come through West Newton area, the Pittsburgh area, and said he would be in the area that we would like. Would we like to have him? Oh, absolutely.

So our class and all the surrounding classes said, yes, we'd love to have you, Brother Holiday. So we set it up and we had the hall for that evening, and Brother Holiday comes to give his talk. Now, mind you, this is 35, at least 35 years ago. I was a little bit younger at the time.

Anyhow, he, he proceeds to give his discourse, and, and I just thought he was infatuated with his ability to communicate. He had a, he had a very profound way of speaking. He could touch your heart in, in no ways. I, I.

There's so many things that he, he was able to do in his gift of Speaking that I wish I could do, but I can't. But he's very eloquent, very loving. So he starts to give his discourse, and we're all listening

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and all pay attention. There's a good many brethren there.

And I'm listening, and as I'm sitting there looking through my scriptures, he said, has anyone, he asked this question, has anyone ever here ever experienced resurrection? I look up, I'm looking around, I'm looking what the reaction of everybody else is, and I don't see really any tremendous reaction. So I'm sitting there and I'm thinking, okay, well, I'm sure there's a good reason for this.

And I'm sitting there, he says, well, I have, I'm sitting on the edge of my seat right now. I am holding on to every word that he says, and he begins to tell an account in his life as a child growing up in England in the 1940s during World War II. He tells us that he was a young man, probably a, I'm going to guess 13 or 14 year old young man, and all the problems that arise in a country that's ravaged by, by war. Although England was not completely taken over, but had it not been, Hitler would have taken him over.

We know that, and he has a lot of friends. But he had one particular friend of his and he didn't tell me if I did. He did. I don't remember.

But it was this, this young man was probably four or five years older than him. But he said they had a connection that like, they were like brothers, and what reminded me of this was Lazarus and our Lord. I'm sure I may be overemphasizing it, but they had a very special connection and Brother Holiday had a very special connection with this other young fellow, and it was just, you know, their characters, their, their similar similarities, their hobbies, whatever it was, they just matched up well.

This young man being of age and unfortunate side of war is that when the war rages on, people die and they need to replenish their soldiers. This young man, his friend was now of age, so they drafted him into the English Army, Air force, whichever. So of course he said his goodbyes to his families. He said his goodbyes to brother Holiday. They marches off to war, somewhat reluctantly, but had to be done.

So time passes and Brother Holiday's life is going on, and it was not a short time after that the family gets a letter from the officials of the government stating that this young man, their son, was just killed in action. Brother Holiday finds this out he's devastated, his heart's broken. This is like his brother. Like his brother just died.

So much, so many connections, just gone. Now he's just realizing life will go on without his dear friend, and life does go on for a short time, and he's trying to muddle through this situation every day, waking up, trying to hold his head up a little more, but still misses his friend greatly, and nonetheless.

One day, sitting outside, I don't know if it's springtime, it seems to be the appropriate time, but I can't say for sure. He was outside of his household and there was a lane that came down the road from out of town. It was a single lane. That's why it reminds me of West Newton, just a one horse town they call. Anyhow, he's sitting there and he's.

He looks down the road and he sees something that catches his eye. It's. It's movement. It's seeing movement down the road, and there's something familiar about it.

Something familiar. So he's, he's not taking his eyes off and he's seeing now he's realizing that the movement is some people walking. Okay, that happens every day. But there's something familiar about the one individual that's walking. So he's not taking his eyes off and he's just staring as

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they're walking.

And he's, he's up now and he's starting to walk towards him. All of a sudden he realizes it was his friend. His friend had never died.

It was miscommunicated by the officials to his parents and to him that he had died. He was alive. Brother Holiday took off down the road. He embraced him. He held on to him and wasn't letting go.

He walks him back up to his family and the reunion and the rejoicing just began even more. What a story. What an account. Story could be. Lies.

This is an account.

Can you imagine the joy according to Brother Holiday? This man was dead. He realized the joy of resurrection. Mary and Martha realized that joy.

The world is going to realize that joy, everyone. Can you imagine the joy in the people's hearts when their dead ones start to come back to them? Oh, we certainly so sorely need it, brother. But the joy was short lived because once word got back that Jesus had raised Lazarus and he was no longer dead, and this was an actual miracle, the Pharisees, the priests, they didn't see the joy in it.

And now in, in chapters 12, 53 and 54, it says now they didn't just passively want him Dead. They. They demanded his death, and this is the second point. This is the second thing that I wanted to bring up that Jesus accomplished not just giving his life.

He now gave his enemies reason to want to take his life, to want to murder him. So not only is he in the area a few days before, but now he gives them reason to want to take his life.

Obviously, he had to leave the area. He had to leave the area. Why? Because now they wanted him dead. They weren't going to wait until the 14th day of the first month and say, okay, we'll wait till then.

They were going to take it right then and there. So Jesus leaves the area, and when things calm down, where do we find him? Back at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Six days before, he's about to give his life.

So now we come to this feast that connects both of these stories. Matthew and June and John together. So now, at least in my mind, there's a better reason why Mary and Martha were hosting this fabulous feast. Jesus had to leave before they could thank him.

Now back in the area, they're not going to miss their opportunity. What I really appreciate is in verse 2 of chapter 12, at this feast, it says the Lord was there and his disciples. But who else was sitting at the table? Ahasuerus, of course. He's an honored guest.

He was just dead. Now he's alive. Mary and Martha are not going to allow him to serve the food and to clean up after. They are so thankful to the Lord that he's alive, and they are thankful that he is alive and they loved him that he's one at the table as well.

Now that they finish this feast, this meal, and it implies that they're still at the table. They're still at this table. But if you read the dialogue rendering of verse, I think it's two. It kind of implies that Jesus and them, they were reclining back.

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And I. My mind goes immediately to Thanksgiving dinner, and after you get a belly full of turkey, what do you want to do? You want to go relax? You want to get some of that pressure off that bell?

Well, I'm not saying that for sure with the Lord, but he was relaxing and, and actually the first scripture comes to mind is Philippians, chapter 4, verse 7. The peace of God that passes all understanding. He's about to die. He's about to give his life.

He's relaxed without a care in the world, it seems, with those he loves reclining, and I say this because the next portion of this event is simply just a Testimony of love. Mary. Mary comes to him, and she comes up to him and him in a reclining position. Naturally, he's going to sit up.

And what happens when he sits up? His head is now over top of his feet, seemingly insignificant. But she has this ointment, ointment of spike and artist called she. It's a liquid, and she pours it on his head, and it's a.

It's a very aromatic, strong, strong perfume. She pours it over his head, naturally the gravity pulls it down and it lands on his feet, and to me, the first thought I had was, is, that sounds so much like the anointing of the high priests for the. For the work of the tabernacle. But it's not.

But it's still beautiful. Picture this perfume. Extremely fragrant, extremely expensive. Actually, the research. The research I did says that it.

It was the equivalent of a year's worth of wages. That's a lot. So what is Mary doing with it? Why does Mary have this oil, spiken or it's made out of thousands and thousands of rose petals that have to be ground and worked until the oil is extracted, and then just that, thousands of petals is just a little bit.

And it takes a lot of time to get that. Why do they have it? And it dawned on me. They probably, out of whatever economics and funds they had put their monies together when Lazarus had died and they were going to use it on him, but they didn't have to because he's now alive. So they kept it.

And now it's the perfect opportunity.

It was such an outpouring of joy and love shown by Mary that it collected on our Lord's feet. So what does she do? She doesn't grab a rag or a towel. She bends down in the highest part of her body. She takes her hair, her covering, and she mops up that excess.

She didn't do this by any command. She didn't do this by any demand, and the Lord had not brought her to this point. She did this strictly out of the joys of her heart, the thankfulness of her heart, because the Lord was her master and he had just done one of the most marvelous things.

Not only that, it's a great show of humility that she takes the highest part of her body and is willing to put it down to the feet of her master, the lowest point of his, and actually she was fulfilling scripture, and this was one that was a little obscure to me, but I found it and I just put a smile on my face. If you turn to Solomon's Song of Solomon's chapter 1, verse 12. It says, as the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sends forth its sweet smell.

She fulfilled scripture. She fulfilled a prophecy about the Lord. Unknowingly, Jesus recognized this was for his death, and he told her such. You unwillingly, unwittingly anointed me for my death.

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The typical fare for a Jewish person. The tradition was wrap the body in linen. But before they did, they would put spices, aromatics on the body, then wrap them in this linen, and it becomes obvious, especially in Lazarus situation, they didn't embalm these bodies. They weren't preserved.

And after a few days in the heat, and even though they were in a cave, it was still hot in the air and the climate, the bodies would become. They would start to decompose. So they would have these aromatics so they could prolong the time to be with their loved ones, and this oil spike guard was extremely strong, so that maybe two, three days into it, if they wanted their last moments with their loved ones, they could use this essence, this aromatic, to get through the obvious so they could spend just a little more time with their loved ones. They didn't need it.

Let's drop down quickly to chapter 12 of John, verses 4 and 5. It's a show of love and humility, what Mary had just done, and we assume that all the other apostles and disciples realized that. But there was one who found fault with it. There was one who said, you know, we could have taken that and sold it, and we could have made a lot of money and gave it to the poor, fed the poor.

Who do you think that one was? Judas. No surprise there. Judas is so infuriated over this, what does he do? It says he gets up and he goes to the priests and he sets up the deal to betray the Lord.

He's so incensed, and this is the final point of this account, that not only did our Lord bring himself as a lamb led to slaughter, to where he was going to die without a fight, he also gives reason to his enemies to want to take his life, and now he makes it possible for his life to be put into the hands of his enemies by his betrayal, and our Lord did this consciously, knowing this had to be done so that he could give his life for you and I. What a savior.

Of course, there's so much else, and I'm out of time. So much else that took place in the Lord's life. We don't have time to go over, but I would like to read our text that we started with, that's Hebrews chapter 12, verse 3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Brethren, our point today was to prove and to show that our Lord went above and beyond.

He gave his life, he gave his humanity, poured out his soul for our lives. But he also had to set it up that it could be done. He also had to be the one that made sure these things were taken care of. So when we think our trials in our life are becoming heavy and they do, there's no doubt and we're low and we're really feeling the weights of our sacrifice when we consider him who did this, he suffered that contradiction without any rightful cause. But he ensured that it could all be done so that he could pay the price, so that all of mankind, including you and I, will someday reap the benefits of that salvation.

And may the Lord continue to bless him.