

7 April 2020
Holy Tuesday

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church
Vienna, VA

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Holy Tuesday Meditation
Text: John 12:23-50

Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.

It all boils down to this. Christmas was nice, with the virgin birth and the angels. The miracles were great, especially for those who received their vision, hearing, and cleansing. Jesus' teaching was astounding and His wisdom singular, for He taught as one who had authority and no one could trick Him, trap Him, or befuddle Him. You could learn a lot from Him. Jesus treated everyone with equally, whether you were the greatest sinner or the greatest Pharisee. Feeding the 5,000, stilling storms, casting out demons. It's been a great run, Jesus. A great three years. But it all boils down to this. **This is the hour.** For the Son of Man to be glorified. For the Son of Man to die.

If He saves Himself from this hour, then we are lost. Then all that He said and did dies with Him. Then He remains just a grain of wheat, here today and gone tomorrow.

But all thirty-some years of His life have been leading to this hour. He will die alone so that He will not remain alone. He will be buried in the ground so that in His resurrection, He will be the first of much fruit, of an abundant harvest. A harvest that includes you and me. **This is the hour.** The time has come.

So He is *troubled*. He is a true man, after all, and He knows the horror and pain that awaits Him. The mocking, the flogging, the crucifixion. But that's not it. It's the sin of all the world that will crush Him (Isaiah 53:5). He will be cast out by this world's powers, but in so doing He will *cast out the ruler of this world*, and set all people free.

This is the hour. He will not stop now. His friends will betray Him, deny Him, abandon Him. He will remain faithful.

This pandemic we are living through has reminded us once again of the fragility of life and our mortality. Satan would seek to use this time to turn us against Jesus. Evidence that He does not care, that He is not really in control. Jesus would use this time to *draw all men to Himself*. That He be lifted up as the hope of the world. Hope not just for now, for a time, but real hope. Resurrection hope.

Without that, we are in the darkness and we do not know where we are going. What will

happen if we get this virus? What will happen if we die? In the darkness, we do not know. We hope at best.

But Jesus has come to bring light into such darkness. That we become sons of God and know our hope. That we know where we are going. That we have confidence in the love, mercy, and promises of God. That the one who created all things has redeemed us and restored our life.

It is not too late. To repent. To believe. To live. That we not be here today and gone tomorrow, but live in the vine that cannot die. Whatever darkness you're walking in, whatever sins you're hanging on to, or that are hanging on to you, whatever anger or bitterness, distraction or wrong love, whatever misplaced priorities or how you've messed things up - it's not too late. Repent. Believe. Live.

This is the hour.

The hour of Jesus' death, the hour of your life.

The hour of Jesus' condemnation, the hour of your forgiveness.

The hour of Jesus' forsakenness, the hour of your sonship.

He will not save Himself. He will save you.

He will not ask His Father for Himself. He will ask His Father for you.

And the Father will glorify. Him and you.

That you live in the light of His love. Now and always.

This is the hour.

Thanks be to God.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.