

John 10:14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

Pray.

There is so much suffering in this world and yet so little of it is chosen.
Who in their right mind would choose cancer?
Who would choose divorce?
Hunger? Poverty?
Who chooses to be a victim of war, abuse or injustice.

Jesus Christ is so different from us in that he chose to suffer **freely** and **voluntarily**.
In John 10:14-18, Jesus makes it plain that His suffering was completely free.

No one would take his life from him.
He would lay it down **of His own accord**.

And yet he didn't merely die.
He endured daily humiliation and prolonged sufferings.
And all of these humiliations and sufferings were his choice.

I. Jesus Chose to have a difficult life on Earth

Jesus wasn't always the suffering son.
He had a life and glory before he ever became man.

As the second person of the Trinity, he was never compelled to do anything against his will.
Because it is impossible for God to ever go against what he wants.
God always does what he chooses, whatever he wills.

And yet it pleased the eternal Son to become humble and to suffer.
He chose His life's path freely and voluntarily.

He didn't come with Glory like the Jews thought he should.
Instead he was born of a lowly Hebrew maid and a simple carpenter.
His parentage was so humble that he was actually derided for it:
Matthew 13:55 Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? ...**57** And they took offense at him.

During the days of his ministry, he was especially humble- he didn't even have a home:
Matt. 8:20 Jesus said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

He knew that he would be derided because of his lack of physical glory.
And yet he chose this humble life for himself- every step of it.

But not only that,

II. Jesus chose a difficult time to come to earth.

He came during a time of great corruption and oppression in Israel.
Roman occupation.

A corrupt and puppet local government.
Corrupt and misguided religious leadership.

The world was filled with great prejudices against him.
The people we're not prepared for his coming- if being prepared meant receiving him well.

And yet he chose to come at such a time.

I. He chose a humble life.

II. He chose a difficult time.

III. Yet his choices were motivated by his love for God.

And this is why he actually got angry when the disciples wanted to impede him on his path to suffering.

Imagine it- he actually got angry at Peter for saying that his sufferings were not necessary:

Matt. 16:23 But he turned and said to Peter, “**Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.**”

Jesus was angry because he knew that the path to God’s greatest praise entailed suffering. If Christ had followed Peter’s advice, Peter and all of the elect would have been condemned. There would have never been a church to praise God for his grace.

Christ knew that his suffering would accomplish God’s greatest praise. And so out of love to God and a perfectly free will, he chose to suffer.

Christ’s loved God with all His being.
He also loved His people.
In John 10, He calls us his sheep.

Even though we brought shame upon the name of God and upon ourselves, he loved us still.

He called us friends.
He washed our feet.
He laid down his life for us.

He was completely free in this and he was motivated by love.

Jesus’ choice was put to the test many times.
Yet His greatest time of testing was when He prayed in Gethsemane.
There the Father swirled the cup of justice and wrath before the nostrils of Jesus.

Jesus didn’t have to drink the cup.
Yet he loved his people so much that he hated the thought of them having to drink it.

The cup of the father’s wrath would have brought eternal misery upon us.
Such a thought disgusted him.

And so even at his arrest, when his disciples resisted, even to the point of violence, he reminded them that he was in control.

This was his choice.

If at any time He wanted to be free of His sufferings, he could appeal to his Father who would dispatch more than 12 legions of angels. (Matt. 26:53)

Yet he never sought relief. He never wavered from the path that secured our salvation.
His greatest desire was for His Father’s glory and our joy.

And so as we think about the work of Christ on this Maundy Thursday- where he did so many things-

He instituted the Lord’s Supper,
he washed his disciples feet,
he comforted his disciples with the words of John 13-16
he prayed in Gethsemane.

And then as we think about the events of Good Friday:

Where he was arrested,
Falsely accused and falsely condemned

Abusively treated
And then crucified

As we think about these events, let us keep in mind that Jesus knew what was coming and he walked into these sufferings anyway.

This is love.

John 15:12 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command you. **15** No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. **17** These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.