

Find Life in the Son: Jesus Glorified John 12:12-26

Introduction

Last Sunday we considered the timeless portrait of Devotion, True and False. You remember the self-sacrificing love of Mary, the self-serving hypocrisy of Judas, and the self-protective hostility of the chief priests. Talking about devotion to Jesus naturally raises the question, Why does Jesus deserve devotion? What about Him makes Him worthy of worship? Where do we see His glory? You remember that in chapter 1 of John's Gospel, the apostle declared, We have closely observed His glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

12 The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. **13** So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" **14** And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, **15** "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" **16** His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had

been written about him and had been done to him. ¹⁷ The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. ¹⁸ The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him." ²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹ So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Key verse—John 12:23

And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."

"The hour has come." That's a significant change from what we've read before in John.

Wedding feast at Cana where He would turn water to wine, Jesus told His mother, John 2:4 My hour has not yet come.

To His brothers who wanted Him to go up to the fall feast of tabernacles, John 7:6 Jesus said to them, "My time (*kairos*) has not yet come, but your time is always here."

John 7:29-30

²⁹ I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me." ³⁰ So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.

John 8:20

These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

They wanted to arrest Him in order to kill Him. That had been their objective for over a year, but His hour had not yet come. So they were powerless to destroy Him.

But here, even as Jesus enters Jerusalem in a way that will surely intensify the determination of His enemies in Jerusalem to murder Him, He talks of His being glorified.

John 12:23

And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."

How is it possible for Jesus the Son of Man, the Messiah Savior-King to be glorified while at the same time provoking what would lead to His crucifixion that very week? We know this is on His mind because He moves immediately to talking about dying.

How can suffering and glory go together?

That is the great paradox of the gospel over which people still stumble. But it is crucial to the gospel. This is how the Savior will save. This is how the King will establish His rule. The cross comes before the crown.

Jesus' identity as the Savior-King is inseparable from His sacrificial death—even as we witnessed last week in Mary's extravagant gift of pure nard poured out on His feet prophetic, according to Jesus Himself, of His burial.

Jesus Glorified

1. Glorified in His Saving Mission (12-15)
2. Glorified in His Resurrection Power (16-19)
3. Glorified in His Fruitful Death (20-26)

1. Glorified in His Saving Mission (12-15)

¹² The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King

of Israel!" ¹⁴ And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, ¹⁵ "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"

Who is this exultant crowd?

According to the text, they are those who have made their annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. According to verses 17 and 18 they had come to see Jesus because they had heard from eye witnesses that He had raised Lazarus from the dead.

When we check out the other Gospels' record of this event, Luke 19 describes those celebrating here as "the whole multitude of His disciples." Matthew 21 records that the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" But they were not the ones shouting Hosanna. After Jesus entered Jerusalem He drove out the merchants in the temple, then healed the blind and lame in the temple. Children cheered in words like those of the crowds who had accompanied Him into the city, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

The chief priests and scribes saw the same miracles of healing, but they were enraged at the praise Jesus received from the children.

Matthew 21:16

And they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, "'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?"

Jesus is quoting from Psalm 8 that talks about the majesty of God displayed in creation for all the world to see. His glory is clear enough for even infants to see, thus rebuking his foes and enemies, who refuse to give Him glory.

According to Luke 19, the Pharisees demanded that He rebuke His disciples for their praise, but He replied, Luke 19:40 "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

However imperfect the understanding of some in the crowd may have been, what is clear is that Jesus considered their praise completely true and demonstrably self-evident from all He had said and done. The Gospels make clear that while this sent shock waves through Jerusalem and enraged Jesus' enemies, this crowd is not the same group that would cry, "Crucify Him!" later in the week. According to John 19, it was the chief priests and officers that cried out in response to Pilate after He had had Jesus scourged, "Crucify Him!"

Matthew 27 records that the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd gathered for Pilate's annual release of a prisoner to demand the release of Barabbas and the crucifixion of Jesus. It's a different crowd from this group.

These are disciples, these are pilgrim worshipers come to celebrate the Passover who have heard about the resurrection of Lazarus, which miracle had caused a number of Jews to believe in Jesus. Added to them will be children responding to the self-evident glory of God manifest in the marvelous works of Jesus.

So what was this crowd glorifying Jesus saying?

John 12:13

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

Hosanna means "Save now!"

Salvation is rescue, deliverance, healing. It can be applied to any realm of human need.

Jesus' very name means, "Yahweh saves."

The angel told Mary and Joseph to name Him Jesus because He would save His people from their sins, the human plague that has marred our world and ourselves.

They draw their praise from a familiar passage in Psalm 118:25-26

25 Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! **26** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.

The Psalm is Messianic. The preceding verse in the Psalm talk about the stone that the builders rejected becoming the head of the corner—the cornerstone. In the temple on the next day Jesus will confront the chief priests and elders with this very same passage from Psalm 118 (Matthew 21).

The one coming in the name of the Lord is none other than the Messiah, the premier King of Israel. That is why the crowd refers to Jesus as the Son of David, for God had promised David that his son would sit on his throne and reign forever. The angel refers to this truth when he announces to Mary that she would bear a son to whom God will give the throne of David to reign forever (Luke 1:31-33).

In the very Psalm the crowd quotes it is clear that the Messiah will face deadly opposition from those who are the leaders in Jerusalem (the builders).

One final piece in this picture of the promised Savior-King entering Jerusalem. According to Zechariah's prophecy He would enter not on a war-horse but on a donkey.

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

This promised King bringing salvation is righteous and humble, so He rides a humble animal, a colt of a donkey. It was not till after His resurrection that the disciples realized the prophetic significance of His having chosen this animal for His mount. Luke 19 and Matthew 21 tell us that He had sent two of His disciples into the village of Bethany to procure this young donkey that had never been ridden before. He did so intentionally not just to fulfill prophecy but to underscore the willing humility He exercised to fulfill His saving mission.

You put all this information together and it is clear that Jesus is glorified in His saving mission. Even though many of His disciples may have a skewed understanding of how He would save them, thinking mainly of His role as King, nonetheless their praise of Jesus had to do with His identity as the promised

Savior-King, the son of David, the Messiah. We glorify Jesus when we affirm His identity as the promised Messiah who has come to save us from our sin, just as His given name conveys. We need a Savior. We cannot save ourselves, as many falsely imagine. If we see Jesus as less than the Savior, we rob Him of the glory He deserves.

Applications

- In what ways can you glorify Jesus for the great Savior He is? (Your Hero, Deliverer, Healer, the Answer to the world's woe)
- What habits, attitudes, and behaviors in your life could create doubt that Jesus has saved you?
- What lesser things and persons do you tend to look to for rescue instead of Jesus the Savior-King?
- Who are the people you need to point toward Jesus as the only Savior God has sent us?

2. Glorified in His Resurrection Power (16-19)

¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. ¹⁷ The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear

witness. **18** The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. **19** So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

Three groups in this passage: first the disciples. They did not understand the significant of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem riding a donkey until Jesus was glorified, referring to His resurrection from the tomb and His ascension into heaven forty days after His crucifixion.

The saving mission Jesus came to fulfill required His death as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. For Him to reign forever as King required that He rise again after His death. But did Jesus possess that level of power? It was obvious to anyone who had seen Him raise Lazarus from the dead that the answer is yes. And for the apostles along with hundreds of others who spent time with Jesus after He Himself rose from the dead, His resurrection power was undeniable and key to the good news they proclaimed.

Without the resurrection of Jesus, His life and ministry make no sense. There is no way to combine His suffering and death with His victory over all His enemies and His eternal reign. The Messianic prophecies predict both.

The resurrection of Jesus solves the paradoxical dilemma of how the Messiah could suffer and die and yet reign forever.

The second group here is the witnesses of Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead and those who had heard their testimony. That's why there was a crowd cheering for Jesus on this day. His resurrection power was key to their conviction that He was the promised Messiah.

Over and over Peter and the other apostles testify that God raised Jesus from the dead just as David had prophesied in Psalm 16, and that they all were witnesses of God's having done so. Jesus was now exalted at the right hand of God.

The third group is the Pharisees who say to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

The Pharisees believed in resurrection, but they had no use for Jesus' power to raise the dead because they hated the acclaim His resurrection power gained for Him. They cared less about the Jesus' display of the power of God than about the popularity Jesus was gaining that put their own power and prestige at risk. They valued the glory that comes from man, not the glory of God.

And when Jesus rose from the dead, many of these men joined in the conspiracy to accuse the disciples of stealing the body, which the Jewish leaders had rendered impossible when they posted Roman soldiers to guard the tomb.

Jesus is Glorified when we affirm that He does indeed have power over death, not only in His raising others from the dead but in His own resurrection from the dead. One day He will raise us from the dead as well.

Without resurrection power there is no hope beyond the grave for us or anybody else including Jesus. If there is no resurrection, the apostles are liars, says Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, and of all men most miserable because they suffered all they did for a false hope. The promise of eternal life is meaningless unless what Christ offers is stronger than death.

Applications

- In what ways should the resurrection power of Jesus change how you view death and dying?
- In what ways do we show we value popularity among men more than we value the power of God?
- In what ways does your life evidence the resurrection power of Jesus?

3. Glorified in His Fruitful Death (20-26)

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹ So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

It may have been startling to the disciples for Greeks to be looking for Jesus too. These Greeks had come to worship at the Passover. They were proselytes of the Jewish faith. That Greeks too were looking to have time with Jesus foreshadowed the Messiah's worldwide kingdom. It is likely that Jesus was in the part of the temple precincts where Greeks were not allowed to go, so they approached Philip to see if he could bring Jesus to them. This request could have created great excitement for Philip and Andrew that finally Jesus was about to inaugurate His kingdom.

What Jesus said next was like throwing cold water on their expectations. He goes back to talking about dying. But Jesus teaches them that His dying was necessary to bearing fruit, the very success they long for. Just as a grain of wheat buried in the ground produces many grains of wheat in the harvest. Greek believers would be part of the vast harvest. People from every language, kindred, and tongue will worship Jesus as citizens of His eternal kingdom. In fact, only fifty days after the crucifixion of Jesus, at the harvest feast of the day of Pentecost, there would be a huge ingathering of Jews who had been dispersed in many countries of the world. Speaking in languages of these regions the praises of God as the Spirit of God gave ability to speak would draw a crowd. It was a sign that the gospel was not for Jews only but for all ethnicities all over the world. Jesus had to die first to produce this harvest. His death would not be the end, but the beginning.

Just as Jesus had to die to be fruitful, so His followers cannot cling to this life in this world if they wanted eternal life in the next. To follow Him requires dying to self, but it brings life and fruitfulness. Even as Jesus has taught all along, you have to deny yourself to serve Him, but when you serve and follow Him you end up wherever He is, even into heaven itself. God the Father honors those who forsake their own honor to serve and follow

Jesus. Their death to self is fruitful, even as Christ's death on the cross is fruitful.

This is precisely the sacrifice the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees refuse to make. They chose instead the present honor from man, rather than eternal honor from God.

Applications

- What does Jesus' willingness to die to save you tell you about His love for you?
- What ambitions and appetites of this life do you need to forsake in order to follow Jesus?
- In what ways do you show that you value the honor that comes from the Father more than the honor that comes from human beings?

Conclusion

Are you bringing glory to Jesus? Not that you can add to it, but that you recognize it, celebrate it, and declare it.

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- What does Jesus' willingness to die to save you tell you about His love for you?
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