

## The Hour

John 12:27-36

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<sup>27</sup> “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. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” <sup>29</sup> The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. <sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” <sup>33</sup> He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. <sup>34</sup> So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” <sup>35</sup> So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup> While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

– John 12:27-36, ESV

### Intro: Critical Moments

Some moments in our lives change everything. Sometimes we don’t see it in the moment, of course. I think back on a Thursday evening in October over 23 years ago when I walked across the room after our InterVarsity meeting to ask a girl from my French class about our homework assignment. She was talking with a cute brown-haired girl I didn’t know and they were talking about the lyrics of “Big House,” and my first words were “Hey, that’s Audio Adrenaline!” 23 years and 3 children later, I can see that was one of the most critical moments of my life.

In today’s passage, the history of the world approaches one of its most critical moments, and no one knew it – except for One Man, an itinerant rabbi from Galilee who was visiting Jerusalem for Passover. He alone saw and felt the approach of the decisive moment, the critical hour for Him, for His disciples, for all of God’s people and for the whole world.

The critical hour approaching would bring unimaginable suffering and unspeakable glory for the carpenter’s Son-turned-rabbi. It would also bring judgment for the world and the devil and an hour of salvation for the people of God. Finally, it would bring a crucial opportunity for each of us here this morning.

## I. The Hour Brings Suffering & Glory

To remind ourselves of the context from two weeks ago, some God-fearing Greeks who were in Jerusalem for Passover wanted to see Jesus. Jesus took their inquiry as a signal that this critical moment had come, saying to His disciples: *“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 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.”*

Jesus is speaking of His own coming death on the cross, which is just a few days away.

### A. Jesus’ Prayer

As He sees in His mind the coming reality of His death and all that it will mean for Him, He prays: *“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. Father, glorify your name.”*

Jesus says that the hour of His glory, which is also the hour of His death, has his soul “troubled,” using a word which means His soul is stirred up, His mind disquieted, stirred up, anxious, distressed. But why is His soul so troubled? Is Jesus anxious and distressed about the physical suffering awaiting Him? No.

Jesus knows the only way for Him to be glorified and for the people of God to be saved requires something much more distressing than a painful physical death, as excruciating as the pain of crucifixion was – so painful that it has shaped our language – excruciating literally means “from the crucifix” or “from the cross.” Jesus will have to become sin, become a curse, for us to be saved by His death:

*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. – 2 Cor. 5:21, ESV*

*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. – Galatians 3:13-14*

Jesus is anxious and distressed at the thought of becoming sin, becoming a curse for us, bearing the wrath of God and being crushed for us. Jesus knew well the words of the prophet Isaiah that foretold what was coming for Him:

*Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all. – Isaiah 53:4-6, ESV*

Knowing what is coming for Him, Jesus wrestles with how He should pray - *And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.”*

Jesus’ human nature naturally wants to be spared from the suffering of separation and death. Jesus doesn’t eagerly look forward to the prospect of being chastised, pierced, crushed, smitten by God and afflicted for our sins. In the Garden of Gethsemane in just a couple of days from this moment, Jesus will agonize until he sweats drops of blood, crying out to His Father, *“Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not My will but Yours be done.”*

Yet ultimately, Jesus knows He must have our iniquity laid on Him. He knows this is the purpose of the hour, so He resolves His prayer by simply asking, *“Father, glorify Your name.”* Jesus’ focus, His priority, the heartbeat of His life remains clear and unwavering: He will glorify His Father in all He does.

## B. The Voice from Heaven

God the Father immediately answers His Son: *from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."*

God the Father has been glorifying His name through the earthly ministry of Jesus, in at least three ways:

1. By empowering Jesus to do miraculous signs, God the Father has revealed His power and His love, His strength and character, His greatness and His goodness.
2. In Jesus' teaching, God has been revealed to people, as Jesus has taught the truth about God and His kingdom.
3. In Jesus' perfect obedience, two things have happened:
  - a. Jesus has been earning a perfect, active obedient righteousness to give to His people.
  - b. God's character has been displayed, as Jesus has been the perfect image of the invisible God in visible human form.

So, God the Father has been glorified through the miracles, teaching and perfect active obedience of Christ.

But God the Father also says, "I will glorify it again." Here, God the Father is promising that He will be glorified through the coming death and resurrection of Jesus. How?

- He will be glorified in Christ's passive obedience, as He submits Himself to the will of His Father and accepts the cross appointed for Him.
- God the Father will be glorified in the words Jesus will speak from the cross.
- He will be glorified in the way His love and justice will both be perfectly displayed in the willing sacrifice of His Son.
- He will be glorified in the defeat of Satan, as the tempter and accuser of God's people will be disarmed and defeated when the sins of God's people are atoned for on the cross.
- And He will be glorified in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, as death is overthrown and the power of God shines forth in eternal life.

So, God the Father has been glorified and He will be glorified. Jesus' life goal will be accomplished!

Then John tells us, *“The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine.”*

The crowd could not understand the voice of God from heaven, so how was the voice for their sake and not for Jesus’? Wasn’t Jesus deeply troubled? Wasn’t He comforted by the assurance of His Father? Well, first we need to understand that Jesus is using a particular Hebrew manner of speech here, and what He means is, “This voice has come for your sake and not ONLY for mine.” And then we need to see that, although the crowd could not understand the words, they had no doubt the voice was supernatural. It was still an effective sign that God had heard and responded to Jesus’ prayer, even if the words were not understood.

Then, Jesus announces the significance of the hour to the crowd, loud and clear . . .

## **II. The Hour Brings Judgment & Salvation**

*“Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.*

### **A. A Decisive Death**

Jesus tells the crowd His death will be the decisive death, the moment of decision for the world. The word He uses for judgment is “crisis,” meaning that when Jesus dies, a critical division will be made; it will be the trial, the judgment, the separation of the world.

Ever since the death of Jesus, the cross has been the true dividing line for all humanity. Race, color, language, tribe, nation, socio-economic status, profession, education – none of this matters for eternity, only the cross! Now is the judgment of the world, because from now on people stand either in defiance of or in worship before the cross.

Not only is the death of Jesus decisive for the eternal destiny of humanity, it is also the decisive downfall of the devil, whom Jesus calls “the ruler of this world.” He is cast out! From where is he cast out? From his position before God’s throne as the accuser of the brethren. All of his accusations are answered by the blood of Jesus. All his

condemnations are turned back on his own head before God's throne of justice because of the perfect atonement Jesus made for us on the cross.

## **B. A Different Drawing**

Not only is Jesus' death decisive for the judgment of the world and the condemnation of the devil, but it also becomes a very different way of drawing the world to Christ. The common concept of the Messiah people in Israel had was of a conquering king who would lead the Jewish people to overthrow the Romans, take his throne in Jerusalem and then draw all nations to Himself through His glorious reign of peace and justice. Instead, Jesus is talking about dying on a cross. He is going to be betrayed by the Jewish people, submit to the unjust tyranny of the Romans and die in humiliation, lifted high on a cross.

And yet, he says, it will be by being lifted up that He will draw all men to Himself. And He is right! People come to Jesus through the cross. They come to be forgiven, cleansed of their sin and made right with God. Through the sacrifice of the cross, all people are called to come and be reconciled to God, as open access has been made through His shed blood. The moment of His death now defines How He draws people to Himself.

## **III. The Hour Brings Light & Opportunity**

The crowd doesn't understand Jesus at all. They've read the Bible, and they haven't seem this kind of Messiah described in those pages, and *So the crowd answered him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?"*

It's important to know what they're asking. They know who the Son of Man is, as this was Jesus' favorite way of identifying Himself. What they don't understand is what kind of Messiah this Son of Man could be. Who is this Messiah lifted up on a cross? It makes no sense.

Of course, if they had read and understood Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, they might have known. If they had read and understood how much of the Messiah is shown in the agonizing of David in the Psalms of Lament, they might have known. If they knew and understood the representations and promises of Messiah found in the Passover Lamb and in the sacrifices of atonement in the Temple, maybe they would have known.

Like so many people, the crowds had read the Bible to see what they wanted to see. They had filtered it through the lens of self-interest. So Jesus issues them a warning and an invitation, to draw them out of their short-sighted, narrow-minded self-interest and into the light of life!

*<sup>35</sup> So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. <sup>36</sup> While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”*

### **A. A Warning**

Jesus' warning to them begins with a sobering reality: He will not be walking among them, teaching the truth and demonstrating the kingdom of God for much longer. He will soon be gone. They have an opportunity to walk in the light while the Light of the World is walking in their midst.

However, if they will not, then the darkness will overcome them. They will be overtaken, will walk in darkness, and will not know where they are going. In fact, they will be walking off a cliff to eternal destruction and will be blind to that reality because of the thick darkness which overcomes them.

Jesus is the Light of the World. When you hear the message of the Gospel, revealed in His word, you are called to walk in the light. If you will not, then you will continue to be in darkness until the darkness has overcome you forever. You will be blind to the reality of Your own condemnation. Many, many people sadly walk this way, living in the darkness of sin and ignorantly blind to their own sad condition.

### **B. An Invitation**

Yet Jesus does not just offer a stern warning, He also extends a gracious invitation: *“While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light”*

Not only can you walk and live in the light, but you can actually become a child of light, one whose life is filled with light. How? Believe in the light! If you believe in Jesus as the Son of God and the Light of the World, Christ in you will make you a child of God, a child of the light. You will be cleansed of your sin, clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus, filled with His Spirit of truth, reborn with a new nature after His likeness. You will be a child of light.

If you have already come to believe in Jesus, this is who you are: You are a child of light if you believe in the light. You are no longer under condemnation. You are free from guilt and shame and the disastrous effects of the fall and your own sin. You are alive forevermore! This is why Jesus came to His hour of glory and His hour of suffering, for you and your salvation.

## **Conclusion: A Crucial Response**

And so you now have an opportunity to make a crucial response. Do you see how much Jesus changes everything? Even the world crucial comes from the cross and means cross-like or cross-shaped. The cross is of such vital importance, it is the very definition of crucial.

So, you have an opportunity today to make a crucial response. Jesus is the light of the world, the Son of Man who has been lifted up on a cross. He did so to bring life to a world of death, justification to those under condemnation, healing to those broken by sin, reconciliation to those alienated from God, peace to those at war with God, themselves and each other, hope for those trapped in despair, light to those who walk in darkness, forgiveness to those condemned by guilt, a covering of grace to those covered in shame, and adoption as sons of God to those lonely and afflicted.

He says to you this morning: *“Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. My yoke is easy and my burden is light.”* Why is it light? Because He bore the heavy burden for us!

He says, *“While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”* How will you respond?