

John 12 19-50

Good morning and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn in your bibles to John 12 please?

Last week we saw the incredible scenes of the anointing at Bethany, the plot to kill Lazarus, and the triumphal entry.

Remember, Jesus is in the last week of His earthly ministry. The horrors and agony of the cross are now just days away.

This morning we'll pick up our study in verse 20 and finish the rest of chapter 12.

The title of our message this morning is GRACE AND TRUTH.

Let's read verses 20-21 **20 Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. 21 Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus.**

LET'S PRAY

The crowds in Jerusalem are excited. Earlier they were waiving palm branches. You can be sure the apostles were walking with Jesus, brimming and beaming with a new confidence, for the Messiah has entered Jerusalem.

With the throngs of people hovering on Jesus' every word, the remainder of John 12 reveals shocking teachings of Jesus that not only shook up His listeners 2,000 years ago, but frankly can cause you and I to get a little uncomfortable. We'll see this as the chapter unfolds.

20 Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. These Greeks are looking to worship at Passover, which means they are gentile proselytes-which is just a fancy name for a non-Jewish convert to Judaism. A non-Jew

could convert to Judaism by undergoing circumcision and then observing the law. So, there's a group of these converts looking to worship at the feast of Passover...

21 Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip was the only apostle who had a Greek name, so it's likely, these Greeks chose to ask Philip for a meeting with Jesus because of his Greek heritage.

Now this is an important section of scripture that we can't just pass over.

Earlier Jesus had said **John 10:16** "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."

Who are the other sheep? It's the gentiles-non Jews. Remember **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Jesus is the savior of not just the Jews, but of the world. And now we see the world is starting to come to Him. So they ask Philip, and he does something peculiar...

22 Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

The apostle Philip appears to have had some hesitation about introducing these Greek converts to Jesus. And I wonder why? Perhaps the earlier words of Jesus gave him pause. **Matthew 10:5** These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Perhaps Philip sought Andrew's help because introducing Gentiles to Jesus was difficult for these Jewish disciples, and Philip needed encouragement to do so. We can't say for certain.

23 But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. This is a huge shift in our study of John- Jesus' moment of glory has now arrived.

As we've studied the gospels, we've seen how Jesus had kept saying that His time had not yet come. Just in John's gospel Jesus said His hour had not yet come in chapter 2, chapter 4, chapter 7 and chapter 8!

Much like an orchestra reaching the crescendo in a dramatic moment, Jesus announces His hour has come.

So now that the hour has come for Jesus to be glorified, what will His glorification entail? Perhaps some amazing lightning bolts across the sky, maybe some giant earthquakes to shake up those in a spiritual slumber?

No, rather Jesus' glorification would be a wooden cross.

The cross was the culmination of His coming, the ultimate act of obedience and the greatest fulfillment of divine will and love.

Jesus now speaks of His impending death.

24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. Plant a kernel of wheat, and the moisture in the soil softens its shell and it releases its seeds. The seeds germinate, and sprout, and grow toward the sunshine. Its life, springing forth from death.

Through His sacrificial death on the cross at Calvary, Jesus gives the free offer of salvation and eternal life for all who follow Him.

25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Denying the flesh, dying to our sinful nature, dying to ourselves, is a theme that Jesus had taught on several occasions. Matthew 10:39 "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

and

Mark 8:36; For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

and

Luke 14:26 26 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

Look at Romans 8 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

The concept and application of dying to self is foundational to being a follower of Christ.

This is one of the greatest challenges to our walk with Christ isn't it?

Whenever a person's focus is all about themselves, and finding themselves, they will not find what they're truly looking for.

This is one of the many reasons the whole gender fluidity issue is so tragic and heartbreaking. Kids are being instructed to place all their focus upon themselves, to make everything about them.

They're instructed to celebrate pride, and revel in exaltation of self.

But it's a futile exercise that will only lead to further frustration.

To hate your life means not living in a self-centered way, but being a servant of others. It's denying self. And the Bible tells us the one who lives a life of service in the name of the Lord will be rewarded in this life and in the life to come.

And this is a good reminder that we're not saved by serving the Lord, yet we are saved TO serve the Lord.

James 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

One of the greatest joys of being the pastor of this fellowship is to watch how so many of you live this out-dying to self, serving others in the name of Jesus. It's a wonderful testament of Jesus working in your life.

But serving Jesus isn't all there is to being a disciple. Look at verse 26.

26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; pause here: To be a Christian is to serve Jesus AND to follow Him. Now this doesn't mean that we stop working our job, or caring for our family, or studying at school. It means we're to do all these things as a servant of Jesus, a follower of Jesus, with the love of Jesus.

It's a dangerous thing to serve in the name of Jesus without truly following Him.

In Revelation 2 we see a strong rebuke by Jesus to the church at Ephesus. **Revelation 2 1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,**

'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot

bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

For disciples of Jesus, self-sacrifice doesn't just mean putting others before themselves. It also means putting Jesus first.

Because it's easier to serve Jesus (by serving others) than it is to follow Jesus.

STORY?

...26 and where I am, there My servant will be also. Jesus isn't describing forced slavery, where the servant wants to be free from the master. Being a disciple is a chosen, willing servant that simply wants to be close to the Master.

...26 If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor. This is an astonishing promise. The reward for serving Jesus is to receive honor from God the Father.

27 "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Jesus was born to die. He is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. You remember the wisemen at His baby shower gave Him myrrh, a burial spice.

Here we see that Jesus was troubled because He knew what the agonies of the cross would involve. Not just the physical torture He would endure, Jesus' death would involve separation from His Father, and bearing God's wrath for the sins of the world.

So after saying His soul is troubled, Jesus then says...

28 Father, glorify Your name. Pause here

This statement summarizes and describes the entirety of Jesus' life doesn't it?

As Jesus thought of the cross just a few days away, His main concern was to glorify the name and character of God the Father. More than deliverance from the hour of the Cross, Jesus wanted God's glory.

When hardship and difficulty have us in their grasp, we tend to get grumpy, then complain and ask God why He lets unpleasant things happen to us.

But Jesus models for all of us this morning the proper response- we should learn to say, 'Father, through this suffering and through this pain, glorify yourself.'

Lets read all of verse 28...

28 Father, glorify Your name. Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

Jesus' prayer was answered audibly by God the Father.

This is the 3rd time we see in the gospels where God audibly spoke of His son. The other two were at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration.

Approaching the cross, the great concern of Jesus was to glorify the Father, and He was assured that He already had, and would continue to do so.

But remember-Jesus is saying this in Jerusalem, where there are crowds of people around Him-how do they respond to this scene?

29 Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." This is always how it is, isn't it? How can one person see a miracle that glorifies God, and another witness explains it away? How could a thief on one cross confess Christ, while the other doesn't?

30 Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. According to Jesus there were two reasons a gory cross became His moment of glory... On the cross "the world was judged" and "Satan was cast out."

When Satan took Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted, he promised Him the kingdoms of the world - but without the cross - all Jesus had to do was bow down and worship Satan.

The reason Satan used Judas to betray Jesus, and tried to sift Peter and the disciples like wheat, was because he wanted to discourage Jesus.

But Satan's opposition to Jesus goes back even further. Satan tried to exterminate the Jews in the book Esther with the wicked Haman. Satan tried to stop Jesus with king Herod having the babies murdered in Bethlehem shortly after Jesus' birth.

Satan has tried and failed every time to defeat God. And this battle came to its culmination on the cross.

Colossians 2:15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

No longer were the coverings of the OT sacrifices necessary, because through the cross, Jesus dealt with sin once and for all.

Hebrews 7:26 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those

high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." 33 This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

The verb used for lifted has a deliberate double meaning. It means both a literal elevation (as in being raised up on a cross) and exaltation (being raised in rank or honor).

34 The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" Jesus' many predictions of His death continued to puzzle His listeners. They were probably thinking of the passages in the Old Testament that spoke of Messiah and His kingdom enduring forever.

Yet Jesus was clearly speaking of His death. How could Jesus be the Messiah and die they wonder?

Couple this with the fact that when the crowd cried out in the beginning of John 12 "hosanna", or "save now", they weren't speaking of their personal salvation. Rather they were looking for a messiah who would free them politically, who would set them free from the oppressive Roman regime.

But Jesus came for an entirely different purpose.

Jesus is the King the Jews were promised! And He will deliver them from all their enemies - including Rome.

But what so many people didn't understand was Jesus' timing.

They wanted political deliverance now - save now! But that wasn't Jesus' intention. Jesus came the first time to save them spiritually from their sin.

And now, you and I await His return.

Jesus Christ is coming back. Satan's future eternal destruction is sure.

Revelation. 20: 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where^[fn] the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Deliverance from evil is coming!

35 Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them. Notice that Jesus didn't answer their question in verse 35 of who the Son of Man is. He already explained and declared several times that He is the Son of man, that He and the Father are One.

Jesus urged His hearers to walk in the Light, the brilliance of His earthly presence while they had it. After the Cross, when the Light was no longer present with them, it would be harder for them to believe.

Now, verses 37-41 are some of the most debated verses in all of the Bible.

37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, 38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

"Lord, who has believed our report?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"^[fn]

39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

40 “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
Lest they should see with their eyes,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.” [fn]

41 These things Isaiah said when [fn] he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

This is one of those areas in scripture that can make us squirm in our theological seats. It says God blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts-but what about free will?

To understand this, let's look at the first place we see God hardening a heart, when God hardened pharaoh's heart back in Exodus 4.

Exodus 4:21 And the LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.

If you have a concordance at home, study the Hebrew word in this verse for harden. And when you open your concordance, I use Strongs, strongest concordance, you'll see that the word for harden here in Hebrew is KHA-ZAK. KHA-ZAK means hardened or strengthened, or to hold.

Now as we read of Moses' dealings with Pharaoh in Exodus, we read, "Pharaoh hardened his heart".

And if you pull out your handy dandy concordance and study the word hardened there, when it says Pharaoh hardened his heart, you'll see a different Hebrew word. The Hebrew word there is KA-VAD.

So why does this matter? Because when we read of the Lord hardening Pharaoh's heart it means the Lord strengthened the already hardened heart of Pharaoh.

In other words, Pharaoh set his heart against God and not only did God allow it, but God also eventually strengthened Pharaoh in his position.

When Moses performs the first 5 miracles, the bible says over and over again that pharaoh hardened his heart. He KA-VAD his heart. It's not until after the 6th plague that it says God made the heart of Pharaoh firm. KHA-ZAK.

In quoting from Isaiah 6:9-10 John emphasized that unbelief was because God acted in judgment upon those who refused to see His truth and turn to Him. God would strengthen them in their decision.

This isn't saying that the hardening takes place without the will or against the will of these people, rather these men repeatedly chose evil. It was their own deliberate choice, and God eventually strengthened them in their choice.

Now the bible tells us God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. **Ezek. 33:11 Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'**

We see God's heart in **1 Tim. 2:4; 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

AND

2 Pet. 3:9. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, [fn] not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

However there does seem to be a point of no return, one that none of us knows, where a person denies Christ so much that God will confirm their decision, and they cannot believe.

I'm convinced that denying God is irrational. We don't have a blind faith, or an anti-intellectual faith. In fact, God calls us to reason. In Isaiah God says 'Come now, let us reason together says the Lord.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. It's reasonable, it makes sense.

David said in Psalm 14:1

The fool has said in his heart,

"There is no God."

They are corrupt,

They have done abominable works,

There is none who does good.

It's instinctive for mankind to believe in God, we're created for it. Irrational unbelief denies the existence and need for God, and if a person continues down that road, God will strengthen them in it.

42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. What a tragic indictment.

We'll see later, 2 of the religious leaders, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea take Jesus' body off the cross.

44 Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. 45 And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. Jesus shouts again that He is God's Representative, and so closely connected with God, that to believe in Jesus means believing in God.

And notice there's a distinction between the Son and the Father in their subsistence, and a unity between them in their essence.

46 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. Jesus again claimed to have come to dispel "darkness." He did this by revealing God. And we know the problem don't we- John 3;19 "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

47 And if anyone hears My words and does not believe,[fn] I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. The same message that brings life to those who believe it, will result in condemnation, and eternity in hell for those who reject it.

Now the "last day" is the day unbelievers will stand before God in judgment, namely, at the great white throne judgment Revelation 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God,[fn] and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written

in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.[fn] 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

God doesn't send anyone to hell. When a person rejects Him through Jesus, they are bringing eternal judgment upon themselves.

49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. 50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.” Jesus, knowing the cross is just a few days away, was perfectly obedient to the father.

John 13-washing the feet