

The Paradoxical Promise of Life.

*Paradox: a statement that seems contrary to common sense and yet is perhaps true.

How do I get what my soul longs for in this life?

That question brings us to John 12 where we find a promise of God that speaks directly to this question.

WHEN A PERSON'S AFFECTIONS ARE FOCUSED INWARDLY ON THIS TEMPORAL LIFE, HIS LIFE WILL VANISH BEFORE HIS EYES, BUT WHEN A PERSON'S AFFECTIONS ARE SET ON GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSES, HE WILL NEVER LOSE OUT ON LIFE IN ITS FULLEST SENSE.

I think we need to look at the greater context of this verse, which includes verses 20-26, and can be broken down into 4 parts.

Part #1 - John sets the stage for the statement of Jesus. **12:20-23**

Throughout the book of John Jesus had been saying that His time had not yet come, but upon hearing from his disciples that Greeks were after Him, Jesus says, "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." We learn now in chapter 12 what is meant by "Jesus' time, or Jesus' hour" that was to come. It is the time in which He is to be glorified.

The program of God is about to switch from Jew to Gentile. Jesus is about to be rejected by the Jews and the program of God will transition. When this change happens, the primary people who are going to be in-step with God through faith in Jesus are going to be Gentiles, not Jews.

This would all happen because Jesus would be glorified. The Greeks coming to see Jesus was the sign that said, "now is the time for Jesus to be glorified." How would Jesus be glorified? How would this transition fully take place? Jesus would have to die.

Part #2 - Jesus speaks of a dying seed to illustrate His own death that leads to glory. **12:24**

It's interesting that Jesus said that His hour to be glorified had come, and then immediately starts talking about something dying. Essentially, He is saying, "I must die in order to produce a harvest."

Just like a grain of wheat must die in order to produce something, Jesus must die on a cross and be buried in a tomb to produce eternal life for those who believe in Him.

The death of Jesus Christ was, according to God, that glorious moment when God opened the door for our eternal life to be a reality through faith in Jesus. It is the death of Jesus Christ that

produces eternal life for anyone. If Jesus had not of died on that cross, then the there would be no fruit produced. We are saved because of His death.

Part #3 - Jesus explains that death is the way to life. **12:25**

'Whoever' indicates that this statement includes all people on earth - whoever has the affections of his heart set on life here and now on earth, that person will eventually lose his life.

To those who are the unaved, if you go on in life loving your temporary life and never coming to terms with Christ and Him crucified, then you will one day die and that will be the end of it.

To those who are saved, if you set the affections of your heart on this temporary life and all that the world has to offer, you will lose even though you've been redeemed. You won't lose heaven, but you will lose rewards in heaven, fellowship with God, a good testimony for Christ, and you will miss out on the great things God could to do in your life.

Hate in our language is a strong word, but the translators used this word for a reason. I think there is a point where we have to come to the conclusion that we hate the thought of living life out of step with God. To the world, it may look like we hate our very own lives, being willing to say no to us and yes to God, but according to God, it is that very thing that produces life to its fullest potential within a person.

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." - Jim Elliot

Part #4 - Jesus said it looks like serving Him in honor. **12:26**

We give up our wants, our desires, our passions, and our goals, in order to serve Christ. If we want to serve Him we need to follow Him. That means we continually follow Him by learning the Bible and living according to it. Make this the constant theme of your life, and you will find that Christ will lead you in life.

"What does Christ want me to do? Am I doing it?"

Notice the result: the Father will honor him. The person who has come to terms with Christ and Him crucified, and then goes on to serve Christ, knowing His Word and obeying it, God the Father will not only honor that person in eternity, He will gift him what his soul longs for most - life in its fullest sense, starting now and continuing eternally forever.