

That You May Have Life In His Name

John 12:9-50

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What we will see today –

- The ongoing plot to execute is in motion behind the scenes as the Pharisees operate out of fear (losing control) and anger (spiritual blindness) towards who Jesus is
- Jesus knows what is before Him and what His death will mean for those who believe
- The consistent reminder that Jesus is doing the will of the Father for His glory
- The invitation to believe and trust for life in His name

The Plot to Kill Lazarus

⁹ When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

In the background, plans are being made for the execution of Jesus and Lazarus – the fear of losing control, the spiritual blindness and hardened hearts of Jewish leaders were ready to be done with Jesus.

The Triumphal Entry

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.

It’s important to remember that the Jews were expecting a different kind of king – what they were hoping for and what Jesus was like were two different things.

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 (Zec 9:9)

Jews were thinking a political and military King would lead them to victory from Romans oppression – but Jesus came as a humble Servant King to bring victory from the oppression of sin and Satan through his perfect love and life, through his perfect obedience unto death, even death on a cross.

Charles Ross Weed writes this poem comparing Jesus and Alexander the Great.¹

*Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three, One died in Babylon and one on Calvary. One
gained all for self, and one Himself He gave.
One conquered every throne, the other every grave.
When died the Greek, forever fell his throne of swords,
But Jesus died to live forever Lord of lords.*

*Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three.
The Greek made all men slaves, the Jew made all men free.
One built a throne on blood, the other built on love. The
one was born of earth, the other from above.
One won all this earth to lose all earth and Heaven.
The other gave up all that all to Him be given.
The Greek forever died, the Jew forever lives.
He loses all who gets and wins all things who gives.*

Jesus – the servant King – humbly rides into Jerusalem. No army. No military. Uttermost humility under heaven’s authority.

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.”

Some Greeks Seek Jesus

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.

³⁸ And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

*** (Matthew 10:38–39)

The Son of Man Must Be Lifted Up

²⁷ “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. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”

¹ Hughes, *John* 303

²⁹ The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. ³⁴ 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?” ³⁵ 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. ³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

Jesus knew what kind of death he was going to die – Jesus knew he would be lifted up on a cross, He knew his purpose, He knew God’s plans, He knew that weight of guilt and shame to be placed upon his soon to be beaten bruised body – He knew. In perfect love. In perfect obedience. Each day, one day closer to his betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion.

Sinclair Ferguson writes:

The cross is at the heart of the gospel; it makes the gospel good news. Christ died for us. He has stood in our place before God’s judgment seat; He has borne our sins. God has done something on the cross which we could never do. But God does something to us as well as for us through the cross. He persuades us that He loves us. ²

The Unbelief of the People

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. ³⁷ Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, ³⁸ so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

⁴⁰ “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart,
lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart,
and turn, and I would heal them.”

⁴¹ Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. ⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

DA Carson comments on this hardening of hearts.. “God’s judicial hardening is not presented as the capricious manipulation of an arbitrary potentate cursing morally neutral or even morally pure beings, but as a holy condemnation of a guilty people who are condemned to do and be what they themselves have chosen.” ³

² Ferguson, *Grow in Grace* 58

³ Carson, *The Gospel of John* 448-9

Jesus Came to Save the World

⁴⁴ And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. ⁴⁵ And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷ If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”
(Jn 12:9–50)

To believe in Jesus is also to believe in Him who sent me.

Dane Ortland writes on what it means to believe...

“We need to understand that however long we have been walking with the Lord, whether we have never read the whole Bible or have a PhD in it, we have a perverse resistance to this. Out of his heart flows mercy; out of ours, reluctance to receive it. We are the cool and calculating ones, not he.” He is open-armed. We stiff-arm. Our naturally decaffeinated views of God’s heart might feel right because we’re being stern with ourselves, not letting ourselves off the hook too easily. Such sternness feels appropriately morally serious. But this deflecting of God’s yearning heart does not reflect Scripture’s testimony about how God feels toward his own.” (p. 144)

“That place in your life where you feel most defeated, he is there; he lives there, right there, and his heart for you, not on the other side of it but in that darkness, is gentle and lowly. Your anguish is his home. Go to him. “If you knew his heart, you would.” (p. 187).⁴

To see Jesus is to see Him. Can you see?

To believe in Jesus means NOT remaining in darkness. Are you walking in darkness?

To hear the words of Jesus and believe the words of Jesus means salvation. Can you hear?

To reject Jesus - to not receive the words of Jesus means judgment. Are you rejecting Jesus?

The Father sent Jesus with what to say and what to speak.

Jesus knows this is eternal life and He speaks as the Father has told me.

Do you believe?

⁴ Ortland, Gentle and Lowly, 144, 187