

3/31/24

Good morning Cornerstone, and Happy Easter! Today is the Day that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Amen! It is good to be with you this morning. My name is Joe and I am one of the Pastors here at Cornerstone. Thank you for joining us this morning. If this is your first time worshiping with us, I want to invite you to fill out our connection card. It just lets us get to know you a little more and be able to connect with you more. If Cornerstone is home for you, you can use our app to check in and let us know you are here. There you can also fill out a prayer request so we can be praying for you throughout the week.

We have been going through a series called broken preparing ourselves for today easter Sunday the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. We have talked about how Jesus' death was necessary for salvation and how salvation can only come through Jesus. Week 2 we talked about how Jesus is not just concerned with our worship towards him physically but he is concerned for the position of our hearts in worship. Finally last week we talked about the problem that all humanity faces, that is sin. The solution to that problem is Jesus

Today our scripture is going to be found in John 12:20-36. If you have your bibles go ahead and turn there if you would like to follow along with us. If you do not have a paper bible and would like one we have some available for you in the back. You can also follow along with us today on the app with the scripture and our sermon notes available to you there.

But before we dive in the teaching today, lets read a part of our passage this morning together which comes from the book of John 12:31-32. So let us stand as you are able, out of reverence for God's word as we proclaim the truth found in His Scripture.

[1] SCRIPTURE John 12:31-32

"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."

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

INTRO

[2] In an age of social media we have some of the best and the worst of humanity on display right? We have funny memes, or the reels that you can watch over and over again and it gets funnier every time. My wife and I have an Instagram chat where literally we just send funny stuff back and forth with each other. Sometimes it'll be funny stuff about marriage or an encouraging sermon clip.

Social media and the internet have brought us to what is called the 'age of information'. It can be both good and bad, especially when it comes to Christianity. There is something that we can come across that are super encouraging and there are others that are designed to lead people away from the gospel by including a little bit of truth and a lot of lies. We are going to talk about a couple of them that have popped across my news feed over the past couple weeks. We are going to touch on topics like Judgement, death, obedience and life. Some can sound scary and intimidating, but the main point that I want to talk about came from something that also came across my social media. It is this.

[3] Know Jesus, know hope.

I'm sure some of you have seen something like this before or at least something like it. In all of the topics we are going to cover this morning, especially the ones that are a bit scary or uncomfortable, it will always come back to this.

KNOW Jesus, **KNOW** Hope.

I like that it conveys 2 messages. If we are to know Jesus that 'know' then we are to know again 'know' Hope. Also if we are without Jesus that no as in 'No' then we will be without hope again 'no'.

On Easter we celebrate that the Lord is risen today. It is a celebration in the wake of good Friday where we mourned his death. But it is through his resurrection that we understand the hope that we have in Christ. A hope not just for ourselves but a hope that is bold and true for the whole world.

Know Jesus, Know hope.

BODY

Lets dive into our passage to see this truth and understand how Jesus presented it to the people before his death, and the reality that comes in the wake of it.

[4] This passage that we find in John 12 marked the climax of Jesus' ministry in John's account. Before Jesus is to be arrested and crucified, he is going to make this shift in after this passage to move from ministry to the masses to the private ministry to his disciples. Summarizing for them the next 4 chapters everything that he has taught them throughout his ministry.

Looking at John 13-17 the shift takes place for a couple of reasons. The first is preparation for his death. Even though Jesus knew that he was going to be resurrected today easter Sunday, he still intentionally took the time to prepare and equip his disciples for the work that was going to come after his ascension to heaven. Because after the resurrection he was only going to be with them for 40 days and then the Holy Spirit was going to come after he ascended.

The second reason is the door is opened to belief and faith to all people. That is faith coming to the people outside of the Jews, that Jesus spent the majority of his time teaching and preaching to. This pinnacle point comes in our passage this morning starting in John 12:20.

[5] John 12:20-21

"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.'"

As we have talked about before the gospel of John has a heavy focus on symbolism in his account of things. He intentionally includes the detail that these people came to worship in the temple with the Jews, but they were not Jewish, they were Greeks. They were clearly pointed out as not Jewish, but John points out that they believed in the God of Israel.

He says that they were headed to Jerusalem to worship during the Passover celebration. This detail of them being Greeks was probably because even though they believed in God, they did not follow all of the Jewish customs. If they both believed and followed the customs, probably referencing circumcision, they would have been accepted and referred to as Jewish by conversion.

These Greeks come to Philip, one of Jesus' disciples, and said that they wanted to 'see' Jesus. The symbolism of this direct appeal to 'see him' would have been John alluding to their faith in Christ. They wanted to see him because they believed in who he was. We see Philip then grab Andrew, who both these men were known to find people and bring them to Jesus, and they go tell Him about this.

[6] John 12:22-23

"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.'"

Jesus saying that 'the hour has come' is Jesus identifies the significance of this moment. The Greeks are now coming to him in faith. There has been a shift. The Jews have rejected Jesus, his death a few days from this moment being the obvious and ultimate rejection and the final testimony of it. But there have been several instances throughout Jesus' ministry where he has been rejected by the Jews. Which was predicted in multiple OT prophecies about the Messiah¹.

This was a sign of the end of Jesus' ministry. It had always been a future event that Jesus talked about with his disciples², but now it was a present reality. The events he talked with them about were going to unfold.

The Jews rejection of Jesus as the Messiah would have opened the door for the grafting of the Gentiles³ into the promise of the Jewish people. This promise being earthly relationship with God and the promise of eternity in Heaven. The promise of the Messiah being for all people was also prophesied many times in the OT⁴. This is how that prophecy was going to come about, through his rejection of God's chosen people. Peter later in his sermon at Pentecost quotes Joel 2:28-32 saying how God's spirit was going to be poured out on all people, meaning both Jew and Gentile.

Jesus said that in this hour that has come, it is identified as the Son of Man being glorified. This is Jesus talking about the events that we are celebrating today, Jesus' resurrection and ascension, that are to take place after his death⁵. Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension are the things that have to take place before he is glorified.

The glorification of the Son of Man which is talked about in Daniel 7:13-14 where the Messiah is given dominion, a kingdom and glory, come from the Messiah's place on the throne of Heaven. It is through these things that happened over 2,000 years ago, that the kingdom of the Messiah is established. Christ is placed on the judgement seat over the everlasting kingdom. Jesus talked about the judgement later in our passage but first Jesus talks about the value of his death.

[7] John 12:24

"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"

¹ Isaiah 53; Psalm 118:22; Micah 5:2

² John 7:33-35

³ Romans 9-11

⁴ Hosea 1:10, 2:23; Deut 32:21; Isaiah 29:10, 65:1; Ps 69:22-23

⁵ John 3:13=Daniel 7:13-14

John 12:24 explains that God's way of setting everything right is for Jesus to die on behalf of sinners⁶, that is you and me. Jesus speaks of a seed falling to the ground, dying, and then producing a fruit in keeping with the nature of the seed itself. During this time of Easter, especially in the celebration of Good Friday, it's critical to see Jesus's death as the only possible way of producing the fruit of salvation in our lives. It requires all believers to accept that their status before God, would be permanently fallen, unless Jesus hadn't "fallen" at the cross and died⁷.

To provide a better picture of this let's look at Jesus' analogy of the seed being planted. Jesus says that the grain of wheat possesses less value unless it produces fruit. In order to produce the "life" that it is capable of, and has the potential to do, it first has to 'die'. It would have to be buried in the ground, even in modern times do with someone who has died, we bury them.

[8] Looking at the anatomy of the seed for a moment, a seed consists of 4 parts. There is the 'plumule' which becomes the first shoot of the plant. The 'radicle' becomes the first root of the plant. The 'cotyledon', is a food storage for the plant as it grows until it reaches the surface and can complete the process of photosynthesis and produce its own food. Finally, you have the 'seed coat' which is just the protective layer around the seed.

The seed as it germinates, it is actually consumed by the plant as it grows. The bulk of the seed is the cotyledon. It acts as a food source for the growing young plant. The seed then must die, to be born. Jesus uses this illustration to show that he is willing to suffer and die for the course God has set before him. The act of his obedience to death produces the fruit of salvation for all people. What he is suggesting is that his own value is substantially less if he is unwilling to follow God's will and die for the forgiveness of sins.

[9] N. T. Wright explains the seed analogy: "Jesus's death will be like sowing a seed into the ground. It will look like a tragedy, the large-scale, fully grown version of the tiny 'tragedy' that a small boy feels at planting one of his largest and best 'conkers' in the ground and never seeing it again. In fact, it will be a triumph: the triumph of God's self-giving love, the love that looks death itself in the face and defeats it by meeting it voluntarily, on behalf not just of Israel but of the whole world, the world represented by these 'Greeks'"

Jesus death creates the life that we all enjoy when we have entered into salvation. When we do not recognize or understand Jesus' death we remove the substantial value of Jesus' purpose. When we do we see things like this floating around social media.

[10] *"If the Church were Christian, Jesus would be a model for living, not an object of worship. If we in the church were serious about honoring Jesus, conducting ourselves as he did would be our chief goal. For the joy of Christian faith is not to be found in the worship of Jesus, which he never expected and seemed to discourage, but in modeling Jesus' mercy and love, which alone has the power to transform us and our world."*

Now at first glance there something about it that should feel 'icky'. It doesn't sound too bad until you look at it through the lens of this passage. It has a little bit of truth and a lot of lies. Jesus is to be

⁶ John 3:16; Mark 10:45

⁷ Romans 3:21–26; 2 Corinthians 5:21

glorified. To be seated on the judgement seat, a heavenly throne. Sounds like worship to me. He is to be the Son of Man, king over an everlasting kingdom.

But this quote removes the thing that Jesus says gives his life substantially more value. His death and the fruit that comes out of it. It was not just the things that Jesus taught or modeled that has the power to transform, it was his death. If his teachings and love had the power to transform there would be no need for him to die, but that's not what Jesus said. His life was just the seed. When he dies and is buried it is the fruit that it produces that changes lives. This willingness to die is the model that Jesus teaches we are supposed to embody.

[11] John 12:25-26

“Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 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.”

Jesus is talking about this principle of dying to self. He establishes that this is the principle that he is applying to himself, and it is the principle that should be applied to all those that believe in him. Jesus says anyone who lives life for themselves, destroys the potential of their earthly life for an eternal reward. Like Jesus and the seed, we have the same potential to produce substantially more value in the fruit of our lives after we have died to self to fulfill the will of God over our lives.

If people decide that their life is more important than God's will, then they will forfeit the type of life God wants to give them. This life is a life of relationship with God, both now on earth and in eternity⁸. John described it in chapter 10 that Jesus came that we have life and have it to the fullest or abundantly⁹. This is a presentation from Jesus for those that have not believed yet. He is speaking about the people who are present, they have an opportunity to believe, but chose not to, because they value their lives, possession, or desires more than they value a relationship with God.

This idea of 'hating' your life is not disdain for your existence. It is not Jesus telling us to wake up every morning look ourselves in the mirror and say 'I hate you'. It is a literary term called an idiom. It's an expression that holds a different meaning to its literal meaning. Like saying you are under the weather, or you see your family 'once in a blue moon'.

The meaning that Jesus is conveying is someone desiring to follow the will of God, would forfeit the usual desires and wants for the sake of obedience. The one who rejects self-centered choices, his life will be rewarded in eternity.

Those who choose to believe in Jesus will receive life forever. This life is eternal communion with God the Father in heaven, because of the earthly relationship with Jesus. There is this distinction that Jesus talks about. He expresses 2 things service and devotion. Those who are completely devoted to his work are the ones that serve him.

[12] Follow (devotion) = service.

⁸ Prov 37:4; Ps 16:11; James 1:25

⁹ John 10:10

To serve Jesus is to believe in him. That is belief his work (not miracles but death, resurrection and ascension), belief in his commands and belief in his claims (to be God). The service that comes from that belief is submission to the will of God.

Wherever Jesus leads, those that believe and are devoted will follow. Jesus says that those that do this will be honored by the Father. This is not like a shout out as you enter the pearly gates. Jesus is inferring that those that follow and serve Jesus will receive leadership responsibilities in the world that is to come, the Kingdom of the Messiah¹⁰.

This is Jesus equipping Philip and Andrew on the ways to respond to people that are looking for Jesus. It is him expressing to them that He is soon going to be gone and the way of faith that these Greeks are expressing, is to follow the will of God through self-denial. There would have been crowd more than likely around Jesus, so while he is equipping Philip and Andrew he is also evangelizing to the crowd.

Jesus then shifts in his message. The reality of these things that are about to happen, he expresses, it kind of wash over him. And he points to the action that is to come, to bring God glory.

[13] John 12:27-28a

“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.”

Jesus is coming to terms with the fact that he is about to take on the sins of the world, which is why he says that his soul is troubled. Even though his soul is troubled he knows that this is the purpose that he came for. So even though he is troubled what can he do about it? He says, ‘what shall I say then?’. He could pray for God to change his mind and save him from the fate that his is about to go through, or he could be disobedient. Both go against the purpose he came for and what is God’s will. Which he just taught was a mark of his being glorified and what he is going to model so others can repeat it.

Now some of us might remember the words that Jesus said in the garden of gethsemane right before he was being arrested.

[14] Matthew 26:38-39

“Then he said to them, ‘My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch^d with me’” ³⁹ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.’

Again, his soul is troubled or sorrowful, he knows that he is close to death. He says, ‘let this cup pass from me’. He is praying, ‘God if there is any other way, let it be so’. Jesus also says, ‘nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will’. If there is no other way, I will do this because it is your will and I desire your will to be done above my own. It is exactly what Jesus taught to the disciples and the people. He is placing his desire to live in the will of God above his own fleshly desires. A perfect model that we are to replicate in our own lives.

Back in our original passage in John, Jesus says, ‘Father glorify your name’. The purpose Jesus was going to achieve in his death was to bring God glory. God’s desire in everything that he does is to bring himself

¹⁰ Lk 12:44, 19:17; Rev 2:26-27

glory. In creation, in his intervention with the Israelites, and with sending Jesus it, was all to bring himself Glory. Our salvation through Christ is then a byproduct of the purpose of God bringing glory to himself.

Then we see God respond to this prayer of bringing himself glory.

[15] John 12:28b-29

“Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”²⁹ The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.”

This thunderous voice from Heaven comes and speaks audibly for all to hear. This is the crowd that Jesus just witnessed to about his death, self denial, and following the will of God. This voice that responds would have been a validation of all the things that Jesus just said to them.

This is the third time that we have record of the voice of God speaking audibly to be heard by people throughout Jesus’ ministry. There was Jesus’ baptism¹¹, Jesus’ transfiguration¹², and then this moment. All of them were signs and validations of Jesus’ ministry and actions taken by God to show Jesus’ divinity as the Son of God.

All these times are what the voice of God is pointing to. God says that he has glorified it, meaning himself, in the past. Jesus glorified God by performing signs and following the will of his father even when doing so was painful or difficult.

God has glorified his name through Jesus before, and it says that he will do it again. This is that God will be glorified after Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension. When Jesus suffers and dies for salvation, through it, the name of the Father will be glorified. Jesus is the seed that will die and be buried, and He says that he will bear much fruit. Salvation is only one fruit, Glory is the other. This is the Father expressing satisfaction, not only in the life of Jesus has already led, but it is expressing approval of the work that is still to come.

The people think it was an angel that spoke, but Jesus is addressing the Father, and this is the Father’s response. In scripture, God’s voice is the only one that is ever identified as being thunderous¹³. The voice identifies that it will bring itself glory and every heavenly being already has the understanding the God is the only one deserving of Glory. It was not an angel speaking to Jesus as the people first assumed.

Jesus explains the voice that they heard.

[16] John 12:30

“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.”

The voice was for the sake of the people, not for himself. Jesus did not perform signs so that he would be encouraged to persevere in carrying out God’s will. He has already determined to do whatever God the Father asks of him. He decided to be the grain of wheat planted in the ground. If is to death that is the

¹¹ Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34

¹² Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36

¹³ Psalm 29:3-4

will of God, scripture says that he decided to do it before the foundations of the earth¹⁴. Jesus performed the signs so that people around him may believe in Him and enter a restored and eternal relationship with God.

Even the very miracles of God, including this one of the people hearing the audible voice of God, demonstrate all these things were done so that the people would persevere in doing God's will. Even with all of this, there are still those that don't.

[17] One thing that we have to understand when it comes to judgement is God honors our choices. We have been given all the signs and evidence to believe in him. He has taught extensively on how to be saved. He has taught exhaustively on the life of obedience that will come after the Holy Spirit. If we do not choose to live this life in relationship with him, he will force no one to live in relationship with him in eternity. Eternal life, absent of relationship with God, is eternal life in hell. It is determined and defined as eternal life separated from him.

[18] This sign and his entire life, is giving all of the information that someone would need to make an informed decision. Whatever the choice, God is going to honor that. He is going to allow the natural consequence of that decision, because he has made us aware of that as well.

He tells the people that NOW is the time of judgement of this world. The judgement that is to fall of this world is brought on by the cross. With the forgiveness of sins, Satan, the ruler of this world, is defeated and no longer has dominion¹⁵.

The judgement that Jesus is talking about is a judgement on Satan and a judgement on humanity. With Satan, because the punishment for sin is atoned for, enmity has been placed between humanity and Satan, this comes from Genesis 3:15. This judgement on Satan is that humanity has a greater ability to follow Satan/sin/flesh or fight against them because of the Holy Spirit living within us that comes when we believe and our sins are atoned for.

The judgement on humanity is 2-fold. There is a current judgement of all men after death¹⁶. People will choose to follow Jesus or reject and even condemn him. As I said before God is going to honor our choices in this life and they will reflect in eternity. Mankind is going to be judged for their current actions towards him.

Scripture tells us that all men will give an account for the way they lived their life in response to the gospel, this is both believer and non-believer¹⁷. Even though this is positioned like a future, being after death, this judgement includes the natural consequences while we are alive. When we choose to live outside of the will of God, the life that God intended, will not come to fruition.

The other fold is the future judgement that will come in Christ's return. Jesus is confidently prophesying the future judgement of all people, and he says that it is happening now. He says it this way because he

¹⁴ Revelation 13:8

¹⁵ Matthew 4; John 12:31; Eph 2:2; 2 Cor 4:4

¹⁶ Hebrews 9:27

¹⁷ Romans 14:12

understands it to be so certain that he can declare it as having already occurred because it is certain beyond a doubt¹⁸.

Even though this judgement can sound scary. The idea of being judged by God really shouldn't sit well with anyone, even if you are a believer and follower of Jesus. This is not a threat of eternal damnation, so that people will conform to the example of Christ. Remember Jesus honors our choices, but Jesus also gives us a promise in the midst of this declaration of judgement.

[19] John 12:32

"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."

He says that he is going to die and through his death he is going to draw all men to himself. God desires that none shall perish¹⁹. He always wishes that all will come to salvation through repentance. Drawing all men to himself is a promise that because of the salvation that he offers he is actively working to bring all men to salvation. Even in this work and desire, God honors our choices. He says that many will not choose him, and only a few among the many, will discover salvation.

[20] If we know Jesus we will know hope even though we confidently know that judgement is coming

GOSPEL

The resurrection of Christ is a pivotal moment in all of human history. The way that we separate periods of human history, is by the date of his birth. All of creation testifies to the glory of its creator²⁰. We have to make the choice to follow him or not. He is drawing us to him. What are we doing about it?

Even this day, Easter Sunday, is a celebration of the God who came in flesh died and rose again from the dead. As Jesus said it was through this that he would be glorified, and it would bare much fruit.

How do you respond?

Jesus died not for his own sake. Sure, it was to produce much fruit. As he said that his value and purpose are substantially changed through his death, but his death and resurrection was to bring salvation to the world, so that we can glorify our God in heaven.

APPLICATION

[21] The time of judgment is now. That is not a threat. It is a promise and an opportunity. We can follow the model that Jesus set in following and serving him. Denying our own fleshly desires in order to achieve the will of God for our lives. By doing this we live in relationship with him in this life, and the life that God intended us to live will be poured out. It is a life that is full, a life that is abundant. Scripture tells us it brings joy in terrible circumstances. It gives strength when we are weak. It pours out wisdom abundantly when we do not know what to do.

This is not a sales pitch to try and get you to cross to the other side of the fence. This is a plea. Recognize that this life on earth is limited and it will eventually come to an end. When it does God is going to honor

¹⁸ Matt 25:32-33; Rev 11:18; Romans 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10

¹⁹ 2 Peter 3:9

²⁰ Romans 1:20

your choices. Choose to be in relationship with him both now and in eternity, or choose yourself, your own desires, your own possessions and your own will and you will be left to the same devices in eternity. Forever separated from him because God is honoring your choice.

Jesus is our only hope. His life was validated by the voice of God. He made his divinity apparent with signs and wonders. His wisdom that he taught the people, is timeless. It has endured centuries and is still applicable beyond culture and context. His death was for your sake, so that you have the enmity to fight against selfish desires and choose him. Jesus is the hope for humanity and is the only way of salvation.

Today is the day that Jesus defeated death. It was a victory not just for himself but for us to be able to not only not fear death and the reality that comes afterwards, but it gave us the ability and the power to die to ourselves and live according to his ways.

Jesus gave this same plea in the end of our passage. It was not instructions for our own benefit but to the benefit of all those willing to listen.

[22] John 12:34-36

“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 is the light of the world. We have the same opportunity that these people did. We are able to walk in the light by following wherever Christ leads. It is the only way that the darkness of this world will not overtake us. We can know where to go, know where God is leading us in life by doing his will. Eph 2:10 says that we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Everyone here today, you know what lies before you. Jesus is the light of the world and the hope for salvation. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of the light. We become adopted, accepted, and restored as a child of God, through the belief and repentance found in Jesus, through his death and resurrection we have hope. Now and in eternity.

[23] Know Jesus. Know Hope.

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

COMMUNION

If you would like to talk with someone about this new life, or more information on what it means to die to self I want to encourage you to come and talk to someone. Grab me during the last song or talk with the person you came with over lunch. Do not let this opportunity pass you by. Listen to Jesus’ plea. Know him and Know hope. Without him God is going to honor your choices.