

# The Gospel of John

## Confronting the Cross

### John 12:27-34

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

This morning we are continuing with John's Gospel. Please open your Bibles to John chapter 12. Last week we looked at the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on what we now call Palm Sunday. This happened during the annual Passover Feast. It is believed that there were over a million people in Jerusalem for that Passover, both Jews and gentiles. Last week, God's Word focused on some of the gentiles, Greeks who had come to the city to worship at the Passover feast. They believed Old Testament Scripture, but not being Jews, they were very restricted in how they could participate.

But these Greeks had heard about Jesus, and they told His disciple Philip that they wanted to meet with the Lord. That probably happened on the day after Palm Sunday in the Temple's court of the gentiles. That was as far as these Greeks were allowed to go, and Jesus was probably in the court of Israel.

In our scripture passage this morning, Jesus is still speaking in the Temple, and there is a mixture of people listening to the Lord. Some of the Lord's closest followers were there. There were also some Jewish seekers there, still wondering if Jesus might actually be the Messiah that He claimed to be. And there were people present who hated Jesus so much that they wanted to kill Him.

#### **ILLUSTRATION:**

How many times have you walked out your front door into a swarm of flying gnats? Do you remember how annoying they were? They seem to be oblivious to the fact that you are even there and fly into your face and arms. If time permits, your first thought would be to go grab some insect spray and wipe as many as possible out. You almost take pleasure in seeing them fall to the ground. This really isn't fair to the gnats that recognized that you were there and avoided flying into you. They didn't deserve to die. But you couldn't possibly be able to identify them. Even if you could, you would not be able to protect them from the spray while spraying the perpetrators.

I imagine this is how God could have reacted to us when we continuously refused to acknowledge Him. How we can be so oblivious to all of His blessings that He is providing for us. What an annoyance we must be to Him due to our sinful nature!

Yet John tells us...

#### **John 3:16 (NASB)**

**16** "For God so loved the world, that He **gave** His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Instead of wiping out His creation, God chose to deal with His "gnats". In our text this morning, the time has come for God to prove His love for us. The time has come when God is going to allow His only begotten Son to die on the cross for us. Jesus has told us in verse 23 that "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."

With this background in mind, let's read John 12:27-34.

## All Stand and Read Scripture

### **John 12:27-34 (NASB)**

<sup>27</sup> "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." <sup>29</sup> So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. <sup>31</sup> Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." <sup>33</sup> But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. <sup>34</sup> The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

## Prayer

### **BODY:**

#### **I. THE PAIN OF JESUS.**

##### **John 12:27-28a (NASB)**

<sup>27</sup> "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify Your name."...

How much does God love us? We know that He loves us far more than we can measure or understand. God sent His son to be born as man. He was named Jesus. He was the long awaited Messiah. He was flesh and blood just as we are. He ate and drank water. He felt pain and sorrow. And He went through terrible grief for us.

Jesus was "troubled."

It is the same word used in John 11:33, when Lazarus was still dead, and Jesus saw Mary and the people with her weeping.

##### **John 11:33 (NASB)**

<sup>33</sup> When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her *also* weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was **troubled**,

This same word "troubled" is also used in John 13:21 in the upper room during the last supper with the disciples on the night before the cross.

##### **John 13:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> When Jesus had said this, He became **troubled** in spirit, and testified and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.”

The original word for "troubled" had the idea of being turbulently stirred up like a fierce, stormy ocean. Our Lord was in great mental anguish in those last few days before the cross.

All of us know about mental anguish, some a whole lot more than others. We know the anguish of fear and loneliness. We know the anguish of rejection, of discouragement and failure, and the loss of loved ones. Some of us even know the anguish of betrayal. But we can never know the turmoil and grief that Jesus went through as He got close to the cross.

One of the best places to see Christ's anguish is when He was with His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane.

### **Luke 22:41-44 (NASB)**

<sup>41</sup> And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and *began* to pray, <sup>42</sup> saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.” <sup>43</sup> Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. <sup>44</sup> And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

Jesus went through terrible mental anguish, and he did this for us despite our sin! His heart was always to do the will of God despite the suffering and pain He must go through. "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

We see, as we continue in verse 28, that God was pleased with His Son.

## **II. THE PRAISE OF THE FATHER.**

### **John 12:28b-30 (NASB)**

...Then a voice came out of heaven: “**I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.**” <sup>29</sup> So the crowd of *people* who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, “An angel has spoken to Him.” <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, “This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.

This was the third time our Heavenly Father spoke audibly, according to scripture, during the earthly ministry of Jesus. The first time was at the beginning of His ministry when He was baptized by John the Baptist.

### **Matthew 3:16-17 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, <sup>17</sup> and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “**This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.**”

The second time was on the Mount of Transfiguration, where Jesus brought Peter, James, and John with Him and appeared with Moses and Elijah and revealed His glory.

### **Matthew 17:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> While he (Peter) was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, **“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”**

Why did God the Father make His voice known? Every time, He was putting His stamp of approval on His Son Jesus Christ. The Father wants to convince **everybody** that Jesus Christ is His only begotten Son, and the only possible Savior. He wanted those people **and us** to believe and be saved!

I have heard people say "I wish God would speak audibly to me so I could know exactly what He wants me to do." God spoke directly to Peter, James, John, and the crowd that was there. **And what does He tell them?** It was not specific answers to their concerns and questions. It was "**This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!**"

### **John 12:29-30 (NASB)**

<sup>29</sup> So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, **“This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.**

God always speaks for our benefit. And He has done it for you this morning. **Every scripture that you have heard read this morning was God speaking to you!** He has preserved the words that Jesus taught while He was here on this earth through the scriptures so we could hear them also.

We may not hear His voice firsthand, but always remember that the best way to hear God speak is through the pages of His Word! You want to know God's will for each of your situations in life? **READ GOD'S WORD!**

## **III. THE PROJECTION OF VICTORY.**

### **John 12:31-32 (NASB)**

<sup>31</sup> Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”

Satan was finally defeated by the cross of Jesus Christ! It was the only way the devil could be defeated without God destroying mankind too. But through the cross of Christ, God had a miraculous way to judge the world without destroying those who would believe in Him.

And surely Satan is still on the prowl. He will be for a while longer. But the devil's days are numbered, and he has already been defeated by the cross of Jesus Christ!

The meaning of the cross is death. From about the 6th century BC until the 4th century AD, the cross was an instrument of execution that resulted in death by the most torturous and painful ways that man could dream up. In crucifixion Jesus was nailed to a wooden cross and left to hang until dead. Death would be slow and excruciatingly painful. In fact, the word *excruciating* literally means “out of crucifying.”

Jesus was confronting the cross and His mission was about to be accomplished. He **was** lifted up on the cross and He **is** drawing all people to Him.

Jesus draws us to salvation. How does He do it? He uses our circumstances, and He uses the Holy Spirit to witness to us.

### **John 16:7-14 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup> But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. <sup>8</sup> And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; <sup>9</sup> concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; <sup>10</sup> and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; <sup>11</sup> and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

<sup>12</sup> "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. <sup>13</sup> But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

The Holy Spirit is still working in the world today, seeking to convict people of their sins and of God's coming judgment on sin. But the most important work of God's Spirit is to shine the light on Jesus Christ. Everybody needs to be convicted of their sins, but it is not enough to just be convicted.

We must also repent of those sins and allow God's will and His work to save us from our sins. So the Holy Spirit leads us to desire to live a perfect righteous life as Jesus taught us. The Spirit convinces us that the Lord's perfect righteousness made Jesus the one and only perfect sacrifice for our sins. The Holy Spirit also shows us the salvation we can have through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

How does Jesus draw people to Him? He uses our circumstances. He uses His Holy Spirit. He uses His Word. And He uses Christians just like us.

Why? Because He loves us!

## **IV. THE PORTRAYAL OF HIS DEATH.**

### **John 12:33-34 (NASB)**

<sup>33</sup> But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. <sup>34</sup> The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

Jesus was about to be lifted up on the cross. It's impossible to express the Lord's agony in words. But think about it for a moment: the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. The mental anguish for all the unbelievers who were oblivious to their eternal destiny. The mocking trials, the physical abuse, the flesh-tearing scourging of the whip, the crown of thorns, the weight of the cross, and the excruciating agony of being nailed to the cross and dropped into the ground. On top of that, think about our perfect Savior taking all the shame and punishment for our sins in His body and soul.

The crowd did not understand why Jesus was going to die. He was supposed to be setting up an eternal kingdom. **(sarcastically) Not very eternal if you are going to die, Jesus.** They had been taught that He would come to defeat all God's enemies and

establish an everlasting kingdom of peace and righteousness. This is, of course, exactly what He accomplished. But it was a spiritual kingdom instead of an earthly one.

"We have heard out of the Law". They did not understand the clear teaching in the Old Testament that the first arrival of the Messiah would be to die as a sacrifice for sins.

So they say mockingly "The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" In other words, "What kind of Son of Man are you talking about?" They cannot reconcile Jesus' prediction of His death with their belief that the Messiah was to be a triumphant conqueror.

## **CONCLUSION**

Just as Jesus had to confront the cross, so must we. Listen to what Jesus called His followers to do.

### **Matthew 16:24-25 (NASB)**

**24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.**

This concept of "cross-bearing" today has lost much of its original meaning. Many people interpret "cross" as some burden they must carry in their lives: a strained relationship, a thankless job, or a physical illness. With self-pitying pride, they say, "That's my cross I have to carry." Such an interpretation is not what Jesus meant when He said, "Take up your cross and follow Me."

When Jesus carried His cross up Golgotha to be crucified, no one was thinking of the cross as symbolic of a burden to carry. To a person in the first-century, the cross meant one thing and one thing only: death by the most painful and humiliating means humanly possible.

Therefore, "**Take up your cross and follow Me**" means being willing to die in order to follow Jesus. This is called "dying to self." It is a call to absolute surrender to Christ. Every time Jesus commanded cross bearing, He said, "**For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it**"

There are places in the world where Christians are being persecuted, even to the point of death, for their faith. They know what it means to carry their cross and follow Jesus in a very real way. For those of us who are not being as severely persecuted, our job is still to remain faithful to Christ. Even if we are never called to give the ultimate sacrifice, we must be willing to do so out of love for the One who saved us and gave His life for us.

**This is the Day.**