

The Gospel of John

Attaining Perfect Vision

John 12:34-47

INTRODUCTION:

We are continuing in the twelfth chapter of the Gospel of John. 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 Jewish seekers there, still wondering if Jesus might actually be the Messiah that He claimed to be. And the Jewish leaders were there who had been seeking to capture Jesus and put Him to death because they felt He was an imposter. A blasphemer of the worst kind who was claiming to be God.

This is most likely the day after the Lord's triumphal entry into the city during the annual Passover Feast. It is believed that there were as many as one to three million people there.

Our scripture this morning is part of a conversation that began when Andrew and Phillip went to the Lord with a request from some Greeks. These gentiles wanted to meet with Jesus. Being so close to the cross, Jesus answered by pointing them to the only way people can be with the Lord forever. That is by trusting in the Lamb of God who came to earth to die on the cross for our sins.

In these verses, Jesus told them about His suffering and death on the cross. He called us to follow Him closely in loving service. Jesus also prayed for His Father in Heaven to glorify His name. Then God the Father replied with a thunderous voice from Heaven in order to help people believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, and the only Savior of the world.

In today's scripture, Jesus continued to speak to that mixed group of believers, seekers, and haters. **As we stand and read verses 34-47, consider the truth Jesus teaches us in order to give us perfect spiritual vision.**

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 12:34-47 (NASB)

³⁴ 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?" ³⁵ So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. ³⁶ While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light."

These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them. ³⁷ But though He had performed so many signs before them, *yet* they were not believing in Him. ³⁸ *This was* to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our

report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" ³⁹ For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, ⁴⁰ "He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them." ⁴¹ These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. ⁴² Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing *Him*, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

⁴⁴ And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. ⁴⁵ He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. ⁴⁶ I have come *as* Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷ If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

Prayer

BODY:

I. THE DARKNESS OF DISBELIEF.

ILLUSTRATION:

The Christian hymn writer, Fanny Crosby, lost her sight as a very young child. But God blessed Fanny with 20/20 spiritual sight. Although she was physically blind she still had perfect vision. Fanny wrote over 8,000 hymns! And she gave all the glory to God.

Fanny once said this about her physical blindness, "It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank Him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight (was) offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things (around) me."

In Fanny's hymns, God's spiritual light shines brightly through her soul. One of our favorites is "Blessed Assurance." Listen to these words:

"Perfect submission, all is at rest.
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above.
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love
This is my story; this is my song.
Praising my Savior, all the day long;
This is my story; this is my song.
Praising my Savior, all the day long."

Fannie Crosby was physically blind, but in the most important way, she had perfect vision! God wants all of us to have this 20/20 spiritual sight. Through this passage of scripture we are taught how we can attain this perfect vision.

The unbelieving people in verse 34 were **blinded** by spiritual darkness. That's why they challenged the Lord with a question:

John 12:34 (NASB)

³⁴ 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?”

These people were blinded by spiritual darkness. They had been taught and believed that the Messiah was going to be an earthly king. The thought of Him dying made absolutely no sense to them. God wants us to understand their darkness.

The god of this world is Satan. His goal is to blind each of us to the truths of God. It is only through the light of the Gospel that we can see the spiritual truths of God. It allows us to see and understand what God is doing behind the veil that is before us. He has rolled back the curtains for us so we can see and understand.

Paul tells us...

2 Corinthians 4:4 (NASB)

⁴ ...the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Jesus reminded them of the danger of this blindness in verse 35:

John 12:35 (NASB)

³⁵ So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.

People who walk in darkness don't know where they are going. And that is a very dangerous situation. It is like riding down the interstate on a dark night at 70 mph, and suddenly having your lights go out! But being in spiritual darkness is much, much worse, because most people don't even realize that they are in the dark. They aren't headed toward a tree, they are heading toward death and an eternal separation from God.

The worst kind of spiritual darkness comes from not **believing** in Jesus Christ. God's Word makes this truth clear in verses 36-37:

John 12:36 (NASB)

³⁶ While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.”

These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

Jesus is telling them to listen to what He has taught them and **believe**. Through believing you can become a child of God. The time is coming when He will not be there for them. Then He went away and hid himself from them.

How does that help us? Jesus is dead. Yes, Jesus died but He promised not to leave the apostles or us as orphans. The Holy Spirit arrived 50 days after His death on the Day of Pentecost to help us in this spiritual life. God has preserved what Jesus taught through the scriptures. We are to believe in the Light now while the opportunity is available to us because when we die that opportunity is lost forever.

John 12:37 (NASB)

Verse 37 helps us see this truth.

³⁷ But though He had performed so many signs before them, *yet* they were not believing in Him.

Their "disbelief was not by accident. Many of them experienced many of these miracles first hand and even admitted that they could not be performed by man. There are only 36 miracles of Jesus are recorded in the Gospels, but the Gospel writers tell us that many others were performed.

John 21:25 (NASB)

²⁵ And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they **were* written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself **would* not contain the books that **would* be written.

Despite the many miracles that Jesus had performed before them, they still refused to believe in Him. This is the power of the spiritual darkness that Jesus is referring to.

Romans 1:20-23 (NASB)

²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

What we see here in John 12 is a deliberate rejection of the Light of God. Jesus talked about this same kind of thing back in John 3: deliberately choosing spiritual darkness over the light of Jesus Christ.

John 3:16-21 (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. ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

The great news of the gospel is that we can choose to live in spiritual light because Jesus Christ is the Light of the world! What He taught us and preserved in the scriptures for us reveal the truths of that light. We know that living in the light is far better than living in darkness, especially when we are talking about spiritual light. That is why it is so hard for us to understand why so many people choose to live in darkness. They deliberately reject the Light of the Lord.

This deliberate decision to walk in spiritual darkness leads to disaster. We can see this tragic truth in verses 38-41.

John 12:38-41 (NASB)

³⁸ *This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”* ³⁹ For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, ⁴⁰ “He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them.” ⁴¹ These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.

These verses are a quote from **Isaiah 6:9-10**, and they are a fulfillment of the prophecy God gave to Isaiah when he saw the exalted Lord lifted up in glory.

These prophecies might lead you to conclude that these rejecters of Christ never had the possibility of trusting in the Lord. But we must remember that God is bigger than time. God has always seen the beginning from the end.

So from a prophecies point of view, they "could not believe." But as they moved through life they were given opportunities to believe. Remember John 3:16?

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.

What a disaster to get to the end of your life and find yourself still in darkness! And what a difference it makes when we know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior!

II. THE DARKNESS OF LOVING THE PRAISE OF MEN.

Verses 42-43 remind us of another truth concerning walking in the light. We are to seek the glory of God instead of the glory of men.

John 12:42-43 (NASB)

⁴² Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing *Him*, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

How foolish it is to love the praise of men more than the praise of God! There is no good reason to love the praise of men. But also remember that these Jewish believers were facing severe persecution, and we must not be too quick to judge them. Even with all of the problems in our country today, most of the world can only dream of the freedom we have. Countless Christians around the world are facing terrible persecution today. But they are putting their lives on the line, because they understand the importance of seeking the approval of God in their lives.

Mark 8:35-38 (NASB)

³⁵ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is

ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

When we believe, we receive blessings from God. This is the Lord's message for us in verses 44-47.

III. THE BLESSINGS OF BELIEVING.

John 12:44-46 (NASB)

⁴⁴ And Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. ⁴⁵ He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. ⁴⁶ I have come *as* Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.

When we believe in Jesus Christ, we get to live in His light! That is why we can spiritually see God. We can see who He is and who we are. We can see where we should be going in this life, and where we are going. We can see **when** we are heading in the wrong direction, and the right way to turn. We can also see where we are going when we die!

John 12:47 (NASB)

⁴⁷ If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

Jesus Christ "**did not come to judge the world but to save the world!**" That is why He died on the cross. It was to save us, to pay the price for all of our sins. God is so good to us!

How many days do we go without remembering that His heart had to break for ours to mend? That He had to go into the valley to lift us to the mountain tops? That He had to endure the ugliness of Golgotha for us to experience the beauty of His Father's love?

When you clearly see the picture of the cross and this picture of His love, it has to change you. You cannot ignore that degree of kindness.

CONCLUSION:

God is so good to us! Jesus Christ "**did not come to judge the world but to save the world!**" If you know Him and have believed in Him and have received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then you are saved! You have truly been delivered from darkness, and you are living in the Light of the Lord.

These scriptures have been preserved for us so we can see beyond the darkness of this world and attain perfect spiritual vision. A vision that will enable us to be with our Creator in His glory forever. Now God wants us to do everything we can to help other people see this same Light.

This is the Day.