

Morning Sermon September 30, 2018
John 12:20-33 "Christ's Cross, God's Glory"

When we think of God's glory, what do we think of? His miracles? His awesome Presence? Our praises of Him empowered by His Spirit? All of these things are connected in one way or other to God's glory. But what about Christ's cross, does it glorify God? Is the cross Christ's glory?

I. The Cross is Christ's / God's Glory because in it, through it, all peoples are drawn to and saved by Christ –

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." (John 12:32 NKJ)

1. All peoples here is a reference to the Gentiles who are starting to come to Him at this point –

Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. ²¹ Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." (John 12:20-21 NKJ)

2. This was always the plan of God to bring the Gentiles to salvation through Christ's cross –

Indeed He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6 NKJ)

A. This is what Christ's cross does, it saves both Jews and Gentiles, this is its power, this is the Gospel (Good News) –

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18 NKJ)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. (Romans 1:16 NKJ)

B. Christ's cross humbles us because it makes SIN, and the great guilt of it, OBVIOUS, no one is justified, gets to Heaven by their own claimed goodness –

As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. ¹² They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." ¹³ "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; ¹⁴ "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." ¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their ways; ¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known." ¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes." ¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:10-20 NKJ)

C. Because all are sinners, all can be saved through the cross – But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:21-23 NKJ)

3. Being drawn to Christ and His cross also includes taking up that cross and following Him –

A. Certain Greeks wish to see Jesus :21, Philip is telling Jesus about them, bring them to Jesus -

Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. (John 12:22 NKJ)

B. Jesus speaks about being glorified, but He is referencing His cross, and it is in this context He speaks of our hating life, eternal life, following and serving Him -

²³ But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. ²⁴ "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵ "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor. (John 12:23-26 NKJ)

Our being drawn to Jesus, following Him, involves our taking up His cross, denying / hating our life in this world –

“Across the will of Nature Leads on the path of God;
Not where the flesh delighteth The feet of Jesus trod.

O bliss to leave behind us The fetters of the slave,
To leave ourselves behind us, The graveclothes and the grave.
We follow in His footsteps; What if our feet be torn?
Where He has marked the pathway All hail the briar and the thorn!
Scarce seen, scarce be heard, unreckoned, Despised, defamed, unknown
Or heard but by our singing, On, children, ever on!”

— *Gerhard Tersteegan 1697–1769*

Following Christ in this way goes against the grain of our flesh and the ways of an ungodly world and truly glorifies and honors God!

II. Christ’s Cross is Christ’s / God’s glory because an ungodly world is justly condemned by it –

1. Note the judgement of an ungodly world starts pre-cross –
“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. (John 12:31 NKJ)

Even at that very moment when Jesus said “Now...” there was abundant evidence of the world’s guilt –

A. The raising of Lazarus was an event that should have inspired belief – John 11:41-42

B. It did inspire “belief” in many – John 12:10-11

C. Yet, despite the miracle men were determined to kill Jesus –

But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.⁴⁸ “If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.” (John 11:46-48 NKJ)

Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. (John 11:53 NKJ)

2. The judgment is increased here because men were fighting with God’s goodness –

Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?” (John 10:32 NKJ) “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.³⁹ “And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. (Acts 10:38-39 NKJ)

3. The judgment is increased here because they would crucify God’s Son –

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 NKJ)

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? (John 14:9 NKJ)

A. They crucified Him because they did not believe His SONSHIP relation to God the Father –

The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.” (John 10:33 NKJ)

B. They wanted to kill Lazarus because his life was evidence of God’s power in Christ – John 12:9-11

C. The Roman soldiers also were involved – John 19:2-3

D. The Jewish Leaders who should have loved Him were against Him with the greatest passion – John 19:6

4. Christ’s crucifixion was a horrible thing –

Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; (Isaiah 52:14 NKJ)

A. Christ’s image, visage, face was marred physically

B. God’s / Christ’s image is marred by our SINS

5. Horrible and yet beautiful –

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18 NKJ) (see also 1 Corinthians 2:9-10)

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