

Gospel of John Chapter 12C

Friday I was glued to the NEWS awaiting the capture of the second suspect in the Boston Bombing. The news caster was talking about the possibility of the young man going out in a blaze of glory:

That actually provided me with an opening to this weeks sermon: IS there ever an occasion where “Death and Glory” fit together in the same sentence?

As I was contemplating this I remembered stories of extraordinary bravery and self sacrifice:

- Firefighters at the World Trade Center.
- Soldiers from Iraq / Afghanistan....
- I came across 2 excellent examples: 4 year old Xander Vento - Sgt. Dennis Weichel
- All of us are moved by stories, like these of truly benevolent sacrifice.

In the scripture reading this morning Bob read the words of the Lord Jesus as he said:

John 12:23 “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.

- SO the Lord Jesus looks at his own death as a revelation of His GLORY.
- Surely Sgt Weichel and Xander Vento’s sacrificial actions were worthy of honor BUT The Lord Jesus’ sacrifice is much more glorious; his humiliation, his righteous life and atoning death far surpass the glory of any human accomplishment.

If you are a note-taker: We are going to break down the next section of John 12 into 4 points all beginning with “P.”

1. Probing Greeks
2. Pivotal Moment
3. Productive Passing
4. Profitable Pattern

The triumphal entry of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem, that we looked at last week, seems to have raised the interest of some visiting Greeks.

- Understand that the Feast of Passover caused the population of the city of Jerusalem to swell from around 200 thousand to about 2.5 million. The Passover was one of 3 mandatory feasts in which all Jewish men were required to present themselves at Jerusalem. Along with the Jews from all over the world, certain Gentiles (or Greeks) who were interested in Monotheism, drawn to the God of Israel came to observe the feast.

HISTORICAL POINT: Jesus arrived at Jerusalem on the very day when the Passover lambs were being inspected by the priests. (Law required them to be without blemish) John the Baptist, declared that Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world;

- HOW FITTING that he should show himself, the spotless lamb to the nation, on the very day when the Passover Lambs were being evaluated.
- How did Jesus fare in his inspection?? We saw last week that the leadership of Israel rejected the Lord Jesus, just as the Psalmist prophesied.

Psalm 118:22 The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

- The Israeli leaders may have rejected the Lord Jesus BUT in vs 20 we find there is a group of Greeks asking for an audience the Lord.

1. Probing Greeks

John 12:20 **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.**

- Throughout the Gospels we see Philip, consistently bringing people to the Lord.
- He brought his brother Peter, He brought the little boy with the lunch pail to Jesus at the feeding of the 5000, now he is asked to bring these Greeks to the Lord.

Why is the approach of the Greeks significant?

- First – because Genesis 22 foretold that the Messiah, the seed of Abraham would be a blessing to ALL nations.
- Second – John’s inclusion of Gentiles at this time represents an imminent transition in the proclamation of the Gospel. The offer of salvation will soon move from Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth.

The expansion of the Good News of Jesus’ atoning death and resurrection beyond the borders of Israel is important to me because I AM A GREEK!

- YOU and I are worshipping here today because God’s sovereign grace continues to open the blind eyes of desperate sinners at the ends of the earth, even today.

SO Andrew and Philip come to Jesus with the request of the Greeks BUT Jesus responds in a very strange way.

2. Pivotal Moment

John 12: 23 **And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.**

- Jesus is fully aware of the time and events that are about to take place.

SIGNIFICANT: This is the FIRST time that Jesus refers to His Hour as having arrived. Many times he spoke of “His Hour,” but it was always “FUTURISTIC.”

John 7: 30 **So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.**

John 8: 20 **These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.**

- From this point forward Jesus speaks of his “Hour” as having arrived.

John 13:1 **Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.**

- This is the HOUR of his departure

John 17:1 **When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,**

- It is the HOUR for him to be glorified.

The moment that Judas left the Passover meal to betray the Lord, Jesus said:

John 13:31 **When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.**

- For Jesus, his departure was the doorway for his return to Glory, and His death was actually the supreme manifestation of that glory.
- Earlier we considered the glory involved in the death of Sgt. Weichel, (saving a little girl) and the glory in the death of four year old Xander Vento. (saving a girl from drowning.)
- They each saved ONE individual in their death. (Limited glory)

BUT the glory found in the death of the Lord Jesus is in reality: The wondrous, shining forth, the brilliance of the glory of God! UNLIMITED

The glory of God is the manifestation of all His perfections, those attributes which set him apart from everything that is not God....

- His death is the ultimate expression of his grace and mercy. He bore God’s wrath....
- His death is the full expression of his love for sinful man.
- His death will satisfy God’s perfect justice and provide the foundation of God’s gracious forgiveness for the sin of his people.
- His death is the ultimate expression of his glory.

Exodus 33:18 **Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” 19 And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.**

Exodus 34:5 **The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.” 8 And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.**

As Jesus speaks of his glorification, the Apostles would naturally think about his throne, and the crowd surrounding him is thinking NOW finally he is going to take his rightful and glorious place on the throne of Israel.

- BUT Jesus has something very different in mind. The throne on which he will be seated is in heaven and death is the doorway to his exaltation.

Jesus uses an illustration from agriculture to communicate the glory of his death.

3. Productive Passing

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.**

- “Truly, truly” – don’t miss this, it is VITALLY important!
- A solitary grain will abide undisturbed and unfruitful literally for hundreds of years but when it is buried in the soil, beneath the earth the miracle of germination begins.

- The hull or outer shell of the grain dies and deteriorates in the elements of the soil. Amidst the decay a shoot rises from the hull, God has provided sustainable nutrients in the seed so that once dead it springs forth in new life.
- A single grain of Wheat when sown in the ground will multiply and produce anywhere between 100 -200 grains of wheat.
- This is a simple picture of the fruitfulness and the glory that will be the result of Jesus' death. "His death will JUSTIFY many"
- Like the single grain of wheat, Jesus, death will bring forth a harvest of souls, a multitude that cannot be numbered will be resurrected unto eternal life.
See Revelation 5:

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

MOVING to the LAST point, "A Profitable Pattern" we see that Christ's death for our salvation becomes His design for our Imitation.

If we are to follow him in glory we MUST follow him in death.

Romans 6: 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Romans 6: 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions.

4. Profitable Pattern

John 12: 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.

- True disciples of Christ, those who have been Born of God are called to follow HIM.
- Just as HE willingly gave up his life to provide eternal life to many, so His disciples will also willingly die to the self-centered life of the flesh that previously dominated them.

In Vs 25, the word translated "LIFE" is actually the Greek Word (PSUKE – SOUL)

Whoever loves his life (SOUL) loses it, and whoever hates his life (SOUL) in this world will keep it for eternal life.

- Dr Boice called the soul the "EGO," the self-willed, inner life of man that is corrupted by sin, and is opposed to the will of God.

- It is this corruption that Jesus calls us to hate and daily put to death.

Paul told the Corinthians “I die daily!” (1 Corinthians 15:31)

- If you belong to Christ you are well aware of this INTERNAL struggle with the soul.
- Hatred, anger, lust, pride..... far too easily these things work their way from the hidden realm of the soul into our behavior patterns.
- These are the very things that we hate about ourselves.... PAUL: *What a wretched man I am who will save me from this body of sin.*”
- There are times when we need to speak God’s Word to our own SOUL.

Galatians 2: 20 *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

SADDLY:

I have met multitudes of people who claim to be Christians. They prayed a prayer, say that they have “accepted Jesus into their heart” and YET their lives remain virtually unchanged.

They are consumed by the same fleshly passions that consumed them before they prayed that prayer, they have NO hunger for God’s Word and no desire to worship.

- Don’t get me wrong, we ALL struggle in the flesh and we all fail from time to time.
- BUT there is a significant difference between those who struggle with the flesh and those who are continually habitually dominated by the flesh with NO spiritual resistance.

When we are truly born of God, He gives us a brand new heart. *He removes our heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh* That New Heart yields to the Word of God and is sensitive to the direction of the Holy Spirit.

- Communion with God is treasured and anything that gets in the way need to be put to death.

When the Spirit leads you to the altar of sacrifice you willingly lay down because you have tasted the glory and sweetness of resurrection life.

Matthew 16:24 *Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

Romans 8: 12 *So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

BE STRONG for the Battle...

Encourage one another every time we gather together