

May 17, 2015  
Sunday Morning Service  
Series: John  
Community Baptist Church  
643 S. Suber Road  
Greer, SC 29650  
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*To Ponder . . .*

Questions to ponder as you prepare to hear from John 12:27-36.

1. What did Jesus mean when He confessed that His soul was troubled?
2. In what way did God the Son expect God the Father to glorify His own name?
3. In what ways had God already glorified His name?
4. Why were the people present unable to discern God's voice?
5. What principle about a relationship with Him did Jesus teach in this setting?
6. Describe how "walking in the light" effects you.

### **APPRECIATE AND APPROPRIATE THE LIGHT**

#### **John 12:27-36**

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross didn't look like victory to the fearful disciples. The crowd that had gathered in Jerusalem during that Passover Feast certainly would not have agreed that Jesus won the battle against the teachers, the Pharisees, and the high priest's family. The Romans, illustrated by Pilate, would never have acquiesced victory to Jesus and His followers. There on the cross of shame hung the same man from Galilee who had ridden into Jerusalem five days earlier to shouts and praises of the crowd.

One time I watched a baseball game in which one team had built up a ten run lead by the seventh inning stretch. But there were still three innings to play, and the home team mustered a serious rally and won the game by a run in the bottom of the ninth. One commentator observed that the visiting team had somehow managed to "snatch defeat from the jaws of victory." That is what the world thinks about Jesus.

What looks like agonizing defeat to the world is actually the greatest victory imaginable according to God's assessment. Jesus Christ, God the Son, came to this sin-cursed earth in the form of a human just like us in order to bring penitent sinners back into fellowship with our Creator. Only by providing the one acceptable sacrifice for sins, His own blood shed on the cross, are we able to come into fellowship with God the Father.

It is as though everyone in the world is stumbling around in spiritual darkness. We think we know what is best, but that is only because we can't see truth. One day we come face-to-face with Jesus and suddenly the truth is displayed brilliantly. By the Light of the World we understand our need of the Savior in order to be right with God. Jesus said that He is that light. He warns that sinners need to believe Him while they have the opportunity because the opportunity is not guaranteed forever.

That truth is illustrated perfectly in the situation of our text. We studied a couple of weeks ago how devout Gentiles came to see Jesus. In response to their request, Jesus replied with a picture that didn't seem to make sense. He explained that in order for there to be fruit, the seed had to die. Oh, but looking in retrospect over the past 2,000 years, it is very obvious that much fruit has been born for God's glory among the Gentiles because of Jesus' death.

That is the point. God the Son had to die first. Having pointed out this fact to the disciples, Jesus now did what some playwrights call a soliloquy. It would appear that He lifted His head toward heaven and addressed the heavenly Father regarding the heaviness of soul He endured in light of the coming suffering. The Father answered the Son audibly, and Jesus then explained to the crowd that their opportunity to walk in the light that He brings was limited.

That is the critical challenge still. Jesus is still the light of the world. He still reveals truth. And when He reveals truth about us, we

do well to listen carefully, believe the truth, and put the truth into practice.

And this is the truth . . .

### **The Son of Man is Glorified (vv.27-33).**

Jesus acknowledged that the time for Him to be glorified was at hand. But the time for the Son's glory confused the crowd (vv.27-29). This all turns on the fact that God the Father promised to glorify Himself through God the Son (vv.27-28). That was not a surprise to God the Son who fully understood His purpose and understood that bringing glory to the Father would involve suffering.

Now the hour for glorification had arrived and Jesus confessed, "*Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'*" (v.27a). It is clear from this statement that Christ's innermost being was deeply troubled. The Greek word is *tarasso* which means *to shake or to stir up*. The word describes the troubled waters in the lame man story (John 5:7). Or it describes the way Herod the Great felt when he learned that the "King of Jews" had been born (Mat. 2:3). Or the same can accurately convey how the disciples felt when they saw Jesus walking on water (Mat. 14:26).

We conclude that this is a somewhat common experience for all humans. Jesus felt it before. His soul was stirred up again like it was when He observed the family and friends of Lazarus weeping and wailing (John 11:33). Why shouldn't the Christ experience such feelings of turmoil? Isaiah had promised that He was to be the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3). He was one of us. Therefore, the writer to the Hebrew Christians could write confidently, *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).*

The reality of physical suffering and rejection troubled the Son. The troubling of His soul came with the certainty that He was about to carry the weight of sin upon Himself, His perfect self. He was troubled that His ordained trial would require Him to be separated from the Father for a time. This was the same agony He experienced in the Garden. Again the writer to the Hebrews penned, *In the days*

*of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence (Hebrews 5:7).*

None of that surprised Jesus. He understood that He, the Son of God, was on earth to reflect the Father's glory. He said, "*But for this purpose I have come to this hour*" (v.27b). The most interesting aspect of this troubling is that it was something that had already been thrust upon Him in the past. Jesus fully understood that suffering and the agony of the crucifixion was unavoidable if He would complete the will of the Godhead for eternity. God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven displays God's glory.

To that end, God the Son desired a proper display of glory. He prayed, "*Father, glorify your name.*" *Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again"* (v.28). The glory of the Father is what Jesus' ministry was all about. He had argued with the Pharisees that His purpose on earth was to reflect the glory of God the Father who sent Him. He told those critics, "*The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory, but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood*" (John 7:18). He explained to them that He fully realized that God the Father was with Him in God the Holy Spirit. "*And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him*" (John 8:29). Therefore, His purpose was to exalt God the Father in all things. "*Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge*" (John 8:50).

That desire is what motivated Jesus Christ to walk the path to the cross without wavering. He showed us how to live for the glory of God. If we really know Jesus, then we are to be *Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).* This intentional desire and activity toward glorifying God's name is the same attitude we express in "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Desiring God's will in our lives is not passive acquiescence because there is no other alternative. That's fatalism. Rather ours is a determination to do what God intends for us to do through the grace and strength He gives us to do it.

When Jesus prayed that God would get glory for Himself through Jesus' suffering, God answered audibly. John wrote, *Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again"* (v.28b). This is the same voice spoke publicly at Christ's baptism informing all who could hear that Jesus of Nazareth was God's beloved son (Matt 3:17). This is the same voice that spoke to the disciples at the transfiguration (Matt. 17:5) telling them the same truth.

The Son acknowledged that God has already glorified Himself through Jesus' miracles and teachings. That is what Jesus kept telling people. At His first miracle at the wedding in Cana we read that "He manifested His glory and the disciples believed" (John 2:11). He taught that Lazarus' resurrection was for the glory of God (John 11:4). Therefore, it was a common response to Jesus' healing for people to be "glorifying God." The woman who Jesus healed from osteoporosis glorified God (Luke 13:13). So did the leper Jesus healed (Luke 17:15). The healed blind man glorified God (Luke 18:43). The paralytic glorified God (Luke 5:25). The amazing works that God the Father gave God the Son to do always brought glory to God from the recipients of the blessing and typically from people who observed God's work. Do we not praise God when we see His amazing work? You haven't seen a miracle? Have you observed a person come to salvation through faith in God? That is a miracle of God's grace. Have you enjoyed fellowship with a person who is growing in Christ? That is a miracle of God's grace. Do you not give glory to God for His work? Of course we do.

Also true is the fact that God the Father would certainly bring glory to Himself as He allowed the Son to die for sins, as He raised the Son from the dead, and as He took Him home to heaven. The people just could not grasp that reality. *The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him"* (v.29). Why didn't everyone hear God speak these particular words? Some people heard only a loud sound which they assumed was thunder. Some people heard a voice but concluded that it was an angel. The Old Testament Scriptures mentioned angels speaking to men and these people were familiar with Scripture.

But there is an important principle conveyed here. The Old Testament Scriptures with which these people were familiar had

warned Isaiah regarding God's commission for him to preach. God said to Isaiah, "*Go, and say to this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed"* (Isaiah 6:9-10). The people in Isaiah's day never understood how this truth was brought to pass in their own lives.

Jesus had taught the same warning to these people who argued with Him now. In explaining to the disciples why He taught in parables, Jesus had said, *Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them"* (Matthew 13:14-15). God spoke through the prophets and the people didn't hear. God the Father spoke through God the Son and the people did not hear.

Now it was time for judgment (vv.30-33). When we think of divine judgment, we generally latch on to the truth stated here that Satan's defeat was imminent (vv.30-31). God the Son was fully aware of the plan that confused the people. When the people acted confused about the heavenly voice, *Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine"* (v.30). On one hand, it is true that God the Father answered Jesus' request. But the answer was not exclusively for Him.

God intended for His answer to also teach an important principle to the people. God the Father had been speaking quite plainly to these people through God the Son for three years. They refused to listen to what He taught them. At first they were really impressed with His authority. But as it dawned on them that the whole Messiah thing was about sacrifice (both His and theirs), they walked away. Here is another warning implied in the circumstances. "If God is speaking to this *Man*, you ought to listen to Him."

Jesus taught specifically that God was ready to level judgment against Satan. *Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out* (v.31). But wasn't Jesus referring to His

coming crucifixion at this point? Yes. How could that be judgment against Satan. To normal humanity that would look like judgment against Jesus, not Satan. Hold that thought. Christ on the cross was the point of judgment of this world. We tend to think of judgment against the world as a “last times” kind of thing. The right for God to level that judgment against all sin was won by God the Son on the cross. All humanity is born in rebellion against God our Creator. Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross is the only means for us to be reconciled to our Creator. Therefore, the Lord’s sacrifice on the cross stands as the difference between reconciliation and judgment.

Christ on the cross was the point of judgment against Satan. Satan is the ruler of the fallen world. He does have authority as a ruler. That’s why Satan’s temptation of Jesus three years earlier was so serious. Jesus could have taken the shortcut, avoided the cross, and ruled the kingdoms. But for Jesus to die on the cross spells Satan’s doom. His judgment is complete, we are just waiting for the sentence to kick in at the final judgment.

But there was another judgment that took place on the cross. It was also time for judgment on God the Son. Not really! How could we possibly conclude that the perfectly innocent Son of God should be judged? Listen to what Jesus said in verses thirty-two and thirty-three. “*And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.*” He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. This truth about Messiah wholly escaped the people. They wanted a popular and powerful Messiah who would restore the kingdom of Israel. The idea of a suffering Messiah like Isaiah promised was off their radar.

They had the Scripture but refused to acknowledge that God would pour out His wrath that our sins deserve on the perfect Son. Listen to Isaiah’s promise again from chapter fifty-three. (3) *He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (4) Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. (5) But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. (6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;*

*and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (7) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. (8a) By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation . . . (10) Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; (11) Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied.*

Popular or not, Christ being raised up on the cross is the only means for salvation. Only through faith in the finished work of Christ are ***all the people who will be saved*** drawn to Him. Jesus had just explained that He will be like a seed put in the ground that dies and bears much fruit. Every person who is drawn to Christ through faith is the fruit of His death. Now the people were really confused—much as people are today.

### **The Son of Man Is the Light (vv.34-36).**

Who is this Son of Man (v.34)? The people thought they knew all about the Son of Man because they had heard about this from the law. They were quite sure that the law teaches that Christ remains forever. *So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever (v.34a).* The “Law” refers to the entire Old Testament. Several passages in that sacred Scripture do indicate that there will be no end of the Messiah’s kingdom (Isa. 9:7; Ezek 37:25; Dan. 7:13). They learned that the promised Christ will defeat all enemies and establish His kingdom. He will!—the next time He comes.

So was Christ saying that Christ doesn’t remain forever? That was what the people wanted to know. *How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? (v.34b).* It is obvious that they understood exactly what “being lifted up” referred to. And that would not do. They could not accept a dying Messiah because they could not grasp the reality that they needed the acceptable sacrifice for their sins. Therefore, it is also obvious that the people as a whole could not hear when Jesus taught, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6).

No wonder the people were confused and asked, “*Who is this Son of Man?*” (v.34b). They had learned through Daniel (7:13) that

the Son of Man was the promised Messiah. Jesus kept using the title in reference to His suffering and death. Therefore, the people concluded that Jesus was not the same “Son of Man” that Daniel had promised. To which, the Son of Man says, “*Walk in the light*” (vv.35-36). He revealed to the people that walking in darkness causes confusion. That is very important in light of the fact that Jesus also warns people that they will not always have the light. *So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer” (v.35a).*

Confusion about Jesus Christ is spiritual darkness. The people in Jesus’ day had learned that they must keep the many rules the teachers had created if they were going to keep the law. They believed they needed to keep the law in order to go to heaven. No one kept the law, but some of them either pretended they did or assumed they did. Worse was the fact that the people were consumed with earthly, temporary, material things. All they really wanted was an earthly king who would make their lives easier.

They were living in spiritual darkness just like most of the religious people in our day live. People don’t get too excited about “church.” Sure they understand certain things about eternity, heaven, hell, judgment, and stuff like that. But as long as they are not as bad as their neighbor or coworker, they are satisfied that all will be well when they stand before the Eternal Judge. They can talk about the Bible or religion on a certain level of knowledge. But they are stumbling around in darkness. Hearing they do not hear. Seeing they do not see.

Jesus came to dispel that darkness. John introduced us to Jesus by writing, *In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:4-5).* In keeping with that truth, Jesus declared at the Feast of Tabernacles, “*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life*” (John 8:12). It is only fitting then that Jesus warns people of the danger of trying to walk in darkness. He warned, “*Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going*” (v.35b).

It is hard for us to imagine no light at all. Flying at night over the eastern United States causes us to realize that there is artificial light everywhere. But Jesus’ peers did not have such light. If they

were walking along the road and failed to reach their destination in time, they would be in danger of running into things if it was a moonless night. That is the picture of living without a relationship with Jesus who is the Light of the World. That describes most people. They have been overtaken by darkness and proclaim that it is normal and liberating. They do not know where they are going—either in life or eternity!

The challenge continues to stand. Believe in the light before you no longer see Him. Jesus challenged the people to become sons of light. “*While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light*” (v.36a). A sinner receives God’s grace and mercy when he or she is confronted by the light of truth in Jesus Christ. Often their response is to reject that light because it makes them uncomfortable. They don’t want to hear your testimony, or they don’t want to hear the Bible, and they certainly don’t want to attend a church service where the preacher preaches the Bible. But seeing the light of truth in the Bible and accepting the truth by faith is the only way for a sinner to step out of the darkness and confusion of sin to become a “child of the light.”

Jesus’ peers didn’t like the way He exposed the truth. Therefore, Jesus took the light away. *When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them (v.36b).* This is a clear case of God withdrawing grace from the people who rejected the Light. Jesus described it as their preference. “*And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil*” (John 3:19). That is the world we live in. Knowledge about the Bible abounds. Relationship with Christ is sparse. People don’t mind religion as long as it does not interfere with their evil deeds. How long will God be patient? Or has He withdrawn His grace already?

Pay attention to the Light of truth in Jesus Christ while you can. Jesus Christ is the King of kings but He is also the Savior from sin. He had to die on the cross to provide the only means for sinners to have sins forgiven. Embrace the truth by faith before you no longer understand the need in your life.