

John: The Word Became Flesh - John 12:27-36

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. We find ourselves in John chapter 12 today. If you have a copy of Scripture with you, I encourage us to turn there. John chapter 12, we'll be looking at verse 20 in a moment. But before we get there, I want to ask the question, do you wish to see Jesus someday?

Do you wish to see Jesus? There are some individuals we'll find in our text today that ask that very question. And have you ever asked a question and you received a whole lot more than what you thought you were asking?

And so I remember asking a few questions of my parents and their responses to me indicated to me I had no idea what I was asking because they gave me a whole lot more than I was not really looking for or aware that those were dynamics to the answer to the question.

And that's happens today to these individuals who ask Jesus a question. To give us context for our text today, last week we saw in our account that Jesus has left Bethany.

He is going to Jerusalem for the last time. He enters Jerusalem and he sends his disciples away to secure for him a young colt or a young donkey and he rides the donkey into Jerusalem.

[1 : 26] This triumphal entry and people are laying palm branches down and are exclaiming Hosanna, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And we looked last week and Jay illustrated that they are looking for a political leader, a cultural, to have political and cultural change to someone who would usher in this.

And that's who they perceive Jesus to be. Passover is a pilgrimage feast and so people from all over Jerusalem or all over Israel are making pilgrimage faithful adult Jews who are making pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

So Jerusalem is bustling. It's bursting at the seams with tens of thousands of people who don't normally live there who have made pilgrimage for this feast. And we on the heels of him entering Jerusalem, we've come to our text today. And so I want us to read the occasion for our text.

And if you would read with me in John chapter 12 starting in verse 20. And this will serve for our text for this morning.

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip who was from Bethsaida in Galilee and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

[2 : 49] Philip went and told Andrew and Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus and Jesus answered them and said, The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. 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.

Whoever loves his life will lose it and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me and where I am there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the fathers will honor him.

Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this purpose, I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.

Then a voice came from heaven. I have glorified it and I will glorify it again. And the crowd stood there and heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said an angel has spoken to him. Jesus answered, This voice has come for your sake, not mine.

Now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out and I, when I am lifted up from this earth, will draw all peoples to myself.

[4 : 05] He said this to show what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him, We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever.

How can you say the Son of man will be lifted up? Who is the Son of man? So Jesus said to them, The light is among you for a while longer.

Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. Where you have light, believe in the light that you may become sons of light.

Lord, this is your word. And would you use it to speak to your people? Amen. Jesus in our, in this account here in God's word, we find that these Greeks, look with me in verse 20, these Greeks, these are ethnic Greeks.

They have come, likely making pilgrimage to Jerusalem and they come and they have heard of this Jesus. And so they ask, they find Philip, Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

[5 : 19] And Philip then finds Andrew and then Andrew and Philip go and relay this message. Hey, Jesus, there's some Greeks who wish to see you. They want to see Jesus. They want to see you. So they, they deliver this message.

And so the bulk of our text today is really Jesus's response to this question. We want to see Jesus. And if you notice Jesus's response in verse 23, the hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.

Drop down with me to verse 27. Now my soul is troubled. Jesus is this just last, this is the last week for Jesus's life, earthly ministry.

And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this purpose, I have come for this hour. I have our talk. And what is this hour that is being spoken of here previously in Jesus's life and ministry?

Jesus is often saying, if you remember in John chapter two, we see that in turning water into wine, the request of Jesus to turn this water into wine.

[6 : 25] And Jesus responds, no. And then he declines and then he says, my hour has not yet come. We see later Jesus's biological half brothers are, are wanting Jesus to make pilgrimage down to Jerusalem.

And he declines that opportunity as well. He later then goes in secret, but he and declining the offer. He says, for my hour has not yet come. What is this hour? So up until this point, the hour has always been future yet.

But at this point, Jesus is now saying, my hour has now come. It is now. It's no longer future. And what is it? And we find our clue as to what this hour is speaking of in verse 23. The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.

When Jesus is glorified, it is speaking of his death, for sin, his resurrection. And, and, and, and, and, and Jesus anticipating in a few days that he would die. We see in verse 27, his soul is troubled.

Jesus is in anguish of soul. And he says, for what shall I say? And then there's this rhetorical question. Father, save me from this hour. Save me from this hour.

[7 : 39] This is the context in which we find the response to the question of these Greeks. We want to see Jesus. The hour is in reference to the culminating moment of why Jesus came to the earth. He was born of a virgin.

He lived a sinless life to offer his body as a perfect sacrifice to the Lord, to the Father, to satisfy God's wrath towards sin upon himself and offer eternal life for all who would believe.

This is his hour. What I'm going to do for the rest of the message is I'm going to drop down to verse 27, go to the end of what I, what our text is today, and then I'll come back to verses 22 through 26.

Because I want to follow up and continue this thought of the hour a little bit. So Jesus' prayer we find in verse 28. So after Jesus says, now this is, now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.

But for this purpose, I have come for this hour. And then we see Jesus' purpose. What is his purpose in his death? This hour of his death and resurrection. What is the purpose? He answers it in verse 28. Read with me, Father, glorify your name. In Jesus' hour, in his death for sin, what is his ultimate prayer? Father, in my death, would you receive glory?

[9 : 30] And then a voice is heard from heaven. I have glorified it and I will glorify it again. So this voice from heaven, Jesus hears, I have glorified it and I will again. So how has, first thing we're going to answer is how has the Father glorified his name through the Son's life?

How has the Son glorified the Father? In the history past, we can look at Luke chapter 2. You can recall the angel. This is the Christmas narrative, if you will.

The shepherds are on this, keeping the sheep on the hillside. The angel reveals himself. A whole host of heavenly hosts also join in this praise and they say, glory to God in the highest.

And on earth peace among those whom he is pleased. What happened? So when we read, I have glorified it and I will again. How in the past have we seen Jesus glorify the Father in his very birth?

Being born of a virgin, condescending to earth, knowing that this is the beginning point of his earthly ministry to culminate in his death. And so even in his birth, he glorified the Father. And let's read this verse again. What is so beautiful about our Lord that we ought to emulate?

[10 : 52] Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those whom he is pleased. Oftentimes among worldly leaders, when someone is glorified and lifted up into a place of position, you can think of many people down throughout history.

I'm just going to name a few that are the personification of what I'm talking about. Hitler, Stalin and Lenin and these kinds of people, Pol Pot, Mao Zedong. When people are glorified on earth, people pay a deep consequence for the negative for them being glorified.

But the beautiful thing about the Father being glorified is every time the Father receives glory, people receive a benefit. Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace.

When the Father receives glory, people benefit. And that's how we ought to live our lives. Lord, would you receive glory from our lives and would others benefit from my life for your cause and namesake alone?

So then we're going to look a little bit future. All throughout Jesus' ministry, oftentimes when he would perform a miracle, also the Father would receive glory. I could account for several times, but all throughout Jesus' life and ministry, the Father receives glory.

[12 : 12] But then it says, and I will glorify it again. So how in the future will the Father receive glory through the ministry of the Son, namely fulfilling the hour of his death?

How is that going to occur? There are four ways throughout this rest of this passage from verses 28 through the rest. There are four ways that the Father will receive glory. I will glorify it again. So how is that?

How does Jesus' hour and his death for sin glorify the Lord in its still future as far as the time of this occurrence that it's writing?

It's going to happen on Friday. How will that on Friday, that event on Friday, when Jesus dies, how will the Father receive glory? That's the question we're going to ask. The first one is this.

God glorifies himself by judging the world in the cross of Christ. Look with me in verse 31, the first part of 31. Now is the judgment of the world.

[13 : 17] So when the Son is glorified, when he is lifted up on the cross, when he makes payment for sin, what are some things that the Father is receiving glory for in that moment?

Number one, he judges the world in the cross of Christ. In other words, those who trust Christ to reconcile them to God will not come into judgment. They will escape judgment.

Why? Because they have already passed from a condemned state in death into a justified state for eternal life. Their judgment has been paid. And Jesus's hour and his resurrection has done that for all who would believe.

And so judgment has come for he is judging the world in the cross of Christ. And our text says now in the hour of Christ's death and resurrection, this is occurring.

The death of Jesus becomes the decisive dividing line between the condemned and the vindicated. That's how the Father is glorified in his death in this hour. That's number one.

[14 : 31] Number two, God glorifies himself by casting out the ruler of this world of Satan. Look with me in verse 31, last half. Now the ruler of the world will be cast out.

This is the second way that the Father is glorified. Christ hour his death and resurrection. Satan is cast out and we're defeated. But in what sense is Satan being cast out? Because we know that he is the prince of the power of the air.

We know that we are told to protect ourselves against Satan. And we know that Satan interjudged in the final hour. And so in what sense that did Jesus's death cast Satan out?

I think of maybe John 14. Jesus being in the upper room. We're going to come to this text in a few weeks. But Jesus is with the disciples and he says in verse 30, I will no longer talk much with you for the ruler of this world is coming.

He has no claim on me, but I do what the Father has commanded me so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here. And he encourages them to leave this upper room.

[15 : 47] But listen to what Jesus says about the ruler of this world that is coming in Satan. He says, he has no claim on me. I am greater than Satan.

He hasn't any begin. Then Jesus clarifies, I do what the Father has commanded me so that the world may know that I love the Father. The picture that we receive is that Satan is making his final move. This is Jesus's last week of his earthly ministry.

He is going to the cross. And Satan is making his last move against Jesus in the hope that he would possibly make Jesus's final hour so bad to exploit the humanity of Christ in the hopes of destroying his faith and obedience and in turn making the whole work of salvation, Nolan void. But Satan failed and in failing he himself was judged decisively and he was defeated.

Additionally, in Christ's hour and his death and resurrection, Jesus stripped Satan of the one last weapon that he had to condemn us, namely the accusation of unforgiven sin. And Christ took our sin and declared us righteous, defeating Satan.

And that is the second way that the Father received glory in Jesus's hour through his death and resurrection. Thirdly, God glorifies himself by drawing his sheep to himself. Look with me in verse 30.

[17 : 30] And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. When Jesus says I will draw all people to myself, what is he speaking to?

But God is multiplying the ways that the Father receives glory through his death of his son, where Christ died.

When he was lifted on the cross, he actually secured, obtained, guaranteed the homecoming of his sheep and the end gathering of his children.

In other words, his death not only makes it possible to offer free salvation to anyone who would believe, so that whoever believes on him might have eternal life, but his death also secures with certainty the in bringing of all of his sheep, those who do believe in his name or will believe in his name. And God's glory is multiplying in the son's death.

And this manner of thinking and talking is troubling to those who are listening. If you read with me in verse 33, he said this to show what kind of death he was going to die.

[18 : 53] So when he says, I will be lifted up on the earth, he is talking about being crucified and being left. And they understood what Jesus was talking about because look at their questions. And he said this to show what kind of death he was going to die.

And so the crowd answered him, we have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. So we have heard that when the Messiah comes, he will be forever. And you're talking about a son of man being lifted up and dying.

They understood what he was talking about. How can this be? And so they have another question for him. How can you say that the son of man is going to be lifted up? How can you say that the Messiah is going to die? Who is this son of man?

So then we come to the fourth answer, how the father is glorified in the son's death, which is this. In the next few verses, verses 35 and 36, we read that the father glorifies himself by shining as a light in the world and in the lives of those who believe in Jesus.

So let's look at this verse 35 and 36. The light is among you for a while longer. Walk while you have the light, less darkness overtake you.

[20 : 12] And the one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light that you may become sons of light.

Look at that last line that you might become, that you may become sons of light. Here's where it gets very personal for you and me.

God's glory is revealed for us to cherish him and his glory as our highest treasure. Remember what Jesus' prayer is. Father, glorify your name.

His glory is revealed supremely in his death because Jesus on the cross, the world is judged because of the cross Satan has cast out. Because the cross, the homecoming of all believers is secured and here it is because of the cross.

Jesus is shining in the world and in the lives of those who believe in his name. Remember the question the Greeks had. Sir, we wish to see Jesus. That's where we began.

[21 : 27] His hour, his death, his resurrection, his father receiving glory is through his death. So in essence, Jesus is communicating to these Greeks, you want to see Jesus.

I'm about to model before you the death that my father will receive glory and here's what we're going to see. And now I'm inviting you to join me in death. And you say, well, how do you get there, Scott?

Well, look with me in verses now 23 through 26. Philip and Andrew come to Jesus and they're coming to Jesus and they're bringing the question the Greeks are asking.

Sir, we have some Greeks over here and they want to see you. We wish to see you. They wish to see you. And Jesus' response is going to be threefold. In verse 24, we're going to see a doctrine or a principle.

And so let's familiarize ourselves with the principle that's at play, this doctrine. And here's what the doctrine or the principle is going to say. Dying produces life.

[22 : 38] So let's familiarize ourselves with this. Jesus answered them. So notice this. He said, we want to see Jesus and Jesus says, the hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.

So imagine this. We want to see you and Jesus has said, but I'm scheduled for death. The hour is now and I'm scheduled for death. So if you want to see me, join me in death. So what's the principle?

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.

The principle stated again, dying produces life. Here Jesus is referring to himself on the cross. He is the grain of wheat that fell in the ground, died, bore much fruit, and is bearing much fruit and bore much fruit.

And giving his life for a ransom for many. Jesus, we are told, brought many sons to glory. He bore much fruit. And those of us in Christ at this point should break out in praise, rejoicing with much gratitude that in the death of Christ, you are among the sons and daughters who he brought into glory and you benefited.

[23 : 54] And the fruit that it's speaking of in verse 24, you and I could be named among those who have believed in Christ for the forgiveness of sin.

But it is not merely informing us what Christ has done. He is giving a principle. He is providing the doctrine. He is informing those who want to see Him, the principle to understand that living for God's glory is producing much fruit for the sake of His name includes dying.

Listen to the words of Peter. Dying produces life. Listen to the words of Peter in 1 Peter 2, verse 20 through 21. For what credit is it if when you sin you are beaten for it and you endure, but if you do good and suffer for it, you endure?

This is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called. What is it that you've been called to? Because Christ who has suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you may follow in His steps.

That you may follow in His steps. Listen to the words of Paul. Paul, after he is saying in Philippians, he has just said, Of the law, I am blameless. I am a Hebrew of Hebrews. I am a Pharisee of Pharisees.

[25 : 14] And then he says, I have counted all of that for loss for the sake of Christ. A few verses down from that in verse 10 he says this, That I may know Him. What is Paul's cry?

That I might know Him in the power of His resurrection. That I might share in His sufferings becoming like Him in His death. That by any means possible I may retain the resurrection from the dead.

Paul renounces the things of this life in order to know Christ Himself. Christ Jesus is Paul's only boast. He is his only desire. And so too should the Lord be for us.

It has been said that imitation is the highest form of flattery. But in the case of Christ, in case of all who call upon His name as disciples, imitation is the highest form of love.

And we need to imitate Christ's death for the sake of His name by proclaiming His name among the nations. The question on our mind should be, How can we position our lives for the spread of the gospel, for the spread of His great name?

[26 : 26] One of the most humbling things as a pastor is one who proclaims and preaches God's word. For those of us who hold the word of God as true and has authority over our lives is, when we proclaim God's word, we put our own life and we put the life of those who hear God's word in harm's way for the gospel.

To proclaim God's word where He calls people to go and to proclaim the name of Jesus where He has not yet worshiped in hostile lands, who may be seeds who fall into the ground, who by their death may bring much fruit, may bear much fruit and bring other sons and daughters into glory.

Through your death, I'm recently reading a biography, a book by John Piper, but it has three martyrs in it and I'm richly being encouraged by it, but William Tyndale, who in his 30s died, translating the Bible into the English language, he's a seed that fell in the ground and is bearing much fruit.

I pray we don't take for granted ever that we have the word of God in a language we can read and understand. What a privilege.

And this is what separates Christians from extremists. We need not fly planes into buildings nor shoot doctors outside of clinics.

[28 : 26] We need only to die, to voluntarily lay down our lives for the service of Jesus and the fruit of death may be life for many.

And the principle is dying produces life. So after that principle, then Jesus, we come to the second point here, that Jesus then gives us an exhortation.

And the exhortation is, hate our lives in this world to keep it for the next. That's going to be a summary of the exhortation, but here's the exhortation, how Jesus said it in verse 25, whoever loves his life will lose it, loses it.

And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. And this is counterintuitive to how we think, because we say, well, all of life is a gift of God.

That is a true statement. But it is an incomplete statement, because it does not say enough. All of life is a gift from God, when it is dedicated to God in service and in worship.

[29 : 33] And unless we understand what the Lord is saying, we might be tempted to reject this statement as fanaticism. But Jesus is the one who possesses the words of eternal life.

So Jesus is sharing, there is a choice before us. Either we love this present life, and so devote our souls to destruction, or we hate our lives in this present world, and preserve it for all eternity.

Only a holy hatred of our lives in this world is what secures it for the next. Certainly, holiness, consecration, a rejection of worldliness, and the death of the allurements of this fallen and chaotic world is a path of life with God forever.

God will not tolerate brazen elevation of self. God will not tolerate a preoccupation of self. Self is idolatry, which lies at the heart of all sin.

No, we must keep and take up our cross daily, hating our lives in this world to keep it for the next. Do you really think that this world is to be compared with the unspeakable, unfathomable glories in the world to come when we see Jesus face to face?

[31 : 04] No more pain, no more sorrow, no more tears, no more sin. Glory and majesty belong to our Lord.

Imagine being those Greeks. They're asking the question, we want to see Jesus, and Jesus is saying, dying produces life, and to hate your lives in this world will be a way to secure it for the next.

That's the way you can see me. But he doesn't stop there. He continues because he not only lays out the doctrine in verse 24, he lays out this exhortation in verse 25, and then in verse 26 he has this very straightforward call to his disciples.

And the straightforward call is to follow him into death, and when Jesus calls a man to follow him, he bids him to come and die, and how does he say that, look with me in verse 26, if anyone serves me, he must follow me, and where I am there will my servant be also.

If anyone serves me, my Father will honor him. This straightforward call, true Christian disciples is to behold Jesus in his death, his burial, his resurrection, to forsake this present world for the one that is to come, and to follow Jesus into death, and also into his honor.

[32 : 40] Our nominal Christian minds will work to make this merely figurative and maybe a convenient application. We will too quickly and maybe too glibly make this death a hollow death.

We might die when it is convenient. We'll die to self and die to our jobs and our occupations and we'll die to some desire, die to make some habit or ambition that isn't too good for us anyway.

But a disciple's death certainly includes those things, but those things are perhaps preparatory at best to the radical call to follow Jesus to the cross.

I don't want to blunt or neuter the radical call to follow Christ. If not careful, the Christian life can mean something or perhaps nothing more than living in this world, but maybe giving up an hour or two on a Sunday morning just to hear that your sins are forgiven.

And we tell ourselves we don't need to leave this world very often, but perhaps an hour or two on Sunday. Nominal Christianity can make grace an excuse for not following Jesus to the cross.

[33 : 56] This is not Christian discipleship at all. All the men and women throughout Christian history who have died for their faith have done so with all their faults, with all their shortcomings, and imperfections all in tow.

So we too should go into death, go on to death, not waiting for an imaginary perfected state of holiness.

Our act of consecration is in the act of dying itself. So let us follow Christ. Let us follow Him clumsily. Let us follow Him awkwardly and imperfectly.

Let us follow Him with all anxieties that you may have and I may have, but let us follow Him and let us die for Christ. To honor the Father, and one day we will see Him and He awaits our homecoming.

Let us leave all to follow Christ. So in summary, imagine being those Greeks. We want to see Jesus.

[35 : 15] And Jesus says, if you want to follow me, if you want to see me, come and die.

And I am, in a few days on Friday, going to give you the example of what it means to follow me and die, because I'm going to model that death as well.

And my Father is going to receive much glory. That's my heart's prayer, is to do that. And so I'm bidding you to come and die and follow my example so forth, my final words.

How hard are these words? How difficult is this call to discipleship? Until we see the Son of God Himself in the agony of the garden. And until we see Him, like in verse 20, with a soul that is troubled.

Until we see the Father's glory as enough to propel Jesus to obedience unto death. And until we behold Jesus and see Him in His glory. And until we see life together with Jesus with the Father.

[36 : 26] May that be our motivation to remind ourselves He has called me, and He has bid me to come and die for His name's sake.

So let us share in our Master's suffering, and let us share with Him in glory. This is a hard call until we see Jesus, who is the author of our faith, and the perfecter of our faith.

This is a hard call, but it is the only call worth answering. And it is the answer to the Greeks question. Sir, we wish to see Jesus. You wish to see Jesus?

He bids you to come and die. And may we do so. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day.

We thank you for these hard words. But I pray that the things of this world will grow so strangely dim, as the hymn says.

[37 : 45] In the light of your wondrous grace. So Lord, may we consider what you have done. You gave us the example.

And now you have bid us to come and die for your namesake. Forgive us for all the things that we live for, other than for your glory.

Lord, I pray that we would consider the things we value in this life, that eclipse our cherishment of you. We would confess those.

Ask for your forgiveness and say, Lord, I want to reorient my life and heart towards you once again. And may I join you in death in that sense to make your name known.

And may you receive much glory. And may others benefit through our lives. We love you, Lord, and thank you.

[38 : 55] And that's in your name we pray, amen.