

# John 12:23-33

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Thank you very much. I appreciate your helping us with the music this evening.
- I think some congratulations are in order, I understand. The Pearsons, Andrew and Holly have a new little baby, another granddaughter for the Pearson family.
- Granddaughter? I'm right? Okay. And then we understand that the Smiths, likewise, Matt and Juliana had a little boy, Silas.
- So, wow. Trent put out an email saying that there were 12 ladies that were expecting, and that including our missionaries overseas.
- So, wonderful to have those new lives come on board for sure. Precious times. Precious times. I want you to take your Bibles tonight and turn to the Gospel of John chapter 12.
- [ 1 : 10 ]     John chapter 12. Several times Jesus earlier said, My time is not yet come.
- My time is not yet come. My hour is not here. And in verse number 23, Jesus said, The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified.
- Verily, verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fallen to the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.
- He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it until life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall my servant be.
- If any man serve me, him will my Father honor. Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?
- [ 2 : 20 ]     Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.
- Then came there a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by and heard it said that it thundered.
- Others said an angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, The voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.
- Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.
- This he said signifying what death he should die. This particular passage has three deaths in it.
- [ 3 : 33 ]     There is the death of a seed, the death of a savior, and the death of a servant. How did Jesus come to give this message?
- Well, interestingly enough, in verse number 20, there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast. Well, what feast is that? In verse number 1, you find then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany.
- So it was the time of year for the Passover feast, and there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast. Greeks.

Not Jews. Greeks. Who were these Greeks? Well, we don't know exactly, but we know that from what some have said, there were always a degree of people that would follow Jewish practices.

They followed the Hebrew law. They followed the Hebrew worship system. And just like today, we have some people that will join Hinduism.

[ 4 : 39 ] For whatever reason, all of a sudden they just decide that they're going to become Hindu. Or somebody decides, I'm going to become Islam. Or I'm going to become this. Or somebody says, I'm going to become Catholic.

Or I'm going to become Baptist. And they may not really necessarily, in our understanding, become born-again people as far as joining a church, but they just decide they want to have some religion.

And some of these Greeks came from foreign countries, and there they learned about Hebrew practices and became worshipers of the Hebrew religion.

And they learned about the feasts and the Passover, and they would gather wherever these feasts were to learn and to gain what was going on. So here we have the element that there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast.

The same, that is the Greeks, came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida, of Galilee, and desired Him saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

[ 5 : 44 ] Now we've heard sermons and people talking about we would see Jesus, so the pulpit is to be the place where people would see Jesus. These people didn't know who Jesus was.

They had heard some stories about Him, but they were curious. They were curiosity seekers. They wanted to see who this person was that they'd heard had performed miracles.

The miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus. We would see Jesus. So Philip, verse 22, cometh and tells Andrew.

And again, Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. What does Jesus do? And Jesus answered them saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

Now that doesn't sound like a bad thing. In verse number 16 of the same chapter, there were those that ascribed praise to Jesus. Verse 15, Fear not, daughter of Zion.

[ 6 : 56 ] Behold, the King cometh. Sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not the disciples at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him and that they had done these things unto Him.

So the glorification of Jesus was pointing to His death. Verse number 27, And now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say, Father?

Save me from this hour. Yet, but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name. He's talking about His death.

The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. But then notice verse 24. Verily, verily, truly, truly, I'm saying something unto you that's very important.

It has the authority of Jesus. I say unto you that except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.

[ 8 : 01 ] But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. This is the start of the first death that is spoken of in the passage, the death of a seed.

Y'all gardeners, fun, isn't it? I grew up on a farm and still love to get my fingers in the soil.

I love to put up plants. Our yard is pretty good size, but my wife has just instructed me now in the last few days enough already. No more plants.

No more plants. I still have one in a pot that needs to be put in. I picked some summer squash yesterday. I don't have a big gardening area, but I love to be able to plant. Seeds, if they are going to germinate, need three elements.

They need oxygen, they need water, and they need heat. So a farmer takes his equipment out into the field, and I watched as people that farm my stepdad's land come through with a big tractor and a disc behind, and he stopped, and we talked to him a little bit, and I said, wow, this is big equipment.

[ 9 : 18 ] And I said, how much was this disc digger? Oh, I said, that's a \$90,000 piece of equipment. Wow. I said, how much is that tractor? And he said, well, we bought it used for \$450,000.

My dad farmed all his life, and I don't think he ever had a grand total of \$90,000 of equipment, and they had \$450,000 and \$940,000 of equipment, and they weren't putting a corn in the ground.

Huge digger. Well, no matter how you do it, if you dig it up with a shovel or a spade or if you have a tiller, you have to work up the ground, you break up the lumps until it's soft, and what happens when that ground is stirred up, it gathers air that is everywhere and pulls the oxygen into little pores inside the soil.

So when that seed is put in the ground, it lays in dry dirt, and along comes a cloud, and it rains water onto the ground, the water soaks in around the seed, and then the sun comes and warms up the soil, and the combination of the water, the oxygen, and the heat, all of a sudden that seed begins to germinate.

So here you have this little seed that's in the ground, and the oxygen is there, but there's a shell around the seed. It's called the coating, the coat, and that seed has a hard shell.

[ 11 : 05 ] Well, as the moisture comes down, and the heat comes, and the oxygen, they permeate that shell, and little by little, it begins to expand, and as it expands, that shell cracks, and as the shell cracks, all of a sudden, you have things happening, and you have roots that grow down into the ground, and you have a stem that grows up, and they continue to grow, and they work together, that seed disappears.

The seed has all of the elements that it needs to start a plant. It has food enough to get that plant started, but eventually, all of the food is depleted, and the plant grows, and the seed is gone.

Jesus understood that well. He created the earth, and He said, except, or the word is unless, meaning there's just no other way for it to happen.

Verily, verily, truly, truly, I say unto you, except unless, no other options, a seed must enter into the soil and die. And Jesus gives two statements of fact.

One is, if the seed does not die and go in the ground, it abides alone, verse 24. And if it does die, it brings forth much fruit. So two statements here.

[ 12 : 34 ] There's a loneliness of not dying. And there is a fruitlessness of not dying.

If the seed does not die, it abides alone. And if the seed does not die, it abides fruitless.

The seed has to die so that loneliness is gone and fruitlessness is gone. The seed then can become fruitful. So here's this plant growing up and it performs whatever it's supposed to perform.

If it produces grass, if it produces leaves, if it produces grain or nuts or fruit or vegetables, it produces something that is profitable.

It is fruitful. And then that seed likewise produces more seed. It is a part of the process. The seed must die or it abides alone and is fruitless.

[ 13 : 54 ] Now here's these Greeks. They find Philip and said, we would see Jesus. And Philip finds Andrew and said, I'm not sure what to do with these Greeks.

If it was the Jews, I think we'd be able to say, hey, Jesus, there's some Jews over here that want to see you. But these are Greeks. We don't know what they want. So they tell Jesus and Jesus begins to talk about His dying.

But then He starts to talk except a grain of seed. Unless a grain of seed falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone. And if it does fall in the ground and die, it will bear much fruit.

Isn't that something? Ah, Jesus, what are you trying to accomplish here? Then, He changes the subject a little bit and talks about the next death.

And that is the death of a servant, as it were. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

[ 15 : 07 ] So He changes gears a little bit and He begins to talk about a servant. And the picture is here of a servant who loses his life.

If he loves his life, he shall lose it. He that hateth his life in this world, the same shall keep it. So once again, two statements of fact.

You love yourself, you lose. You hate yourself, you win. Now if the seed abides alone, it stays lonely.

If it dies, it bears fruit. The seed has to die. The servant, likewise, if he tries to save his life, he will lose the value of his life.

But if he hates his life, the same shall keep it, guard it. He will be one who wins in the life and death battle.

[ 16 : 19 ] What does this word love mean? If a man love his life. We understand that in the Bible there are two types of love spoken of.

One is the agape type of love, which is the love of intelligence and purpose. It is the love at any cost. Agape is that kind of love whereby a man will sacrifice himself as in, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

That's that agape love that is the intelligent love of will. The will to be able to surrender one's life for the value of someone else.

The word that's spoken here is the philos love, which is a strong affection, one who regards highly his life. So if a man has a strong affection for his life, it is a love of mere affection.

It speaks to his earthly existence. He has a love of his life in the world's context. He loves his possessions.

[ 17 : 33 ] He loves his surroundings. These are important to him. He loves what he has, what he can visualize.

And he has a strong affection for that which is around him. The other word that Jesus used here is this word hate.

It is not the strength, the strong word of where a man hates his life so much that he doesn't, he despairs of living, he doesn't want to live anymore. It's again, again, the regard with less affection, less esteem for the things of the world.

I love most cheeses, but I detest cottage cheese.

I love most meats, but I detest liver. I love most beverages, but I detest certain elements of beverages.

[ 18 : 47 ] If a man has an affection for this world, he will lose his life, but if he despises things of the world, he will keep his life.

There is this thing that Jesus is trying to tell these Greeks and tell his disciples that a seed has to die and go into the ground to be able to preserve itself the same way a man must come to that point in his life where he, as it were, hates him, hates his existence.

And it's not the hate that he wants to die. His life is what God gave him. God gave him the life that he has. God has given you and me the life that we have. We're to love our lives.

Your life and my life are precious things. God gave them to us as gifts. But if we attach our lives to the things of the world so that the world is our love, that is the part that needs to change, that needs to go away.

We almost, as it were, at that point, need to have a hate. He that loveth his life shall lose it.

[ 20 : 01 ] He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. And Jesus is teaching these Greek people an important principle of love for the things of this world and then the detesting of the things of the world.

And we have to come to the point in our minds where the things are detestable to us. We're not attached to them. It's very tough for us. We have any kind of successes in life and we get accumulation.

Maybe you reach a point of being able to buy a house. And that house is important to you. You love your home. You decorate your home.

You get an attachment to your home. It becomes something special to you. You look around and you see your pictures in the home. You see the things that you made or the things that you bought.

It's very difficult for us to not gain sometimes an affection and our mindset needs to be such that it almost becomes detestable to us.

[ 21 : 14 ] Jesus said, if you don't hate your life and its attachments to the world, you will lose what is valuable to you.

In 1 John, if you would turn there for a moment, 1 John 2, share a couple of verses with you again from John's writings. 1 John 2, beginning with verse 15, love not the world, and the action here is for these people to stop loving the world.

Stop loving the world and the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. John picked up on the concept of what he had heard Jesus speak about a man who loves his life.

He will lose it. The man who detests his life in this world, the same shall keep it unto life eternal. The death of the seed, the death of the servant, lastly, the death of a Savior.

[ 22 : 47 ] Once again, two statements of fact. Jesus is glorified in his death, in his dying.

We look at the cross and we think of Jesus, the torments that he went through. How is that a gratifying thing? How is that a glorious thing? And yet Jesus said in verse 23, the hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

Speaking of his death, how is it that death is a glorious event? In Jesus Christ, death is a glorious thing. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain, Paul said.

To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. It's a glorious thing. It's a wonderful thing. And for Jesus to die, though death for all of us is a difficult concept, a difficult thought.

Yet it has a glory about it. And Jesus talked about the glorification that would come upon his dying. So Jesus is glorified in dying.

[ 24 : 00 ] And then number two, the Father is glorified in the death of his Son. Verse 27, Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.

But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.

God did not often speak. When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, the voice came from heaven, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Christ. And here he speaks again, and when Jesus cries out to him, Father, you remember the time where he prayed, If it be possible, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.

He prays something here that, Father, do I need to go through this death? Save me from this hour. Yet for this cause came I unto this hour.

[ 25 : 05 ] Glorify thy name. And the Father says, I have glorified my name and I will glorify it again. There is a glory in the Savior's death.

There's a glory in the seed when it dies in the ground and it's not now alone and it brings forth fruit that shall remain. There's a glory in the servant who loses his life, gains it.

There's a loss of his life if he loves it, he loses. In the same way it is, there's a glory in the death of a Savior.

God is glorified. The Savior is glorified. It is a beautiful picture of us to picture how that not only is it the glorification of Jesus when He goes to heaven and He takes us up to be with Him, but from the point of His dying to His resurrection to His ascension to His coming back again to establish His kingdom to snatch us up to be with Himself forever when we sit at His feet and sing praises to Him in glory.

All of that fits to this glorification, but it starts with a horrible moment of His death. the glory of dying.

[ 26 : 27 ] Sounds a little gruesome. Don't mean to be heavy tonight for you. But here are these Greeks and they come to Philip and say, we would see Jesus and Jesus said, alright, here's my message.

a seed must die if it's going to bear fruit. A servant must die if he will keep his life.

The Savior must die if He will be able to deliver the world and be glorified in heaven. Death is a glorious thing. For you and I, it is for us a picture of a future day that we will be able to sing triumphantly Hallelujah, what a Savior that delivered us from our sin by His death.

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