



Text: John 12:20-36¹

Series: *Life in His Name* ... The Message of John's Gospel

Title: Part 26 ... Jesus' Hour of Glory

Date: May 22, 2011

Place: First Baptist Church, Olds, AB

From the very beginning of his ministry, Jesus had been aware that he was heading towards an hour that awaited him. Jesus had a goal in mind every step of the way from the day John the Baptist baptized him in the Jordan River. Every teaching he gave, every healing he administered, every debate he engaged was directed to an "hour" that awaited him.

Even at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, when he performed his first sign and turned water into wine to point to his identity as the promised Messiah, even there Jesus had been aware this hour that awaited him. When Mary, his mother, had told him that the wedding was about to run out of wine, Jesus had said to her...

**"Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come."
John 2:4**

As Jesus' ministry unfolded and as his teaching gained him followers his enemies laid plans to arrest him, but as John tells us...

**"no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come." John
7:30**

Jesus continued his teaching, even in the temple, the very place his enemies gathered, the place they thought of as "home ground,"

"but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come." John 8:20

This hour loomed large in Jesus' mind from the very beginning. The knowledge of it was with him every day. He could measure its approach by the ticking in his spirit and now the alarm was sounding. The hour had arrived.

I'm reading this morning from John's Gospel, chapter twelve, verses twenty to thirty-six. This is God's holy, inspired and authoritative Word. Let's hear it with reverence and respond to it with faith.

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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. ²³ And Jesus answered them, “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. 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.

²⁷ “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.”

³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

³⁴ So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” ³⁵ So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

The “feast” to which John refers is the final Passover (11:55; 12:1) that Jesus experienced with his disciples. It’s the feast during which he became the once and for all “Passover lamb,” (1 Cor 5:7) who was sacrificed on the Cross to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Those who know the story of Jesus know that we are now walking within the shadow of the Cross on which Jesus died.

Jesus is in the “home stretch” of his life and ministry on earth. Within a week from this interaction with his disciples and the crowd, Jesus will have been crucified, buried and raised from the dead. We are approaching the central historic foundation of the Christian faith. Everything that happens in these last seven days is intense and focused. The pace of events quickens day after day, hour after hour, as Jesus’ appointment with the cross approaches.



Everything is focused now on that central act of Jesus' life. And Jesus' mind is becoming fixed on the Cross. The other Gospel writers tell us of the intense focus of Jesus as he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before the cross and John recounts that same intensity within the spirit of Jesus. Jesus said...

“Now is my soul troubled.” John 12:27

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” John 12:23

**“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.” John
12:32-33**

Jesus' Hour Had Arrived ... Lifted Up on the Cross

It was the hour in which the Son of Man was to be glorified. It was the hour in which the Son of Man was to be “lifted up.” It was the hour of Jesus' death. Just as Jesus had been aware that there was an “hour” awaiting him in Jerusalem, Jesus had been aware from the beginning of his ministry that the hour ahead involved his being “lifted up” to die.

During his interview with Nicodemus, years before, Jesus had referred to his being “lifted up.” He brought to Nicodemus' mind an event from Israel's Old Testament history. At one point during their journey through the dessert from Egypt to the Land of Promise, the people of Israel rebelled against God and God sent “fiery” snakes among them as a punishment. The people acknowledged their sin and asked Moses to intercede for them with God. And God said to Moses...

**“Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole.
And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.”
Numbers 21:8-9**

Jesus said to Nicodemus...

“as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” John 3:14

Jesus saw in this story two pictures. First, he saw a picture of his own cross. (cf John 12:32-34) He saw himself lifted up to die. And secondly, he saw that anyone who looked at him would live! He saw dying men and women looking with the desperation of the dying at a raised pole that offered them life if they would only look and believe!

Jesus' Hour Had Arrived ... Lifted Up in Resurrection



But this hour wasn't only the hour of Jesus death; it was also the hour of his resurrection. The term "lifted up" is intentionally ambiguous. Yes, it refers to the way in which Jesus died, being "lifted up" on a Roman cross. But it also refers to what follows the cross. It refers to Jesus' resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father in heaven. Isaiah's great insight into the death of Israel's Messiah in chapter 53 of his book of prophecy begins with a word about the Messiah's exaltation. Isaiah wrote...

"Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted." Isaiah 52:13

And his prophecy about the death of the Messiah ends with another hint about the resurrection that would follow his death. Isaiah wrote...

"Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see light and be satisfied;" Isaiah 53:10-11

But the exaltation of resurrection would be preceded by the anguish of crucifixion and Jesus' "anguish" of soul had begun. The intensity of his focus on the cross explains why a simple question from some visitors to Jerusalem provoked such a profound outpouring from Jesus about the nature of the hour that was at hand. Jesus is absorbed in the reality of the hour that is upon him, but there is something in their simple question that prompts his deep response...

"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." John 12:23

What was the glory of this hour? What was glorious about being "lifted up" to die on a Roman cross? The glory isn't to be found in the method of Jesus' death but in what it accomplished.

What is the glory that is found in Jesus' Cross?

First of all,

The glory of Jesus' cross is found in the abundance of the life that it provides for others

Jesus said...

"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." John 12:24

Jesus used a very simple analogy to planting and growth. One seed bears many seeds but in order for the one seed to produce life in others, it must die, so to



speak, and give its life that others might live. In Jesus' mind this is the first and greatest glory that comes to mind. He went to the cross with the conviction that his death would bring life to others. And not just to a few. He spoke of "much fruit."

Jesus envisioned that his death was going to bring life to many and there was something in the request that was brought to him by Philip and Andrew that prompted that reflection. John tells us that "some Greeks" had come to Jerusalem to worship during Passover. These people were Gentiles by birth. The word that is used here is not the same as that used in Acts 6:1 to describe Jews who spoke Greek. These people who came to Philip were either Gentile converts to Judaism or they were Gentile "God-fearers" who had not fully converted to Judaism but who nevertheless worshipped Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The word "Greek" was sometimes used in the New Testament to refer to all non-Jews. For example, in his letter to the Romans the Apostle Paul wrote...

"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him." Romans 10:12

Jesus life and ministry had been lived within the boundaries of Palestine. As Israel's Messiah, Jesus had kept the focus of his teaching and ministry on the people of Israel. Once when he was approached by a Gentile woman in need, Jesus had said to her...

"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 15:24

But that restriction in his focus was about to end. With his death and resurrection, the Gospel message of eternal life through faith in Jesus was about to break out of the confines of Judaism and flow out through the entire world. Jesus had already hinted at that expansion. As he taught about his work as the "Good Shepherd," Jesus had said...

**"And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd."
John 10:16**

And as Jesus spoke about his coming work on the cross, he declared...

**"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."
John 12:32**

Jesus saw in his hour of death and resurrection a promise of new life for an entire world that was under the judgment of God for its sin and rebellion. As Jesus died, bearing our punishment for sin, all those who would believe in him were released from the curse of death and given the gift of new life. His solitary



death would be the fountain of life for many, and not only for Jews, but for a numberless multitude of “all people” from every language and nation. The glory of the cross of Christ is found in this multitude of men and women from every nation and from every age of human history who will stand at the foot of Jesus’ cross for all eternity worshipping the Lamb who died so that they might live.

Secondly,

The glory of Jesus’ cross is found in the model of self-giving that it provides for those who follow him

Please understand that Jesus’ death for us is more than just a model of self-sacrifice, but it is clearly a model of self-giving that Jesus expects his disciples to emulate. Some would see the glory of Jesus’ death only in its heroic self-sacrifice but Jesus death for us is more than that. Part of the background for Jesus’ words here in John chapter 12 is something we find back in chapter 11.

After Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, the religious leaders of Judaism got nervous. They feared that if Jesus became too popular, the Romans might see his movement as a threat to their control of Palestine and might reassert their direct control over Palestine, pushing aside the religious leaders who were acting as their deputies. And so they plotted the death of Jesus. Caiaphas, who was Jewish High Priest at the time, justified their murderous intent by saying...

“it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” John 11:50

As John wrote his Gospel, some years after Jesus death and resurrection, he couldn’t help but note the prophetic irony of Caiaphas’ words. John wrote about Caiaphas’ insight...

**“He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.”
John 11:51-52**

Caiaphas, in a twisted way, understood that Jesus was dying as a substitute for others. Imbedded in this picture of Jesus dying so that many others might live is the notion of substitution. Jesus died for us. He died in our place. He died so that we might live. The seed or kernel of the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement of Christ is imbedded in Jesus’ words here. Please don’t miss that.

But along with Jesus’ declaration of his death **for us** is Jesus’ invitation to us to die **with him**. Jesus said...



“Whoever loves his life loses 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 Father will honor him.” John 12:25-26

Recently I was talking with someone who has a person in their life who has made a choice to love his life and in so doing is losing it. What is even more tragic about this situation is that this wayward person seems to think that he can have a relationship with Jesus and love his own life at the same time. We live in a culture that very easily redefines what it means to be a follower of Jesus in self-glorifying, self-satisfying, self-fulfilling ways. But Jesus death on the cross won't allow us to do that. Reflecting on this passage in John's Gospel, Bible scholar D.A. Carson wrote ...

*The person who loves his life will lose it: it could not be otherwise, for **to love one's life is a fundamental denial of God's sovereignty, of God's rights, and a brazen elevation of self to the [summit] of one's perception, and therefore an idolatrous focus on self, which is the heart of all sin.** Such a person loses his life [in other words, brings judgment upon himself.] By contrast, the one who hates his life ... will keep it for eternal life ... This person denies himself, or, to use another of Jesus' metaphors, takes up his cross daily (Mk. 8:34 par.)... [that is to say,] **he chooses not to pander to self-interest but at the deepest level of his being declines to make himself the focus of his interest and perception, thereby dying.**²*

This is the model for authentic Christian living that Jesus' cross sets for us. There is a glory in a life that is lived, not to please itself, but to bring life to others, just as Jesus gave his life to bring life to us. Being a spouse who lives to bring life to his or her mate, being a parent who lives to bring life to his or her child, being a neighbor who lives to bring life to his or her community, being an employee who lives to bring life to his or her workplace, being a believer in Jesus who lives to bring the life of Christ to the world, this is how we follow Jesus' glorious model of self-giving. As Paul wrote...

“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

Thirdly,

The glory of Jesus' cross is found in the way Jesus freely fulfilled God's established plan of salvation

² Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (438–439). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.



The hour that Jesus endured for us did not “come upon” him the way an illness comes upon us or the way an economic depression comes upon a nation. When we speak of something “coming upon” us it’s because we have little or no control over the situation. But Jesus’ hour with the cross was not an hour of arbitrary fate. I don’t even want to refer to it as his “destiny” because that word often carries with it the undertone of inevitable doom. Jesus’ hour was an hour of his sovereign choosing. It was not forced upon him. He chose it.

Notice carefully Jesus’ words. Jesus said...

“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.” John 12:27

This hour didn’t come upon Jesus. Jesus came purposefully, intentionally, willingly to this hour. Jesus was not the victim of the Father in his death on the cross; he was a willing participant in the plan of salvation. There was no other way to secure our forgiveness than by his death on the cross for us. There was no other way to give us life than through his death for us.

Jesus came to the cross with a purpose: to fulfill the Father’s will and to bring the Father glory in so doing. That had always been Jesus’ purpose. Jesus said...

“For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.” John 6:38

There is a climactic scene in the movie, *Saving Private Ryan*, which, according to one former US Army Ranger, would never have happened. The film is a fictional story about a squad of Army Rangers who are sent into enemy territory to find one soldier and return him home. Several of the members of the squad are killed in their search for Private Ryan. In the climactic scene, after having found Ryan, the captain of squad lies dying. He eyeballs Ryan and begs him to, “Earn this.”

One pastor, himself a former Ranger, said that that would never happen. The motto of the US Army Rangers is “Sua Sponte,” which means, “I chose this” or “of our own accord.” Ryan didn’t need to earn the gift given by those men for him. They chose to give it. Jesus chose to go to the cross. He chose to make the will of the Father his own will. He chose the hour of glory, it didn’t choose him.

His will was to do the Father’s will. His desire was to bring the Father glory in his obedience and so he prayed...

“Father, glorify your name.” John 12:28

The Father answered from heaven...



“I have glorified it, and I will glorify it.” John 12:28

The Father had glorified his name in the signs that Jesus had performed throughout his ministry by his power (John 2:11; 11:40) and he would yet glorify his name by raising Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:24). The hour hadn't overtaken the Father, either. He chose it. He planned it. It was his established plan of salvation. Peter preached on the day of Pentecost...

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.” Acts 2:22-24

Our salvation required the agony of the cross and the darkness of death, but there was no other way to reach to glory of the resurrection and the life that it brings to you and me. The Father chose it to be so. The Son chose to make it so.

Fourthly,

The glory of Jesus' cross is found in the total victory it won over his enemies, sin and Satan.

Jesus said...

“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 the earth, will draw all people to myself.” John 12:31-32

There are at least four aspects to the glory of Jesus' victory in the cross.³

First of all,

Jesus' Cross passes judgment on the world

Jesus does this in at least two ways. First, his cross exposes the sin of the human race, a sin in which we are all complicit. The death of God's Son is, at heart, a rejection of God himself, since the Father had sent the Son to

³ For these four points, see Bruce Milne (1993). *The message of John : Here is your king! : With study guide*. The Bible speaks today (190–191). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press.



accomplish his will in the world. Sin is exposed in its most basic and most dreadful form as the rejection of God.

But secondly, in the wonder of God's love and grace, *"the Son comes not simply as the representative and agent of the Father, but as the representative of God's rebellious subjects. In the cross he reveals not only the guilt which makes judgment necessary, but, as the guilty one in place of the guilty, **he bears the judgment for us.**"*

Secondly,

Jesus' Cross defeats and humiliates Satan

The heart of Satan's plan against the human race was the disobedience to God that he inspired in the Adam and Eve. He inspired them to turn their backs on complete obedience to God's will but in his cross, Jesus, our representative, completely and totally obeyed the will of the Father. Jesus' perfect submission to the Father's will completely disarmed Satan and his demonic forces and as Paul wrote, ...

**"he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."
Colossians 2:15 (NIV)**

Thirdly,

Jesus' Cross exalts him

As I said early, the phrase "lifted up" is ambiguous. It certainly refers to his crucifixion, as verse 33 points out, but it also carries the idea of "exaltation." Jesus, the Christ, is the King who died for us. The sign that hung above his head as he died declared, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." (Matthew 27:37) As Bruce Milne wrote, *"For the elevation on to the cross is to be understood as the exalting of the one who reigns. The cross is a throne, his crucifixion is his coronation; he reigns from the tree."*

Fourthly,

Jesus' Cross is the throne from which he draws all people to himself

Someone once wrote, "I asked Jesus, "How much do you love me?" He spread his arms and said, "This much," and then He died." On the cross, Jesus embraced the world! There is something powerful and glorious about his display of love and grace on the cross. I would venture the guess that that simple picture of Jesus hanging spread-eagled on the Cross has drawn countless millions of people to faith in him. They see his arms open to welcome them and they come to him!



Finally,

The glory of Jesus' cross is found in the simple access it offers us to God's love and mercy

The people of Jesus' day didn't understand that he had to die. They thought that the Son of Man was to live forever. The prophet Isaiah had written...

"Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever." Isaiah 9:7

"How can you say," they asked Jesus, "that the Son of Man must be lifted up?" (John 12:34) They knew that "lifted up" meant death on the cross, but what they didn't know was that it also meant raised from the dead. The cross was a mystery to them because they didn't see the glory of resurrection that was yet to come. How could they see it?

But instead of engaging in a long Biblical study to demonstrate, according to Scripture that he was the suffering Servant prophesied by Isaiah who would see the light after his death, he simply told them to believe in him. He said...

"While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." John 12:36

Jesus said...

"I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." John 12:46

"Just believe in me," Jesus told them. The message of Jesus is reduced to the simple terms that even a child can accept...

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

The glory of Jesus' cross is that it invites us in the simplest terms possible to enter into his embrace, to receive his love and mercy. His invitation is simple: "Believe in me."

Do you?
Will you?

- **Invitation to Prayer Ministry**
- **Final Song:** Glorious Day



- **Benediction**