

**Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>**  
Sermon Series: “Saved”  
“Jesus Pays the Price”  
John 12:31-33

## I. The Context: A Simple Request and a Complex Answer

### The Greeks

*John 10:16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd*

*1 Corinthians 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

*John 12:21 They came to Philip....with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.”*

### What do we “See” in this Passage?

The \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus

*John 12:31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.*

### The “Hour” has come

The World will be judged.

Satan will be driven out.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus

*John 12:32-33 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”<sup>33</sup> He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.*

Jesus will be lifted up.

All people will be drawn in.

*(Answers: 1.Message, Method. )*

□ **Day #1--Monday, March, 30<sup>th</sup> Read:** *John 12:20-22; John 10:16.*

John's mention of the Greek crowd is significant. The Greeks were the "seekers" of that day; those who would likely say in contemporary parlance, "I am 'spiritual' but not 'religious.'" These particular Greeks were likely God-fearers who would attend the Jewish synagogues and observe the Jewish feasts. Their coming was symbolic of the coming of Gentiles into the family of God. Why did the Greeks approach Philip about seeing Jesus? It could have been because Philip had a Greek name, and/or had some contact with perhaps these Greeks and others in and around the Gentile area of the Decapolis. ("The 10 Cities." See Mark 5:20). Notice the progression: The Greeks go to Philip, Philip went to Andrew, and then Andrew and Philip went to Jesus. Why the "chain of command?" It seems that due to the large crowds that followed Jesus, the disciples would "screen" Jesus from some people. (See Luke 18:15-17!) What is interesting is that when Andrew's name is mentioned in the gospels, it is in reference to him bringing someone to Jesus! (See John 1:40-42, 6:8-9, and 12:22). The question the Greeks ask is simple and profound: "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." I knew of a pastor who had this verse engraved on a small plack and affixed to the pulpit. It was both a reminder and a prayer that during the sermon, his task would be to help people "see" Jesus through the proclamation of God's word.

Consider: Andrew is a great example of an "evangelist." Andrew brings people to the source—Jesus. How can we, in our lives, do the same? Also, the question of the Greeks can be our daily prayer: "I want to see Jesus."

Pray: "Lord, what I really need in my spiritual life are not theological arguments, articulate prayers, or even certainty—what I need—who I need—is you. Give me eyes to see you in my life; in my job, in my home, in my school. I thank you that you want to be seen by me. Amen."

□ **Day #2--Tuesday, March, 31<sup>st</sup> Read:** *John 12:23-24.*

John does not record any conversation between Jesus and the Greek seekers. What Jesus does is very—well—very Jesus! Jesus is asked one thing and he seems to be answering something entirely different! Upon being told about the Greeks seeking to see him, Jesus begins a description of what he is about to encounter; his dying on the cross. All that Jesus has taught, done, and described is coming to its nexus. The reason that Jesus came into the world was to die—and rise again for the sins of the world. The Jewish theology of the first century articulated a messianic expectation of nationalistic fulfillment: the messiah is coming to restore the nation, which includes expelling the Gentiles. Jesus, however, has come to include both Jew and Gentile. The Greek Gentiles ask to see Jesus and Jesus uses this request as an example of the universal nature of his sacrifice. Just as these Greeks seek Jesus on this day, one day all people will have the opportunity to seek Jesus and have a relationship with Jesus. Jesus is going to die and that death (like a grain of wheat falling to the ground) will bear "many seeds." So, as usual, Jesus answers a simple question ("can we see Jesus?") with a much deeper and profound answer.

Consider: The *necessity* of Jesus' death is clearly expressed, as is its purpose and consequence: life coming out of death.

□ **Day #3--Wednesday, April, 1<sup>st</sup> Read:** *John 12:23-26; John 2:4; 4:21, 23; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20.*

The "hour" that Jesus spoke of was his impending crucifixion. As we explored yesterday, Jesus was born for this moment—the day he would surrender his life for the sake of the world. For most people, death is something to be put-off and ignored. For Jesus, his death was His means of entry into glory. The phrase that Jesus uses, "I tell you the truth..." always introduced a profound affirmation. To describe this profound truth, Jesus uses the analogy of a kernel of wheat "dying" in the ground and consequently producing many seeds. The wheat analogy illustrates a general paradoxical principle:

death is the way to life. In Jesus' case, His death led to glory and life not only for Himself but also for others.

Jesus goes on to describe what is true of Jesus, will also be true for those who will follow Him—his disciples. A disciple must “hate” his life in this world or he will lose it. To “hate” one’s life means that the commitment one has to Christ is so strong, that any other commitment would appear like “hate.” Conversely, the one who “loves” his life in this world would be one who idolizes one’s interests, goals, and desires. (See Luke 12:16-21; 18:18-30) Jesus obeyed God to the point of death. A believer must undergo a spiritual death to self so that God and God alone is obeyed. (See Romans 6:1-14; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 6:14). Many of Jesus’ original followers *did* follow Him—in death. According to tradition, of the early disciples, all but John, died as martyrs. Jesus’ word was thus a prophecy and also a promise.

#### □ Day #4--Thursday, April, 2<sup>nd</sup> Read: John 12:27-29

What an incredible verse, v.27. Jesus honestly reveals his emotions to the disciples. What was Jesus’ troubled heart? The Greek word, troubled *tetaraktai*, means “stirred, agitated.” (See John 11:33 and 14:1). Even though Jesus knew that death was near, the kind of death he would die, and that he would be made sin for us, it would be understandable that Jesus would be “troubled.” However, and this is critical, Jesus would not pull back and ask for deliverance. Rather, Jesus asks that God’s name be glorified! To glorify someone’s name was to submit to and honor what they represented or who they were as a person. As disciples, we to must submit to the Father’s will despite conflicting emotions.

The divine affirmation comes through a thunderous voice that confirmed God’s will and work through Jesus, now and in the future. The voice was audible but not all understood it ( See John 12:30 and Acts 9:7 and 22:9).

#### □ Day #5--Friday, April, 3<sup>rd</sup> Read: John 12:30-33

Jesus’ death on the cross was a judgment on the world. The “world” in the gospel of John are human systems, organizations, and individuals, set against God’s plan and purposes. This is what the devil offers Jesus: all the “kingdoms of the world” that Satan boasted had been given to him (See Luke 4:5-7). Jesus says that the cross, being God’s ultimate revelation and self-disclosure, reveals the sin of the world and God’s judgment of sin. The Cross and resurrection spelled Satan’s defeat and the reversal of all that the prince of this world has sought to attain. Satan and the world’s ways are motivated by self-will; Jesus is motivated by the Father’s will. Satan and his world bring destruction and death; Jesus’ power brings renewal and life. (See John 14:30; 16:11; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 2:14-15).

Jesus’ words, “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth” refers to his crucifixion. The typical mode of death for the violators of Jewish law was “stoning” (Stephen, Acts 7:58-60). Jesus knew how He was going to die. Jesus also knew that his death would “draw all men to myself.” He did not mean everybody will be saved for He made it clear that some will be lost (See John 5:28-29). It does mean that the drawing of all people by the Son is the same as that of the Father (John 6:44) meaning, Jesus will draw indiscriminately. Those saved will include those from every tribe, language, people, and nation. Like the Greeks who came to seek him on this particular day (See Revelation 5:9; John 10:16; 11:52).

#### □ Day #6--Saturday, April, 4<sup>th</sup> Read Again: John 12:30-33; John 12:12-19; Zechariah 9:9

Today, we spend a little more time on John 12:30-33. It is interesting that even though the crowd around Jesus thought the divine voice was “thunder,” Jesus says that the voice was for the people’s benefit. We might translate John 12:30 this way: “That voice came more for your sake than for Mine.” Jesus explains that the voice from heaven was intended to encourage the disciples and to inform the crowd, not to encourage Jesus. It appears that those who were spiritually perceptive heard the divine voice, but to the unspiritual it was only a noise (See 1 Corinthians 2:14). Really, there is little difference today. God’s Word can just be “noise” or at best, nice words written to some nice people a long time ago. But, for some, the Word of God is the “Word of life.”

The *now* in v 31 points more precisely to the commencement of the ‘hour’. The “hour” is identified as a time for judgment. It would seem that the judgment in mind was a general condemnation of the present world order through the cross. For those who come to faith through the cross, judgment has already taken place at the cross through which they will gain forgiveness and reconciliation. The double result is seen clearly in the driving out of “the prince of this world” and in the power of Jesus to draw people to himself. The instrument by which Satan designed to conquer Jesus (the cross) became the means for the conquering of Satan’s own power!

Verse 32 is the third prediction of the “lifting up” of Jesus (See also John 3:14; 8:28). Jesus’ death was no accident or surprise to Jesus. The mode of crucifixion is to be literally lifted up from the earth as a condemned criminal hangs from the wooden cross. One commentator adds that the Greek word, “*hypo*,” translated here as “lifted up,” has a double meaning; “To be lifted up ‘from the earth’ can be read as a description of the physical act of crucifixion....but it can also be read as a description of Jesus’ exaltation (uplifting, literally) in his return to God. The positive effect of Jesus’ hour is described in sweeping terms.” (Gail R. O’Day. “The Gospel of John.” *The New Interpreters Bible*) Here we can see the entire spectrum of Jesus’ salvific work: Jesus dies and rises again, ascends to the Father, and one day will return to consummate human history. Until that time, the “prince of this world” is still at work, but ultimately defeated.

Tomorrow is Palm Sunday. One of the appointed gospel lessons for Palm Sunday is John 12:12-19. Read this passage slowly and deliberately a few times. Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem was predicted by the prophet Zechariah and began Jesus’ resolute march toward the cross. Pray about worship tomorrow. Pray for a heart that is open and worshipful. Ask God to reveal to you what you need to hear during the sermon and study. Finally, pray for wisdom and understanding as you begin the Holy Week journey.