

The Hour Has Come! John 12:12-50 Pastor Guy Gray

The Turning Point of the Gospel of John

John 12 marks the end of what is often called the “Book of Signs” in the Gospel of John. In these first 12 chapters we have been given a fantastic vision of Christ. The portrait of Christ in these chapters has been developed around a series of miraculous signs that Jesus performs...the raising of Lazarus being the last and greatest of the signs. Throughout this part of John we have been challenged to see Jesus for who he truly is and to respond in true faith.

Now our study leads us into what is called the “Book of Passion.” This is because beginning in chapter 13 and throughout the rest of John, the focus is on the final days of Jesus’ ministry as He goes to the Cross, followed by the victory of His resurrection. This section is very different from the first 12 chapters. In this section we find Jesus speaking privately to His disciples. He shares His heart and mind with them, all in the shadow of His death and resurrection. If you are a believer...a follower of Christ, these words are meant to be deeply personal and powerful for your life. John 12 sets the stage by giving us a preview of the central theme that is at the heart of everything Jesus will teach in the “Book of Passion” (the rest of the Book of John).

Cheering for Jesus While Missing the Point?

But before we get to the central theme, we are reminded that it is easy to miss the point! That is the message of the “Triumphal Entry” (John 12:12-19). This wildly cheering crowd of Jesus admirers has completely missed the point. Their enthusiasm for Jesus is based on a distortion of truth. They have invented a Jesus that suits their own wishes, their own agenda, their own politics, their own methods. But this is not the real Jesus.

It has often been observed that in every age people tend to remake Jesus into their own image. Often people are not really that excited about Jesus – they are excited about themselves and their issues and they want to enlist Jesus to validate their particular point of view. By the way, would Jesus drive an SUV or choose a hybrid instead? Would Jesus protest global warming or back less government intrusion instead? Etc. Etc. WWJD???

The Glory of God in the Cross of Christ

Right in the midst of all this excitement, Jesus says something of ultimate importance. What He reveals brings us to the very center of both His mission and His method in our broken world; and this is the very point that the crowds have missed.

Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” (John 12:23-25)

The “hour” of Christ’s Glory is what we have been waiting for throughout the Gospel of John. This has been hinted at from the beginning. Finally it has arrived. But what we find is that the moment of Glory is all about the Cross. It is about humbly yielding His life to the death of the Cross and trusting in the power of God to bring victory through it. This has been the mission of Christ all along. This is, in fact, the very act that will break the power of Satan, evil, and darkness in our world:

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. (John 12:30-33)

So this is the point...the Cross is the heart and soul of the mission of Christ and it is the very glory of God! Pray that we might see this, understand it, and believe it! And there is one more thing. The Cross is not only Christ’s mission, it is also God’s method of working in our broken world. This means we also must learn the way of the Cross. This is why Jesus speaks not only about Himself in this passage. He also speaks about His followers. He tells us that we too must live out this principle in our lives (see 12:24-25). This is at the very center of Christian discipleship. What follows in chapters 13-17 is in many ways, an explanation of what this should look like in our lives on a daily basis. So we are set on alert right here in John 12 to watch for this theme as we move forward in John; to pray about this theme, to seek to grow in our understanding of the way of the Cross – as both the mission of Christ as well as the method of God’s work in and through our

lives. What a challenging message! This is what will protect us from simply remaking Jesus in our own image and then imagining that we are really on the right page with Jesus. May the Lord graciously lead us to see the true glory of God in Christ and to live in the power of the Cross in our lives!

For Further Reflection:

As you spend time in John 12:12-36 this week think about the following questions. . .

What is the lesson of the account of the triumphal entry for your life today? How have you missed the point of Jesus or simply enlisted Christ for your own views and agendas?

How do you need to apply the truth of 12:25 to your life today? How can meditating on the Cross of Christ help you?