

The Coronation of the King

John 12:12-33

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This morning, we do remember the marvelous event of Jesus entering the city of Jerusalem. I want you to turn in your Bible to John chapter 12. And certainly, as we think about this passion week and look forward to the death of Christ to be remembered on Friday and His resurrection next Sunday, it is fitting that we get into the flow of these wonderful redemptive events by examining His entry into Jerusalem.

Traditionally, Palm Sunday is a day filled with meaning for Christians -- a day of "hosannas," a day of "hallelujahs," a day of remembering Jesus as King, the One who entered the city to the praises of His people. And they did hail Him as King on that day. Hope was bright, hearts were filled with anticipation in the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah. And finally, the people began to feel this was probably the Messiah - this was He. The crowning achievement that sealed their thoughts toward Him was the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. This was a great day, filled with hope. And yet, their "hosannas" were silenced, and their enthusiasm had turned to indifference and, by Friday, to hatred. And Jesus was crucified by a bloodthirsty mob, made up of the same people who had hailed Him as King. On this day, the day the King entered the city, the King came to die. We'll see that as we look at John's narrative.

As Jesus enters the city and hears the "hosannas" and the praise, He certainly feels behind them the hate, knowing it will soon take over and end in His death. And actually, He had avoided any such public confrontation up to this point because He knew it would lead to death, and He didn't want a premature death. It had to be in the Father's good time. But now it was His hour - He was on schedule. The divine plan was unfolding; the timing as well as the event itself had been scheduled before the world began. He was to die at Passover as Passover Lamb, and so it was now time to force the issue to bring that about. And so, Jesus Himself, in the will of the Father, deliberately planned a demonstration.

He planned a final, public presentation of Himself to Israel, knowing well that the enthusiasm of the masses would have the effect of enraging the Jewish religious leaders to the degree that they would eventually seek His life and kill Him. He was forcing the Sanhedrin to do something they wanted to do, but not at this time. He was forcing the Sanhedrin to set aside their timetable in favor of God's timetable; to set aside their execution plan in favor of God's execution plan.

You see, the Sanhedrin had planned to kill Jesus - they had been planning it a long time - but they didn't want it at this time. Too much Passover activity; the time was too busy. This would compound their already extremely busy lives. And then they didn't want all these people there, all this excitement. But Jesus hastened the crisis, brought the event to pass in God's good time, and accomplished what from before eternity past had been planned.

Now with that as a background, I want you to begin looking at the event in verse 12 of John 12. And we'll just take some simple steps through John's record of that day. We begin with the fateful presentation - and we'll give you a little outline, alliterated, so you can kind of follow along.

The fateful presentation begins in verse 12, as Jesus makes his move to begin the demonstration. "On the next day the great multitude who had come to the feast when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him." Jesus really makes the move; Jesus takes the initiative. Let me reconstruct just this day, if I might. He had been in Bethany, the home of Lazarus, the home of Mary and Martha, where He of course had spent much time. It was morning and He had left Bethany, perhaps approaching the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, just above the little town of Bethany. He then dispatched two of His disciples to go into an adjacent hamlet - an adjacent village, or really a suburb, to get a donkey and a colt of a donkey for Him.

So the disciples, in response to the command of their Master, reached the little village and found the right home, and there, sure enough, two animals were tied to a post outside that home, just as Jesus said they would be. And they went to the owner and said that Jesus wanted the two animals. And when the owners were told the reason (the reason, simply stated, was, "The Lord needs them"), they immediately complied, perhaps indicating that they were followers of Jesus to one degree or another. And so the disciples then took the two animals and threw their outer garments over the colt and over the mother of the colt. And Jesus chose the colt to ride on - the humblest of the two rather humble animals to begin with. And on that colt, the foal of that donkey, Jesus began His ride for Jerusalem.

Now, He had collected quite a little entourage; not only believing people who were associated with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus - people who had been astounded and participated to one degree or another in the miracle of resurrection - but He had been accumulating people all the way along because He'd been trekking from Galilee south, and as He went He had taught. And as He came through Jericho, you remember He did some marvelous miracles, including giving sight to the blind; and that, no doubt, added to the entourage that was now with Him. And as He approaches the slope of the Mount of Olives, He has collected quite a crowd.

These people are now convinced that Jesus is the Messiah. After all, they've heard His teaching, they have heard His preaching, they have listened to His wisdom, they have heard the questions that confounded the most brilliant religious leaders, they have seen His miracles, they have known of His ability to raise the dead - there's plenty of evidence for them to believe that He's the Messiah. And as He ascends toward Jerusalem, they begin to feel the fever pitch. And the Bible tells us, as we bring the accounts of all the Gospels together, that they began to throw at His feet the palm branches and the garments that were... to make a pathway, signifying Him as the King.

So as this group is approaching the city now, something very interesting happens. From out of the eastern gate comes this massive crowd of people who have heard that Jesus is coming. The resurrection of Lazarus has now gone like electricity through the city of Jerusalem, which, I suppose at this time, could be populated by as many as 2.6 or 2.7 million. You can calculate that, at least approximately, by looking at history and finding out that about 257,000 lambs are recorded to have been slain at one Passover season. And with a minimum number of ten people for each lamb, that could press the number to that 2.6--7 million people. The city was bursting with all the pilgrims who came there for this event.

And so coming out that rather small, eastern gate - sort of squeezing out like toothpaste out of a tube - was this multitude coming down the slope from Jerusalem as the other group was coming from Bethany up the slope. And the two great crowds converged together like two colliding rivers, enthusiasm mounting, and Jesus accepting it all as He is hailed as Messiah and King. And the fever pitch begins to escalate.

The very fact that He is riding on the foal of a donkey, rather than on a white horse, was a way for Jesus to demonstrate that He was a king, but not like the kind they had expected. They were looking for a military conqueror. They were looking for a rider on a white horse who would come in and overthrow Rome. They were looking for someone to lead a coup. They wanted a full-scale rebellion. They wanted war against Rome; only they wanted war against Rome on a supernatural level - the kind of level they had seen demonstrated by the miracles of Jesus. But Jesus, even in the way He rode, came to make it very evident that He was not bringing war, but peace. And He was not going to come as a killer, but He was going to come to be killed. And so we see in just in those few words, the fateful presentation - the event that Jesus actually inaugurates.

We immediately move to the fulfilled prophecies in verse 13 where we read, "They began to cry out, and they say, 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.' And Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it;" (that's recording what I just told you), "as it is written, 'Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.'" You have there two prophecies being fulfilled immediately.

First of all, they are throwing the branches of the palm trees at His feet. They were, in ancient Jewish times, symbols of strength and beauty and joy and salvation. You see them again in Revelation chapter 7, in verse 9. They were ways for the people to hail Jesus as the conquering hero, the political redeemer, the deliverer from Roman domination, the required mighty deliverer that it was gonna take to accomplish what they wanted. And they had seen enough and heard enough, with regard to His power, by virtue of the resurrection of Lazarus, to have confidence that He was gonna make it happen.

And when they say the word, "hosanna," that word means, "save now." If we wanna translate that into what they really meant, what they really meant was, "Bring the revolution now; deliver us from Roman bondage." It wasn't a spiritual thing they were calling for; it was a political and economic and social thing they were asking for. "Save now! This is the moment! This is the time!" The euphoria is at its pinnacle; the public support is at its greatest. You've got the power of the mob to overpower the Roman garrison. "Let it happen, and let it happen now!"

In verse 13, also we must note that they said, "'Blessed is the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord.'" And I read that to you earlier; that's from Psalm 118 verse 26, the last Psalm of the Hallel, and it is called, "The Conqueror's Psalm." It was that same Psalm, by the way, about a hundred years before this, that was sung to Judas Maccabeus after he had conquered Achora. But it really is a Messianic promise, and they identified it as Messianic, and they are therefore identifying Jesus as the Messiah, the One who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

By the way, Matthew tells us they also called Him, "Son of David." It must have been common knowledge that His earthly father Joseph was in the line of David, as was His mother Mary, and He did have a right to the throne; but Son of David was the Messianic title. So they see Him as Messiah, King, Deliverer. They feel that any moment He can capture the tremendous enthusiasm of the crowd

and turn it into a coup against Rome and, with His supernatural power, bring about what those people have been longing to experience - the freedom and liberation from the Roman oppression.

The Pharisees, meanwhile - while this euphoria and this enthusiasm is going on - are in a state of panic. They are desperately concerned about all this because they don't want Jesus as their Messiah; they want Jesus dead, and they have been plotting His death all along. In fact, back in Luke chapter 19, you get a little bit of a glimpse into their attitude in verse 39. At the height of all of this, when the multitude, as Jesus is coming down the descent of the Mount of Olives, the multitude is crying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" and "Peace in heaven!" and "Glory in the highest!" I mean, this is a big, big deal.

Some of the Pharisees, in verse 39, in the multitude - and they're mingled throughout - said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples!" You gotta call a halt to this. I mean, they were utterly unwilling to acknowledge Him as their Messiah for the reason that He had attacked their religious system; He had called them, "hypocrites." I mean, He had literally dismantled their whole system, showed the falsity of it from the very first sermon He ever preached, in the Sermon on the Mount. And so they say to Him, "Rebuke Your disciples." And He answered and said, 'I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!' He wouldn't do what they asked Him to do.

In verse 14, after having indicated the fulfillment of Psalm 118, Jesus is said to have found that young donkey and He's sitting on it as He comes. That fulfills verse 15, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt," from Zechariah 9:9. The prophet Zechariah had said that is how the Messiah will come. "He is just," said Zechariah, "having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, upon the colt, the foal of an ass." An exact and specific prophecy given about 600 years before. When a king rides a horse, particularly a white horse, it's conquering, it's triumph, it's war. When a king rides a donkey, it's peace. No Roman soldier - certainly no Roman soldier in the garrison at Jerusalem who saw the Lord riding on the colt, the foal of an ass - would report that He looked like a threat. There will be a time when He does come riding on a white horse, Revelation 19:11, and He will be a threat. But He came, not to bring war, but to bring peace; not to kill, but to be killed.

So the fateful presentation and then the fulfilled prophecies. That leads us to a third point: the faithful's perplexity. Those poor disciples - bless 'em; we love 'em - but they're about as hardheaded as any people you could imagine. "These things His disciples did not understand at the first." That could be said about just about anything that He told them. They just didn't get it. They had so many preconceptions about what should happen and what should be going on, that they didn't hear with clear thinking. "These things His disciples did not understand at the first." They couldn't figure the whole thing out. First He's talking about death, and now He's coming in as a king. It just didn't make any sense at all.

"But when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him." He had just told them he's gonna die; they didn't want to believe that, and they were having a hard time even believing that. Now, He comes riding in and everybody's hailing Him as the King, and that doesn't seem to square with what they would have expected because, you remember earlier on, the disciples had frankly said, "Let's go to Jerusalem and die with Him." I mean, that's what Thomas said. They just couldn't put it all together.

And it's wonderful; it says, "When Jesus was glorified, then they remembered." How did that

happen? Well, after Jesus was glorified and went to heaven, what did He do? When He went to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit, right? Remember, the Scripture says that the Holy Spirit couldn't come because Jesus wasn't glorified? So when Jesus was glorified, He sent the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit came, according to John 14:26, He brought them into remembrance of everything. And things didn't become clear until the Holy Spirit came. Isn't that a wonderful blessing for us? To remember that the things in Scripture are clear to us because we have a resident truth teacher. They had to wait for that "anointing," which belongs to every believer, as John called it in I John 2:27.

So they just couldn't quite make sense out of this whole thing. Beyond that - and I didn't read it to you, but over in Luke chapter 19, when Jesus rode into the city, you know the first thing He did? He wept. According to Luke 19:41, He started to cry. And none of it made sense. If He's being killed, why all this "hosannas"? And if all this "hosanna's" going on, why is He crying? But He had told them He was coming to die back in chapter 11 in verse 16. It was where Thomas said, "Let's go die with Him."

Now, He's being hailed as King. And when that all turned sour and He did die, they were equally confused, and they scattered even at His arrest and they hid out of cowardice. And after He was killed, they didn't know what was going on. And we remember meeting some of them on the road to Emmaus, and they're in complete chaos - have no idea what's going on - didn't believe in the resurrection until Jesus revealed Himself to them. So, they were definitely perplexed; and they didn't really get it all straight until the Holy Spirit sorted it all out. And then they remembered the Messianic prophecies that spoke about Him coming with a triumphal entry, but also those prophecies that indicated He had to die as well.

Fourthly, we turn to the fickle people - and this is, I guess, the saddest part of all. It's one thing to be confused; it's something else to be hypocritical. But in verses 17 and 18, we read, "And so the multitude who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, were bearing Him witness." And here came this crowd that I told you was collected as He came through Bethany and raised Lazarus. And of course - and they're now coming, descending down the Mount of Olives, which into the Kidron valley, where the brook is, and then up the slope to Jerusalem by the eastern gate - and they're being collided with by this other multitude. But as they're coming along, they're bearing Him witness. I mean, they're giving testimony. "This is the Messiah, this is Son of David, this is the King." And the testimony is what draws the crowd, and they come out to meet Him because they had heard that He had performed this sign - a sign being something that points to something, and it pointed to His Messiahship, His divine power.

Now, here are the thrill-seekers, and the little statement, "He had performed this sign," really triggers our understanding of them. It wasn't that they were particularly interested in Jesus; what they were particularly interested in was a miracle. Do you remember how often they came to Him and said, "We want a sign, we want a sign"? And He said, "I wouldn't give a sign to this evil and adulterous generation"? It's the same crowd that a little later are gonna be screaming for Jesus' blood; it's the same crowd that are gonna be pleading with the Romans to release an archcriminal by the name of Barabbas - the thrill seekers. The same kind of crowd that were up in Galilee following Jesus around to get free food, looking for the next sensation, but not committed at all to Him. They were the false followers; they were the people who walked no more with Him, who scattered when He talked about dying or drinking His blood and eating His flesh. They were the ones who said they believed, but didn't follow and continue - fickle followers. John 2 talks about them; John 6; John 8; John 12, later in the chapter.

They're still around. They go out from us because they never really were of us. These are the same people now shouting, "Hosanna!" who will someday, very soon, shout, "Crucify Him!" And we see them even in the church today; even hovering around Christianity today. For a while, they appear to adore Jesus, but it isn't long before they stand with the crucifiers. Jesus knew it. He knew the fickleness of their "hosannas."

And then the fifth thing we see here is the frustrated Pharisees. I already told you about their frustration in asking the disciples to stop this whole thing; to tell Jesus that he ought to call a halt to this thing because it isn't right. In fact, they probably suggested that it was blasphemous for anybody such as Jesus to be accepting the accolades that belonged only to the Messiah. But the frustrated Pharisees surface again in verse 19. "The Pharisees therefore said to one another, 'You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him.'" Probably responding to the fact that some of them had gone and said, "You gotta stop this." And they're saying, "This isn't helping, guys. We've lost this deal. This is out of control. This is beyond us - we can't handle this."

Back in chapter 11 verse 47, "The chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council before this, and said, 'What are we doing? This man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.'" In other words, "We'll lose our status here." And you remember that whole situation. Down in verse 53, "So from that day on they planned together to kill Him." Now it's all going bad on 'em, because they certainly can't kill Him when the crowd is so supportive. So you see their frustration - they want Him dead; the crowd wants Him King, and they are frustrated at His popularity and intimidated by His acceptance. They really can't do anything about it; they just gotta stand their ground until it all sort of falls apart, which it does.

And then, a sixth point, "the following pagans," I called it. This is wonderful. And we're just giving you really the "bird's eye" - the overview of this. But this is a marvelous little vignette, in verses 20-22, that you might read through and just sort of throw away. But listen to what it says. "In the middle of all of this, there were certain Gentiles." Obviously they were proselytes to Judaism, so they'd come to Passover season. And these Gentiles "came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee," which was an area inhabited by Gentiles - kind of a Gentile area in Galilee. And so, they saw a guy that was kind of from their area, and would understand the Gentile mentality. "And they began to ask him, saying, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.'" Now, I like this. There was more to this whole deal than a sign; they wanted to see Jesus. They wanted to ask some specific questions. They were truly interested in Him. That wasn't like the crowd of Pharisees. The Pharisees wanted a sign, and the rest of the crowd wanted a revolution. These guys wanted to see Jesus. "We want some specifics." They were certainly in the crowd; they were caught up in the mob. But they could see past the euphoria of the whole thing; they wanted to see Jesus.

By the way, there was - remember when Solomon built the temple back in I Kings chapter 8, he designed a court for the Gentiles? And, certainly, in Herod's temple, there was a similar court of the Gentiles, and they were wonderfully accepted in that far, as proselytes to Judaism. So here come these Gentiles, and they want an interview.

This is a most interesting incident to me, for a number of reasons. First of all, because it's this little jewel set in the middle of this really ugly, Jewish scenario. And I say that because the Jews are about to kill Jesus because he doesn't pull off the coup. Their fickleness is really terrible - tragic. But here,

in the middle of this Jewish fickleness, in the middle of this Jewish unbelief, in the middle of Jewish hatred that's gonna end in the killing of Jesus, are some Gentiles who really want to know the truth.

And, frankly, the whole incident, I think, is put in here as a rebuke to the Jews. The Jews never said, "We want to see Jesus." The Jews never came and wanted an answer to their questions. But these wanted to understand who He was. "What's this about? What's going on here?" And I really believe what you're getting here is a little glimpse of the Church - a little preview of the Church. Because when Israel rejects the Messiah, He's gonna turn to the world, isn't He? And you're getting a little preview. They honestly sought the truth. And you are reminded of Haggai's words in Haggai 2:7, that "the desire of all nations will come." And here He is; and here are the nations. He came unto His own - and His own what? Received Him not. But the nations want to know.

Well, they went to Philip because he kind of belonged from their area. And they said, "We want to see Jesus." Well, Philip didn't know what to do about that, so in verse 22 he "came and told Andrew." He wanted some counsel. And you say, "Well, why would he need counsel?" Well, this was a pretty busy scenario, right? We don't know how many thousands and thousands of people are milling around all over the place. This is pretty busy, and they don't know whether Jesus really wants to stop this whole procedure and spend some time talking to these guys. On the other hand, you know, Philip might have remembered that in Matthew 10:5, Jesus said, "Don't go in the way of the Gentiles." Remember that? And in Matthew chapter - I think it's chapter 15, around verse 24, Jesus said, "I am not come but for the lost sheep of the house of Israel." So maybe Philip wanted to kind of get his theology sorted out a little bit. On the other hand, Philip also knew that Jesus also said in John 10:16, "I have sheep of another fold." And he probably interpreted that as Gentiles. So, in his dilemma, he just went to Andrew and, "What do we do about this?"

Well, there's a wonderful implication here. Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus. And then it says in 23, "And Jesus answered them." You know what I think? When Philip went to Andrew, the group of Gentiles was with him, because otherwise they would have gotten lost. And when Philip went to Andrew - when Philip and Andrew went to Jesus, they were there, too. And it was to them that Jesus spoke. And I think the answer that Jesus gives here tells you what the question was. This takes us, then, from those sort of "following pagans," as we call them, to the fatal prediction.

Look at verse 23. Jesus answers them, and He says, "The hour is come for the Son of Man to be glorified." And they probably said to Him, "What's this all about? What are you going to do? What did you come to do?" They don't have the same Jewish agenda, you know. It's not like overthrowing the Romans is a big thing to them. "What's going on here?" Well, He says, "It's time for the Son of Man to be glorified." And I think He's talking to the disciples and to this small group of Gentiles. And He tells them, "It's time to be glorified." And, you know, their moment of immediate reaction might have been, "Wow, we are gonna have a coup!" I mean, "glorified" means, "exalted, honored, lifted up." "And this is gonna be it!"

But instead, He says the most incredible thing in the next verse. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." What a shock! I don't know that there's any passage in the New Testament more shocking than that, given the scene. I mean, they're all assuming some triumph is about to happen. He's got the whole populous on His side. This is a perfect moment to act. He's got the power to raise the dead, so He certainly would have the power to kill the living - and He could take care of the Romans

relatively easy. But instead of talking about conquering, He says to this little group of Gentiles along with the disciples who brought them, "I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die. Because a grain of wheat has to fall into the ground and die before it can bring forth fruit." And He taps into those agrarian illustrations that He used so very often.

As long as a grain remains in the granary, nothing happens, because the life is in it; and it's pressured and preserved and kept by the shell. What has to happen is the shell has to decompose so the life can get out. That's what happens when you're buried in the ground. It decomposes, rots away, the shell dies, and life comes. And Jesus says, "There won't be any life until there's death." And He's talking about Himself. "And you've gotta know this, that I am not come to bring salvation by My perfect life; I can't bring salvation by a military coup; I can't bring salvation by an economic change; I can't bring salvation by social revolution; I have to bring salvation by death. So, you've gotta see that this is a time to die." He likens Himself to a grain of wheat, which is a beautiful and graphic way to express it. And He says, "If I'm gonna bring forth life, I have to die. If I don't die, then there's no life." There's no spiritual harvest apart from death. His life-giving power is made possible by His death.

So the Son of Man, God incarnate, is coming to Jerusalem to die - the King comes to die. His example could not give life; His transfiguration could not give life. Had He been translated like Enoch, He couldn't have given life. He had to die. And that's why the writer of Hebrews says that He went to the cross "for the joy that was set before Him," because He could see past the death to the life that was coming.

So the solemn truth of verse 24 applies to Christ, and Christ alone. He is the substitute who will die and bring forth much fruit. But there's also an analogous principle that applies to the rest of men, and that's in verse 25. And He says to this group, "He who loves his life loses it; he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

What's He saying? He's saying, "I'm gonna die, and the real possibility is, you might have to, also. I have to die to bring life. And the rest of you are gonna have to let your life go, too. And you're gonna have to hate the life that you have in this world, and love the life that is to come - to be willing to take up your cross and follow me; so count the cost. Are you willing to go the path that I'm gonna go? It's a path to honor - the Father will honor you." He says in verse 26, "the Father will honor you as you serve Him." But it's a path, not through triumph; it's a path, not through exaltation; it's a path through suffering; and it might even be a path through death. "If you wanna serve Me, if you wanna follow Me, take the path of sacrifice, take the path of death; and God will honor you." It's back to the same principle. "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me."

So, frankly, these Gentiles come to Jesus and ask what's going on, and He shatters their ideas about setting up some kind of a kingdom - about knocking off the Roman army - and He says, basically, "I'm gonna die. And not only am I gonna die, but if you decide to follow Me, you might, too." And that was true. If they were to be a part of the plan, they too would not be exalted, magnified, and glorified by the world; they might be killed by the world. They certainly would be broken and humbled and sacrificing everything. But in the end, they would be honored by God. That's the message He gives them. That little group of people who are kind of like symbolic of the Church that is to come - in the midst of a fickle Israel.

Then you come to the faithful petition, verses 27-30. This is full of pathos. The "hosannas" still ringing in His ears; but Jesus knows it is superficial. The mob is fickle, and they're about to cry for His blood. But He's haunted by the cross now, and it begins to touch His humanness - not like it hasn't before, but it really begins to touch deeply. In verse 27 He says, "Now My soul has become troubled." I wish I could comprehend that - I can't. I wish I could tell you something of what that means - I can't. I guess I can compare it to Luke 22:42--44, where in the Garden, He was sweating great drops of blood, as it were, out of the agony. I mean, He was feeling tremendous emotion over the reality of death; there's no question that it moved Him deeply. You see, He was facing not just physical suffering, but alienation from God, shame, separation; and this is John's glimpse of the kind of agony we see in the Garden.

Jesus didn't go to the cross coldly, diffidently; He didn't go the cross detached and without feeling. His was not even the death of a Christian. You understand that? A Christian goes to death without terror, because the terror has been removed by forgiveness. And it wasn't even the death of a non-Christian, because a non-Christian has no idea of what awaits him. It was the death of one who fully understood what was coming; and He knew what was coming was shame and reproach and alienation and pain and a curse, that He would feel. He was like an unbeliever dying, who knows everything he's going to feel before he feels it, and having to live his whole life in anticipation of that. Only it would have been infinitely greater than that feeling of any one unbeliever. Jesus was for real, believe me. All human, as well as divine.

He felt every pain, every aching muscle, every torn piece of flesh, every thorn piercing that blessed brow, every dislocation of bones and suffocation of organs, every grasping for breath. He felt the flies in His face; He felt the dripping blood that He couldn't wipe away. He felt the naked shame, the dried mouth, the cracked lips - He felt it all. And far worse, He felt the curse of sin on His soul. And think of it - it would have been enough if He had endured it when it happened; it would have been enough if it came by surprise; but He was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. Who knows how long He had been anticipating this? Certainly, in His incarnation, His death must have been on His mind all the time. With perfect knowledge of every detail, He anticipated mentally what He was going to suffer, and endured it 10,000 times.

Maybe that's why in all the New Testament, Jesus never laughs; He only cries. Even in times of joy, the haunting pain of His own death and what was to come had such a grip on His soul that it allowed no place for trivial joy. The nails must have gone through His hands and feet a hundred times a day. And so He says, "My soul is troubled; and what shall I say," verse 27, "Father, save Me from this hour?" Can't say that. "But for this purpose I came to this hour." There's only one thing to say. Verse 28, "Father, glorify Thy name." That's really what He said in the Garden, "Father, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done. If this is it, and You can glorify Your name, do it." That is the most glorious, the most noble purpose in all the universe - that God be glorified; and certainly Christ was set to that purpose.

At that particular moment, verse 28 says, "There came a therefore a voice out of heaven." The same voice, the voice of the Father, that spoke at His baptism and, secondly, spoke at His transfiguration, now speaks again. "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. I have glorified You in the past; I'll glorify You again." And He was talking about the cross and the resurrection. This is the authentication, the verification, the affirmation of Holy God on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Then verse 29 - and this also leads me to believe that He had been talking to that small group of

Gentiles and His disciples, because it says, "The multitude therefore who stood by," (you get the idea that they were kind of peripheral to the conversation), "and heard it were saying that it had thundered." In other words, there was this loud thing, but they couldn't distinguish what was said. "Others were saying, 'An angel has spoken to Him.'" They didn't know. They didn't know. It's almost like the people that God wanted to know knew, and the people that He didn't want to know didn't know. And isn't that how it always is? Didn't Jesus say that He spoke in parables in order to reveal these things unto babes, but to hide them from others? And so came the divine seal of approval, and it was heard by those that God wanted to hear. It's not that God is silent - people wonder about that. It's not that God is silent, it's that men are deaf.

So we see the troubled soul of Jesus comforted by the voice of the Father, who says, "'You have sought to glorify Me by willingly sacrificing, and I will glorify You, believe Me.'" That's back to that eternal covenant, isn't it, where the Father and the Son are committed to each other's glory.

And then in verse 30, "Jesus answered and said, 'This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.'" "I don't need affirmation from the Father; you just need to hear it. You need it. I understand what's going on. It was for you." So it must have been understood by somebody; otherwise, how could it have been for them? So we again go back to the idea that it must have been that little group who asked the right question. Always in the midst of the fickle mob there's some of that remnant seeking the truth - in this case, some Gentiles. A little preview of the Church.

Well, the final pronouncement brings it to a conclusion. The final pronouncement - and this is powerful stuff. Verse 31, "'Now,'" and that signifies the event of His death. "'Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.' But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die." Here we see the triumph. The day could be looked at as a tragedy and indeed, in many ways, it is. It solidifies the judgment on Israel. That's the first consequence. He says, "Judgment is upon this world. The crisis has come; probation is over. The doom of the world is sealed by the murder of the Son of God. And from now on the Holy Spirit will convict you of sin because you believe not on Me."

The whole world, thinking it had judged Him, was judged by Him. And really, the Jews were the best of the world. I mean, they were the ones who had the covenants, the Law, prophets, the Word of God. And they sort of represent a whole world rejecting Christ. And instead of them judging Christ, they were judged by Christ. When they executed Christ, the whole world fell under judgment. Every man who ever lives is judged by what he does with the cross of Christ. Is that not true? So when Jesus dies on the cross, in effect, He set the standard for judgment. Judgment has come. It is by the cross that every man is judged. You believe in the cross, you're saved; you reject the cross, you're lost. It is the standard.

Secondly, the prince of this world is cast out. Satan's head was bruised at the cross. The power of death which was given to him, according to Hebrews 2:14 and 15, was taken away, and Satan was sentenced. He is now on death row, to be finally incarcerated in the lake of fire in the future, as Revelation 20 points out.

So the first thing that happened was the world thought it was judging Christ. The table was turned; Christ was judging the world. The second thing that happened was Satan thought he was judging Christ - wrong. Christ was judging Satan - the reverse of what it appeared. And then thirdly, and this wonderful conclusion, "'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.' And he was

saying this to indicate by what kind of death He would die." The third thing that happened was He was lifted up on a cross as a sacrifice for sin; and the cross becomes the magnet that draws sinners to Him for forgiveness and for life.

So it climaxes with Him being lifted up and drawing men to Him. Just like the serpent in the wilderness was lifted up, and all who looked were healed, so all who look at the cross are saved. And they become the "much fruit" of verse 24 that are the result of the death of the seed. What a day! A day of destiny. They judged Him? No, He judged them. Satan judged Him? No, He judged Satan. They lifted Him up as a criminal? No, He was lifted up as a savior. He was lifted up in shame? No, He was lifted up in salvation. It was the reverse of everything they planned. A day of destiny. The King came, but He came to die, that men might live.

A poet said, "They pluck their palm branches and hail Him as King early on Sunday. They spread out their garments, 'Hosannas' they sing early on Sunday. But where is the noise of their hurrying feet? The crown they would offer, the scepter, the seat? Their King wanders hungry, forgot in the street early on Monday." It wasn't long until they took His life. But the grain had to die. It was in the counsel of God. And because of His death, our sins can be forgiven. And we'll move to that on Friday, as we look at the death of the King.

Father, thank You this morning for Your word to us; for this wonderful glimpse of this tremendous event. And now we ask, Lord, that You will draw us to Christ. Help us to know that on that moment that He died, He was not judged; the whole world was. And every human being will be judged eternally on the basis of what they do with the crucified Christ. And Satan didn't judge Him; Satan was judged by Him. And He wasn't lifted up in shame; He was lifted up in salvation. Oh, the paradox of Calvary. I pray for every person here who doesn't know the Savior. May they see Him lifted up and fall before Him, seeking forgiveness for their sin and eternal life. In His glorious name. Amen.

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