

**Walk While You Have the Light
That You May Believe: The Gospel of John | John 12:27-43
Southern Hills Baptist Church
July 9, 2017**

WELCOME

Happy Sunday, y'all. We are back in the book of John so if you have your Bibles head over to John chapter 12.

INTRODUCTION – BACK IN JOHN

It has been about 2 and a half months since we have been in the Gospel of John and I have been eager to get back to it. I hope you are as excited as I am. Let me try to briefly recap what we have learned so far in our study of John...

Than You May Believe

John tells us towards the end of his account of the life of Christ that he wrote this history of Jesus' life **that we would believe upon Jesus as the Christ**, the Messiah, the Son of God, as God become man come to save us from our sins. **He wants to relay the miraculous deeds and divine teachings he has been privy to as one of Jesus' Disciples** who traveled everywhere with Jesus for 3 years. So this is what we have seen. We have seen Jesus cause the lame to walk and the blind to see, we have even seen Jesus bring the dead back to life. We have also had the opportunity to hear Jesus proclaim a message of salvation that is wholly of grace, not of works, while at the same time calling people to a faith that is evident by a life of discipleship.

Final Public Address

We have seen amazing, wondrous, and beautiful portraits of Jesus' life. Where we pick up tonight is actually in the midst of a transition. We are about to read Jesus' final public address. After this address Jesus slips away from the public and spends his final days with His inner circle, the Disciples.

Jesus Knew This Was It

While the crowd that Jesus spoke to here didn't know this would be the final time that Jesus would address them or any other crowd this side of the cross, Jesus knew. He speaks to it in our passage. He knew His time was quickly coming.

Your Final Words

Let me ask you, if you knew you had one final opportunity to talk to co-workers or neighbors or others that you know, **what would you want to say? What would weigh upon your heart?** What would you want to leave them with? Would it be a joke? Would it be something trivial? Not likely, right?

Something that Matters

You would likely want to deliver something of greater **significance**, right? You would want to share a message that could make a difference with others or share something that others might not have another chance to hear. You might want to share...

- What these people meant to you
- What mattered most to you in this life
- The most important truths that impacted you
- Lessons you had learned that had opened doors for you

- Maybe you would want to share the truth of the Gospel with people, pointing them towards the hope that you had found.

You would want to deliver a message of **substance**, right? **When you are staring at the end of your life your perspective starts to change** and the trivial matters of this life are just that, trivial. You won't get mixed up in losing your perspective as easily.

Transition – What Will Jesus' Message Be?

We are about to read the final public words of Jesus on this side of the cross. What message would He have to share? What would He want others to know? What call would He put out for others to follow? This is what we will have an opportunity to consider together. The question you will have to answer yourself this morning is what you will do with this weighty message and call from the Son of God.

OPENING PRAYER

Before we jump into our text this morning, let's pause and ask God to work on our hearts through the reading and consideration of His Word.

Heavenly Father,

We come to your Word this morning and we ask that you would press upon our hearts the weight of these final public words from Jesus. May we not only hear them with our ears, but may we embrace them with our hearts.

- May we see the beauty of our Savior who is sympathetic to our suffering as He took on more than we will ever know.
- May we see the blinding and binding power of sin that we would run from it and run to Jesus in faith, the light of this world.

Would you, as Jesus prayed, glorify Yourself? Glorify yourself in us, in the conviction and heart change you bring about through your Word. Give us soft hearts, may they not be hardened to your Word.

We pray these things in Jesus name and for your glory,

Amen.

HEAR THE WORD OF GOD...

John 12:27-43

[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."

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. [37] Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, [38] so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

[39] Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

[40] “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.”

[41] Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. [42] Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; [43] for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

Isaiah 40:8

[8] The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

There is much for us to consider in this passage, so let’s begin to walk through it and then we will consider its call upon our lives.

JESUS’ ANGUISH: UNSPEAKABLE SUFFERING (vs. 27)

The first thing we see as Jesus makes His final public appeal to the masses is the great burden He carries. **He speaks openly and honestly about a real struggle He faces.** Let me reread verse 27 so you have it in front of you once more. Listen to the words of Jesus...

John 12:27

[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.

The weight of the situation, the weight of what Jesus knows is to come, presses upon Him. He confesses in this moment that His soul is troubled. The Greek word used for “troubled” (τετάρρακται) here in our text **literally means to “shake or stir up.”** It is a strong word that implies that Jesus was experiencing **great emotional and spiritual anguish.**

Sweating Blood in the Garden

We see this in the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane later, Jesus didn’t look forward to the pain that was ahead of Him. It weighed upon Him, so much so that we read He sweats blood when praying about it in the garden the night He was betrayed. Do you understand the stress and pressure you have to be under to sweat blood? **Jesus was carrying the weight of the world as He waited to carry the sin of much of the world as a sacrifice.**

What Did Jesus Anticipate?

What did Jesus know was ahead of Him that caused Him so much anguish? We know it had to do with His forthcoming death as He winds up speaking to this in the passage.

Torturous Physical Death

Listen to how Isaiah’s prophecy describes the death of Jesus...

Isaiah 53:3-6

[3] He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. [4] Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. [5] But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

This prophecy, written hundreds of years before Jesus' was born describes His torture and crucifixion. The physical pain Jesus would face was overwhelming. When we think of the suffering Jesus faced we generally have the scene of the cross in mind. We think of the

- The **cat of 9-tails whip** that raked over His back.
- The **staffs** he was beaten over the head with relentlessly at the hands of Roman guards
- The **crown of thorns** that was pressed into His brow
- The **nails** that pierced His hands and feet that would hold Him up on that cross as He gasped for air

Wrath of God as Sin Bearer

As excruciating as all of this was, it wasn't what Jesus was troubled over the most. You see Jesus was going to take on the sins of any and all who would place their faith in Him. We just read that in Isaiah's prophecy, right? The iniquity of us all would be laid up on Jesus. So Jesus took our sin and sin cannot go unpunished.

Romans 1:18

[18] For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Therefore the wrath of God was poured out on Jesus to purchase our pardon and salvation. We have seen the ugliness of the wrath of man in the death of Jesus on the cross. **If the speck in the universe that man is can cause so much pain when they exercise their wrath, what do you think the wrath of God looks like?** This is what troubled Jesus.

Save Me!

He was so troubled He says, "Father save me from this hour!" The ESV puts this sentence in the form of a question, but that is the translators best guess. The Greek doesn't give punctuation like this. I think it is a statement, much like the one we hear from Jesus in the Garden. He is asking God for another way, but even as He says these distressed words He knows that this moment, as terrible as it is, this moment is exactly why He left the throne of Heaven. He came to be the Lamb of God.

1 Peter 2:24

[24] He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Never an Easy Road

We all know the story of the Gospel. It was Jesus who died for our sins that we might find forgiveness. We all know the horror of the cross as well, but what we need to see in this text, in the days that led up to this perfect work of God is that Jesus walked this road with a troubled soul. This was never an easy road for our Lord. **I hope, I pray this makes His sacrifice for you all the sweeter.** Jesus paid an infinitely high price for your salvation. The trouble His soul waded through is evidence of this reality.

Transition

Now, as troubled as His soul was, as much anguish as Jesus experienced leading up to His sacrificial and substitutionary death, **He never lost sight of His purpose.**

JESUS' PURPOSE: THE GLORY OF GOD (vs. 28-33)

As soon as He utters the words for God to save Him from this hour He also confesses that it was this moment, this torturous, painful, lonely moment that He had left the throne of Heaven for. Jesus had not left Heaven and entered our world for a vacation, He came to purchase the salvation of lost souls at the cost of His own life. He knew this. Now that didn't make it easy, but it did give Him the strength and the eternal vision to press on.

Even in great pain, Jesus didn't lose sight of His purpose. Let's hear Him walk through this in verses 27-33...

John 12:27-33

[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.

As we continue on in Jesus' final public address He restates the greater purpose that He came into our world with and begins to break that purpose down.

Glorify Your Name

We see this purpose expressed in verse 28, when Jesus prays, "Father, glorify your name." This is the overarching purpose of Jesus' life and ministry, why He, as God, became man. He desires to see God's beauty, goodness, power, grace, and majesty put on display for all to see and bask in.

Thunderous Response

As He prays for God to glorify His name God thunderously responds by audibly saying, "I have glorified my name and I will glorify it again." This statement from God is an affirmation of Jesus as He demonstrates that He hears Jesus' prayer and will answer it. Additionally, God's response was not generic, widely asserting that in some way He would glorify Himself. No, this is a statement of God's glory in the person of Jesus. Jesus had brought God glory and would again bring God glory.

Glorified at the Incarnation

Recall the words of the angels that were proclaimed at the birth of Jesus...

Luke 2:14

[14] "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

God received much glory at the incarnation, the birth, of Jesus as God had become man in pursuit of lost sinners. The incarnation began God's work of salvation at a new level, but it didn't complete it. Salvation

had not been purchased at the birth or life of Jesus, it would be purchased upon His substitutionary death. This is where God would glorify Himself again, in the future.

3 Ways He Will Glorify God

Jesus then expands on 3 ways in which His substitutionary death will glorify God. Let's consider those together now.

1. Glorified in Judgment

The first thing we see Jesus say is in reference to His coming death is that the judgment of the world is now. **The cross, the death of Jesus, is the proof of judgment on the world as God demonstrates the seriousness of the situation our sin has brought upon us.**

See the Seriousness of the Problem by the Depth of the Solution

This always boggles my mind, but consider this reality... **the only remedy for sin, the only cure that can heal your soul is that God almighty, Creator of the Cosmos, Sustainer of all things, the righteous and holy, He had to die for you! This should tell you something about how seriously your sin has corrupted you before God.** We are talking about an issue that is more serious than life and death and has one resolution path, the death of God on behalf of any and all who would put their faith in Him as Lord and Savior.

The Dividing Line Between Condemnation and Vindication

The cross of Christ not only reveals the eternal judgment that hangs over us due to our sin before God, but it is also the **dividing line between condemnation and vindication or pardon.** Listen to what Jesus says a few chapters earlier in John's Gospel...

John 5:24

[24] Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Judgment looms over all who are not covered by the substitutionary work of Jesus. While we long to see all people come to the knowledge of God in Jesus, finding forgiveness of their sins and acceptance into the family of God, **God is glorified in the judgment of the world because it is here that His justice and righteousness are upheld. God will not be mocked and His justice will not fall short.**

Glory to God

Praise God for that! **Who would God be if He held no true standard of justice? How would He be any different than the world that we live in today?** Our society claims to love justice, but our standard of justice falls woefully short, doesn't it. **We live in a world full of injustices. That is not true of the Kingdom of God.** The heartache we experience today over injustice and inequity will be distant memories in eternity. To God be the glory!

2. Glorified in Victory

Jesus also shares that God will be glorified in the victory that the cross secures. We see this when Jesus says that in his death is when the ruler of this world is cast out. This is a reference to Satan. **The cross appeared to be the victory of Satan as Satan watched creation rebel and revolt against its own Creator, murdering their Maker by hanging Him on a cross. While the cross looked like a loss for Jesus, it was His ultimate victory** as He purchased the salvation He came to secure and overcame the grave through His resurrection.

War is Won

This work rendered Satan ultimately powerless against God as the war was won. Nothing could undo what Jesus secured on the cross. Listen to what the author of Hebrews wrote on this...

Hebrews 2:14

[14] Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil

Jesus secured an irreversible victory on the cross. He paid the tab that sin left us with. He undid death. He rendered Satan powerless.

Going Kicking and Screaming

Now, that isn't to say that our adversary, the Devil, isn't going to go kicking and screaming and trying to see you trip as often as possible on his way out. Thus we still have to be on guard for the temptation that is going to be cast in front of us, but what we can know is that in Jesus we are eternally secure because He has won the war.

3. Glorified in Salvation

The final way that Jesus shares that His death glorifies God is in the salvation of lost souls. He says this in verse 32 when He says, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

Lifted Up – 2 Layers of Meaning

This is a really interesting statement from Jesus. The word He uses in the Greek for lifted (ὑψωθῶ) can be taken two ways. **It can refer to being physically raised and it can also speak to be exalted in stature.** As we have seen in other passages in our study of John's Gospel, I believe both meanings are intended here. Jesus is using this layered meaning to communicate at multiple levels. At one level He is speaking to being physically raised on the cross as He is executed. The crowd around Him certainly picks up on this meaning as they question Jesus around this. The second level Jesus is communicating at speaks to how He will draw people to Himself as He is exalted in the sharing of the Gospel, the message of the salvation He purchased.

The point is that when Jesus is exalted on the cross, when Jesus is exalted in the sharing of the Gospel, people will be drawn to Him.

1 Peter 3:18

[18] For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

Jesus is the Great Reconciler, bringing all who put their faith in Him to God!

Missing People

Let me step aside for a moment to share an interpretive note on this verse. Something that is interesting in this statement that you don't get without digging into the Greek a bit is that the word for "people" in our English translation was supplied, it isn't there in the Greek. So the verse would more literally read that if Jesus is lifted up He will draw all to Himself. All what? That is the point of much discussion by Bible Scholars. I think there are two good answers that we could consider as we try to understand the words of Jesus.

All Kinds of People – Greek Audience

One is that Jesus was talking to a group of Greeks in this conversation. The salvation He was going to purchase wasn't only for the Jews, but for people of all ethnicities, languages, and skin colors. This meaning makes a lot of sense with the context of the passage as Jesus had a group in front of him that was more ethnically diverse than normal.

John 6 Drawing Context

The second possible meaning relies on what we learned in John 6 about who God draws unto salvation. There we learned that God draws the elect unto salvation.

John 6:44

[44] No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

So we see here that all that the Father draws will be raised or saved, which means that not all are drawn, right? Because not all in this life are saved. Sadly, many reject Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Summary

So when Jesus says that all will be drawn to Him when He is lifted up, it either referring to all kinds of people, all people without distinction, to communicate to the Greeks that this salvation is for them as well or it is referring to all of the elect that God will draw into a saving relationship with Himself through Jesus.

Larger Point

Either way, the larger point is that Jesus is the source of salvation. **He purchased salvation when He was lifted up on the cross and people find that salvation when He is exalted in the proclamation of the Gospel.**

To God Be the Glory

And in this God receives much glory as His great **grace is put on display.**

- **Creator dies for creation.**
- **The Maker dies for those marred by sin.**
- **The Self-Sustaining Sovereign One pursues empty-handed rebels.**

To God be the glory! This is what Jesus lived for, the glory of God in the purchase of salvation through His perfect life, substitutionary death, and victorious resurrection.

THE CROWD'S RESPONSE: MISUNDERSTANDING (vs. 34)

As Jesus lays all of this out, what stands out to the Jewish crowd that is there is that Jesus has just spoken of His death.

John 12:34

[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?"

This is something they didn't anticipate. The Jews who had read the Old Testament Scriptures and the prophecies of the coming Messiah had focused in on certain prophecies that related to the Messiah's reign.

Eternal Reign

Let me give you a sample from Daniel 7...

Daniel 7:13-14

[13] "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. [14] And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

They read prophecies and others very much like it (Isa 9:7; Ezk 37:25, etc.) and assumed that the Messiah was coming to establish this kingdom right away.

Lost Sight of Greatest Need

Part of the problem is that the Jews had lost sight of what they really needed saving from. The Jews, by in large, saw their greatest threat as the Roman empire, which had taken their land and ruled over them. Thus the Messiah was to come and lead them to victory over the Romans.

A Greater/Eternal Threat

Wrong. This was wrong. The Romans were not the greatest threat to the Jews. The Jews were the greatest threat to the Jews or more specifically the sin they were entangled with was the greatest threat they faced. They didn't need saving from Rome, they needed saving from themselves, from their sin. They could never stand before a holy and righteous God in their sin. They needed someone who could defeat sin and purchase rescue for their lost souls.

What Jesus Accomplished

We have already talked about this, but this is what Jesus accomplished in His death on the cross. It was through His death that He bought eternal life and this eternal kingdom. Of course there were Old Testament prophecies that spoke to this reality as well, but this isn't what the crowds wanted. They wanted the conquering King now. This was short-sighted.

JESUS' CALLING: WALK WHILE YOU HAVE THE LIGHT (vs. 35-36)

Jesus responds to the misunderstanding of His mission of salvation, not without further explanation, but with a call to believe while there is still yet time. Jesus makes this call with a familiar analogy. Let me read it to you once more, starting in verse 35...

John 12:35-36

[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." When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

Jesus is the Light

Jesus returns to the picture that often is used of Him as the Light. This is a helpful picture because it is so practical. We have all experienced the impact of being in the dark, right? We don't know where we are going, we are in danger of walking into something, we can't get our bearings, we don't know if danger lies ahead. Light makes all the difference, right? We can find the path we need to be on, we can navigate, we can detect danger and reveal that which might trip us. Light exposes and reveals. This can also be hard at times as it will reveal truths that we may not have wanted to see, but the truth is the truth and it

needs to be revealed so we can know what we are working with and the situation that lies in front of us, right?

What Jesus Reveals

Jesus steps into the world and the light and does just that. He reveals sin and sin's power in a whole new way. He shows us how we might find reconciliation with God and eternal life. He points us towards hope and safety.

Little While Longer

The warning that Jesus gives this crowd is that He will only be around for a little while longer. He is encouraging them to take advantage of the opportunity they have before them. Hear His message while He is there. Believe!

Believe!

This is the ultimate call of Jesus' message to this crowd,

Believe. Believe now. Today is the day of salvation. You are not promised tomorrow. You stand under judgment in your sin, but I, Jesus, am going to overthrow the ruler of this world with a decisive and eternal victory. My death will secure the salvation that your soul so desperately needs, it will purchase an eternal kingdom of perfection and unending beauty. This is all yours in me, if you would but believe, believe in me, not just in my existence, but in my person, my deity, my work. Turn from your sin and turn to me as Lord and Savior.

After making this final plea to the public, Jesus slips away and ended His public ministry. He would spend His remaining time with His disciples preparing them for what was to come next and preparing Himself for the greatest sacrifice He could ever give.

THE CROWD'S REACTION: REJECTION (vs. 37-43)

This still leaves the crowd however with a decision to make. They have been presented with the truth of the Gospel and the call of the Gospel from Jesus, the Messiah, God-incarnate. Now what? Let's read our final section, picking up in verse 37...

John 12:37-43

[37] Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, [38] so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

"Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

[39] Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

[40] "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them."

[41] Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. [42] Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; [43] for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

They Had Seen Signs!

John points out the incredible nature of the crowd's rejection. "Though Jesus had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in Him." In this statement John surely has in mind the incredible miracles Jesus had done just recently. We can remember times when Jesus healed the man unable to walk or

another time when he made the man who was born blind able to see or most powerfully, what was likely just a week or two earlier, the raising of Lazarus from the grave, which took place just a matter of mere miles from where they were in Jerusalem.

Flabbergasted

This crowd knew of all of these unbelievable miracles and yet, yet, they still rejected Jesus. They didn't believe. Incredible. How? Why? I think John is flabbergasted by their response so he uses the remainder of our passage to give some commentary and explain their rejection of Jesus.

He provides a divine reason for their rejection and a human reason for their rejection.

1. Rejection's Divine Explanation

The Divine explanation given is a quote from Isaiah 6 that explains God's hardening of hearts. This is something we see pop up in multiple passages of Scripture, the most famous of which is the interaction between Moses and Pharaoh. Pharaoh's heart is hardened so that he would not relent in holding Israel as slaves. He held on even when it made no sense. This is accredited to God's hardening of His heart.

Here is an example of another place we see this reality arise...

Deuteronomy 29:2-4

[2] And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, [3] the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders. [4] But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.

How could so many in Israel live in a state of unbelief after all God had done to deliver them from Egypt? How? God had not given them a heart to understand. He allowed them to continue in their unbelieving hearts.

Hardening Not Contrary to One's Will

Now, let me share a few things to consider with this teaching from John and Isaiah...

Leon Morris notes, "*When John quotes 'he blinded their eyes...' he does not mean that the blinding takes place without the will or against the will of those people... These men chose evil. It was their own deliberate choice, their own fault. Make no mistake about that. (John, NICNT, 604)*"

D.A. Carson adds, "*God's judicial hardening is not presented as the capricious manipulation of an arbitrary (ruler) potentate cursing morally neutral or even morally pure beings, but as a holy condemnation of a guilty people who are condemned to do and be what they themselves have chosen. (Pillar NTC, 448)*"

So I think something that is important to understand as we consider the sovereign hardening work of God is that this work is not acting against the desires or intentions of the heart of these people. In fact, as we continue on in our passage we see that clearly as John provides the human explanation for the Jews rejection of Jesus.

2. Rejection's Human Explanation

John shares that there were many who didn't believe in or follow after Jesus simply because they understood the social difficulty this would bring them. They understood that if they followed after Jesus they would be shunned by the leaders of the synagogue and didn't want that kind of social alienation. Thus they followed the flow of the culture, rather than the truth of their Maker, the Redeemer, Jesus.

Concert of Divine and Human Explanations

I very much believe that these two explanations go hand in hand. The Jews who rejected Jesus, loved something else more than Jesus, they loved social acceptance more than Jesus, thus God hardened their hearts on that desire

Transition

This takes us to the end of our passage, I want to close with some application as we consider how this text should apply to us.

APPLICATION: LIVING OUT OUR TEXT

There is so much in this passage for us as we consider our own lives. My original list of application had about 15 different points, but for the sake of time and in an effort not to drown you I have boiled it down to what I think the biggest calls from this passage are.

1. The Power of Sin

The first thing I think we need to take away from this passage is a healthy fear over the power of sin. Consider its impact in the lives of the Jews of this passage. They were so caught up in their sin that they denied truth that they stared face to face. Jesus had just raised a dead man from the grave after he had been dead for days. There were countless witnesses. Yet, they would rather find acceptance in their culture than follow after the man who was clearly who He said He was, the Messiah.

Acceptable Sins

Consider their sin as well. They just wanted to be accepted by others. They didn't want to get kicked out of the synagogue. They were probably viewed as very responsible people, right? Yet this sin was killing them spiritually.

Trained Assassin

Friends, know this, sin is a deadly bedfellow. Sin is a trained assassin. It will infiltrate your heart slowly and covertly and before you know it, it will have a grip you tightly. It will have worked to mesh with your identity so much so that you won't even be able to see it there, but it will color and shape everything you see to the point that you will be willing to deny the truth of God.

Fighting Sin's Blinding Power

So what can you do?

- You need to hold the Word of God up to your life like a mirror and let it speak truth into your life. God's Word needs to take authority in your life and have sway.
- You need to ask God in prayer to reveal your heart to you and help you fight sin in your life.
- You need other brothers and sisters in Christ in your life who can objectively speak into your life from God's Word.

Don't underestimate the power of sin. You may feel like you have your pet sin under control in your life, but that is a lie it tells you to infiltrate your heart further.

2. What is your Light?

The next question I want to ask you is, What/Who is your Light? What or Who casts light in your life that you may see and make sense of life? Through what lens do you interpret life? Most people interpret life

through a compilation of their experiences and various values they have picked up along the way. Jesus tells us in our passage tonight that He is the light and apart from Him you are walking in darkness.

- Is Jesus the GPS of your life?
- Is Jesus the lens that you view life through?
- Is Jesus the center that your life orbits around?

If not, Jesus says you are walking in darkness. You may think you can see well enough, but let's be honest, your perspective is pretty limited, right? We are all specks in this universe with lives that are blips on the timeline of eternity. While our culture likes to tout how educated, advanced, evolved, and "woke" we are, the truth is we are gnats in comparison to the knowledge and wisdom of almighty God. Our universe has mysteries so deep that Google will never even know the questions to ask let alone the answers.

And God steps foot into our world with eternity-altering news. He tells us His name is Jesus and He is the light? Will He be your light?

3. Will You Believe?

This leads me into my 3rd question of application and this is the big one, the one that Jesus left us with most directly... Will you believe in Jesus?

The Gospel

This life is short. You stand condemned in your sin before a holy God. Your sin problem is real and it is bigger than you could have ever dreamed or will ever know. But the good news is that Jesus has won the decisive victory over sin, Satan, and death through...

- The perfect life He lived that made Him an acceptable sacrifice before God
- His substitutionary death, where He stood in your place, bearing the wrath of God that was due you for your sin
- His victorious resurrection, where He overcame what no one else could in death

His call upon you to enter into this vast blessing is that you would believe upon Him as Lord and Savior. That you would follow after Him wherever He calls.

Don't Be a Tragic Tale

Have you done that? Have you placed your faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior? The tragic end to the story we read in our passage today was all those who saw the miracles of Jesus and still rejected Him. I pray that there would be no one here this morning that would have such a tragic end to their lives. You have been presented with the truth of the Gospel this morning. See it for what it is, God's grace and love on display in an overwhelming way, meant to change your life in the here and now and for all eternity. Don't foolishly pass it up for something lesser, for something that won't be able to eternally satisfy your soul.

Let's Talk

If that is something you want to explore more I would love to talk to you after service. I would love to explain more of how the grace of God has been manifested in the person and work of Jesus towards you so that you could know that you are a child of God and will spend eternity in the presence of our Savior.

CONCLUSION

Let me close by reminding you that John wrote this Gospel that you might believe in Jesus as God become man to save you from your sins. Considering Jesus' final public words to this crowd, I think John was spot on in his goal. Jesus' call to those who will hear Him today is to believe. Believe in Him. He can remove the judgment that hangs over you. He has already defeated the enemies we have in sin, Satan, and death. He can pardon and cleanse. He can bring you into His eternal kingdom and loving family. What a joy it is to know Jesus. Let's close, thanking Him for the wonderful gift He gave of Himself.

Let's Pray