

November 27th, 2016

"BUT FOR THIS PURPOSE I HAVE COME TO THIS HOUR"

John 12:27-36

This morning is the first Sunday of the Advent season. Advent means "coming." Advent is a season where Christians have traditionally focused their attention on the coming (advent) of Jesus Christ into the world. And providentially, this morning's passage speaks to His coming.

The key verse in this passage is v.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." There it is. Jesus said "But for *this purpose* I have **come** to this hour." Jesus was troubled in His first coming. In order to save sinners, Jesus would have to be slaughtered. The baby in the manger, would be a bloody unrecognizable man. That's why He came. His first advent would be a horror to His soul.

But Jesus' first advent would also be the demonstration of the glory of God. After Jesus says "But for *this purpose* I have **come** to this hour," He cries out to God in v.28 "Father, glorify you name." Jesus came into the world to glorify His Father. Christ demonstrated the righteousness of God in taking on the punishment that we deserve, and manifested the love and mercy of God in reconciling us to the Father. That's why He came. His first advent was to show us God.

In our passage this morning, Jesus displays those two parts of His first coming. The horror that He faced, and the glory that He prayed for.

☆ The Horror of the Cross

☆ The Glory of the Cross

The Big Idea...

Jesus endured the horror of the cross for the glory of God and the gladness of men

I. The Horror of the Cross

The Horror of Christ

Because Jesus is fully God it's easy to de-emphasize His humanity. v.27 wakes us up to that reality. Jesus was *troubled*. ταρασσω *tarassō* in the Greek means disturbed, distressed, horrified. Jesus is the grain of wheat that will fall to the earth and die (v.24). And now as He thinks on this, He is horrified. Is that how picture Jesus before His cross? I don't pretend to know how Jesus' troubled spirit perfectly reconciles with His sinlessness, but the Scripture unabashedly speaks of Jesus' agony. **Hebrews 5:7** "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with *loud cries and tears*, to him who was able to save him from death..." Jesus cried and wept before the Father as the cross approached.¹

You see Jesus did not *merely* suffer physical torment on the cross. No. Jesus was *damned* on the cross. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" (**Galatians 3:13**) Jesus was cursed by God. Condemned as a sinner though He was perfectly innocent.

Can you fathom the weight of that? I've spoken with many of you when you are heartbroken over just one sin. You feel the weight of it, the shame of it. I know the weight I feel in my own heart when I have sinned grievously against God. But Jesus took on Himself the iniquity of us all. And His Father did not spare Him. Often when I am disciplining my kids, I spare them. I'll hold back

¹ In the Garden of Gethsemane, we hear Jesus say "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death'... And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, *the hour* might pass from him." (Mark 14:34-35)

some of the discipline that they deserve to receive. But Father did no such thing to His Son. **Romans 8:32** “[God] did not *spare* his own Son but gave him up for us all...” God did not look on His Son with *pity*, but looked upon His Son as the sin-bearer and He emptied His holy wrath upon Him.

Jesus saw that coming, and was troubled. Jesus saw His own damnation on the cross, and He was horrified.

The Horror of Unbelief

But there is another horror in our passage. The horror of unbelief. Remember that the crowd that is here speaking to Jesus just finished proclaiming “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” (v.13). The more that Jesus speaks, the more they realize that Jesus is not speaking about the Messiah the same way they are. Jesus is speaking about the Messiah being *lifted up from the earth*. **v.33** says “He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.” So look at how they respond, v.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 crowd did not see the passages in the OT that said the Messiah must suffer. They only saw those passages that spoke of His *remaining forever*. **Isaiah 9:7** promises that the Messiah’s government will *never end*. **Ezekiel 37:25** promises that the Messiah would be Israel’s prince *forever*. **Psalms 89:35-37** promises that the Messiah will *remain forever*.² This crowd only saw the Messiah as a conquering king, not as a suffering servant. And so they ask: “Who is this Son of Man?”—meaning ‘What *kind* of Son of Man do you have in mind Jesus? Because we don’t believe in one that has to die, but one that conquers.’

Do you see? The crowd did not see themselves as the *real problem*. They believed the Romans were the real problem, the real enemy. Dear congregation, this lie is so attractive for us to believe. ‘I’m not the real problem. The people

² D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pg. 445

I'm in relationship with are the problem. My boss is the problem. My church, this country, Islam, my spouse, those things are the real problems. If I could just get those things, those enemies to submit, then all would be well.' The Jews were saying 'We don't need a Messiah to die for us, we need a Messiah to rescue us from our enemies.' And what Jesus is saying is: "You are the enemy."

Apart from faith in Jesus Christ, human beings are enemies of God. If you have not been born again, you are under the terrible wrath of God. You are unclean and stand condemned before the Living God. And this is how Jesus pleads with this unbelieving crowd. v.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." Oh the horror of this verse! Darkness will overtake unbelievers. Forever. Jesus is speaking of hell. That is what hell is—"the gloom of utter darkness" (Jude 13). And Jesus says at the end of v.35 "The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going." If you have not come to believe in the gospel, Jesus is pleading with you in this passage. You have a soul that will never die. And if you resist His call, you are heading for hell—where there is an eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:50). Jesus is pleading with you: "While you have the light, *believe in the light*, that you may become sons of light." To walk in the light of Jesus means to *believe* in Him. Turn from your bankrupt and broken life. You are the real problem in your life—your sin. And Jesus says "Give it to me, I will suffer for that sin. I was crucified so that sinners like you would never have to perish. Trust Me, hope in Me, and you will be a son of the light.'

The horror of the cross is truly inexpressible. Jesus was damned on the cross, and human beings will be damned if they don't believe Him. But Jesus presses on, so that we will see the glory of it.

II. The Glory of the Cross

How did Jesus overcome this horror? Glory!

Here's my question: If Jesus was so troubled by the thought of suffering under God's wrath, why did He go through with it? Look again at v.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. [What purpose? He answers in the next verse] Father, *glorify* your name." Jesus endured the horror of the cross for the purpose of *glorifying* His Father. Jesus died to make God look great (as He actually is)!

And then we read in v.28 "Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." So get this. Not only does Jesus ask His Father to glorify His name, Father thunders from heaven "I will glorify it." 'Yes Son you will have to suffer, but it won't be in vain, I will be made much of in your death.' That is how Jesus endured the horror of calvary. Because the deepest commitment that God has is the commitment to honor and extol and make much of His own name. And this is good news for us. Because when we see and experience the glory of God, we get grace and truth. **John 1:14** " A n d the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, *full of grace and truth.*" God gets the glory and we drink from His fullness grace and truth.

There are three things that Jesus specifically ties to God being glorified in this passage. 1) God is glorified in judgment. 2) God is glorified in casting out the ruler of this world. 3) God is glorified in drawing all "people" to Himself.

God is glorified in judgment

Right after the crowd heard the thundering voice from heaven, Jesus told them that this voice was for their sake. Then in v.31, Jesus says "*Now* is the judgment of this world;" Now! This *now* corresponds with the hour that Jesus has been speaking about. The hour of His death (v.24), the hour of His trouble (v.27). When Jesus was punished for sin, the judgment of this world took place.

And this is puzzling at first because Jesus said in John 5:28-29 that judgment is set for the future. “...an *hour is coming* when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of *judgment*.” Judgment is at a future hour.

Likewise in next week’s passage we will see Jesus say in **John 12:48** “The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will *judge him on the last day*.” So no doubt there is a future judgment.

But here Jesus says “*Now* is the judgment of the world”—meaning on this side of the final judgment there are *some* who are being judged already. As believers we were judged in Christ. His death was our death. His condemnation was our condemnation. Believing in Jesus unites us to the decisive judgment of our souls. **John 5:24** “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.”³ No judgment for believers! No guilt! No shame! No death! So when God said to Jesus “I will glorify it (my name)—He meant ‘Son, in your death, all *our people* will pass from the judgment of death into life.’

God is glorified in casting out the ruler of this world

Next look at the end of v.31, Jesus says “...*now* will the ruler of this world be cast out.” Again *now*—meaning at the hour of Christ’s passion, the devil was cast out of the world. How can that be? **1 Peter 5:8** says “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary *the devil prowls around like a roaring lion*, seeking someone to devour.” Likewise **Ephesians 6:11** says “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand *against the schemes of the devil*.” So the devil is still around in *some sense*. So what does Jesus mean by “...*now* will the ruler of this world be cast out”?

³ That’s why Jesus could say “It is finished!” (John 19:30)

Jesus means that the deathblow was dealt to Satan at the cross. Jesus effectively defeated Satan. It won't be fully consummated until he is cast into the lake of fire, but the cross was the deathblow that guaranteed his defeat.

Paul echoes this truth in **Colossians 2:13-15** "God...having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. *He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*" Which means that your accuser has *nothing* on you. Your debt was nailed to the cross, and when that happened the devil lost his power to bring any condemnation against you. Think back to the book of Job, when Satan appeared before God and God asked him "Have you considered my servant Job?" (Job 1:8). What did Satan do? He accused him. And Satan is the accuser of the brethren. But Jesus effectively stripped Him of all accusations. If all of our past, present, and future sin is forgiven, then Satan is all bark and no bite. He can never *ultimately* bring any charge against us that will stick (Romans 8:33). The cross served as a stake that went right through the serpent's heart. And this decisive deathblow by Christ, glorified the Father. When the Father said "I will glorify it (His name)" He meant 'Son, in your death I will shut Satan's mouth forever against my people.'

God is glorified in drawing *all* "people" to Himself

Look at v. 32, Jesus says "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." We know that being "lifted up" means His crucifixion because of v.33. But what does this phrase "will draw all people to myself" mean?

1st interpretation

It's a controversial verse. It's often used to disprove the claim that God draws *only* His elect. But John would remind us of **6:37** "All the Father gives me [those He "draws" in v.44] *will come to me...*" This 'drawing' [same Greek word as in 12:32] is effectual. Literally it means to drag off—like a fishermen

would drag a net full of fish. In other words, if God draws you, you are coming. If He doesn't draw you, you won't come. That's how John 6 ends. Jesus *explains* the unbelief of those who left by saying "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father" (v.65) So Jesus can't mean in v.32 that He draws all people *effectually* to salvation.

2nd interpretation

v.32 could mean that Jesus draws *all kinds* of people—meaning Jew and Gentile. Remember, from last week, the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus. This wasn't an accidental inclusion in our text. It signified that Jesus is the Savior of not just Jews but also Greeks. This is what a lot of commentators think this verse means. Jesus is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world[meaning Jewish and Gentile sins] and His cross draws *all kinds* of people[meaning Jews and Gentiles]. v.32 *at the very least* means this. But I think it means more. Remember Jesus is connecting v.32 to His suffering and His Father's glory.

3rd interpretation

The question is: who did Jesus die for? **John 10:15** "I lay down my life *for the sheep*." And then He says to the unbelieving Jews in **v.26** "...you do not believe because you are not part of my flock." And so the logic of ch.10 is that some people do not believe *because* they are not part of the flock that Jesus died for. This gets to the heart of what Jesus' death accomplished. Jesus death did not *merely* purchase an *opportunity* to be saved, it purchased *actual* salvation. The death of Christ is not good news if the decisive factor in our salvation rests with ourselves. Our faith must be blood bought. We will never believe the gospel if God doesn't act first. That is what grace is.

Now look at again at v.32 "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth[there's Jesus' death], will draw **all people** to myself." Now the word "people" is an interpretation. It is not in the Greek. The Greek just says "all"—'I will draw *all* to myself.' *All* who? Well why wouldn't we interpret that

all in light of other passages in the gospel of John? **John 6:37** “*All* that the Father gives me will come to me,” **John 17:2** Jesus has been given authority “...to give eternal life to *all* whom you [the Father] have given him.” In other words, v.32 could read “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw **all those you have given me, all the sheep I died for** —to myself.”⁴

So when God said to Jesus in v.28 “I will glorify it (that is my name) —He meant ‘Son, in your death, I will be glorified when all our people are invincibly drawn to you.’

So let me recap. There are three things that Jesus says will glorify His Father through His death in this passage. 1) v.31 —That your *judgment* was fully executed in Christ. You were crucified with Christ. In His death you died, and you will never come under condemnation. 2) v.31b—That the ruler of this world had no claim on you in God’s courtroom. Christ has shut Satan’s mouth on the cross by nailing his accusations against you to His own body. “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect?” (Romans 8:33) 3) v.32—That when Christ was lifted up from the earth, He invincibly drew you to Himself. If you are a believer it is because of v.32. Jesus drew you to Himself 2,000 years ago when He suffered on that tree.

Application

Our Doctrine: Jesus Died For God’s Glory

Our big idea says Jesus endured the horror of the cross for the glory of God and the gladness of men. It’s a controversial thing to say that Jesus died for the glory of God. But this is the overwhelming message of the Bible. At the bottom of every one of God’s actions is His esteem for own His glory. And this includes the crucifixion of His Son.

⁴ I received great help in this section especially by John Piper’s sermon on this same passage: <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/for-this-purpose-i-have-come-to-this-hour>

Psalm 79:9 “Help us, O God of our salvation, *for the glory of your name*; deliver us, and atone for our sins, *for your name’s sake!*”

Romans 15:8-9 “For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised *to show God’s truthfulness*, [the glory of God’s truth] in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles *might glorify God for his mercy.*”

1 John 2:12 “I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven *for his name’s sake.*”

When this got ahold of me 8 years ago, my Christian walk forever changed. I am not at the center of God’s universe, God is. God’s glory—meaning His infinite worth—is why God is so infinitely happy. Human beings are not infinitely worthy. If our happiness depends on our own worth, then we will never be happy. Jesus died so that we would see this.

Our Duty: Let the Glory of God Comfort Your Troubled Heart

Why is God’s glory good for us? Look at v.27 again to see how it was good for Jesus. “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. Father, glorify your name.” When Jesus was horrified at the prospect of the cross, what propelled Him forward? The answer from Heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” His Father’s glory was the joy that was set before Him. **Hebrew 12:2** “Jesus...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.” Jesus endured the troubled heart because He knew God would be shown to be great in His death.

Many of you ladies are finishing of the series on Philippians and you have been studying the topic of Christian Hedonism. John Piper’s little couplet is so memorable “God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in Him.” But consider the power of that when we turn it around. “We are most satisfied

in God when He is most glorified in us.” The hope of seeing God’s glory is the antidote to every trouble.

George Whitefield the famous evangelist of the Great Awakening of the 1700’s had a lot of trouble in his life. One of the chief troubles was with His friend John Wesley. When Whitefield was in America, Wesley decided to preach a sermon against the doctrines of grace—doctrines that Whitefield held dearly. The sermon proved to nearly sever the whole movement both in England and in America. There were followers of Whitefield who wished him to vindicate himself and retaliate, and take back the properties that he let Wesley use. Instead, Whitefield renounced his leadership over the Methodist movement to Wesley, and much of the property. When Whitefield’s people kept urging him to “retain his position and perpetuate his name he replied, ‘Let the name of Whitefield perish, but Christ be glorified.’”⁵ Whitefield was satisfied when he decreased and Jesus increased. And not only did this satisfy him, it comforted his trouble soul.

Our Delight: Jesus Came to Make us Sons of Light

v.36 says “While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” Today is the first Sunday of Advent season. Advent means “coming.” Jesus said “But for this purpose I have *come* to this hour.” Jesus *came* in His first coming to make us sons and daughter of light. All the other glories that we saw in this passage lead here. If you have believed in Christ—you have passed out of the judgment, the devil has no grounds for accusation against you, Jesus has drawn you invincibly through His cross. Why? So that you could become sons and daughters of light.

Do you realize what Jesus is saying? A whole new reality has come over you. You are no longer defined by the ways of this world. Your troubles don’t define you. Your last name doesn’t define you. Your job doesn’t define you.

⁵ Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Vol. 2* (Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 518

Your bank account doesn't define you. Your sickness, or age, or marital status, or political party don't define you.

Because of Christ's first advent, the most *defining reality* about you—**if you have believed**—is that you are a child of the light. Not only do you experience Jesus as the light of the world (John 8:12); but you have *become* a child of the light. "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14) Now only do you see the glory of God, but now you shine it forth. "...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give *glory* to your Father who is in heaven."

This is what Jesus' first advent secured for you dear child of God. You have been transformed from a child of darkness to a child of light, through the death of Christ, for the glory of God.

Closing Prayer to Sermon

Benediction:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

(2 Cor. 13:14)