

Life through Death

John 12: 23-32

Our text this evening follows the excitement of the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem. The people had exalted Christ, desiring Him to establish Himself as king over Israel. We discover that certain Greeks were among the people in Jerusalem, coming to worship during the Passover. They too desired to see Jesus.

These verses reveal the conversation Jesus had with the disciples and the multitude that had gathered to hear His words. Clearly He did not speak to them as they presumed. Rather than revealing a plan to establish the kingdom, Jesus spoke of death and the great benefit it brings. Calvary is a few days away, and yet the people have yet to understand the purpose for Jesus coming to earth. He had not come to reign as king, but to offer Himself the atoning sacrifice for sin. Through His death on the cross, life would be offered to humanity.

I want to look in on their conversation as we seek to discover the **certainties** Jesus reveals concerning: **Life through Death**.

I. Jesus Spoke of Death (23-24) – Jesus spoke very candidly in these verses concerning His coming death. They yet do not perceive He is speaking of the cross, but Jesus reveals great truth concerning His coming death and the benefit it will bring. Consider:

A. His Sovereignty (23) – **And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.** Jesus well understood the purpose for His coming and He knew the hour was approaching. As we read the Gospels, many times we find occasions where the Pharisees and religious elite sought to kill Jesus, but His hour was not yet come. Those who followed Him sought to make Him king, but it was not time for His reign upon this earth. The time for His death was quickly approaching and Jesus was fully aware and in control of the situation.

- We must understand that Jesus' death was not an unfortunate, tragic event that simply happened through the hatred of many. This was all within the sovereign will of God and Jesus' death on Calvary was fulfilled just as God had planned. **Heb.2:9 – But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.**

B. His Sacrifice (24a) – **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.** Jesus uses a simple illustration to reveal profound truth. He speaks of a grain of

wheat. If that grain does not fall into the ground and germinate to produce a plant, it will abide alone and bring little benefit. However, if it is placed in the ground and allowed to germinate, it will produce much fruit through another stalk of wheat. The seed sacrifices for the harvest.

- Although they do not understand, Jesus speaks of the sacrifice He will soon make for the benefit of humanity. He had to offer Himself in death in order for us to have life. His death and glorious resurrection became the first-fruits of many to come!

C. His Salvation (24b) – *but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* While the grain of wheat, the seed perishes in the ground, through the seed much fruit is produced through the stalk that grows from the seed. One grain of wheat produces many grains that follow.

- That is exactly what Jesus did for us. He offered Himself on the cross as a ransom for sin. He bore our sin and judgment, laying down His life and giving up the ghost. They placed His lifeless body in a borrowed tomb. Three days later His rose triumphant over sin, death, and hell. Through His sacrificial death on the cross, many are made alive in Him. We have the hope and assurance of eternal life because of Jesus' sacrifice for our sin. [Heb.2:10](#) – *For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

II. Jesus Spoke of Discernment (25-26) – Those who heard His words that day did not comprehend what He said, but Jesus offers spiritual guidance in these verses. We need to understand and heed His words. Consider:

A. The Paradox (25) – *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.* This statement appears to be a paradox, a contradiction of truth, but they reveal the way to life eternal. Jesus declares that we must lose our life in order to live. We must understand that He is speaking in a spiritual sense. We must be willing to hate the life of sin, literally die to ourselves in order to experience life eternal. The old man of sin must be crucified and die in order for us to be resurrected a new creature in Christ.

- Many today are unwilling to let go of this life in order to gain eternal life. We must die to self if we are to be born again. We must desire the righteousness of Christ more than the pleasures of the flesh. [Luke 9:23](#) – *And he said to *them* all, if any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

B. The Promise (26) – *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.* Jesus knew these words would be hard to receive. Many would question the benefit of dying to self. They would not understand the reasoning behind such a request. Jesus offers comfort and assurance to those who will die to self in order to follow Jesus. Those who follow Him are promised eternity with Him. He has gone away, but He is coming again, that where He is we may dwell also. God the Father will also honor all who follow Jesus.

- This remains hard for many to receive, but what a blessed inheritance is offered those who come to Christ in salvation. If we live 100 years upon this earth, life is but a vapor. We face much difficulty, adversity, and pain. If we will but die to self, believing in Christ by faith, we are promised an eternal inheritance with Him in heaven. I don't know how you feel, but that is a deal worth taking! We can trade the sin and sorrow of this life for eternal life and spend our eternity with Christ our Lord!

III. Jesus Spoke of Deliverance (27-32) – Here we find Jesus' words concerning the sacrifice He would make for our sin and the deliverance He would bring to fallen man. Notice:

A. His Agony (27) – *Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.* We know Jesus was divine, but He was also human. The cross is but days away, and as He looks toward the suffering He would endure He expresses His agony. He well understood the sacrifice He must make. He knew that was the purpose for His coming. He does not refuse the cross, although He could have. His humanity dreaded the suffering, pain, and loneliness He would experience.

- I am convinced Jesus knew exactly what He would face. He knew what He would have to endure. He would bear the sin of all humanity. He would suffer the righteous judgment of God in His body. He would endure a season on the cross where the Father would have to turn from Him, looking away from the sin. Surely His humanity dreaded all this, and yet He willingly embraced the suffering to purchase our redemption!

B. His Appeal (28) – *Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* Here we discover the submission Christ displayed to the Father. Facing the cruel death of the cross, He wanted to ensure the Father's name was glorified. Rather than seeking sympathy, He sought to honor the Father. That ought to challenge us to seek God's glory and honor in all we do as well.

- The Father reveals Christ had already glorified God many times in His life and He would glorify Him again as He submitted to the cross. Christ lived a perfect life that glorified and honored God in every aspect, even in His suffering and death.

C. His Authority (31) – *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* Ever since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, sin and death had ruled the earth. Satan became the prince of this earth and humanity groaned under the curse. Christ came to defeat sin, Satan, and death. He came to redeem fallen man and set at liberty those held captive by sin.

- We know sin brings forth death. We are all born in sin and face the curse of death because of our sin. As Jesus offered Himself the atoning sacrifice and rose triumphant from the grave, He forever defeated sin, death, and hell. Satan has power, but he doesn't have all power. In fact, he was powerless to stop the work of Christ in fulfilling the plan of God for redemption! *Rev.1:18 – I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

D. His Access (32) – *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* Likely the people failed to comprehend this as well. Jesus wasn't speaking of sitting upon an earthly throne, but being lifted between heaven and earth on a cruel cross. He spoke of His atoning death. As He offered Himself upon the cross, He granted access to lost humanity. He provided the means of our salvation. His death appeased the righteous demands of God and made the way for lost sinners to be reconciled to God.

- Clearly Jesus spoke of His death here, but there is also great application for us. Jesus alone provides salvation. He is man's only hope of forgiveness of sin and reconciliation to God. We need to do all we can to lift Him up before a lost and dying world. We must exalt Christ as Savior and Lord. We must point others to Him if there is any hope of their salvation! The Greeks declared in *V.21: Sir, we would see Jesus.* May we exalt Him so others may see!

Conclusion: I tried to imagine the passion with which Jesus spoke these words. Calvary was quickly approaching. Soon after having this conversation, He would give His life on the cross. I realize He did that for me. He loved me enough to bear my sin and die in my place. He did that for you as well. His great love was proven on Calvary.

Do you know Christ as your Lord and Savior? Christian, are you serving Him in a way that He deserves? Are you seeking to honor Him with your life? He is worthy of our service. If there is a need, come to Christ. He can pardon, forgive, and save!