

“For This Purpose I Came to This Hour”
John 12:27-36

Today is Palm Sunday. It’s a day to remember that *everybody loves Jesus*. Everybody loved Jesus on the day He entered Jerusalem riding on the donkey, making His claim to be Messiah. And everybody loves Jesus today.

Except that’s not completely accurate is it?

On that day, as today, everybody loves Jesus if He is the One who will overthrow a tyrannical government. Everybody loves Jesus if He is the miracle worker who makes sick people healthy. Everybody loves Jesus if He gives food to eat to those who are hungry. Everybody loves Jesus if He is a compelling and intriguing teacher. Everybody loves Jesus when He takes small children on His lap to speak with them.

But not everyone loves Jesus. Not everyone loves Jesus when His Messianic claim isn’t about overthrowing governments as much as it is about overthrowing ungodly rulers in *my* heart. Not everyone loves Jesus when He claims exclusivity — that He alone is sovereign and that He alone must be followed and obeyed. Not everyone loves Jesus when His teaching confronts, challenges, and calls hearers to repentance from sinful behavior. Not everyone loves Jesus when He says that He has come to die and that those who follow Him must die (to themselves and sin) also.

Not everyone loves Jesus.

And after the day that Jesus was acclaimed in Jerusalem, He quickly confronted the adoring crowds and set the record straight about the nature of His coming. His correction particularly began with the simple statement, “For this purpose I came to this hour...” (Jn. 12:27).

What was that purpose? His purpose was to die. You know that. We speak often of the death and resurrection of Christ here; but on this Palm Sunday and communion Sunday, our desire is to again be refreshed and encouraged by the purpose of Christ in His death.

CHRIST’S PURPOSE ON EARTH WAS TO DIE FOR MEN’S SIN.

- 1. Christ’s Death Was PURPOSEFUL (v. 27)**
- 2. Christ’s Death was for GOD’S GLORY (vv. 28-30)**
- 3. Christ’s Death was for JUDGMENT (v. 31)**
- 4. Christ’s Death was for SALVATION (vv. 32-34)**
- 5. Christ’s Death was LIGHT (vv. 35-36)**

BACKGROUND:

- These verses are actually in the middle of a section that began in v. 17 —
 - ✓ People who had seen the resuscitation of Lazarus and the triumphal entry were testifying (v. 17)
 - ✓ The Pharisees were agitated that Jesus' influence was spreading — ***the world...*** (v. 19)
 - ✓ And as if to demonstrate the truthfulness of that statement, v. 20 introduces a group of Greeks (Gentiles) who approached Philip to attempt to gain an audience with Jesus (v. 21). Perhaps these potential converts to Judaism had heard of Jesus' cleansing of the Temple on Monday and now were coming to find out more about Him.
- *Why* they wanted to see Jesus is unclear (just curious?), but whatever reason, they wanted to see Christ. These Gentiles who were evidently considering conversion to Judaism and now were curious about Christ is a reminder to us that “Whoever will, may come to Christ.” Jew or Greek. Male or female. Free man or slave. Any man may come. And God is working circumstances in life to stimulate people to say, “I’m interested...”

Matthew 7:7-8 – “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

- What is also notable about this account is that it does not make clear whether or not Jesus met with them; but it does make clear who Jesus is and why He came to earth. And that’s our focus today —

CHRIST’S PURPOSE ON EARTH WAS TO DIE FOR MEN’S SIN.

1. Christ’s Death Was **PURPOSEFUL** (v. 27)

- Take a moment and think about the things that are currently problematic for you. Everyone has some measure of problems. What are yours?
 - ✓ Difficult boss or co-workers?
 - ✓ Too much month & not enough money?
 - ✓ Unresolved conflict with your spouse?
 - ✓ Some kind of “besetting sin?”
 - ✓ The IRS saying, “you were wrong”?
 - ✓ Doctor saying, “it’s worse than I thought?”
 - ✓ Unbelieving spouse or children?
 - ✓ Fears about the future? your future?
- Compare those to what Jesus says in v. 27 — ***My soul has become troubled.***
 - ✓ The word indicates agitation and turbulence. And it is ongoing — it set in some time earlier and He has continued to be troubled and agitated. There is an inner turmoil in Christ. Why? Verse 23 has already alluded to it — His ***hour*** has come — this is a term that John frequently uses to indicate the death of Christ (e.g., 5:25, 28; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; 17:1).

- ✓ Simply stated, Jesus is “in a state of crisis” because the One who does not sin (and cannot sin) is about to carry the sin of all the world on His shoulders. And the One who is intimate with the Father and is God Himself is about to have *His Father’s* infinite wrath poured out on Him and endure a cursed death. He will be judged by the perfectly holy standard of God as if He had committed all the sins of those who would believe in Him.

Gal. 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”

- Now if you or I are similarly dismayed, what do we do? We become anxious or we attempt to manipulate the circumstances or we run or we complain... What did Jesus do?
- ***What shall I say?...*** Because there are no punctuation marks in Greek, it is somewhat unclear what Jesus is saying here:
 - ✓ It could be that He’s saying, “What should I say? Father, save Me from this hour!” The suggestion is that this is a real prayer to be released from the plan for the cross. As holy God, He cannot imagine the weight of sin and the wrath of God on Him and He seeks a way out.
 - ✓ Or, this more likely is a hypothetical response, “what am I supposed to say, ‘Father keep me from this hour?’” And that would be answered immediately, “Of course not!” ***But for this purpose I came to this hour.*** The whole intent and plan and ***purpose*** of Christ’s coming was this very moment. Should He now shrink back from it?
- This simple statement is a reminder of the intentionality of the cross. Throughout His ministry He had been clear about His intention to go to the cross, and as it loomed close, He was not the least bit hesitant to go to the cross. The cross was not a Plan B because His Messianic Plan A didn’t work. And Jesus didn’t come to earth to die for sin and sinners because after creation the Godhead was surprised by the sin of man and said, “Now what will We do?” No, the intention always was to go to the cross, and despite it’s horror, He was committed to that plan.
- ✓ We see this in the many (40+ times in Gospels) statements — “the Father sent Me...”

- *In 4:34 Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who **sent Me** & to accomplish His work’*
- *John 5:30 “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who **sent Me**.*
- *John 7:16 So Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who **sent Me**.*

- ✓ And consider other similar statements in which Christ spoke of His necessary death —

- *Matt. 16:21-23 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that **He must go** to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.” But He turned and said to Peter, “**Get behind Me, Satan!** You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”*
- *Matt. 26:53-54 “Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that **it must happen this way?**”*
- *Luke 9:51 When the days were approaching for His ascension, **He was determined to go to Jerusalem;***
- *Luke 22:22 “For indeed, the Son of Man is going **as it has been determined;** but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”*
- *Luke 24:6-7 “He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that **the Son of Man must be delivered** into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”*
- *Luke 24:25-27 And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! **Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things** and to enter into His glory?” Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.*

- Christ’s life — from before His advent and in eternity — was always about His coming to die. That was His singular purpose and He would not be dissuaded from it.

2. Christ’s Death was for **GOD’S GLORY** (vv. 28-30)

- Jesus was not actually praying in verse 27 to not go to the cross (it was a hypothetical prayer); and that is further reinforced by what He prays in verse 28 — **Father, glorify Your name**. That same request is given again in 17:1-5; it emphasizes the gracious, overruling sovereignty of God.
- What motivated Christ in going to the cross was the glory of God. He did what He did so that people would see the greatness of God’s wonder and that they would be driven to worship Him.
- Therefore, this is no begrudging death — it was with joy that He did it. Not only was the Father glorified, but so was the Son (vv. 28, 30). So the Father declared (the third time God spoke publically to affirm Christ — cf. also baptism and transfiguration), **I have...and will...** That is, there was glory for the Father in Christ’s life and there would also be in His coming death.
- Now we must understand the irony of what is happening in this statement: it pleased the Father to

crush the Son (Is. 53; Col. 1), and it pleased the Son to be crushed (Heb. 12) — nothing else could or would so glorify God (reveal the character of His righteousness and grace) as that crushing!

- *Is. 53:7, 9-11 **He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth...His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. **But the LORD was pleased To crush Him**, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, **And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied**; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.***
- *Col. 1:19-22 For it was **the Father's good pleasure** for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him **to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross**; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach —*
- *Heb. 12:1-3 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, **who for the joy set before Him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.***

- On one occasion Martin Luther read the account of Abraham offering Isaac on the altar in Gen. 22 to his wife, Katie, to which she responded, “I do not believe it. God would not have treated His son like that!” “But Katie,” Luther replied, “He did.” He did indeed. And it was for His glory to do so.
- But not everyone heard or understood what was said by the Father (**vv. 29-30**):
 - ✓ Why didn't they understand? Because they were spiritually deaf. They had no capacity to understand God's Word because of that deafness (cf. Mt. 13:13-15; 1 Cor. 2:14; Jn. 12:40). Though they did not understand, they are culpable because the Word was spoken.
 - ✓ How then could this be for their **sakes** (v. 30)? Even though they did not understand the words, since a voice spoke from Heaven, that should have been enough for them to alert them to their need to respond in faith to Christ — something that Jesus' very next statement would affirm.

3. Christ's Death was for JUDGMENT (v. 31)

- Though the crowd may have missed what the Father said in v. 28, they could not have misunderstood what Jesus said in v. 31 — ***judgment is upon this world.***

- One way that God gets glory (v. 28) is the judgment that comes by Christ's death; this is not the final judgment (that comes in Rev. 20:11ff), but it is definitive (16:33; Rom. 8:37ff; 2 Cor. 2:14).
- What judgment is carried out at the cross?
 - ✓ The **world** is judged. This is not final judgment, but it is to say that the world system is no longer victorious. The world considered itself victorious over Christ with His crucifixion, and yet His death was the means by which its own doom was secured (Acts 17:30-31).
 - ✓ Satan is judged. In fact Jesus says it boldly — **the ruler of this world will be cast out**.
 - His realm (the world) has been judged, and so he has nothing left to rule. He's a ruler without a realm.
 - Again, this is not final judgment, but here he loses his authority and influence. Because of Christ's death, men do not have to obey Satan; they are freed from the shackles of sin. Satan's destiny of dethronement and defeat are fully assured (Heb. 2:14; Rev. 12:10-11).

Heb. 2:14-15 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

- Read **1 Cor. 15:20-28**; note especially vv. 25-28. With the cross and resurrection, the judgment is decreed and sure. And like a war in which the enemy's leader is vanquished, but in which some of the soldiers still battle on, the battle against sin, the world, and Satan is won. All that remains is the dying final skirmishes of Satan and his minions. But the judgment is sure.
- The benefits of the cross have already begun. Note the emphasis on **now** (2x). While all this will be realized fully later, it has already begun under the current ministry of Christ.
- And this, my friends, is our liberty and joy. Now we do not have to give in to sin. Now we are liberated to obey Christ (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:14, 17-18). Christ has judged the world and its ruler.

4. Christ's Death was for SALVATION (vv. 32-34)

- **If I am lifted up** is the same allusion that Jesus used in 3:14 (Num. 21:6-9). And the people understood this to also refer to being **lifted up** on a cross (v. 33; cf. 8:28).
- And this lifting up, this cross, becomes the means of salvation — **[I] will draw all men to Myself...**
 - ✓ **If** has the sense of "when" — "when I am lifted up, that will be the means by which I draw..."
 - The cross is the instrument God uses to bring people to Himself. No one comes any other way.
 - ✓ By this he does not mean that everyone everywhere will believe in Him and be saved.

- ✓ Jesus is alluding to something He said earlier (**6:37-40**) — the Father made a promise to the Son of a people that would be redeemed to eternally glorify Him. These redeemed people are the Father's gift to the Son (v. 27a) and everyone who is given to Him will come (**v. 37b, 39**).
- ✓ All manner of men are compelled to believe in Christ. Not all men will believe, but of all those who believe, all of them will come by the compelling ministry/work of Christ and Father (**6:44**).
- This sounds like glorious news, but the crowd (that had no ears to hear, v. 29) rejected what He said. Alluding to **the Law** (perhaps Ps. 89:35-37, or possibly Dan. 7:13-14), they ask how the **Son of Man** could die — “what kind of Son of Man (Messiah) is that?” “Who wants a dead Messiah?”
 - ✓ They could not reconcile their concept of Messiah as a victorious political conqueror with a crucified Messiah.
 - ✓ In one sense they were right; the Messiah will and must reign forever (2 Sam. 7:16). They just misunderstood that He must also be crucified to redeem His people (Is. 53).
 - ✓ They were right to desire a Messianic ruler; they overlooked their need for a Savior from sin (Mt. 1:21).
 - ✓ Every benefit we have from God and in Christ is rooted in the cross. We cannot over-emphasize it; we can minimize it (as this crowd did).

5. Christ's Death was **LIGHT** (vv. 35-36)

- Because of their question about the Son of Man (v. 34) Jesus responded **For a little while longer...** I.e., He is the kind of Son of Man who comes in and with **light**.
 - ✓ Light and dark (night) is a common theme in John and it is used to indicate morality (e.g., 11:9-10)
 - ✓ This becomes one final invitation for them to submit to Him and trust Him as Savior and Lord.
 - ✓ Note the warning: **a little while longer...while you have the light**. The time to choose to follow Christ is not indefinite. There is a limit on the patience of Christ. The opportunity and time for salvation is a limited opportunity.
- You must be born again and you must follow Christ — but not all do. This is an invitation to evaluate the benefits of living in darkness and living in light.
- Note the contrasts Jesus makes between light and darkness:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Walk in the darkness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ you will be overtaken (mastered) ➤ you won't know where you are going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Walk in the light <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ you will become a son of the light — ➤ fellowship & blessing of no darkness
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- He was light; but they preferred the darkness (Jn. 3:19-21).

- Now you can choose to reject Christ, but to do so is to invite what Jesus did with the crowd — ***He went away and Hid Himself***. I.e., He withheld Himself from them; they rejected Him so He judged them for rejecting Him. They failed to be convinced of Him so He convicted them as unbelievers.
- Already on Monday, just hours after the Triumphal Entry, the affirming crowd has turned against Him; the stage is set for those who will shout “Crucify Him!” on Thursday evening.

CONCLUSION:

Everybody loves Jesus. No, not everybody does. They want a cuddly Jesus. They want a friendly Jesus. They want a non-condemning Jesus. They want a political Jesus. But they don’t want a Jesus who talks about sin. They don’t want a Jesus who dies and doesn’t stay dead. They don’t want a Jesus who will intrude on their lives, expose them for who they are and tell them that they must follow Him.

But this is the Jesus we have been given — and it is the Jesus we need. It is for this purpose that Jesus came —

- ✓ to fulfill the Father’s plan
- ✓ to give the Father glory
- ✓ to judge sin and Satan
- ✓ to save sinners
- ✓ and to be the light

This is our Savior and this is why He came.