

## JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

We would like to begin our message this morning by reading you a wonderful little story told by Peter Marshall, one of my favorite preachers and a former chaplain of the United States Senate.

“In a home of which I know, a little boy, the only son, was ill with an incurable disease. Month after month the mother had tenderly nursed him, read to him, and played with him, hoping to keep him from the dreadful finality of the doctor's diagnosis—the little boy was sure to die. But as the weeks went on he gradually began to understand that he would never be like the other boys he saw playing outside his window. Small as he was, he began to understand the meaning of the term *death*, and he too knew he was to die.

“One day his mother had been reading to him the stirring tale of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table, of Lancelot and Elaine the lily maid of Astelot, and about that last glorious battle where so many fair knights met their death.

“She closed the book as her little son sat silent for an instant, deeply stirred. Then he asked the question weighing on his childish heart, ‘*Mama, what is it like to die? Mama, does it hurt?*’ Quick tears sprang to her eyes and she fled to the kitchen, supposedly to tend to something on the stove. She knew it was a question with deep significance. She knew it must be answered satisfactorily. So she leaned for an instant against the smooth surface and breathed a hurried prayer that the Lord would keep her from breaking down before the boy and that she would be able to tell him the answer; the Lord did tell her. Immediately she knew how to explain *it* to him.

‘Kenneth,’ she said to her son, ‘do you remember when you were a tiny boy how you used to play so hard all day that when night came you were too tired even to undress and you'd tumble into your mother's bed and fall asleep. That was not your bed, it was not where you belonged. You would only stay there a little while. Much to your surprise you would wake up and find yourself in your own bed in your own room. You were there because someone had loved you and taken care of you. Your father had

come with big strong arms and carried you away.’

"‘Kenneth, darling, death is just like that. We just wake up some morning to find ourselves in the other room. Our room where we belong, because the Lord Jesus loved us and died for us." The lad's shining face looking up into hers told her that the point had gone home and there would be no more fear, only love and trust in his little heart as he went to meet the Father in heaven. He never questioned again. Several weeks later he fell asleep just as she had said and Father's big, strong arms carried him to his own room.” *Peter Marshall*<sup>1</sup>

This story sets the stage perfectly for our message this morning in John chapter 12, beginning in verse 27. Jesus is about to suffer so that we might fall asleep one night and wake up where we belong. Because of Jesus we can pass from this world to the next in the blink of an eye just as if falling asleep on the couch and waking up in Heaven. That is if we believe in His atoning death for our sin

John 12:27-33 NAS:

<sup>27</sup> *"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.*

<sup>28</sup> *"Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."*

<sup>29</sup> *So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him."*

<sup>30</sup> *Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.*

<sup>31</sup> *"Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*

<sup>32</sup> *"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."*

<sup>33</sup> *But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.*

Verse 27 of John chapter 12 gives us a glimpse into the human side of Jesus. His soul is troubled and the thought crosses His mind to ask God to deliver Him from this horrible death. He knew the agony of what He would shortly be facing. But Jesus’ prayer here gives us a model for how to approach God during our tough times.

How often do we pray, “*Father, deliver me; save me from this . . . ?*”—“This unemployment, this illness, this marital problem, this depression, the effects of that abuse, this trouble with my child, this addiction, these gas prices,” and we could go on and on. Fill in the request with your own personal challenge. It is only natural for us to

<sup>1</sup> James Hewett, ed., *Illustrations Unlimited*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "D".

beg God for deliverance from the bad situations in our lives. And we should. When we recognize God as all-powerful and in control of everything it is right to come to Him with our requests for deliverance.

But let us look at the rest of the model Jesus gives us. His next phrase in verse 27 is “*But for this purpose I came to this hour.*” The true child of God recognizes that there is a purpose for everything in his or her life. Not just for the “good” things but for everything.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 ESV

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.*

Ecclesiastes 8:6, NIV

*For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a man's misery weighs heavily upon him.*

But even so we can be assured, because of...

Psalm 31:15 ESV

*My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!*

So whatever this problem or challenge is in your life, God has allowed it and He has the power to cause good to come out of it (Romans 8:28).

As human beings we want deliverance from the problem, but God's plan and purpose may be something else. Now there are some things God definitely does want to deliver you from. His Word is clear on that. If you have a problem with honesty we know God wants to deliver you from that because He tells us in Colossians 3:9 “*Do not lie to one another.*”

If your problem is stealing God says in Ephesians 4:28 ESV, “*Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.*” Now you may be feeling affronted that we mention stealing because you haven't walked off with anyone's property. But do you spend too much time socializing at work or using the Internet at work for personal reasons so that you are not giving your boss a full day's work for your day's pay? Or do you office supplies home from your job? Then you are stealing. The rest of that verse tells us what to do instead of stealing: do honest work with your own hands.

If your problem is addiction to alcohol or drugs God says over and over, “*do not get drunk*” (Ephesians 5:8; Luke 21:34; Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21). God definitely wants to deliver you from that so you can be filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit instead. It is right to pray for God to deliver you from these things and a host of other sins.

If your problem is lust and pornography, God wants to deliver you from that also because

He says *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality”* (1 Thessalonians 4:3 NAS. See also 1 Corinthians 6:13, 18; Job 31:1.) So if your challenge is something that God calls sin in the Bible, then you can pray with assurance to be delivered from it. That is a prayer according to God’s will and one that He will answer. So where God gives a definite command, there is no doubt about whether or not He wants to deliver us.

However, in many other circumstances no right and wrong is involved. There are no specific statements in the Bible about them. In those situations God may be trying to develop qualities in us such as faith, love, strength, wisdom, patience, or other things. He may want to prepare us to give comfort or strength and hope to others (2 Corinthians 1:3-4) as he told Peter, *“I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers”* (Luke 22:32, NAS). God’s purpose in our suffering and problems may be to prepare us to minister to others.

We acknowledge that there are many situations in our lives where there are no Scriptural directives because they are not a matter of right and wrong. So what then? Christ’s next words in John 12:28 tell us, *“Father, glorify Thy Name.”*

What God may really want to deliver us from is our attitude. If we have a bad attitudes going through things, if we grumble and complain and feel sorry for ourselves, or blame everyone else, that does not glorify God.

God is glorified in many ways. Yes, He is glorified when He miraculously intervenes in a situation. But He is also glorified when He gives us grace to be gracious in difficulties. He is glorified when He gives us whatever it takes to come through victoriously. God is glorified when we, like Christ, say, *“Thy will be done”* (Matthew 26:42). God is glorified when we have a godly attitude instead of a human one. And how do we get that godly attitude? God is glorified when we allow Him to produce the fruits of the Spirit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

This chapter in John now reveals to us just where this entire Gospel has been leading, to the cross and a brutal crucifixion. Who would not want to explore whether there was any chance of avoiding such a fate? Jesus was about to be made sin, to take on the penalty for the sin of all the people of all time, in His death as we learn in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 NAS, a passage we would recommend you read over carefully again and again on your own until you totally understand all that it reveals. Paul writes:

*17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

*18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,*

*19 namely, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself**, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

*20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

*21 **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.***

Think about it; the Holy Christ, Jesus the Son of God, was made to be sin. Horrid, awful, black, disgusting sin. WE cannot possibly begin to comprehend what Jesus must have felt at the moment all the sin of all time was laid on His shoulders. Just imagine what that must have been like for Him, One who had never sinned suddenly having all the sin in the world become part of Him. We have enough trouble bearing the shame and guilt of our own sin. What must it be like to take on the sin of everyone else?

Why did He do it? He did it for you and for me; that we might be delivered from our sin and have the potential to live a holy life, a life dedicated to God.

But for Jesus this pause to agonize over what He must endure was only momentary, revealing His humanness. He knew what He had to do and that He would have to go through with it. So He submitted Himself to His Father with a willingness to get on with it for the glory of God. Jesus was determined to fulfill the purpose for which He had been born.

Now there were a couple of different reactions to this voice that came from Heaven. Some heard a noise like thunder. Others thought it might have been some kind of angelic voice. But Jesus knew that the voice was His Father's and that it was primarily intended for the people so that they might be aware that God Himself was directly involved in what was about to take place. Then Jesus goes on to explain to them the meaning of what was happening. It is *time for judgment*. While Satan was probably delighting in His victory over Jesus and Jesus' impending death, he was about to have the rug pulled out from under him by Jesus who would turn His own crucifixion into a means of stripping Satan of his power. And because of who Jesus is and how He died, there is going to be a magnetic effect created that will draw people to faith in Him.

Verse 27 and the first part of verse 28 is a prayer from Jesus to His Father. "Father, glorify your name" is a request from Jesus for God to glorify Himself by what He is about to have Jesus do on the cross. No sooner does Jesus get the words out of His mouth than He receives a reply from His Father in Heaven. In verse 29 God lovingly replies to His Son by assuring Him that He will not only glorify Himself by Jesus' work on the cross but that He has also been glorified all through Jesus' life by what He has done. God made His voice heard from Heaven on occasions not only when Jesus may have needed such visible encouragement, but also when He simultaneously wanted to remove any doubts from the people about who was directing and initiating this action.

God sent Jesus to die on the cross and now demonstrated His presence and involvement in Jesus' crucifixion by audibly responding to Jesus' prayer so that all could hear His

voice.

If you recall, God also spoke to Jesus from Heaven at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Matthew 3:16,17 NAS:

*16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."*

And God spoke to Jesus again from Heaven when Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of a high mountain, Matthew 17:1, 2, 5 NAS:

*1 Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. 2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. 5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"*

We can fully trust that God is always right there making His presence known for all those who go through suffering for His glory.

Now it sounds like many people in the crowd did not hear God's voice clearly. They heard a sound but did not know the words that were spoken. Yet if the voice was for their sake and they could not understand it, what good was it? Well, we will tell you what good it was. The crowd heard Jesus pray and then they heard a sound from Heaven in response to that prayer. That should have convinced them that Jesus' prayer had been heard by His Father and that God was responding in some way. Whatever it was that they heard was an indication from God that He was involved in what was about to happen.

Jesus then spoke to the crowd about the Cross. It was to be the time of judgment for the world and for Satan, the prince of the world. Jesus' death by crucifixion might on the surface appear to be a victory for the evil world, but the truth of the matter is that it would really be a judgment on the world. The moment Jesus went to the cross, Satan received the knockout punch. His defeat would be complete on Easter morning when Jesus conquered sin and death by rising from the grave. On the cross, Jesus would defeat Satan and his world system. He would destroy the power of the ruler of this world (Satan), and would draw all men to Himself. In His death Jesus glorified God by bringing you and me into fellowship with Him.

Paul writes: "*As for me, **may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.** Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the*

*world's interest in me has also died (Galatians 6:14 NLT)."*

Even though Satan is still allowed to go back and forth across the earth and even to stand before the throne of God, he is a defeated enemy and he knows it. Do you think that makes him angry? His situation is like that of a condemned prisoner who had escaped from his jail cell and knows it is just a matter of time before he gets caught and put back in prison. But while he is out he is going to cause as much damage to society as he possibly can. He will take as much of his rage out on society as he is able while he has time. But take heart, as we serve Christ we receive the power to overcome Satan as Luke tells us in Luke 10:17-19 TEV:

*17 The seventy-two men came back in great joy. "Lord," they said, "even the demons obeyed us when we gave them a command in your name!"*  
*18 Jesus answered them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*  
*19 Listen! I have given you authority, so that you can walk on snakes and scorpions and overcome all the power of the Enemy, and nothing will hurt you.* 20 *But don't be glad because the evil spirits obey you; rather be glad because your names are written in heaven."*

As we serve the Lord, we overcome Satan (Luke 10:17–19). As we let God be glorified in our lives through our attitudes during difficult times, we overcome Satan. One day Satan will be tossed out of Heaven (Revelation 12:10), and eventually he will be judged and imprisoned forever (Revelation 20:10). So we see in verse 31 of John 12 that the world's standards were shown to be worthless and the ruler of the world (Satan) was judged. John sums up these events pretty well in a later chapter.

John 16:5-11 NLT:

<sup>5</sup> *"But now I [Christ]<sup>2</sup> am going away to the One who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going.*

<sup>6</sup> *Instead, you grieve because of what I've told you.*

<sup>7</sup> *But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate [Holy Spirit]<sup>3</sup> won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.*

<sup>8</sup> *And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.*

<sup>9</sup> *The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me.*

<sup>10</sup> *Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more.*

<sup>11</sup> *Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.*

<sup>2</sup> Brackets added.

<sup>3</sup> Brackets added.

People no longer have to be controlled by sin and death. Christ has provided the means to be reconciled with God and have all sins forgiven, past, present, and future, clearing the way to eternal life in Heaven for all who believe.

Colossians 1:13-14 NLT:

<sup>13</sup> *For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son,*  
<sup>14</sup> *who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.*

Hebrews 2:14-15 NLT:

<sup>14</sup> *Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.*

In order for sin to be forgiven, God requires a perfect sacrifice. That sacrifice had to be a flesh and blood human being that would die when sacrificed. Jesus was the only one who could provide the perfect sacrifice. Every other human being ever born is tainted by sin. When Jesus refers to His being lifted up from the earth in verses 32 and 33, He is not talking about His ascension when He rose up to Heaven, but to His crucifixion. Earlier in John 3:14 we read, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (NAS). And in John 8:28, John writes: "So Jesus said, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me'" (NAS).

It was normally the custom of the Jews to stone those that were guilty of crimes worthy of the death penalty death (Acts 7:58-60). We read earlier in John 12:32 that Jesus said He would **draw all men to** Himself at the cross. He did not mean everybody in the world will be given salvation but rather it means He will draw all kinds of people from every county and nationality, both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>4</sup> And Jesus is not going to twist anyone's arm to come to Him. All who come will come by their own choice because they want to.

Jesus was "lifted up" so that all mankind could see the way (John 12:32), hear and know the truth (John 8:28), and receive eternal life (John 3:14). All heaven recognizes these facts, as we see in Revelation 5:8-9 NAS:

<sup>8</sup> *When He [Jesus]<sup>5</sup> had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*  
<sup>9</sup> *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and*

<sup>4</sup> Also see Rev. 5:9; cf. John 10:16; 11:52.

<sup>5</sup> Brackets added.



*to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.*

Now let us resume in John 12:34-36 NAS:

<sup>34</sup> *The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The **Son of Man** must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"*

<sup>35</sup> *So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.*

<sup>36</sup> *"While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.*

The crowd was confused. They believed from their Old Testament teaching that the Messiah was to be around forever. How is it possible that He would die? They were relying on Daniel 7:13-14 NAS:

<sup>13</sup> *"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a **Son of Man** was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.*

<sup>14</sup> *"And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.*

They may have been wondering if Jesus was using the terms "Messiah" and "Son of Man" in a different way than the meanings they were familiar with. But Jesus answered them once again using the imagery of *light* and *darkness*. He tells them that the *Son of Man* is *Light*. The *darkness* represents a world without God in which evil has the power to control the people. If you are walking in the dark you are an unbeliever who stumbles through life without knowing what life is all about and where you are going.<sup>6</sup> Back in John 3:19 Jesus said: "*This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.*" Then in John 8:12: Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "*I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.*"

Walking in the light means following the light. Jesus spoke of his followers becoming *sons of light*, but this can come only through trust in Jesus. Their opportunity to take advantage of this great opportunity for salvation was growing short. Jesus is the Light of the world but the day of His public ministry was almost over (John 12:23).<sup>7</sup> Now that

<sup>6</sup> John 3:19; 8:12; 1 John 1:6.

<sup>7</sup> John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 12:46.

Christ is in Heaven, He has left us with the Bible and the Holy Spirit so that we may have light, and that as Christians we may be light to those around us who do not know Jesus.

Ephesians 5:6-10 NAS:

*Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them; 8 for you were formerly **darkness**, but now you are **Light in the Lord**; walk as **children of Light** 9 (for the **fruit of the Light** consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.*

Colossians 1:13-14 NAS:

*13 For He rescued us from the domain of **darkness**, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

After reminding them that He was the Light of the world, once again Jesus supernaturally vanished from among them.<sup>8</sup>

You may recall that we have come across the phrase “*lifted up*” earlier in our study of John (John 3:14; 8:28). Simply it means *crucifixion* (John 12:33), but it also carries the idea of *glorification*. In Isaiah 52:13, written hundreds of years before Jesus’ ministry, the prophet predicted how Jesus would die, and it is worth noting that when Isaiah wrote these words crucifixion was not even known as a form of capital punishment. No one had ever witnessed a crucifixion until it was introduced by the Romans when they took over Judah. So God had somehow made Isaiah aware that Jesus would be “*lifted up*.” Whether Isaiah knew what that meant is hard to tell. But God knew and He had Isaiah write it down so that all people both then and now could marvel over the fact that God controls the future from the present and can predict accurately what will take place in the future. He has a definite plan, and He will execute it to perfection.

Listen to what Isaiah wrote: “*Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.*” This is exactly what we find happening in John 12:32. Jesus was *glorified* by being *crucified*, and because of His sacrifice and love for us, we who believe in His death for our sins will be glorified as well.

We glorify Christ when we receive Him as Savior. We glorify Christ when we display His attitudes as we go through suffering and problems. Your pain may feel like crucifixion. Perhaps God is trying to “crucify” something in you so that you can live a life of praise and glory for Him. When we glorify Christ, He will one day glorify us.

How is God calling you to glorify Him today?

---

<sup>8</sup> John 5:13; 8:59; 10:39.

