

John 12 - Through Death to Victory

Tuesday, January 24, 2012
6:56 PM

1. Isaiah 29
2. Isaiah 52, 53
3. Zechariah 9

I. Introduction

1. Sermon Introduction

- We finished John 11 last week concluding that God was working everything out according to His purpose for Christ to come to Jerusalem and die
- As we enter John 12, we see Christ take this purpose upon Himself even in opposition to those who would impose other purposes on Him

2. Passage Introduction

- John 12 happens some time after John 11
 - Christ left Bethany for some time and visited several nearby cities including Ephraim and Jericho
 - Several things happened in the interim, especially the calling of Zacchaeus
- But now, in John 12, Christ returns to Jerusalem for the last time and we find Him six days before the Passover in Bethany
- Read John 12

3. Proposition and Outline

Proposition: It is possible to pretend or appear to glorify Christ, and yet have nothing to do with Christ. Therefore we must glorify Christ on His terms and not according to our own desires.

Outline

- a) Introduction, Proposition and Outline
- b) Several mis-glorifications of Christ
- c) The true glory of Christ
- d) The true devotion of the people revealed
- e) How do we truly glorify Christ?
- f) Why do we do this?
- g) Conclusion

II. Several mis-glorifications of Christ - the people regarded Him for who He was not

1. Several people in this passage claim to be glorifying Christ, but they glorify Him for all the wrong reasons
 - a) They misunderstood and refused Christ's true purpose and instead replaced it with a purpose of their own making
 - b) In effect, they were not worshipping the true God, but a god of their own making
2. Three purposes in this passage that were wrongly applied to Christ:
 - a) Judas, the Greeks - Christ's purpose was to provide worldly benefits (**vs 1-8, 20-22**)
 - 1) Both the real reason (Judas was a thief) and the pretended reason (to give to the poor) are both looking for worldly benefits
 - 2) It appears that the Greeks wanted to meet Christ because they thought He was going to be a great king and wanted to gain favor with Him
 - b) The crowd - Christ's purpose was to be a miracle worker (**vs 9, 18**)
 - 1) The crowds were primarily interested in Christ because they heard He was doing great miracles
 - 2) But they did not listen to what Christ was saying or obey what He commanded
 - 3) They wanted Him to be a miracle worker for their enjoyment/benefit, not God as He was
 - c) The crowd, the Greeks - Christ's purpose was to be an earthly king (**vs 12-13**)
 - 1) The crowds decided to proclaim Christ as the king, the son of David, which He of course was
 - 2) But, they did not listen to what Christ said His purpose was
 - 3) They wanted to make Him a king in their image, not the king that He was
3. A prophesied response to Christ
 - a) Really a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in **Isaiah 29:13-14**

"Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men, therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."
 - b) What causes this? **Isaiah 29:16**

You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

 - It is a reversal of the role of potter and clay - it is the clay telling the potter what He ought to be
 - So, the people did this, they glorified Christ with their mouths while their hearts were truly far from Him

III. The response of Christ - the true glory of Christ

1. Christ's purpose was to die (as opposed to everything the crowds were glorifying Him for)
 - a) **Verse 1** - Jesus therefore came to Bethany
 - i. A reference back to **John 11:50** - 'it is better for one man to die for the people'
 - ii. Christ's purpose in coming to Bethany/Jerusalem was to fulfill this prophecy
 - iii. It was evident that Christ and the disciples knew that going to Jerusalem meant risking death
 - a) **John 11:8-10, 16** - The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him...So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."
 - b) **Verses 7-8** - preparing Me for my burial
 - i. Christ knew in coming to Bethany that His purpose was to die
 - ii. He saw a picture of His burial in the anointment with perfume
 - c) **Verse 24** - a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies
 - i. Christ saw that the blessing He brought only came through His death
 - ii. This was His true purpose, not to be glorified before death
 - d) **Verse 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.
 - i. A strong statement of purpose - Christ came to Jerusalem to die
 - e) **Verse 35** - the light is among you for a little while longer
 - i. Throughout His ministry Christ has portrayed the light as not being quenched yet
 - a) **John 11:9-10** - Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him
 - b) **John 9:4-5** - We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."
 - ii. Now, though, He says that it is only here a little while longer
 - a) One more marker showing Christ was going to His death
2. Christ's purpose was to bring peace
 - a) **Verses 14-15** - riding on a donkey
 - i. Donkey was a symbol of peace, the war horse was the symbol of a conqueror
 - ii. Contrast with **Revelation 19:11-16** - Christ riding on a white horse
 - a) Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.
 - b) Christ was not coming to conquer the Romans or to reign from Jerusalem - that will come in time
 - c) Christ was coming in peace to offer a sacrifice on behalf of the people
3. Christ's purpose was to give one last chance to believe
 - a) **Verse 36** - While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."
 - b) **Verse 44** - And Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me.
 - c) Christ presents Himself in Jerusalem one last time to command belief
 - i. Why did Christ bother to correct their misglorifications of Him?
 - ii. Because He was holding up one last chance to believe

4. Christ's purpose was to give evidence for judgment
 - a) **Verses 47-48** - If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 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.
 - b) Since Christ did come to give one last chance to believe His words now stand as witnesses against them
 - c) Similar to **John 3:17-18** - For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

5. Two sets of two purposes
 - a) First - Christ came to die to bring peace (His actions toward God)
 - b) Second - Christ came to call to belief or provide evidence for judgment (His requirements of man)

IV. The crowd's reaction to Christ

1. When confronted with Christ's true purpose, the true dedication of the crowds were exposed

2. Some had already rejected Christ and revealed that they were intentionally hostile to Him, even in the face of overwhelming proof
 - a) **Verses 10-11** - So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.
 - b) **Verse 19** - So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

3. Some had already rejected Christ and revealed that they were just acting a part in seeking after Him
 - a) **Verses 4-6** - He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief

4. Some rejected the purposes that Christ stated for Himself and revealed that they had no care for who Christ truly was but only His benefits
 - a) **Verse 34** - How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up?
 - b) **Verse 37** - They still did not believe Him

5. Some saw Christ for who He was but revealed that they feared men more and were no true followers of Christ
 - a) **Verses 42-43** - for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

V. Application: How do we truly glorify Christ? How do we avoid falling into this trap?

1. We must honor Christ in a way that acknowledges who He is (not who we want Him to be)
 - a) **Verses 2-3** - So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.
2. We must see that the death of Christ brings glory to Himself and to God
 - a) **Verse 23** - The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
 - b) **Verse 28** - Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."
 - c) **A call to worship**- glorifying God in the death of Christ truly glorifies Christ and shows us to be true disciples
3. We must see that the death of Christ is what brings life to the world
 - a) **Verse 24** - Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
 - b) And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.
 - c) **A call to recognize redemption** - recognizing our need for the sacrifice of Christ truly glorifies Christ and shows us to be true disciples
4. We must see and walk in the light of Christ
 - a) **Verses 35-36** - Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.
 - b) **John 1:7** - But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
 - c) **Ephesians 5:1-21** - 'walk as children of light'
 - d) **A call to sanctification** - walking in the light as He is in the light truly glorifies Christ and shows us to be true disciples
5. We must be willing to join Christ in His rejection of the world's purposes
 - a) **Verses 25-26** - Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.
 - b) Christ says this over and over again
 - i. **Matthew 18:34-39, Mark 8:34-38, Luke 9:23-27**
 - c) **A call to self-denial** - rejecting everything in the world, to the point of rejecting our own lives, truly glorifies Christ and shows us to be true disciples
 - d) **Verse 24** - Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
 - i. This is a dual application statement - to Christ and to us - we cannot glorify Christ unless we die and bear fruit
6. In other words, we must believe
 - a) **Verse 36** - While you have the light, believe in the light,
 - b) **Verse 44-46** - so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.
 - c) Believing is doing the four points above
 - i. Believing is a call to worship
 - ii. Believing is a call to recognize redemption
 - iii. Believing is a call to sanctification
 - iv. Believing is a call to self denial
 - v. Therefore believing is glorifying Christ on His terms
 - d) Anyone who says he believes but cannot do these four things is like the crowd that 'believed' and 'glorified' Christ, but rejected who He truly was
 - i. They are not believing in Christ, they believe in a God of their own making

VI. Why do we do this?

1. Because we see the reward
 - a) **Verse 25** - Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.
 - b) We worship, we recognize redemption, we run toward sanctification and we especially deny ourselves because we see the reward - if we lose our life we will keep it for eternal life
2. Because we see the reward
 - a) **Verse 36** - While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."
 - b) We worship, we recognize redemption, we run toward sanctification and we deny ourselves even to the loss of our lives because we see the reward - if we believe in the light we will become **sons** of light
3. Because we see the reward
 - a) **Verse 50** - And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me."
4. Some favorite Hymns - why? Because they speak of the reward at the end
 - a) Amazing Grace (When we've been there...)
 - b) Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing (On that day when freed from sinning...)
 - c) I Will Glory in My Redeemer (Who waits for me, at gates of gold...)
 - d) There is a Fountain Filled with Blood (When this poor lisping stammering tongue...)
 - e) It is Well with My Soul (And Lord haste the day...)

VII. Conclusion - Christ was the great conquering king, but He won His victory through death

1. So, first, we must recognize His victory in and over death
 - a) It was in death that Christ secured His kingdom
 - b) If we can't believe this, then we are rejecting Him as king
2. And second, we must recognize that our victory in Christ comes in death
 - a) It is to death that Christ calls His followers
 - b) If we can't do this, then we are rejecting Him as king
3. It is easy to call Christ Lord and still be rejecting Him as king, so we must be careful about these things
 - a) In the gospel we are thrust up against the purposes of Christ, much like the crowd was, and our true devotion will be exposed, so:
 - i. Will we glorify Christ as the crucified king and follow Christ in denying ourselves
 - ii. Or, will we prove that Christ has never truly been our Lord, that we have never truly glorified Christ
 - b) **Matthew 7:21-23** - "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'