

Sermon Series: *The Gospel of John*

For This Purpose I Have Come To This Hour

John 12:27-36 (ESV)

Reader: Tony Lindmeier

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. 28 Father, glorify your name.”* Then a voice came from heaven: *“I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” 29* The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, *“An angel has spoken to him.” 30* Jesus answered, *“This voice has come for your sake, not mine. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33* He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. 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?” 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. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”*

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

Introduction

Last week we spent time considering the meaning and purpose of prayer. We learned that one of the reasons that God commands His children to pray to Him is because it glorifies Him when His children actively express their trust in Him, which is the essence of prayer.

The Father wants His children to perpetually trust in Him therefore He is pleased with perpetual prayers. He does not merely endure the perpetual prayers of His children, He **enjoys** them. It's OK to pester God through prayer because He Himself commands it. Indeed, it brings the LORD great pleasure and delight when His children converse with Him continually.

Context

This week, as we return to the gospel of John, we pick up in and we have before us an example of one of Jesus' prayers. As Jesus prays, he reveals that his death on the cross has purpose and will effect certain results. Massively important things happened in Jesus' death on the cross. Let's remind ourselves of what's happening in the text and pay attention to what preceded immediately before the text we just read.

The Triumphal Entry

At this point in the text we find ourselves just a day or two after **Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem** (12:12-19). That was the day that huge crowds gathered welcoming Jesus with great celebration as he rode into the city on a donkey fulfilling the OT promises of the way in which messiah would enter the city. Thousands and thousands of people celebrated his coming and received Jesus just as they would have received a king, even throwing their own coats down upon

the ground making a carpet as it were. They are only a week away from the celebration of the Passover.

“Sir, We Wish To See Jesus”

At some point during that week, some **devout Greeks, who had come to worship** in Jerusalem by celebrating Passover (12:20-26), did something amazing. These Greeks approached Philip and requested a private meeting with Jesus. They said, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus” (12:21). Philip, perhaps a bit uncertain what to do, went to Andrew and discussed it with him. Then the both of them went and told Jesus. This prompted Jesus to respond that now

“...the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (12:26).

The coming of these Gentiles appears to mark the beginning of the end. Now the hour has come. All of Jesus’ previous allusions to his future death, suddenly rush into the present. His full attention now turns to his imminent death. This shift in focus has an emotional effect upon Jesus. We see this immediately in the prayer he prayed.

NOTE: Jesus prays this prayer in front of a crowd of people (v.29). There is a place for private prayer and there is a place for public prayer.

A Prayer of Jesus

Look at Jesus’ prayer in vs.27=28.

John 12:27-28 (ESV)

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. 28 Father, glorify your name.”*

His Troubled Soul

Jesus prays very honestly. He opens the door for us to see what is happening within his heart. This is something many of us find it very difficult to do, but quite necessary if true intimacy is grow between us and our heavenly Father. Jesus reveals to all listening that he is troubled. Remember, there is a crowd standing around him. He makes himself incredibly vulnerable.

The word translated ‘troubled’ (Greek *tarassō*, ταρασσω) is “a figure of speech meaning ‘to stir up,’ to cause acute emotional distress, —‘to cause great mental distress.’”¹ “The verb is a strong one, and signifies revulsion, horror, anxiety, agitation.”²

The idea of ‘agitation’ connotes being ‘stirred up,’ much like the agitator in a washing machine. The soul of Jesus was stirred up with a swirl of emotions. He feels unsettled. All that was formerly solid, now feels like liquid. Where there was peace before, now there is turbulence and His soul is deeply troubled.

Jesus’ Response to Trouble: Prayer

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 314.

² D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 440.

Yet in the center of the turbulence and trouble, Jesus is immediately mindful of his (i.e. our) heavenly Father. In the deep distress of the moment, Jesus' first thought is to speak to his Father. If Jesus is a worthy example, then the remedy for soothing a troubled soul is going to the Father in prayer. When the turbulence of this troubled world robs the soul of comfort, then the smartest thing anyone can do is immediately seek out the presence of the Comforter.³

For What Will Jesus Pray In the Midst of Trouble?

But for what will you pray in the midst of trouble? For what will Jesus pray? Does Jesus pray for a way of escape? Jesus was quite aware of what awaited him in Jerusalem. He knew he would be murdered when he arrived in Jerusalem. He explained this to his disciples on three separate occasions on the way to Jerusalem. But knowing this did not prevent him from praying the way he did in the Garden of Gethsemane. We are told that three times⁴ he expressed his desire⁵ for some other way to be revealed. He knew the plan and yet that did not prevent him from asking His Father if there was any other way. Yet, in the end, there was no other way. Jesus understood what he *must* do. He knew his **purpose**.

But whose purpose? And what purpose?

A Purpose For This Hour

It was his Father's purpose that he aimed to fulfill. This troubling hour was a God-ordained hour. The 'hour' obviously refers to the time of his death. In the agony⁶ of his soul, He embraced the painful purpose of His Father. God was not simply *redeeming* that difficult hour, He **purposed** it. God was not merely responding to a series of tragic events, He had **planned** them⁷ and announced them beforehand in incredible detail through His prophets (cf. eg. Isaiah 53) hundreds of years before they came to pass. This hour was a necessary hour pregnant with purpose.

A Painful Road to Glory

And what exactly was the purpose of that hour? Jesus' prayer reveals this. Notice that in Jesus' prayer, he is primarily concerned with glorifying His Father's name. "To glorify his Father's name meant more to Jesus than life itself."⁸ The road to the cross leads ultimately to the glory of the Father's name before it ever effects the salvation of man. God's highest aim at Calvary was the glorification of His name and the name of his Son. It was God's desire to glorify His own name that resulted in Jesus accomplishing the salvation of man. This was God's purpose in this painful hour. Jesus willingly walks into a deadly pathway in order to glory the name of his Father.

An Immediate Answer From Heaven (v.28)

After Jesus prays for the Father to glorify His name, there is an immediate and audible answer to this prayer.

³ In reference to the Holy Spirit, see John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.

⁴ See Mt 26:44.

⁵ Recall from last week the definition of prayer offered by the Westminster Shorter Catechism question 98, "Prayer is the offering up our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies."

⁶ See Luke 22:44.

⁷ Acts 2:23; 4:28.

⁸ Colin G. Kruse, *John: The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, Vol. 4, Gen. ed. Leon Morris. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 271.

John 12:28b (ESV)

28 *Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."*

The glory of God is incredibly important. It is the purpose of our lives and it is the purpose of this universe. Glorifying God's name is top priority in Jesus' prayer and the significance of this is seen in God's immediate and audible answer. [Only two other times did God speak audibly from heaven. The first time was at Jesus' baptism and second was on the Mount of Transfiguration.] When Glorifying God's name is the heart of prayer, His heart is propelled into action.

We here at HCC are yearning to glorify God's name. We are so convinced that God will move when His children go to him with their requests that we have begun to make a list of prayers. Last week I invited you to consider writing down your request so that we as a body might begin to pray together so that we might see the Lord at work. After the service 10 requests were written down. This week, the first week of 2013, we began praying that God would do a mighty work among us for the glory of His great name.

January 6 Prayer Request Log

1. Sports/Arts Camp for/with HCC be confirmed for summer 2013
2. A husband's healing and employment
3. Someone in need of employment which provides a living wage
4. A husband becoming "a visible living brick at HCC"
5. More new people at HCC and large-scale successful impact on Winchester
6. A family friend's salvation
7. A husband's salvation
8. At work, that an acting manager would step down and not be confirmed
9. A mother's recovery and regaining of all functions
10. For God to raise up more pray-ers for the prayer team

Consider adding your request, if it is appropriate, to this public list. These request will remain in a note book. We will periodically update them (removing names) and send them out to you so that you can be praying for these things.

The Father's response to Jesus was that He had already glorified His name but that He would do it again. This probably refers back to the powerfully authoritative teaching, the signs, and the wonders that Jesus did in his Father's name. Evidently, glorifying His name is something that He intends to do repeatedly. Join me in praying, "Father, glorify your name by answering these prayers according to your will and your good pleasure."

Help Needed To Discern the Answer (v.29)

The crowd heard God's voice, but some of them could not receive what He said. They needed help in order to rightly understand what they had heard.

John 12:29 (ESV)

29 *The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him."*

You'd think that hearing the voice of God Almighty would leave you forever changed, but it doesn't. Some people who heard His voice did not even understand what was said. Human corruption is so

pervasive that it is possible to hear the voice of God and not know what you are hearing. Some people, who had no category for the supernatural, came up with a naturalistic explanation. They knew they heard something, but exactly what it was they did not know.

“Did you hear that? What was that?”

“It must have been thunder!”

While others, who did have a category for the supernatural, assumed it must have been an angel. However, even they got it wrong.

Implications of the Answer (vs. 30-33)

Jesus then explains the purpose for which God spoke.

John 12:30 (ESV)

30 *Jesus answered, “**This voice has come for your sake, not mine.**”*

Jesus needed no verbal confirmation that his prayer would be answered. However, the people standing around listening did not have such confidence, so the LORD chose to speak audibly in order all people would know that God’s blessing and favor rested upon Jesus. He spoke for the sake of confused, deaf men, not for the sake of His faultless Son.

As Jesus keeps explaining, he points out three objective truths that will occur as a result of his death. Ultimately these are three ways God demonstrates His glory.

John 12:31-33 (ESV)

31 *Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. **32** And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” **33** He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.*

1) God Glorified in the Judgment of the World

The first way God is glorified in Jesus’ death is that in it **the world will be judged**. This is not the final judgment but it is the beginning of final judgment.

Positively, Jesus will be judged on behalf of all who will trust in Him. At Calvary Jesus becomes the substitutionary sacrifice for all who will be saved. He bears the judgment of God’s wrath against their sins. “He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf so that we might become righteous” (2 Cor 5:21). The reality of this precious truth is why Paul could write in his letter to the Romans,

Romans 8:1 (ESV)

1 *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

He was judged on our behalf. As he bore our sins, those sins were deserving of death and so he was condemned on our behalf. He died the death which we deserved to die. Therefore we can live. Because he was judged, we who have been adopted through faith in him, are not judged. Because he was condemned, we are set at liberty.

Negatively, all who reject Jesus are judged guilty and condemned because of their sins. With no one to bear the punishment of their sins, they must bear the penalty of their own sins. Thus all sinners

are justly condemned for their sins. That will happen, as Jesus described it, in the place of “outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt 8:12).

Every human being must make a judgment about Jesus. Either he is worthy of worship, or he is not. Either he is Savior and Messiah, or he is not. This is the most significant judgment of character anyone will ever make.

2) God Glorified in the Casting Out of Satan

The second way God is glorified is through the casting out of the ruler of the world. **“Now is the ruler of this world cast out.”** Who is the ruler of this world? He is Satan.⁹ Jesus says,

John 14:30-31 (ESV)

30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, 31 but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

In other words, Jesus is saying, “Satan is coming to take me even though he has no right or authority over me, yet I will allow him to take me because my Father has commanded me to let him have me. I will obey so that the world will know that I love my Father.”

The question is cast out from where? From where is Satan cast out? He is certainly not cast out of this world. He runs rampant around this broken world. So if he is not cast out of this world, then from where was he cast out? I believe it is from the courtroom of heaven.

You know that for a time Satan’s presence was required in heaven. In the book of Job we find Satan being called before God in His throne-room to give an account of what he was doing, so we know that Satan has access to God (but he does not speak unless he is first invited to speak). And we find a similar scene with similar language in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 12:10-11 (ESV)

10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. 11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

Satan is the accuser of the brethren (i.e. brothers and sisters, cf. Zech 3:1). Accuser is what his name means. And he stands before God accusing God’s people ‘day and night.’ His accusations have teeth because how is that a just God can allow sinners to go free? How can a just God allow the guilty not to be condemned?

Satan stands before God saying things like, “How can you say you are a just God when you allow murderers like king David to live? Even your own law demands his death, so how is it that you let him live?” The justice of God would demand that all sinners receive a condemnation in proportion to their wickedness of their sins. Since we have all sinned against an infinitely holy God we have all committed infinitely blameworthy sins. And Satan’s accusation have teeth, but only until the perfect

⁹ See also 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 6:12; cf. Lk 4:6; 1 Jn 4:4; 5:19.

sacrifice is offered. When Jesus, the substitutionary sacrifice, dies, bearing the sins of many, then all the sins of God's people have their debts paid for and His justice is satisfied. Therefore, Satan has no more grounds to accuse God's people. The Great and Holy Judge then kicks the accuser out of the courtroom!

3) The Drawing of All 'Kinds' of People

The third effect of Jesus' death which brings glory to God's name is that **he will draw all people to himself**. Jesus says in verse 32,

John 12:32-33 (ESV)

32 *"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."* **33** He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

Being lifted up from the earth refers to death by crucifixion. John explains for us in verse 33 exactly what Jesus meant. Jesus knew he was to be crucified on a cross. He knew that his death would be tortuous, not quick and painless, but prolonged and painful.

Drawing all people to himself does not mean that all people without exception will be saved for certainly many people reject Jesus and do not believe in him. Jesus speaks often of the place of "outer darkness, where the flame and worm does not die."¹⁰ Jesus is not quiet about the reality of hell. The teaching of Universalism is a happy thought that turns out to be a deadly lie.

What Jesus means is that he will draw all *kinds* of people, not just the Jews. One example, is the Gentiles who had just come to Jesus (12:20-12) and whose appearance sparked this entire section of dialogue. One of the effects of the death of Jesus is that people from "every tribe and language and people and nation"¹¹ will be draw to put their faith in Jesus and trust him for salvation.

Confusion of the Crowd (v.34)

The crowds are confused by Jesus' talk of death.

John 12:34 (ESV)

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?"

They have just welcomed him into Jerusalem as messiah and king and suddenly he's talking about dying? This does not make sense. The law indicates that messiah will remain forever so if Jesus is messiah, then how can he be talking about himself? He can't be. They always assumed Jesus was talking about himself when he used the term 'son of man,' but if Jesus is messiah and messiah remains forever, then perhaps Jesus has someone else in mind when he is talking about 'son of man.'

A Parting Invitation (vs. 35-36)

So Jesus now does what Jesus does so often, he answers their question without answering their question.

¹⁰ See Mt 8:12; Mk 9:48.

¹¹ Rev 5:9.

John 12:35-36 (ESV)

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. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”*

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

Jesus was speaking to a people draped in spiritual darkness. He himself was the spiritual light of the world. Even as they refuse to trust him he extends an invitation to believe in him so that they would become sons of light. They were not by nature sons of God, but as John writes,

John 1:11-12 (ESV)

11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. **12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

I invite you to completely put your trust in Jesus today. Hold nothing back from him. Open up all your heart and invite him to shine his light into every corner of your heart. Ask him so fill your soul with light and overcome any darkness that remains. While you have the opportunity, walk in his light.

Conclusion

In closing,

- 1) When your soul is troubled, pray! Go quickly to your heavenly Father in prayer when you encounter the turbulence of daily living. Tell Him everything. It's OK to be troubled. There is plenty in this world to be troubled about.
- 2) Pray for God to glorify His name through your trouble. When you are standing in an hour that troubles you deeply and has you all agitated and stirred up, then ask Him to glorify His name. He will answer. Seek His glory in and through your painful trouble. Ask Him to reveal His glory through such troubling hours.
- 3) Pray to Jesus to help you understand when God speaks. God speaks not for the benefit of Jesus, but for the benefit of helpless man. Jesus is the one who helps us understand the voice of God.
- 4) His death on the cross brought you life. He was judged so that you would not have to be. He was condemned so that you could go free.
- 5) Satan, the accuser, has been cast out. He no longer has any ground to condemn you before God. If you are in Jesus, then you are no longer condemned. If you are not in Jesus, then your condemnation remains.
- 6) If Christ is in you, then you are the light of this world. This week let the light of knowing you are loved by God shine through you in such a way that people will look at your life and give glory to your Father in heaven.

For these purposes, Jesus came to his hour!