

Main Idea: In John 12:27-33, Jesus reveals two more things that so many people don't know about Him.

Review: From last week...

1. Jesus is a different kind of king (20-23).
2. Jesus established a different kind of kingdom (24-26).
 - a. His kingdom involves dying (24).
 - b. His kingdom involves hating (25).
 - c. His kingdom involves serving (26a).
 - d. His kingdom involves following (26b).
 - e. His kingdom involves waiting for future honor (26c).

New ground: Two more things many people don't know about Jesus...

- III. Jesus offers a different view of suffering (27-29).
 - A. He experienced suffering (27a).
 - B. He embraced suffering (27b).
 - C. He anticipated glory through suffering (28-29).
 1. His Father confirmed it.
 2. The crowd didn't understand it, and still doesn't.
- IV. Jesus offers a different view of death (30-33).
 - A. Through His crucifixion, the world is judged.
 - B. Through His crucifixion, the world's prince is expelled.
 - C. Through His crucifixion, He draws all men to Himself.

Make It Personal: Two questions to ponder...

1. Has the real Jesus drawn you to Himself?
2. Are you living with His view of suffering and death?

Glory through Suffering. That's the title of this morning's sermon. Those two words don't seem to go together, do they? *Glory.* And *suffering?* And especially with the preposition *through.* *Glory through suffering?*

That doesn't make sense. There is no glory in suffering, nor *through* it, is there?

According to Jesus, there is. The two go together. They *must* go together, for Him, and for His followers too.

We see the suffering/glory connection at His birth, don't we? He was born into a context of suffering. The Jews were suffering at the hands of the Romans, and the Christ was born a Jew. Mary and Joseph were suffering, for there was no room in the inn, and so His first bed was a cattle trough. The mothers in Bethlehem suffered when their babies were slaughtered by a paranoid King Herod, all because of His birth.

Suffering. Lots of suffering. And there was much more to come, and it wouldn't climax until He was nailed to a Roman cross and on that cross endured the wrath of God in the place of sinners.

Where's the glory? Oh, it's coming, but not yet, at least not yet to this point in the story as we walk through John's gospel together. And when it comes, it will be through suffering. *Glory through suffering.*

We'll never appreciate Christmas as we ought until we grasp this simple reality. The glory of God comes through suffering. If you, a sinner who has fallen short of the glory of God, want to be restored to Your Maker and someday enjoy His glorious presence forever, then you must come to know the One who has suffered, and then follow Him on that path of suffering.

Jesus made this reality very clear throughout His earthly ministry, but nowhere any clearer than in John 12. Let me say something very plainly. Many people do not know the Jesus of John 12, and if you don't know the Jesus of John 12, you don't know the real Jesus. So many settle for an imitation Jesus, a domesticated, made in our image Jesus. It's the Jesus who exists for us, who makes us feel good about ourselves, but it's a false

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Jesus, and therefore, a Jesus that robs God of the glory He deserves, which He says comes through suffering.

In John 12 Jesus entered Jerusalem riding a young donkey. A lot of people know that part of the story. They know about the shouting crowd with the palm branches (13), and about the muttering Pharisees who want to get rid of Him (19).

But there's something that happened on that road that many don't know, and more importantly, Jesus' response to what happened, and what it says to us about Jesus. So many don't know. And the implications are eternally significant.

To set the stage for what we're going to see in John 12 this morning, I need to take you back to what we saw in our last time together.

Review: From last week...

According to verse 20, there were some Greeks worshipping at the Feast. That's odd. What would Greeks be doing at a Jewish festival? Apparently, they were sympathetic to Judaism, perhaps proselytes. But they were Greeks nonetheless, non-Jews.

And what did these Greeks do? The other gospel writers don't even mention them. Only John does, and in verse 21 he says these Greeks approached Philip with a request, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus."

That's an intriguing request, and for several reasons. One, why's it made in the first place? Why are some Greek men interested in having some time with a Jewish Messiah? Two, why does John even record their request? What does he see that's so significant about it that he recorded it when Matthew, Mark, and Luke didn't? And three, why does John record the request but *not* tell us whether it was granted?

Look ahead in the text and you'll notice not one mention of these Greeks. They simply made their request, and then dropped out of the story. Did they ever meet Jesus? How'd they respond to Him? We're not told. That doesn't seem to be important to John.

What's important to John is Jesus' response, and it too is intriguing.

Verses 20-23 "Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. 'Sir,' they said, 'we would like to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. Jesus replied, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.'"

Why did Jesus say *that* in this situation? Two of His disciples tell Him some Greeks want to see Him, and He says, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." What's the connection? What is John wanting us to learn from this account? Two things about Jesus.

1. *Jesus is a different kind of king (20-23).* He is not merely a Jewish king, but indeed is for all people, Jew and Gentile alike. And so when He hears of this request from the Greeks, He says, for the benefit of His disciples, *the hour has come*. Not *is going to come*, as has been the case until this point in John's gospel. For the first time it's not future, but present.

And what hour has come? *For the Son of Man to be glorified*. He's alluding to a messianic prophecy in Daniel 7:13-14, that says that "all peoples, nations, and men of every language" will worship the Son of Man, referring to the Messiah.

So here these Greeks come, and Jesus says, "Now it's time. Now is the hour for the Son of Man to be glorified."

But how will He receive glory? Here's what reveals that He's a king like no other. He's going to receive His glory...*through suffering and dying*.

That's what He says in the next verse, "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds (24)."

What kind intentionally dies for His subjects, particularly His rebel subjects? This king does. He dies and then conquers death in order to rescue unworthy rebels and turn them into grateful and loyal subjects.

And that's the second thing we learn about Jesus, this time in verses 24-26.

2. *Jesus established a different kind of kingdom (24-26).* It's a kingdom where the values of the King are embraced by the subjects of the King, five values which show up in five activities.

a. His kingdom involves dying (24). "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." Anyone can enter His kingdom through simple faith in Him, that includes Jews and Greeks and any other kind of Gentile alike, but to enter it, a person must die, just like the King did.

b. His kingdom involves hating (25). That's verse 25, "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." Hate? Did he say *hate*? Yes. Anyone can enter His kingdom, but the choice to enter it involves the ongoing choice to *hate* that which does not promote His kingdom. He calls it *life in this world*. That's what His people are called to hate. We don't live for this world, just like He didn't.

c. His kingdom involves serving (26a). "Whoever serves me," He says. That's what we are. It's what He was. Servants. Our calling is to serve Him.

d. His kingdom involves following (26b). "Must follow me," He says. We don't do our own thing. We do *His* thing. "Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you," He said. We're called to walk in His steps, to follow Him.

e. His kingdom involves waiting for future honor (26c). "And where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me." That's what we're waiting for, being with Jesus and receiving honor from His Father (and ours). For now, we die, and hate this world, and serve, and follow, and wait for future honor. But one day, we'll stop dying, and hating this world, and serving, and following, and waiting, when faith becomes sight, and the reward of the King becomes our experience.

Friends, Jesus is a very different kind of King, and He established a different from anything you've ever seen in this world kind of kingdom. To show the contrast, listen to this poem written by Charles Ross Weed. It's called "Christ and Alexander."

*Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three,
One died in Babylon and one on Calvary.
One gained all for self, and one himself he gave.
One conquered every throne, the other every grave.
When died the Greek, forever fell his throne of swords,
But Jesus died to live forever Lord of lords.
Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three.
The Greek made all men slaves, the Jew made all men free.
One built a throne on blood, the other built on love.
The One was born of earth, the other from above.
One won all this earth to lose all earth and Heaven.
The other gave up all that all to him be given.
The Greek forever died, the Jew forever lives.
He loses all who gets, and wins all things who gives.¹*

Now let's break some new ground by turning our focus to the next passage. In John 12:27-33, Jesus reveals two more things that so many people don't know about Him.

¹ Taken from Kent Hughes, p. 303.

III. Jesus offers a different view of suffering (27-29).

One of the things missing from the typical American church is a theology of suffering. As sinners, we don't think rightly about suffering. We want to get rid of it, get out of it, get around it, get over it.

Last week the world's attention focused on South Africa for the memorial service for Nelson Mandela. Mandela, of course, knew about suffering. He once said, "In my country we go to prison first and then become President." He served 27 years in prison before being released in 1990 and later becoming South Africa's first black president. Mandela also said, "Our human compassion binds us the one to the other - not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future."²

In God's common grace, Mandela was used to inspire and help millions who suffer unjustly. But Jesus didn't just inspire. Jesus actually presented a view of suffering that is out of this world. It's not just that we must go through it. It's that He, our King, purposes to use it for His kingdom purposes.

How so? We learn three things about suffering from verses 27-29. Let me read the text, then we'll back up and look at the points on at a time.

"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.' The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him."

A. He experienced suffering (27a). Notice Jesus said, "Now is my heart troubled." Jesus was no stranger to suffering. The Greek word for "troubled" (*tarasso*) literally means "to shake" or "to stir up." In John 5:7 it refers to the stirring of the pool of Bethesda. MacArthur comments, "It is a strong word, used figuratively to speak of severe mental or spiritual agitation; of being disturbed, upset, unsettled, or horrified."³

Christ was not unaffected by suffering. He felt it, and in this case, He felt deeply the anticipation of the cross. He was a real human being, yes, God, but the perfect God-man. "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted (Heb 2:18)."

But there's more. Jesus didn't just experience suffering. Secondly...

B. He embraced suffering (27b). Notice His next words in verse 27. First He says, "Now is my heart troubled." Then He asks the question, "And what shall I say?"

It's interesting that Jesus uses the word "say" rather than "choose." What do you say when your heart is troubled? I know what I say, to the Lord and to anyone else who will listen. "How do I get out of this situation? How do I fix this problem so my heart isn't troubled any longer?"

But that's not what Jesus said. Look again. "And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour."

Jesus didn't look for a way out of His suffering. Rather, He embraced it. Why? Because He enjoyed it? No. He's no masochist. He embraced it because He saw His Father's purposes in and for it.

For this very reason I came to this hour, He said. What hour is He talking about? The hour He talked about back in verse 23. *The hour to be glorified*. And by that He's referring to His coming crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension back to His Father's throne in heaven.

² <http://www.ibtimes.com/words-madiba-14-nelson-mandelas-best-quotes-1497954>

³ MacArthur, p. 38.

That's why He came to this hour, why He came into the world in the first place. His Father gave Him a mission, a people to rescue, a payment to make, and He won't let anything stand in the way.

Indeed, suffering *is* the way. It's through His suffering, His incomparable suffering on the cross, that He will fulfill His Father's plan and provide a saving sacrifice for helpless sinners.

That's why He experienced suffering, and why He now embraces it. *Save Me from it? No! It was for this reason that I came.* Which, in essence, is the same prayer He brought to His Father just a few days later in the garden of Gethsemane, "Not my will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

And here's where our Lord's view of suffering transcends this world. He didn't just embrace suffering in some stoic fashion. He embraced it because He saw it as the path to the greatest joy. To borrow from Hebrews 12:2, "Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame."

So now our two words come together. *Glory*, and *suffering*.

C. He anticipated glory through suffering (28-29). Notice verse 28, "Father, glorify your name." He doesn't say, "Father, I will glorify Your name," though He certainly will, but rather, "Father, glorify Your name."

This reveals the fullness of the Son's submission to His Father. It also reveals the greatest longing of His perfect heart, to see His Father receive glory. That's what He wants, what He lives for, not to see His troubles disappear, but to see His Father glorified in them.

So how does God receive glory? MacArthur offers this helpful explanation, "God receives glory when His attributes are manifested (cf. Ex. 33:18-19; 34:5-8), and nowhere was His magnanimous love for helpless sinners (Rom 5:8), His holy wrath against sin (Rom 5:9), His perfect justice (Rom 3:26), His redeeming grace (Heb 2:9), His forgiving mercy (Col 2:13-14), or His infinite wisdom (1 Cor 1:22-24) more clearly seen than in the substitutionary, propitiatory death of His Son."⁴

Brothers and sisters, I know we benefit from our Savior's suffering, and we'll praise Him eternally for it. But we aren't the primary reason He experienced and even embraced the suffering of the cross. Here's the reason. It was His Father's glory.

Glorify Your name! God gets glory when He puts His attributes on display, and nowhere do we see the fullness of His attributes portrayed more vividly than on a hillside outside of Jerusalem on a Friday around AD 30. Look, my friend! See God's love. See His justice. See His wisdom, mercy, and grace. But don't just see it. Glorify Him for all you're seeing.

You say, "How do I glorify God for what I'm seeing?" Here's how. By agreeing with His assessment of that day, and by receiving the benefit He intends to come your way because of it. You cannot save yourself, and if you try, you're making a mockery of that day. But when you acknowledge you are a helpless sinner and put your faith in His Son and in His work in your behalf, you're giving Him what He deserves, what His Son longs for Him to receive, *glory!*

What was the effect of Jesus' request? Two things happened. First...

1. His Father confirmed it. Verse 28, "Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.'" Whose voice is that? It's the Father's.

This is actually the third time in Jesus' earthly ministry that the voice of the Father is heard audibly on earth. It happened first at Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:17), and then at Jesus' transfiguration (Matt 17:5). In these first two occasions, the Father's voice affirmed His

⁴ MacArthur, p. 39.

pleasure in His Son (“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased”). And now He affirms His pleasure again as His Son approaches the cross.

He tells His Son two things. One, “I have glorified it.” And two, “I will glorify it again.” That is, I have put my attributes on display, and I will again, through You, my beloved Son.

But Jesus’ request produced another effect.

2. *The crowd didn’t understand it, and still doesn’t.* Verse 29 says, “The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.” Neither was right, of course. Yes, those present heard Jesus’ request, for His Father to glorify His name. And they heard the sound that resulted, but it made no sense to them.

Unless the Lord opens the ears of the dead, we hear but we don’t hear.

In verse 30 Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine.” I take that to mean, not mine *exclusively*, for His Father’s words no doubt did encourage Him. But that does raise a question.

How could this audible response from heaven be for the crowd’s benefit if they didn’t understand it? It’s because even though they didn’t grasp specifically *what* was said, they did hear the sound, and that sound let them know that Christ’s cry did not fall on deaf ears, that His cry and request for the Father to glorify Himself did produce a response in heaven. And, a few weeks later this sound would make sense, to the disciples at least, when their Risen Savior explained it to them.

Friends, you need to know this about Jesus. First, He’s a different kind of king. Second, He established a different kind of kingdom. Third, He offers a different view of suffering, one He modeled and calls on His followers to adopt. But there’s something else, the climax of it all.

IV. Jesus offers a different view of death (30-33).

Verses 31-33, “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.”

Notice that final comment inserted by John. Why did Jesus say this? *To show the kind of death He was going to die.* These words present Jesus’ view of death, specifically, *His* death. For the natural, death is an enemy to be feared. For the God-man, however, death is an assignment to be fulfilled. And it’s time for the assignment to be turned in.

What kind of death will He die? He says He will *be lifted up*. What’s He mean by that? He means He will be *crucified*.

No one took Jesus’ life from Him, not in the ultimate sense. He gave it. He lay it down of His own accord. He purposed to die, and He died. Through His death He had a mission to accomplish, and He accomplished it. Here He speaks of three results that He will accomplish through His death by crucifixion.

A. Through His crucifixion, the world is judged. “Now is the time for judgment on this world.” For centuries, God Almighty had been overlooking sin in a world that committed mutiny against Him. If you didn’t know better, you’d conclude that He didn’t care about the mutiny, as much He tolerated it.

But He didn’t tolerate it. He just postponed the just treatment of it. Until the cross.

Jesus says, now, at the cross, it’s judgment time. This is what sin deserves. The wages of sin is *death*. And I’m about to take that judgment and death in the place of every person who will repent and believe in Me.

You say, “What happens if you don’t repent and believe in Him?” Then you experience the judgment and death that your sins deserve.

Friends, this is why we who know Christ boast only in one thing, which the apostle Paul identifies for us in Galatians 6:14. “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” What do we boast in? The cross? Whose cross? The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And why? Because our Savior’s cross-work produced a double result. Paul says, one, the world has died to me (it’s been crucified), and two, I have died to it.

B. Through His crucifixion, the world’s prince is expelled. That’s also in verse 31, “Now the prince of this world will be driven out.” Who’s the prince of this world? It’s that rebel creature that tempted Adam and Eve in the beginning, the devil, Satan. On that day in the garden the Lord put Satan on a short leash, and the deceiver became the prince of this world. For century after century, this egomaniac and his hosts persuaded the sons and daughters of Adam to defy the God of glory.

But at the cross, papers were served and the guilty received his just penalty. At the time, it looked like a triumph for Satan, like he won. In reality, however, it was his ultimate defeat.

We should note that the Bible refers to several occasions, not just one, in which Satan is cast out. MacArthur explains, “Here [at the cross] he is cast out in the sense that he loses his authority and influence. If his domain (the world) is judged and destroyed, he will have nothing left to rule. During the tribulation [which is yet future] Satan will be permanently cast out of heaven, to which he has had access to accuse believers (Rev 12:10). At the end of the tribulation, Satan will be cast into the bottomless pit for the duration of the millennial kingdom (Rev 20:1-3). Finally, at the end of the millennium, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, where he will be punished for eternity (Rev 20:10).”⁵

Hebrews 2:14 says, “Since the children have flesh and blood, he [referring to Christ] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil.”

Brothers and sisters, Satan is a defeated, cast out foe. Like a wounded lion, he’s now thrashing about, but his days are numbered, and he knows it, and his destruction certain. All because of what happened on the cross.

Through our Savior’s crucifixion, the world is judged (so let’s live in light of that judgment and not become entangled with the things of this world). And through our Savior’s crucifixion, the world’s prince is expelled (so let’s not fear him but invade his former territory and rescue the perishing). Which brings us to the third result...

C. Through His crucifixion, He draws all men to Himself. Verse 32 again, “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”

Notice the verbal phrases. First, *am lifted up*. That’s passive. That’s what was done to Jesus. Wicked hands, doing the bidding of the prince of this world, *lifted Him up*. That’s what they did to Him.

But as the result, what did He do? Here He announces what He’s going to do, and in fact, has now done. *Will draw all men to Myself*. That’s what He did on the cross. He drew all men to Himself, and then brought them into His Father’s family.

Friends, this makes it clear that it’s the cross that saves people. There is no access to God apart from the cross. That’s why we must spread the message of the cross to our lost neighbors and to the lost world. If a person doesn’t hear about the cross, he or she can’t be saved. The remedy for sin is administered through, and only through, the *cross*.

Jesus uses a vivid term here. *Draw*. The natural man doesn’t come to Christ. Jesus says that *He* does the drawing. He’s not alone in this work either, for back in John 6:44

⁵ MacArthur, p. 42.

He said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

You say, “I’m not right with God, and I know it. What can I do? I’ve tried to clean up my life a thousand times, but I keep going back to my old ways. Is there any hope?” My friend, there is hope, but it’s not in you. It’s in Him alone. He not only provided the well of salvation, but He draws you to the well and enables you to drink from it. Just confess to Him your *inability* and His complete *ability*.

Now, in what sense did Jesus draw “all men” to Himself at the cross? We know that all men are *not* drawn to Jesus, as other texts in this gospel account make clear. Such as, “He came to His own and His own did *not* receive Him (1:11).” “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever *rejects* the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him (3:36).” So what did Jesus mean when He said that when lifted up He drew all men to Himself?

First of all, Jesus is not saying that the whole world will be saved. He’s not teaching universalism, that everybody’s going to reach heaven in the end. Rather, when He says He will draw *all men* to Himself, He means all kinds of men, as opposed to one or just a few. Though a Jew Himself, He didn’t provide salvation for just Jews, but for all types of people.

And so, these Greeks that want to see Me, they can, but not yet. I must be lifted up first. And when I am lifted up, when I provide an atoning sacrifice on that cross, they not only can come, but they *will* come, for I will draw them, and people from *every* tribe and language (as Rev 7:9 indicates) to Myself, no people group excluded.

A different kind of king. A different kind of kingdom. A different view of suffering. And a different view of death. Friends, that’s the real Jesus. That being the case, let’s make it personal with a couple of questions.

Make It Personal: Two questions to ponder...

1. *Has the real Jesus drawn you to Himself?* I hear people all the time say, “Oh, I believe in Jesus. I’m going to heaven.” Hold on. If you’ve truly believed in Jesus with saving faith, not just an intellectual sort of assent, it’s because, as we’ve learned today from John 12, He *drew you to Himself*, and particularly, to His cross. So I’m asking, has that happened? Has the real Jesus drawn you to Himself, with the result being that you now cherish Him as your Savior and eternal King, and value His crosswork as your only and all sufficient hope?

If so, a second question...

2. *Are you living with His view of suffering and death?* First, *His* suffering and death. Do you glory in it? Are you helping others glory in it?

But it goes further. Are you living with His view of *your own* suffering and death? He bids us follow in His steps. He purposes to use our suffering and perhaps our death to advance His kingdom and bring home those He’s drawing to Himself. Are you cooperating?

You say, “How should I respond when I’m suffering and facing death?” Jesus showed us, didn’t He? First you say, “My heart is troubled!” And then you say, “What shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this?’” And then you say, “No. Father, glorify Your name.”

It’s when we suffer like that that the world sees the One who made it possible and is drawn to Him. Oh, may the Lord be pleased to use me, to use us, to that end.