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“The Effects of the Cross;” John 12:27-30

Typically, when someone dies, there is not a whole lot of good that would come from that death in terms of its positive impact on others. In fact, most of the time, when someone dies, the impact of that person’s death is almost totally negative.

No wonder people’s deaths are not celebrated or remembered. Their births might be, their lives might be, but not their death. But this is certainly different with Christ. When we think of Christ, His death is front and center. It is not something we want to forget. It is something that we want to remember. Though the death of others might be anything but glorious, this is not the case with Christ. His death is totally glorious and for good reason. Hopefully we will see this truth reinforced in our present study of the Gospel of John.

We are presently looking at **John 12**. This chapter began with a meal at the house of Simon the leper in the city of Bethany where Mary the sister of Lazarus anointed the body of Jesus with a costly perfume. She did it as an expression of love to honor Him. But when she was rebuked by Judas, Jesus chose to use what she did as a teachable moment, explaining to His disciples that this anointing of His body with this perfume prefigured the preparation of His body for burial. We saw all this recorded for us in **John 12:1-11**.

The next incident that the Apostle John recorded for us in this chapter is what some people commonly refer to as the triumphal entry. This took place the day after the dinner in the house of Simon the leper.

Hopefully you remember that entrance. Hopefully you remember that there were tens of thousands of Jewish pilgrims waving palm branches and crying out, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel." The action of waving the palm branches and the specific words that they used to welcome Jesus were significant. These tens of thousands of Jewish pilgrims, in effect, were not only acknowledging that Jesus was their Messiah, they were also expressing their hope that He, as their Messiah, would claim the throne that was rightfully His and remove their Roman oppressors.

And how did this very public and enthusiastic entrance by Christ impact the Jewish leadership? They became desperate. Jesus, in effect, was forcing the religious leaders to seize Him during the feast, which was exactly what Jesus wanted them to do. We saw this in **John 12:12-19**.

From there we went on to consider a group of Greeks who had asked Phillip, one of Christ’s disciples, if they could meet with Jesus. This request that was eventually relayed to Jesus acted as a trigger for Jesus to speak to His disciples about His death in a way that He had never done before. We saw this in **John 12:20-26**.

So, what was so special about the death of Christ over that of worldly Kings? What made His death so special?

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A man named Charles Ross Weed captured this difference very well in his poem "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 the 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.**

When people die, even when great kings like Alexander die, their death is not something that is typically celebrated nor remembered such as was the case in this poem.

But it should be. Hopefully the reasons for this will continue to come alive for us as we now consider the effects of Christ's words about His cross on himself, on the world, and on those who first heard them. Lets begin with the effect of Christ's words about the cross upon Himself (John 12:27-30).

The effect of Christ's words about the cross upon Himself are recorded for us in **John 12:27-30**. Let us begin by looking at **verse 27**. How does this verse begin? "**Now my soul** [in light of what I have been saying about the cross] **has become troubled.**"

What did Jesus mean when He said, "**Now my soul has become troubled?**" The word "troubled" (TARASSO) is a strong verb signifying revulsion, horror, anxiety, agitation (John 12:27).

Why was His soul troubled? Jesus in a few hours would bear the world's sins and suffer separation from His Father. That is what caused Christ to be troubled. The soul of the very God who holds this universe together was in turmoil because He would bear our sin. Let me read for you **2 Corinthians 5:21**. What does it say? "**He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**"

His soul, which had never been tainted with sin, would very shortly have the sins of the universe poured out upon it. Jesus, in other words, was about to endure the wrath of God. **Galatians 3:13** puts it this way, "**Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.**" Literally He was the "cursed one." Jesus cursed because of our sin! Incredible!

His revulsion at facing the prospect of the cross was intensified by the thought of His separation

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from the Father. They created the universe together. They had enjoyed a perpetual intimacy. In the garden He would pray, "Abba, Father" (dearest Father) but on the cross He would cry, "My God, My God why hast Thou forsaken me? Did the words that Christ spoke about the cross have an impact on Him? Absolutely. His soul was troubled. But though Jesus was deeply troubled by the cross, He knew that He personally did not have any other option (John 12:27).

How do we know this? All we have to do is to continue to read **John 12:27**. "**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.**" Clearly Jesus, based on these words, did not consider any other option for Himself other than the cross.

Let us now look at these words more closely. The prayer that Jesus introduced in John 12:27, "Father, save Me from this hour" was hypothetical. It was not a real prayer. It was only a possible prayer that Jesus could have prayed, but certainly it was not a prayer that He would have prayed.

Why? This hypothetical prayer was not a prayer that He would have prayed because Jesus knew that this prayer would not have been consistent with His Father's purpose in sending Him in this world. Isn't this, in essence, what the verse is telling us? Let us once again read the verse. "**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.**"

Why was Jesus' hypothetical prayer not an option? Jesus could not pray this hypothetical prayer, "save me from this hour" because He knew that His Father had sent Him into this world to suffer "this hour."

So clearly in **John 12:27** we see a willingness on the part of Christ to submit Himself to the will of His Father by not praying the hypothetical prayer that He floated by us in that particular verse. But His willingness to submit Himself to the will of His Father was not simply rooted in dutiful obedience.

Jesus wanted His death on the cross not only to be an expression of obedience to His Father's will, but the very means by which His Father's name would be glorified (John 12:28).

This brings us to the next verse where we go from Christ's hypothetical prayer in **John 12:27** to Christ's real and heartfelt prayer in **John 12:28**. Let me read this prayer for you. "**Father, glorify Thy name.**" What did Christ mean by this?

When Christ asked His Father to glorify His name, He was asking His Father to put His own personal divine attributes on display. In other words, Jesus wanted the divine attributes of His Father to be seen in His suffering on the cross.

This prayer by Christ is nothing other than an articulation of the principle that had fully controlled Christ's life and ministry from the very beginning (John 7:18; 8:29, 50).

Hopefully this same principle is also controlling our own lives. This, I suspect, is not always the case. I know this because this is not always the case in my own life. So often times the circumstances of my life gives me the opportunity to put the attributes of God on display as a disciple of Christ and I fail to do so.

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There are times I fail to do this as a husband, as a father, as a grandfather, as a neighbor, as a pastor, as a disciple of Christ.

But hopefully for every failure there will be countless more victories. But this will not happen if we are not purposed to seize the opportunities that God has given to do this very thing (simply preparing this message gives me that opportunity).

So let us get back to our text. How will God respond to Christ's request that He put His divine attributes on display at the cross? In other words, that He, during Christ's hour of suffering, glorify His name? Let us continue to read **John 12:28**. "**There came therefore a voice out of heaven: 'I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.'**" What an amazing thing! Christ's Father responds to His Son's prayer by assuring Him that just as His life had displayed His divine attributes, so would His death.

Would this assurance have been a surprise to Jesus? Of course not! Jesus already knew that what the Father had assured Him of in **John 12:28** was true. How do we know this? We know this based on the words of Jesus earlier in the Gospel of John.

Hopefully you remember **John 5:19**. "**Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.'**"

God's divine attributes are put on display through His Son because there is nothing in Christ's life or death that did not directly flow from His Father (John 5:19).

So did anyone else hear this voice from heaven? And of course the answer would have to be yes. In fact, a multitude of people heard it. The only problem was that those who heard it did not hear any distinct words, very much like those who accompanied Paul on the Road to Damascus in **Acts 9:7**. Though the multitude heard the response of the Father to His Son's prayer in John 12:28, the response was totally unintelligible to them (John 12:29).

Let us read **John 12:29**. "**The multitude therefore, who stood by and heard it, were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, 'An angel has spoken to Him.'**" These various explanations as to the source of the sound that they heard were divided between the naturalists (those who said it was thunder) and the supernaturalists (those who thought it was an angel). Unfortunately, neither explanation truly captured what had just transpired.

But even though the multitude was totally clueless about the significance of what just happened, this would not in time be the same for Christ's disciples. In fact, what had just happened and what was recorded for us by the Apostle John would prove to be extremely helpful to every disciple of Christ.

Let me read for you **John 10:30**. "**Jesus answered and said, 'This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.'**" This verse says that, "**Jesus answered.**" What does this mean? Did He answer the multitude? No, He did not answer the multitude. He had not been talking to the multitude rather He had been talking to His disciples. The multitude had reacted to the sound. This is true, but that was it.

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Therefore, when it says that ‘Jesus answered,’ the verse is telling us what Jesus said to His disciples in light of everything that had just transpired.

And what did He tell them? He told them that the sound they heard was a voice. And I have no doubt that having identified it as a voice that He was very willing to reveal to them exactly who had spoken and exactly what He had said. How do I know this?

I know this because if this was not true, than the Apostle John would not have been able to record for us what He recorded for us in **John 12:28**.

The audible response of the Father to the prayer of His Son benefits the Disciples of Christ because it helps them to view the cross properly, or in other words as glorious (John 10:30). Doesn't this make sense? How could we as the disciples of Christ not view the cross as glorious in light of the fact that Christ's Father viewed it that way Himself?

Let me ask you a question. What do you meditate on when you wake up at night? Is your mind filled with how you are going to pay your orthodontic bill? Or is your mind filled with how you are going to get a particular job done at work? Or perhaps your mind is filled with the thought of how badly you need to go back to sleep.

I don't know what you might be thinking about but let me suggest that you meditate on the Lord and more specifically the cross of Christ. I have recently memorized **Psalms 63:6** which says, **"When I remember Thee on my bed, I will meditate on Thee in the night watches."**

And of all the things that I certainly could meditate on in the night watches, in respect to the Lord, there is nothing, I believe, that would be more beneficial then meditating on the cross of Christ.

Why? Because it is glorious and can have an incredible impact upon our lives. Certainly Isaac Watts, I believe, would agree with me. Isaac Watts wrote the song "When I Survey the wondrous cross." Let me read the words of this song.

"When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died, My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride."

"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the death of Christ my God; All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood."

"See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down: Died e'er such love and sorrow meet, Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

"Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far to small; Love so amazing so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Is the cross of Christ glorious? Absolutely! May God give us the grace to glory in the cross.

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Typically, people's deaths are not celebrated nor remembered. But this is not the case with Christ. Christ's death is not only celebrated, but it is remembered. Christ's death is something special and certainly we have seen that this weekend as we considered the impact of Christ's words about the cross upon Himself in **John 12:27-30**.

When Christ was looking to His cross, His soul was deeply troubled and for good reason. Christ knew that very shortly He would become the cursed one.

But this was all according to His Father's redemptive plan. Christ, who know no sin, in becoming sin for us was necessary in order for us to become the righteousness of God in Him.

So how should the cross of Christ be viewed? How did Christ's Father view His Son's cross? He viewed it as glorious. And how should we view the cross? The cross of Christ should be viewed by all Christians as glorious. If Christ's Father views the cross of His Son as glorious, then we, as the followers of Christ, need to view His cross in the very same way.