

WHAT JESUS SAID – THEN AND NOW

About the Cross

TEXT: John 12:23-33

INTRODUCTION: What wonderful worship we have experienced this morning with our souls being focused upon the cross. In just a few minutes we will be celebrating the Lord's Supper together in which we remember our Savior, and most specifically His body broken and His blood shed upon the cross.

Jesus did not speak all that often about the cross, but every step He took, every word He spoke, every deliberate action He made, moved Him closer to the cross. This morning as we contemplate what Jesus said, we are going to examine one passage in which Jesus said some things about the cross that believers ought to know and those who are not yet believers should very carefully consider. We find these words in John 12:23-33.

John 12:23–33 23 But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. 24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. 25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him *My Father* will honor.

27 “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, “I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.” 29 Therefore the people who stood by and heard *it* said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.”

30 Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.” 33 This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

I. THE CROSS WAS APPOINTED.

John 12:23, 27 23 But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. 27 “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.”

I was like many people. I thought that the cross and resurrection was plan B when God's plan A did not work. But the Bible says this common conception is not true.

Revelation 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

This has important implications:

A. Jesus' death on the cross was Plan A.

B. There was and is no Plan B.

1. If there were any other way for salvation to be offered to mankind than through the death of His Son,
2. what kind of Father would God be to allow Jesus to go to the cross?
3. The fact that God not only allowed it, but planned it, enabled it, directed it, tells us there was no other way.

Acts 4:12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

4. There are indeed many paths that lead up the mountain, but all are roads that lead over the cliff except for one, the path of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ Who shed His blood upon the cross.

C. Even knowing the price that had to be paid in order for men and women created in His image to be able to live with Him forever, God loved us enough to proceed with our creation.

II. THE CROSS WAS NECESSARY THAT WE MIGHT LIVE.

John 12:24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

Headcounters (not head hunters), headcounters tell us that over the history of the world between 100 billion and 115 billion people have lived. I neither criticize nor affirm their calculations, but just offer this as a number to help us picture the marvelous accomplishment of Jesus upon the cross.

Assuming the most popular estimate of 107 billion to be correct, **Jesus, by His death upon the cross, provided a way to gain eternal life to all 107 billion people who ever lived.**

While we know that many, most even, did not receive His offer of grace, still we can see that the end result of His death will be tens of billions of people populating the earth under the reign of King Jesus.

III. THE CROSS SET A PATTERN FOR BELIEVERS.

John 12:25–26 25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

Jesus never sugar coated the gospel He proclaimed. While salvation could never be earned or deserved, but only received as a gift from God by faith, ...

**faith – trusting Jesus as Lord,
meant accepting a life of self-denial and service.**

IV. THE CROSS SEALED THE DEFEAT OF SATAN.

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

With the cross, Jesus fulfilled the first prophecy given concerning Him in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”

V. THE CROSS MADE THE GOSPEL POSSIBLE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD.

John 12:32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.”

If I am lifted up from the earth was a euphemism for being crucified.

Jesus was saying that His crucifixion to pay the price for sin and making salvation a gift to be received, was what would draw people from all over the earth to come to Him.

The cross would draw the poor, for no money was required to come to Jesus.

The cross would draw the common man and woman, for no fame or recognition was needed to come to Jesus.

The cross would draw the sick, the crippled, the handicapped, the hurting for no good thing is required in the life of the person who comes in faith to Christ.

The cross draws us all, for all of us are sinners, in need of forgiveness, in need of redemption, unable on our best days to deserve to dwell with Holy God.

Only Jesus on the cross offers us a way to receive eternal life, as the free gift of God.

CONCLUSION:

And that my dear friend is what we remember and what we celebrate when we take the Supper of our Lord.

**Oh, to see the pain
Written on Your face
Bearing the awesome weight of sin
Every bitter thought
Every evil deed
Crowning Your bloodstained brow**

**This, the power of the cross
Christ became sin for us
Took the blame, bore the wrath
We stand forgiven at the cross**

**This, the power of the cross
Son of God, slain for us
What a love! What a cost!
We stand forgiven at the cross.**

The body of Christ broken for me
The blood of Jesus shed for me

**This, the power of the cross
Christ became sin for us
Took the blame, bore the wrath
We stand forgiven at the cross**

We who have trusted in Jesus stand forgiven at the cross!

Do you? You can – today!