

The Hour of Glory, Victory, and Faith

John 12:27-36 | March 23, 2024 | Redeemer Al Ain

Life is made up of a series of moments. As each moment passes it brings with it new realities and new challenges. Nothing about time ever changes—the clock continues to tick, the sun rises and sets—but what happens *during that time* can be more or less significant. The hour of your child's birth was in one sense just another hour: 9:00am. But because of what took place in that hour your life changed. Previously things were only “not yet” but now the child is already here and it affects everything.

Up until this point of Jesus' life the hour of his death had been a “not yet.” But in John 12 the hour of his death becomes “now.” And just like the hour of a child’s birth changes everything for the parents, the hour of Jesus’ death changed everything for the history of the world. In our passage, we see three implications of Jesus’ hour:

1. The Hour of Glory
2. The Hour of Victory
3. The Hour of Faith

Let's look at them one by one as we work our way through the passage.

The hour of glory.

The hour of Jesus' death is the hour of glory. Specifically, it is the hour of the Father's glory. Listen to verse 27:

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.

Jesus has just mentioned that he is going to die and that his death will bear much fruit. In a moment we'll look at the fruit that it bears. And as Jesus looks towards the cross and what will take place there—both the physical pain and the spiritual pain—he is troubled.

We know what this is like. You have a hard conversation that you have to have with someone and you are troubled before it. You have to have a medical procedure and you are troubled before it. You look to the difficult decision that needs to be made and you are troubled before it.

We tend to get troubled by the unknown. But that is the difference between us and Jesus: **Jesus knew exactly what awaited him.** He was not anxiously wondering what would be next: he knew the pain he would face. He knew that his skin would be flayed, his back would be ripped open, and his hands and feet and side would be pierced. He knew that his friends would forsake him and that he would be left alone. He knew that he would be mocked and despised and shamed. And he knew that he would bear the curse of sin. **Jesus alone knew the full wrath of the holy God** because Jesus had fellowship with the Father and shared in the divine nature from all eternity. And this wrath would be poured on him as payment for sin at the cross. This is a very good reason to be troubled.

This is one of the ways that Christianity is different from Eastern religions, like Hinduism or Buddhism. Eastern religions encourage detachment from the physical reality of pain and suffering. We don't let our suffering get to us and affect us—either in good ways or bad ways—because we are called to be detached from the physical and we're connected with the spiritual.

Christianity, though, acknowledges that you have a body and that your body will suffer pain. And it acknowledges that pain and suffering are not neutral realities: they *products of a fallen world*. They are not the way that it is supposed to be. Jesus is the perfect man—he never sinned—and he was not detached from his suffering. He was troubled by the anticipation of it.

Isn't it glorious that we have a God who can sympathize with us in our suffering? Isn't it amazing that God doesn't give us trite or cliché answers to our pain, but acknowledges the reality of it. We have a God who cares for us in our suffering.

Jesus is troubled by his suffering. But his anticipated suffering did not keep him from moving forward with his purpose for coming. He was perfectly obedient to his Father's will:

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."

This is the same resolve and desire that we see in the Garden before he was betrayed:

Mark 14:36 (ESV) – 36 And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

"I don't want to suffer the pain, but I want your will to be done. I don't want to die, but I want your will to be done." Jesus submits to the Father's will. He obeys the Father's purpose despite the fact that it would lead to his suffering and his death. How was he able to do that? How was he able to pursue a purpose that involved real, genuine, and deep suffering—the deepest suffering that any human had experienced?

We see it in his request. He does not ask to be saved from this suffering of death. He asks that the Father would glorify his name. The glory of God—and our joy in his being glorified—is the key for endurance in the Christian life in the face of pain and suffering and difficulty. Living for the glory of God orients us to stay on mission and purpose as we follow Jesus. The glory of God was the anchor of the life of Jesus so that he would not be blown off course.

Do you know what mission creep is? Mission creep is a term that's used to describe organizations that begin to do one thing but then get pulled off task by other good things so that they lose focus of their mission.

If you are a Christian, then your ultimate mission is to glorify God. That is why you are here. Caring for your family is not your primary goal. Providing excellent medical care is not your primary goal. Evangelism is not your primary goal. Church planting is not your primary goal. Your primary goal is to glorify God. You can glorify God through these things, but you can also do these things in a way that does not glorify God—doing so out fear, or pride, or control, or treating other people poorly, or deceit. But shaping our means as

well as our ends around the glory of God—the way we do things as well as the end goal we are seeking to accomplish—is what keeps us on mission. The anchor of Jesus' life—and of our lives—is the glory of God.

And Jesus was successful in his mission. After his request the Father affirms him and validates Jesus for the crowd to hear:

28...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."

Through Jesus' life, his death, and his resurrection, the Father is glorified. The hour of Jesus' death is the hour of the Father's glory.

The hour of victory.

How is the Father glorified in Jesus' death? Death is an enemy. We already saw that pain and suffering are not the way it is supposed to be. So, why would God be glorified in the death of his beloved Son? Because of what Jesus' death accomplished. This is the second point that we see: **the hour of victory.** Look at verse 31:

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.

At Jesus' death three things are going to happen: (1) the world will be judged; (2) the ruler of this world will be cast out; (3) he will draw all people to himself. All three of these go hand in hand.

The world in John's writings, stands as a system in opposition to God. The world does not mean "planet earth" but rather the fallen system that stands against God. Jesus' death shows that it is judged. It is condemned. Principalities and powers and kingdoms and systems that stand in opposition to Christ are already defeated. They are judged.

And the same is true for Satan. Satan is the ruler of this world. And he has already been cast out. The strong man—to go to another passage in the Gospels—has been bound so that his house can be plundered. Satan has no authority over God's people. This does not mean that he is not able to wreck havoc or cause pain. In a bit, Satan is going to enter Judas Iscariot, will seek to sift Peter like wheat, and will enable the death of the Son of God. That's real pain. That's real havoc. **But it is havoc and pain that serves the purposes of another authority—Jesus himself.** The King has come and in his death he dethrones the devil.

How is this connected with the third effect of Jesus' death: *drawing all people to himself*? We see this in Colossians 2. The Apostle Paul is writing and he says:

Colossians 2:13–15 (ESV) — **13** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him [that is Jesus], having forgiven us all our trespasses, **14** by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. **15** He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Satan and his demonic forces—rulers and authorities—come to the people of God with legal demands. We have broken the law and deserve the curse of death. The weapon that Satan wields against the people of God is the curse of sin. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Satan wields a powerful weapon against God's people. They justly stand condemned. But as Jesus goes to the cross bears the curse of the law upon his body our record of debt—our sins—are nailed to that cross with him. Satan stands with empty hands, powerless to condemn us. He is disarmed of his great weapon. And Christ is seen as victorious.

Genesis 3 promises that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. This happened at the cross of Christ. When Jesus was crucified, Satan's head was crushed. And this makes all the difference in the world for us today.

When I was kid—I think I was like seven years old—we had a dog that jumped into a creek that had a snake in it. In my mind, all snakes were poisonous snakes, so I ran and got my dad. And my dad came to the creek with a shovel and he fished out the snake, dropped it on the ground, lifted up shovel, and cut off its head. Kids, do you know what happens when a snake gets its head cut off? The body flails around and tosses and turns violently. But the snake is dead.

The works of Satan that we see in the world right now are the death-throes of a serpent with a crushed head. The flailing body can appear terrifying and can do damage, but the snake has no head.

There are a few implications for us here.

Some of us come from contexts where there is a fear of evil curses. Maybe we're afraid that someone is envious of our success or our travel plans and they want to put a curse on us. Maybe we're afraid that we've offended someone and they are putting the evil eye on us. If you are a Christian then you should not fear these curses. The victory of Jesus means that Satan's curses can only serve God's good purposes for you. We can even rejoice in our affliction because when we are weak in this world, we are strong through Christ.

Second, some of us look at the trajectory of the world or of the culture and we live in fear. When you think of the world, do you despair at Satan's strongholds or are you amazed at the spread of the gospel? Every generation since Christ has thought that the world was getting worse. And there is truth that evil is spreading. But so is the light of the gospel. So, **we rest in the victory of Jesus and need not fear.** Christ is building his church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. The hour of victory has already come. Redemption and forgiveness have already been accomplished. And God is glorified as his King—Jesus—stands in triumphed with bruised heel and Satan crushed beneath it.

The hour of faith.

Which leads to our third point: **the hour of faith.** Jesus says this to the crowd, but they are confused. The crowd doesn't recognize the voice of the Father in verse 29 and they don't recognize the Son of Man in verse 34. In their mind, Messiahs don't die. So, just as Jesus does over and over again, he addresses them and calls them to belief. Look at verse 34:

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.”

What is Jesus saying here? He is saying that they have the light right now right in front of them: *believe in the light*. There is coming a day when Jesus will not be physically here on earth—he will have died, resurrected, and ascended to heaven. And if you’re not willing to respond to him *now* then it will not be any easier to respond to him *then*. The crowd’s confusion flows from their questioning of Jesus rather than trusting in Jesus. They have a set idea of what a messiah is. They have a set framework for how the messiah would save his people. Messiahs don’t die, or so they think. They are trusting in what their blind eyes see rather than what Jesus is showing them. They need to see with eyes of faith rather than with the natural eyes in their head. They need to be born again and become sons of light. Jesus is pointing out that the hour of glory and the hour of victory is also the hour for faith. *Now is the hour of faith.* Now is the time to believe in Jesus.

If you are here and you do not believe in Jesus or you claim belief in Jesus and yet are not living in obedience to him, I urge you to turn and trust him *now*. Today is the day to believe in Jesus. The gospel promises that Jesus died to pay for the sins of all who trust in him. If you are not trusting in Jesus then you will pay for your sins for yourself in hell. It will take an eternity for you to pay the penalty that your sin deserves. And it will be a terrible place because you will know that you belong there. On the last day you will stand

before the judgment seat of God and you will have your life exposed to you and all the secrets that you've kept, all the evil thoughts that you've had, all the lies that you have told, all the selfishness that you have practiced, *all of it will be exposed* and you will be justly punished. And you will know it.

But today you are hearing the promise of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. He died in your place so that your guilt could be covered and Satan's weapon could be removed. And the way in which you receive that forgiveness is by faith in Jesus.

You might think that the costs of trusting in Jesus are too high—what will my family think? What about my job? What about my future hopes for my kids' education? And there is a cost. Everyone who follows Jesus must take up his cross. But the cost of following Jesus lasts for an earthly lifetime and the reward lasts for an eternity. The earthly rewards of *not following* Jesus may last for a moment, but the cost is for an eternity. Today as you hear the gospel, repent and believe.

And for those of you who are trusting in Jesus and have shared this good news over and over again with people—don't lose heart. Be persistent in your preaching. Jesus preached the gospel over and over and over again. We've seen this in the Gospel of John. As long as there is life there is hope for our friends and our family who don't believe in Jesus. So, keep praying and keep sharing.

The victory has been accomplished. The Father has been glorified in Jesus and continues to be glorified in the faith-filled obedience of

Jesus' people. The hour to trust God and find that all his promises are "yes" in Christ is here. We walk by faith with eyes towards the glory of God resting in the victory of King Jesus.