

The Coronation of the King
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John 12:9-19
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Turn with me if you will to the 12th chapter of John's Gospel, John 12. The text this morning is 9-19, so we move into a new story, new pericope here in John's Gospel. We spent three weeks looking at a portrait of worship that we saw in the pouring out of the perfume on Jesus by Mary. One of the things I mentioned last week in the sermon was that that was one moment. There were very few moments in Jesus' earthly life and ministry in which He was even close to being, or approximately honored as He should be, and that was one of those moments when she broke that precious vial of perfume, 12 ounces, valued at today's money \$20,000, and she spent it on Jesus because He is worthy. Just a few moments that are like that in His life. Most of His life He is being dishonored, disrespected, and even in the moments when we come close, we still miss it by a million miles.

But we come to a second passage, John puts two of these right beside each other because these two events happen in the last week of Jesus' earthly life. We come today to the triumphal entry, to Palm Sunday, the events of that Sunday before the crucifixion in which once again there is an approximation of the honor that is due the Son of God. This is what should have happened every day, every time He came into any town it should have been like this. So we come to this story.

One of the things that has struck me as I was pondering this, and studying the passage is it has always been a puzzle to me how on Sunday He could have been acclaimed by the multitudes. So much so that they are laying, as the other Gospels tell us, laying their coats on the road so that the donkey that He is riding can walk upon the coats. They are hailing Him as the King of the Jews, and yet five days later many of that same crowd are crying out, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" How can that be? How do you explain that? It is hard to understand how this could have developed the way it did, and yet it is something that the apostle John actually goes to lengths to explain something of that dynamic.

The other three Gospel-writers, all four Gospel-writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, record the events of Palm Sunday, they record the triumphal entry, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem amidst the praise of the multitude. All four of them do, but John alone really gives the impetus, the reason for what led to this sudden outburst, the sudden realization by the people for a moment. It was as if the veil

that had been over their eyes was lifted for a moment. They saw His glory, they worshiped Him, and then just as quickly the veil fell back on most of them.

John, in his account, gives us some very important facts, and essentially what we are going to see as we read the text is that John explains how a crowd could, as he's even described in his Gospel, you know over time as Jesus ministered, He was doing miraculous things all the time, and so crowds were coming. As things went, the last year of His ministry, the crowds have lessened. In John 6 we saw this. We read there, when we were in that passage, that many of His disciples no longer walked with Him, because remember, Jesus said the hard words. Remember the multitude was there when He fed the 5,000. They had come out the next day, they are all excited, "Give us more bread," basically. "Show us that You are the Son of God by doing us another miracle," and Jesus says, "You want bread? Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood you will not have any part in Me. That is the bread that I am offering is My flesh."

These were hard words and so many departed from them, even of among His own disciples. Not the 12, but among the larger group who call themselves followers of Jesus, many turned away so that Jesus is even left with the 12 says, "Will you also leave Me?" The discouragement of the diminishing numbers, that has been basically the trajectory of His ministry—early explosion and then decreasing numbers. And yet, right at the end there is the final, just you know if you were graphing it, His ministry would look something like this. He is unknown, Bethlehem, there are just some shepherds. Then later, after maybe He is a year or two old, the wise men get there. So very few people know who He is, and the rest of His first 29-30 years is anonymity. Nobody knows, nobody knows, nobody knows except just the few people around Him that are wondering about this wonder of this person.

And then His ministry begins at the wedding at Cana of Galilee, suddenly starts moving up. The interest is moving up, and you read in Matthew about early in His ministry in Galilee, the area in which He grew up, the area around Nazareth. As He goes about doing miracles, He is healing every kind of disease, He is delivering people from demons, He is doing all kinds of wonders, and the crowds are thronging after Him, so it is way up here. But then, as He starts revealing the nature of His Messiahship, what it really means to be a follower of Christ, He starts giving the bad news that, "Though I've come to deliver you, I've not come to deliver you the way you want to be delivered. I've come to deliver you the way you need to be delivered," and people didn't want to hear that. So the crowds began to lose interest, and there is this growing sense of opposition that John

records for us throughout his Gospel. People are beginning to want to put Jesus to death. The religious leaders are becoming more and more recalcitrant to His message, the people more and more hardened. And yet here at the end it says, "Today My Son will be praised," and we have the high point of all high points in His ministry, where the multitudes praise Him. Probably upwards of a million.

In fact, Josephus, the 1st Century, Jewish historian, in recording the numbers of people who came to a Passover in the 60's. Now he is writing later, in Jesus' earthly ministry, this is either 30 or 33 A.D., the best we can tell. One of those two dates, scholars debate which day it was. Was it 30? Was it 33? Calendars weren't synchronized back then, so we don't know exactly 30 or 33 A.D. Well some 30 years later, Josephus records that in Jerusalem, at Passover, there were 2.7 million people filling, thronging in Jerusalem for Passover. So it was something like that every year. Now maybe he was one of those guys who counted like some people count. It used to be a joke that Baptist pastors were the worst at counting. It's really not good, overestimate, you know? But I don't know how good Josephus was a crowd analysis, but if he said 2.7 million, certainly there must have been at least a million. The point is, there were hundreds of thousands of people thronging Jerusalem, and in this, what we're going to see described today, hundreds of thousands of people are praising the name of the Jewish Messiah. God has ordained this to happen. Five days later, many scores of thousands of those people are at least affirming His execution, by affirming it by their silence, and some of them even joining, those that had even said, "Hosanna to the son of David," now saying, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" and largely because he is not the kind of Messiah they wanted on Sunday. When they were calling for Him to save them on Sunday, they had an idea in mind of what they wanted. "We want a deliverer from Rome," and when they saw Him there, already having been beaten, led out by Pilate in weakness, "That is not the Messiah we want, crucify Him!"

John explains though, how even the fever pitch got there. How did it go from this downward trend to this zenith point? Basically what he tells us is, the impetus for Palm Sunday was the resurrection of Lazarus. That that was the event that stirred interest, that fanned the flames of genuine inquiry and excitement. It was the resurrection of Lazarus that ginned up all of this interest. Such a miracle as that could not be silenced. So the resurrection of Lazarus creates this outburst of enthusiasm, but it is like a flash in the pan. It doesn't last long, and yet it is still glorious to look at. So that is what we are going to look at today and then Lord-willing, also next week. The title of the message is 'The Coronation of the King'.

John 12:9-19 ~ The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; (Now He's in Bethany. He has just been, we know, in Simon's house. He's just been anointed by Mary. Lazarus is at the table.) and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. 10 But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; 11 because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.

12 On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel." 14 Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, 15 "FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SEATED ON A DONKEY'S COLT." 16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him. 17 So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him. 18 For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."

Let's pray together.

Father, we ask that You might grant us grace, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in understanding, and submitting our hearts and our lives to Your word. And we pray this for the glory of Your Son, Amen.

Such a sudden turnaround. Friday, November 22, marked the 50th anniversary of the death of John F. Kennedy. I'm sure that almost all of us are aware of that because if you turn on the TV, or you looked at a newspaper, or you've opened up an Internet webpage, probably there was something about that. Fifty years ago to the day that he was shot, while riding through the streets of Dallas, we saw some of the images on TV ourselves of that festal parade almost. The president is in town, he is riding through the streets of Dallas, and all the streets are lined with thronged crowds who want to get a glimpse of the man, the most powerful man on the earth. That joy that was filling I'm sure his heart, and the people's hearts, I mean people seeing the president. You know, what a neat opportunity to see him in person.

There were little children there, there were young people there thinking, “Today I’m seeing the president. This may never happen again in my life.” There were old people saying, “I’ve never seen the president before, and today I’m seeing him, and I know it won’t happen again in my life.” The crowd’s cheering quickly turns to unspeakable horror as the president was shot and killed. A moment of great joy and acclamation swallowed up in grief. People still don’t understand exactly what happened. The debate rages 50 years later. Was it simply one, lone madman, or was it the mafia, or was it the CIA, or was it Lyndon Johnson? All kinds of speculative theories.

But in the events that we’re talking about this morning, John 12, we have something that in some ways would approximate that in the sense that the great joy, and wonder of people being there, saying, “Today, we’re seeing the king, we’ve been longing for the king.” They never knew how much it was true, they were seeing the most powerful man in the world. And on that day, He was acclaimed the most powerful man in the world. They understood He was the one sent by God. At some level, sadly not savingly for the overwhelming majority, but the veil was open, and they saw it, and yet just days later tragedy would strike. Of course, we know it wasn’t really ultimately tragedy, it was victory. It was that most powerful man that has ever walked the face of the earth, defeating the strong man, and plundering His house, and making a public spectacle of Him as He hung on the cross. And yet the suddenness, and the transformation of the moment, it still as you look at it, it is hard to understand. How could it be? John is helping us to understand that.

I want us to begin looking at this. So the title of the message is ‘The Coronation of the King’, and I want us to look at the power. The power really seems to me to be something that is spotlighted in the passage. Though the word itself doesn’t occur, it is undergirding all the parts of it. I want us to look at the first two points this morning and we’ll consider the rest next time, but how is it that something so momentous, so exciting, can be changed so suddenly? That you could have such a high point of enthusiasm followed by such a low point of hatred and enmity. How can it go from that far to that far? I mean, that high to that low in five days?

1) The Power of the Conflict:

I think one of the things that we see, as we look at the passage the way John has unfolded it for us, I think we note first of all, the power of the conflict. That there is a conflict that is brewing under the surface that has evidenced itself at times, but not to full clarity. There is this powerful conflict going on. You know, for there to

be seismic changes, powerful forces have to come together. I mean, tectonic plates move over each other and you have an earthquake, and then you have a tsunami. And so there are tectonic type forces that are at work here in this situation, and what you have is, you have the power of Christ versus the power of evil. Both are really bracketing the passage in a very clear way.

Look with me at how, I mentioned before that the emphasis is on how the crowd got so large. It is really made clear that it was because of Lazarus, what Jesus did for Lazarus. It brackets the passage. Look with me at Verse 9.

John 12:9 ~ The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead.

Now remember that John knows he is writing John 12 just after he wrote John 11. When he wrote it, he didn't put chapter and verse divisions. He spent a lot of time talking about Lazarus being raised from the dead. I daresay that anybody reading this, having read John 11, having read that previous passage about Lazarus, would know who Lazarus was. But it is repeated here, ***...Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead...*** is repeated. Why? Because he wants us to keep that in mind. He wants us to see that, and to be reminded, he was raised from the dead.

Now look how he repeats it again. Look at Verse 17. After he goes through what happened on the road, the 'Hosannas', the donkey. Verse 17:

John 12:17 ~ So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him.

You see how he is emphasizing the resurrection of Lazarus? ***...raised from the dead...*** In fact, he said the same thing in John 12:1, our previous story. Look at John 12:1.

John 12:1 ~ Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

Verse 9:

John 12:9 ~ The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead.

Verse 17:

John 12:17 ~ So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him.

He could have said, but he said, ***...when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead...*** He doubles it at the end. Three times in the passage in Chapter 12, whom He raised from the dead, repeated, repeated, repeated again. Don't forget Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus Christ. So the power of Jesus is on display, and that is what brings together, that is the great power that is at work in bringing this crowd, and unveiling the glory of God.

But you also have the power of evil that also brackets the passage in Verse 10. After we're told that Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, look what it says in Verse 10.

John 12:10-11 ~ But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; 11 because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.

Many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus, so the chief priests decided they were going to put Him to death. They were going to cover up what Jesus had done. There was a conspiracy, there was a cover-up underway. They were planning to get Lazarus before Lazarus was going to be seen by everybody. Can you imagine that? What level of evil that is. This is the chief priests. These are the spiritual ones supposedly. They are not only wanting to kill Jesus, they want to kill Lazarus. They want to remove every remembrance of Jesus. They would like to wipe it clean, Israel clean of Jesus' influence. That is the power of Satan at work.

Satan hates to see the glory of God revealed, and he does everything he can to oppose it. So Satan himself is at work in this, clearly, trying to bring about a cover-up because Satan, as the god of this age, loves to blind the eyes of the unbelieving so that they will not see the light of the glory of God, and the face of Christ, 2 Corinthians 4:4-5. The hatred of Jesus is so great they want to even kill Lazarus.

That is in Verses 10-11, but look at Verse 19. John is careful to tell us at the end of this story, he didn't have to include this, but he wants us to see this bracket this passage. The focus of the passage is what happens as Jesus comes into Jerusalem. We're going to look at that in a spotlight way next time, but we need to see how the brackets really hold it together, and the reason I read Verses 9, 10, and 11, with Verses 12 and 19 is because I think they form a bracket.

You get this recounting of Lazarus whom He raised from the dead, Verses 9 and 17. Verse 18 even explains that is why they went out. Then you have right after he talks about Lazarus, you have the plot to destroy and to hide the truth. Verse 10, the chief priests plan to put Lazarus to death. Then Verse 19, he says, *...So the Pharisees said to one another,...* What do we care about what the Pharisees said? Well he wants us to understand this conspiracy is going on, and the Pharisees at this point feel defeated. He lets us know their discussion.

John 12:19 ~ ...“You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him.”

Basically, it shows the character of evil people anyway. When people are evil they are all about themselves, and they are all about putting each other down. We saw that with Caiaphas. “You guys know nothing,” you remember that in Chapter 11? Here he is with all these others, esteemed people in Israel. They all studied at the same school he did. “You know nothing!” That is what happens, people, as you give yourself to pride, you want to be on top, you put other people down. And here they are, *...“You see that you are not doing any good;...* No, you would think they would say, “We're not doing any good. We're really messing up.” “No, you're not doing any good.” Then the other guy would say, “And you're not doing any good.” *...the world has gone after Him.”* All of their efforts had failed and so what has happened here, and one of the reasons I think John includes what he does about this account is, he wants us to see the power of darkness, the powers of darkness, the alliance of the world, the flesh, and the devil trying to suppress the light, and yet the reality is the light cannot be suppressed. It *cannot* be suppressed. Just like he told us at the beginning of this Gospel. Remember John 1:5? Verse 4.

John 1:4-5 ~ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Literally, overpower it. The darkness cannot overpower the light. But we see these powerful forces are at work. The power of evil, Satan himself, wanting to hide the power of Christ, erase it from people's memory, cover it up. But also we know

when we look at the previous, when we put this in context, the Pharisees, and the chief priests want to cover it up because they want to keep their place. Remember Verse 48 from John 11? They were worried about Jesus. They said after the miracle of Lazarus happened, their initial council together, it says they planned together to kill Him. They said, “Well look, as He keeps doing these miracles, they are all going to go after Him, and we will lose our place and our nation.” We talked about the fact that the reason that there is so much hatred of Christ is not just Satan himself, but it is the pride of man. We don’t want Jesus because in our flesh we want our place. We want our authority, we want our way, and that is why people hate the Son of God. Because to honor the Son of God as the Son of God, you must lose your place. If you will not you will have nothing of Him. He will not take second place. He doesn’t take a part of your life, He comes to take charge. But giving Him charge of your life is the most wonderful freedom that you could ever experience.

So what happens here is Satan is at work, Christ’s glory is at work, and Satan himself, and all the demons of hell are trying, there is this clash, this spiritual warfare going on, and then you’ve got the flesh of man. They see the glory, but the people that are there want to use that glory for their own ends. So when they see, as Jesus goes through the rest of the week, and He keeps teaching, and then He allows Himself to be arrested, “He’s not the kind of Messiah we wanted in the first place, so away with Him,” and the hatred of sin comes up.

Even one of the songs we sing: *How deep the Father’s love for us. Ashamed I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.* The idea is that had we been there, we would have been yelling, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” because we were born in sin, and we were committed from our mother’s womb that it was all about me, and I will only honor God to the degree that He really wants to be about me. So the powerful force is at work. So for a moment the light shines out, but then it’s just as quickly when God pulls back His hand, the door slams shut and then we’re going to have evil unveiling its hatred for the Son of God.

Now, I want to talk about the triumph of God’s light, though. The second point is:

2) The Power of the Truth:

There’s the power of the conflict and the power of the truth. The light does shine in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overpower it. It’s as if in this passage God says, “On this day, let there be light,” and there was light, and the multitudes saw the light.

Matthew and Mark tell us that the crowds went before and after Jesus, when you read their accounts, and that's a helpful thing. We're going to do this a little more next time comparing the accounts that Matthew, Mark and Luke give, to the account that John gives, because we see by looking at that, what it was exactly that John wanted to emphasize. Well, Matthew and Mark both tell us that as Jesus was coming into Jerusalem, that there were crowds in front of Him and there were crowds behind Him. But John tells us really how that developed. Look with me. When you look at the text carefully, what he says here in Verse 9 is: ***The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there;...*** Jesus is in Bethany about two miles from Jerusalem. A large crowd of people learn Jesus is in Bethany, and they go to Bethany to see Him, and John tells us not only to see Him but also to see Lazarus. They want to put their eyes on Lazarus, the man raised from the dead, so this large crowd makes its way to Bethany. Then after the parenthetical remark of Verses 10 and 11 where we're told about the Chief Priests, we pick up the narrative.

John 12:12 ~ On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him,...

What happens is a large crowd goes to Bethany and then they're with Jesus there wanting to see Jesus and Lazarus, and that's a large crowd. It's a large number of people. The word *crowd* itself means a throng, multitude, and it was a large multitude. That's how the old NAS translates this, a great multitude. This is a great multitude in Bethany, and then Jesus says, "I'm going to Jerusalem," and they start making their way, and another large multitude hears that He's coming, and they come out on the road to meet Him. We see that, and that's the second large crowd, Verse 12:

John 12:12 ~ On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."

They did these things. They start quoting Psalm 118 that we read earlier from the Hillel. *The King is here.* So that's how these crowds get mingled, because of what has happened in Bethany that Jesus is with Lazarus.

Now remember, the power of the conflict, Satan is trying to squash the truth. I mean, Satan has his people on a cover-up mission. It's like the spin doctors. This is the first version of the spin doctors all around Jerusalem, and there have always been spin doctors. Satan is the great spin doctor when he said, "Has the Lord said...? Is that what God said? Do you think He said it because He wants your good?" He didn't say this part, but that's what he knew was true. "Do you think He said that because He wants your good? No, He really said that because He's holding out on you. He knew that if you ate that fruit, you would be like Him." So Satan the spin doctor has got spin doctors in every age, and so the people in this day are trying to cover up the fact of Lazarus' miracle, Jesus' power and majesty, and they're trying in every way they can to silence it, but it cannot be silenced.

On this day, God ordains that everybody know about it, and you see this particularly in Verse 17. The crowds form. You're watching the crowd that goes to Bethany. They come with Jesus, and a crowd goes out to meet Jesus. They're waving palm branches at Him and they're praising Him. He's riding on a donkey, and you have another parenthesis, Verse 15 and 16, the Scripture quote that is fulfilled, and then in Verse 16 John tells about how the disciples were understanding and not understanding. But then Verse 17 picks up the narrative again. Jesus is riding on a donkey, and:

John 12:17 ~ So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him.

This is talking about how the people who were there in Bethany when He did the miracle, they could not stop talking about what they had seen. In fact, the word order in the original is emphatic, completely different than the word order in English. In Verse 17, the last word in the NASB is *testify*. Literally, the way they wrote it is, "So the people who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify." Now, in my Bible it also has in italics *about Him*. Now, why is that in italics? It's because that wasn't in the original. It was not there. They're supplying it to help with the meaning. *They continued to testify* is the point. But the word testify in the original is not the last word in the verse. It's the first word in the verse. It's interesting the word order in Greek is much like some of the other languages where you can move words around. It literally says in the Greek, "They were testifying, the crowd who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead." They were testifying, the crowd. It gives the subject after that.

The point is to emphasize the testimony that's being born. They were testifying, and the translation there in the NASB is they continue to testify. Really it's the imperfect. It would have been better if they'd left it the way they used to translate it before they updated the translation: *were testifying*. It's the imperfect tense which is to take an event in past time and describe it with the imperfect tense, which means it was ongoing action in past time. The Greek has a lot of different tenses, and each of these are precise in their meaning. It could have said, "They testified," as in they gave a word of testimony, boom. No, they *were* testifying. They were continuing to testify, and the idea of *testify* is they were giving eyewitness testimony to what they had seen. The people that had seen Lazarus when he was raised and had watched him walk out of the tomb couldn't stop talking about it. "We saw him."

You even see they're talking about, when it says testify, it's a word meaning witness, testimony, testify, and it's used in John over 40 times. The idea is to tell, to solemnly bear witness to what you have seen and heard, and you can see that even in what they're saying. They were with Jesus when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead. They heard Him call him out of the tomb. There are people saying, "I heard Jesus say, 'Lazarus, come forth,' and this is what I saw. A dead man walked out of the tomb, hopped out of the tomb, bound in grave clothes. He'd been dead four days. I was there. I buried him." This is what they're talking about, and the crowds are electrified by it, because someone that can do that must surely be the Messiah, and on this day they know it. That's what Verse 18 says:

John 12:18 ~ For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.

This sign—that which signifies and certifies that He is the One Messiah of God. The crowd heard the truth that day because the truth could not be silenced, and there's a sense in which when God speaks, nothing can stop God from speaking. Spurgeon has some wonderful things to say about this reality, the enthusiasm that was ginned up on this particular day. He says this:

The marvel is that the popular enthusiasm had been repressed so long.

He says when you really think about it, isn't it amazing that the people, their enthusiasm had been repressed all that time? Isn't that astonishing when you really see it as it is? But he says this, and this is the reality:

It was the Lord Himself who had suppressed the popular enthusiasm.

The reason He wasn't being acclaimed every day is because He chose not to be acclaimed every day, because He had to veil that so that He could show the kind of Messiah He really was. I'm interrupting Spurgeon, and I ought not to do that. I'll start over:

The marvel is that the popular enthusiasm had been repressed so long. It was the Lord Himself who had suppressed the popular enthusiasm. With great skill He had succeeded in bridling a dangerous fanaticism. He did not strive, nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets, and with such a cry and such a voice as He had, the marvel was that He preserved quiet and kept the nation from revolt. Had He withdrawn His hand, the people would have been eager to assail their foreign rulers. Had this been the errand on which He came, He might at any moment have been saluted as The King of the Jews. He, however, with a masterly art, repressed everything that would have made Him a popular hero. He did this by uttering unpalatable truth, or He stole away from the scene of His miracles, or He kept Himself in obscure villages, and thus He eluded their honors.

That's the reality. He was hiding His glory in the sense that they couldn't handle the full weight of His glory until the time was right, and that's why on that day the graph looks like that. The time is right. This is the day that you're going to see unveiled the glory of the Son of God. Why now? Why today? Well, first of all, we're going to see as we look at this more clearly next time in the quote from Zechariah 9:9, but the time is right because He's about to be crucified. He shows His glory so that they will know when He's crucified that they are crucifying the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And had He done it too early, it would have caused a revolt. It's interesting.

In fact, if you think about John's presentation himself, remember John 6, the story of the feeding of the 5,000? It was really probably 20,000 people when you take women and children, 5,000 men and 20,000 total. With five loaves and two fishes, He feeds this multitude. Remember what they did when He finished feeding them? They took up twelve baskets of food. They said, "Surely this is the Prophet," and they wanted to make Him king. What did Jesus do? He sent the disciples in a boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, He sent the crowds away, and then He walked on water across the Sea of Galilee to get away from that enthusiasm. Why? It wasn't the right time.

Do you know when that was? That was the Passover the year before. It's been exactly a year since that happened. You see, it wasn't the time. The time was not then. His hour had not yet come, but we're going to see in John 12:23, the next passage, Jesus says, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Now's the hour for My full majesty, My full person, the wonder of who I am, to be set on display. I've been veiling it." *Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see*. It's veiled in flesh until the moment, and now is the moment, and the reason the moment is, is because God wants us to see the glory of His Son as this great and exalted King, side-by-side, the high point of Jesus' life side-by-side with the low point of Jesus' life, the cross, because that is what the King came to do. The King of God came to die on the cross. Spurgeon also comments on that reality. Why was it that it had to be so close together? Why was Palm Sunday five days before? Why wasn't it a year before? He says He wanted them to see these two things side-by-side. Spurgeon says:

You will remember that our Lord rode into Jerusalem as a King, but He was also brought there as the Lamb of God's Passover whose blood must save the people, and it was not meet that the Lamb of God should go to the altar without observation.

Now, think about that. What he's saying is had He not been acclaimed as King, when they crucified Jesus, people might not have noticed, and it would not have been meet for the Lamb of God to go to the cross without everybody knowing there goes the Lamb of God. He said:

It was not fit that He who takes away the sin of the world would be led to the temple unobserved. The day was near when He was to be offered up, and all eyes were called to look on Him and know who and what He was. Thus He beyond all question manifested Himself to the people so that when they crucified Him, the rulers knew what He professed to be.

As Paul says, "They crucified the Lord of glory." God's timing was perfect. All had been laid out. All had been mapped out. Jesus' earthly life, 30+ years of quiet, righteous solitude hidden away from public view, two and a half to three years of public ministry, still veiled, still veiled, still veiled, glory shining out at moments, but not full on, and then at the triumphal entry the veil is lifted, and there goes the King of Israel. When they say, "Hosanna," to Him, do you know what that means in Hebrew? It means, "Oh, save us!" I don't think they knew what they were saying. I mean, John's always showing people speaking better than they know. "Oh, save us. This is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Oh, save us!"

That's exactly what He's come to do, and He's being acclaimed as exactly who He is and for exactly what He's come to do. That's why the Pharisees we're told in Luke's Gospel said, "Please silence them." Do you remember that? "Do you hear what they're saying?" And Jesus said to them in Luke's Gospel, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would cry out."

Today is the day for Jesus to be acclaimed. Today is the day for Jesus to be honored so that everyone can see His glory, and can see His majesty, and then they can with baited breath and with amazement in their eyes, watch as the King of glory walks the path to Calvary, that they might know fully who He is, His majesty that exceeds the highest heavens, and yet that Man who left glory has come all the way down. *Can it be that Thou my God shouldst die for me?* That's the wonder of what is happening, and John wants us to see it in all of its glory, side-by-side. Look at the majesty of Jesus' miracle, the power of it that overcame the opposition, the attempt to suppress the truth, the conspiracy to cover it up, and yet it can't be covered up because this is the day that the Son of God is going to be seen in His glory, and this is the day in which we anticipate the tremendous contrast that He is going to be most glorified, when in all reality He's most dishonored. Because when Jesus says in Verse 23, "Now is the hour for the Son of Man to be glorified," we're going to see as we read through John's Gospel that when John speaks of Jesus' glory, he speaks of the cross.

I mean, we know the resurrection is a part of what glorifies Jesus, but the essence of glory is the cross, because it is the cross in which Jesus fully reveals to us the nature of God. There is no moment in all of history that God was more glorified than those hours at Calvary, because what does it mean for God to be glorified? It means that you see God as He is, that for a moment you get a glimpse of His character. You get a glimpse of His attributes. You get a glimpse of who He really is, what He does, and Calvary is the zenith point, the great point that towers over all of history, because at that moment we see God as He is, fully disclosed. You see His righteousness and His justice. We see it in a lot of places. We see it in the giving of the Law, but you see it nowhere more clearly than at Calvary. You say, "I want to see His love and His compassion." You see it scores of places throughout the Bible—Him forgiving David, His mercy when He says, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him." His compassion is on display other places, but nowhere more clearly than at Calvary.

His wrath is on display a number of places. What about when He destroys Sodom and Gomorrah? Isn't that a display of His wrath? Yes, that's an incredible display of His wrath, but it is a tiny drop compared to the display of His wrath at Calvary, because when the Son of God is abandoned on the cross, He in His holiness, in His righteousness there is credited with our sin. Fully the vent of heaven's wrath is poured out on Him as God the Father abandons the Son, and evil swallows Him up. All of the guilt and pollution of every sin of everyone who ever believed, think about the magnitude of that, the agony of bearing that, the ugly filth that that felt like for the Son of God, the spotless Son of God to feel that guilt, that pollution, and to be treated as if He had done all of that, and God poured out His wrath.

That's why Jesus, the night before He was crucified, cried out in the garden, "Father, if there be any other way, let this cup pass from Me," because He knew what was coming. It wasn't the crucifixion itself. It was the agony of the wrath of God being poured out on Him, the spiritual hell that He lived through, and the weight of a million hells. For every soul that would be saved, He exhausted the wrath. He drank the dregs of the cup. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you can know today He drank every last drop of the wrath of God that ought to be yours. There's nothing in the cup. That's why He said, "It is finished!" After those hours of hanging in agony, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" the sky is black because supernaturally He hides the sun, because God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. At this moment, the Son bearing sin is abandoned by God. He hangs in darkness, and after all of those hours of agony He finally says, "It is finished! Paid in full," and then He says for the first time in hours, He calls God His Father. "Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit. It's all paid and now I come back to You."

So the wrath of God, the incredible righteousness of His wrath that He's going to punish every evil thing is seen most clearly in the cross, and the wonder of His love, where do you see it more than the cross? Every other expression of His love, so beautiful, so wonderful, we can talk about His relationship with Abraham, the friend of God, Moses speaking to Him face-to-face, His love in delivering Noah and his family. We can go on and on and on through history about the love of God, but can we ever come close to touching what we see at Calvary, when there we behold a God who can love sinners like you and me even as we hated God, even as we were at enmity with God, even as we were shaking our fists at God, yet He said, "This is how much I love you," and He gave His own precious Son? This is how we know what love is, Jesus Christ laid down His life. There is the Trinity, the Father giving the Son, the Son giving His life.

So that's the glory of the Son of God, and we needed to see that when we see that Man hanging there, it's not a tragedy, an accident of history. It is the divine appointment from before the foundation of the world. This is the moment. This is the day that all of the Bible has been pointing to. This is when God saves. This is when He demonstrates His mighty power is at Calvary. It's not just a teacher who was misunderstood. It is the eternal God, very God of very God, very Man of very Man, hanging there in the place of those who would believe, at God's time and in God's way, giving us God's grace and God's mercy forever. When you understand that, you understand there's nothing else that needs to be done for you. You understand that it's folly and foolishness for people to think they need to add to the work of Christ, that you need to pray to the saints to get some blessing, that you need to try to get something from the treasury of merit. That is nonsense and wickedness. Jesus has finished with our sin. If you're in Christ, it is removed as far as the east is from the west. It will never be brought up again, because He has finished it, and the One who has finished it is King and His great victory, His triumph anticipated on Palm Sunday was accomplished in the most surprising way as He hung there and died in weakness—Glory to God.

Let's pray...

Father, we marvel at the majesty and wonder of salvation. We preach Christ crucified. To the Jews, a stumbling block, to Greeks, foolishness, but to those who are born again, Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God. Thank You for such a glorious and perfect Savior, for such a marvelous and wondrous salvation. We pray that You would grant the grace for people in this room today to repent and to believe, to surrender themselves and to come to honor Jesus as the King of kings and their own King and their Lord today. We thank You, Lord, that today is the day of salvation. We pray that You would help no one to have come to this moment and to have considered Your claim, and to walk away unchanged, but that You would press upon them that now is the time. Hurry to the Son. Kiss Him. Bow down before Him lest He become angry, for He deserves to be honored. He is worthy of that. May Jesus be glorified. We pray in His Name, Amen.

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