

Title:            **A PASSOVER SERMON**  
Text:            John 12:20-33  
Subject:        *Our Lord's Passover Discourse*  
Date:            Sunday Evening — April 4, 2010  
Tape:            John #81  
Readings:     *Larry Brown and Frank Hall*  
Introduction:

Bro. Rolfe Barnard used to talk a good bit about **preaching for a verdict**. What he meant by that was this: **Preaching is more than informing the mind, or even edifying the soul and comforting the heart. Preaching calls for a verdict to be made by all who hear.** Preaching is calling men and women to a decision and pressing upon them the urgency of the hour. **All true preaching puts you in a corner and forces you to do something.** One of my old professors put it another way. He said, **“Where there is no summons there is no sermon.”**

That is what **Jonathan Edwards** had in mind when he said,

“Every time I go out to preach I have two determinations. I am determined that it is every man's responsibility to give himself entirely to Christ; and I am determined that if no one else does, I will give myself to my Lord.”

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**Proposition:** I am preaching for a verdict. I want to press you and myself into a corner. **I am calling for us to give ourselves to Christ in the devotion, commitment and consecration of true faith.**

I have titled this message **A PASSOVER SERMON.** Our text is a message from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ in preparation for the Passover. We will begin in John 12:20.

**“And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast”** (v. 20). — It was the time of the Passover in Jerusalem. This was one of the great, important holy days which God commanded the Jews to keep every year. It was a week long festival, which culminated in the slaying of the paschal lamb. Jews from everywhere were gathered at Jerusalem for this holy festival. Among the Jews there was also a large multitude of Gentile proselytes, Gentiles who had been converted to the Jews’ religion. The men mentioned in this verse were Greeks who had turned from their heathen idols and were seeking the knowledge of the one true and living God.

**Illustrations:** *Cornelius*  
*The Ethiopian Eunuch*  
*Lydia*

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They were allowed to come to the temple, but only to the Gentile court. In the Old Testament Gentiles were never allowed the privileges of full acceptance with the Jews. Thank God, in Christ's spiritual kingdom, the Church, the Israel of God, there are no racial, social, economic, or ceremonial separations. We are all one in him! — *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”* (Galatians 3:28). — *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature”* (Galatians 6:15). — **In the New Creation of Grace** *“there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all”* (Colossians 3:11).

These Greeks came to Jerusalem to worship God. While they were there they heard about a man, a mighty miracle-worker, a prophet, whom a few fishermen worshipped as the Christ, the Messiah.

**“The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus”** (v. 21) — These Greeks came to Philip and requested an audience with the Lord Jesus. — **“Sir, we would see Jesus!”** They had heard about the Savior's many miracles. **Most notably, they had heard about the**

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resurrection of Lazarus (John 12:9), a type of every regenerate soul...

- In his condition — Dead (11:14).
- In his calling — “*Lazarus, come forth!*” (11:43).
- In his conversion — Grave clothes — “*Loose him, and let him go!*” (11:44).
- In his communion — “*At the table with him* (12:2).
- In his conflict — Consulted to put Lazarus to death (12:10-11).

Being Gentiles these men were reluctant to approach the Master personally. So they took their request to Philip, who was from Bethsaida and was perhaps a neighbor. At any rate, they seem to have known him and seem to have known that he was one of the Lord’s disciples. — Look at verse 22...

“Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.” (v. 22). — Philip talked this matter over with Andrew. Then he and Andrew together brought the matter before the Lord Jesus. Why do you suppose such a simple request presented such a problem? Let me suggest three reasons why this thing seemed to greatly disturb Philip and Andrew.

First, things were in great turmoil at Jerusalem!

- The Chief Priests talked about killing Lazarus. (v. 10).

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- The people talked about making Jesus of Nazareth king (vv. 12-13).
- The Pharisees were worried and angry about losing their position, power and influence. — “*Behold, the world is gone after him*”(v. 19).

**Second, these disciples simply did not yet understand the necessity of Christ’s death and resurrection as their Substitute and the true, spiritual nature of God’s kingdom.** They trusted the Lord Jesus. They knew him; but they knew little of his doctrine. They knew very little of what he had taught them day and night for more than three years. They knew that he was their Savior; but they do not appear to have known how he saves. — Do we?

- They wanted Christ to live, not to die!
- They wanted an earthly, Jewish kingdom. — (“*We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel*” (Luke 24:21; Acts 1:6).
- They wanted the Lord Jesus to be loved and accepted, not hated!
- They wanted the friendship and support of the Jews, their families and friends.

**Third, perhaps, Philip thought that if the Master received these Gentiles, that would be the last straw!** That, he thought, would give the Pharisees the excuse they were looking for to kill him. **I can almost hear his**

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**counsel**, — “Lord, these Greeks are asking for an audience with you. Andrew and I have discussed it. And, well, we just do not think it would be wise to receive them right now. The priests are talking about killing Lazarus. The Pharisees are worried sick, afraid of losing their hold over the people. But the people are for you. They want to make you king! To receive these Greeks now would spoil everything!

**Divisions**: Then, in verses 23-33 the Master himself speaks. He seized the opportunity to instruct and challenge his disciples. He discusses five things with them.

1. The Purpose of His Incarnation (v. 23).
2. The Meaning of His Death (vv. 23-24).
3. The Way of Life (vv. 25-26).
4. The Object of His Life (vv. 27-28).
5. The Accomplishments of His Death (vv. 29-33).

Let’s listen in. Maybe he who taught the disciples will now send his Spirit to teach us.

### **1. THE PURPOSE OF HIS INCARNATION**

Read verse 23 — Here our Savior shows us again the purpose of his incarnation.

“And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come,

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that the Son of man should be glorified.” (John 12:23)

“The hour is come!” — The crisis I have been telling you about is now here. You have heard me speak of this hour (John 2:4; 7:30). Don’t you remember? — This is not the hour when the King of Israel will be glorified as the Son of God, over all, blessed forever. — This is not the hour when the Judge of all men will be made manifest! — This is not the hour when the Son of Man will be glorified as the God of glory. — This is not the hour when men will own me as the King of kings and Lord of lords. All these things will come in due time. But this is not the time!

- This is the hour of the Son of Man, the last Adam (1 Timothy 2:5; John 17:1-5).
- This is the hour of redemption!
- This is the hour for which I came into this world (Hebrews 10:5-10).

(Hebrews 10:1-14 AV) “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. <sup>2</sup> For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. <sup>3</sup> But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away

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sins. <sup>5</sup> Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: <sup>6</sup> In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure. <sup>7</sup> ¶ Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. <sup>8</sup> Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law; <sup>9</sup> Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. <sup>10</sup> By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. <sup>11</sup> And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: <sup>12</sup> But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; <sup>13</sup> From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. <sup>14</sup> For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

**2. THE MEANING OF HIS DEATH**

Read verse 24 — Here our Savior shows us the meaning of his death.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat

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fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” (John 12:24)

Here is a grain of corn, or wheat. It has much potential. There is in this one grain much corn, but only if it dies. If it dies, it will bring forth much fruit, but only if it dies. If it does not die, it must abide alone.

- Our Lord has many people in him (Ephesians 1:3-6).
- He must die, or he must abide alone.
- But if he dies all who are in him will come to life, and all shall be like him.
- The corn sown and the corn reaped are identical.
- Thus the Son of Man will be glorified (v. 23; Isaiah 53:10-12).

(Isaiah 53:1-12) “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? <sup>2</sup> For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup> He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of

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God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. <sup>8</sup> He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. <sup>9</sup> And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

<sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup> He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup> Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because

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he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

### 3. THE WAY OF SALVATION

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

— What a blessed illustration of his redemptive, life giving death! But he does not stop there. He had a death to die. And all who would be his disciples also have a death to die. The same principle is involved. Read verses 25-26. Here, the Lord Jesus shows us the way of life and salvation in him. Do you asked, “How can I be saved?” Here’s the answer. If you would save your life, you must lose it.

“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. <sup>26</sup> If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.” (John 12:25-26)

Let me show you what these things mean. A farmer has a bushel of wheat, good wheat. It is his. He can keep it for a little while. He can eat it. Or he can feed it to his hogs. But if he keeps it, uses it to satisfy his carnal appetite, uses it only for passing, momentary purposes, or wastes it, he will

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lose it and lose it very soon. However, if, with an eye to the future, he takes that corn and casts it away from himself into the ground, keeping only what is necessary for the present, he will soon have an abundant harvest of corn! Are you with me?

**I have a life.** What shall I do with it? Keep it? Love it? Protect it? Shield it from danger and difficulty? Pamper it? Cater to it? I can. It is my life. You can too! But if I keep my life, I will lose it; and the same is true of you. However, if I give my life to Christ, if you give your life to Christ, we will have an indescribable abundance of life, even eternal life, here and in the world to come!

**The fact is, no man can have two masters! No man can both love Christ and the world! No man can walk in two directions.** Are you listening?

- If you love this world and this life, you will lose it.
- If you lose your life to Christ, love, trust, and follow him, you gain eternal life.
- You cannot do both (2 Timothy 1:12).

(2 Timothy 1:9-12) GOD “hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, <sup>10</sup> But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour

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Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: <sup>11</sup> Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. <sup>12</sup> For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for **I know whom I have believed**, and **am persuaded** that **he is able** to keep that which **I have committed unto him** against that day.”

I hope I have pressed you into a corner. That is where I want you. You must make a decision.

**Illustration:** “*Will you have my Master’s Son, or No?*”  
Eliezer.

Now look at verse 26 again. — “**If any man serve me, let him follow me.**” — To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is to serve him and follow him. This is not talking about preachers and missionaries — “**Any man!**” I am talking to anyone who will hear my voice. **I am calling for you and me to give ourselves entirely to the Lord Jesus Christ as bondslaves of old, to follow and serve him, consecrated to him!** — What a challenge!

**Illustration:** Caleb — “*He followed the Lord fully!*”

- This is more than leaving tradition and religion.

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- This is more than learning the right doctrine.
- This is more than not following false prophets.
  - This is literally, actually following the Lord Jesus Christ! (Ruth 1:16-17). — His Word! — His Spirit — His Will! — (Proverbs 3:1-10).

“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: <sup>2</sup>For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. <sup>3</sup>Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: <sup>4</sup>So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. <sup>5</sup>Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. <sup>6</sup>In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. <sup>7</sup> Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. <sup>8</sup>It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. <sup>9</sup>Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: <sup>10</sup>So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” (Proverbs 3:1-10)

I am talking about putting your hand to the plow and never going back, never looking back! I am talking about Jephthah’s commitment (Judges 11).

**Illustration:** “Remember Lot’s wife!”

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Look at these next words — “**Where I am, there shall also my servant be.**” He is explaining what it is to follow him! It is not mine to determine where he is, or what he does, but by his word and Spirit to find out where he is and what he does, and follow him. There is no guess work involved!

- He is about his Father’s business!
- He is seeking his sheep (Luke 19:10).
- He is ministering to the needs of men. — “*The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.*”
- He is among his people. — “*With desire I have desired to eat this bread with you.*” — “*Behold, my mother and brethren!*”
- He is washing his disciples’ feet.
- He is in prayer (John 7:53 – 8:1). “*Every man went to his own house.*” But the Savior went out to the Mount to pray.
- He is despised and hated by this world. — They took him outside the city and nailed him to the tree. “*Let us go unto him, without the camp!*”
- He is nailed to a cross. “*God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Crucified to the world, the world to me!
- He is risen and seated in the heavens!

Take the world, but give me Jesus.

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All its joys are but a name!  
But His love abideth ever,  
Through eternal years the same!

Take the world, but give me Jesus,  
Sweetest comfort of my soul;  
Then throughout my pilgrim journey,  
I can sing while billows roll.

O the height and depth of mercy!  
O the length and breadth of love!  
O the fullness of redemption,  
Pledge of endless life above!

Then, our Master says, “**If any man serve me, him will my Father honor**” (1 Samuel 2:30).

- Here!
- Hereafter!

**4. THE OBJECT OF HIS LIFE**

Then, in verses 27-28 our Savior shows us by example what he meant. Here, he shows us the object of his life. He lived for and served the will and glory of God.

“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?  
Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause

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came I unto this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.” (John 12:27-28)

### **5. THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HIS DEATH**

Now, read verses 29-33. Here the Lord Jesus tells us of the accomplishment of his death.

“The people therefore, that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. <sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. <sup>33</sup> This he said, signifying what death he should die.” (John 12:29-33)

- The judgment of this world (v. 31).
- The defeat of Satan (v. 31).
- The attraction of sinners (v. 32).

**Application:** Matthew 13:45-46

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: <sup>46</sup> Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that

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he had, and bought it.” (Matthew 13:45-46)

### **Illustration: *The Pearl Merchant***

I have shown you the Pearl of Great Price. Will you buy this Pearl, or will you pass it by?

### **Illustration: *The Art Auction***

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art. When the Vietnam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son. About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands. He said, “Sir, you don’t know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art.” The young man held out this package. “I know this isn’t much. I’m not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this.” The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of

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his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. “Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It’s a gift.”

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected. The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection. On the platform sat the painting of the son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. “We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?” There was silence. Then a voice in the back of the room shouted, “We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one.” But the auctioneer persisted. “Will somebody bid for this painting. Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?” Another voice said angrily. “We didn’t come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Gogh’s, the Rembrandt’s. Get on with the real bids!” But still the auctioneer continued. “The son! The son! Who’ll take the son?” Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of the man and his son. “I’ll give \$10 for the painting.” Being a poor man, it was all he could afford.

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“We have \$10, who will bid \$20?” “Give it to him for \$10. Let’s see the masters.” “\$10 is the bid, won’t someone bid \$20?” The crowd was becoming angry. They didn’t want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections. The auctioneer pounded the gavel. “Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!” A man sitting on the second row shouted, “Now let’s get on with the collection!” The auctioneer laid down his gavel. “I’m sorry, the auction is over.” “What about the paintings?” “I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. **The man who took the son gets everything!**”

Amen.