

The Hour and the Glory of God (John 12:20-36)

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Text: “*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit*” (John 12:24).

Introduction

1. The purpose of Jesus’ coming into the world was to manifest the glory of God (John 1:14).
2. The passage before us is the official development of that purpose.
3. With irony, John reports the frustration of the Pharisees (v. 19).
 - a. In the very next verse we read that some Greeks (Gentiles representing the world) sought to see Jesus.
 - b. This shows the intention of God to reach to the ends of the earth with the gospel (Revelation 7:9-10).
4. Our passage charts the path of the Savior to that throne, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world as announced by John the Baptist at the beginning of His ministry (John 1:29).
5. The theme of the passage is twofold: “*the hour*” (the time of His crucifixion) and “*the glory of God*” (the fulfillment of His purpose to restore all things).
6. However, the hour—the time when Christ would fulfill His purpose in coming—the cross, had arrived; nevertheless, the task itself proved extremely daunting to Jesus.

Two Questions:

1. How did Jesus face and obey this task (going to the cross) that proved so horrific to His every sense?
2. What connection does His obedience have with the difficult demands Jesus places on those who would follow Him?

I. The Pointer (the Signal of the Hour, vv. 20–23)

1. The introduction and significance of the Gentile worshipers who sought Jesus (vv. 20-22; Luke 2:30–32)
 2. The response of Jesus to this signal: “*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified*” (v. 23; note Daniel 7:13, 14)

II. The Principle (vv. 24–26)

- 1 Jesus gave us the principle that He and those who follow Him must observe.

Remember that this is the time of Passover and the feast of first fruits with the waving of the grain offering.

- a. A grain of wheat gives up its life in order that a fruitful harvest may result.

- b. The meaning is this: one must hate his life—be willing to lose it—in order to keep it for eternal life.
- 2. Jesus applied the principle.
 - a. The path: Serving Christ is how one hates his own life.
Our natural inclination is to serve our own desires.
 - b. The reward: The Father honors sacrificial service by making it fruitful.
In this way, God is glorified, and we are glorified in Him.

III. The Purpose (vv. 27–36).

- 1. Jesus resolved to do the hard thing, surrendering to the will of God (v. 27).
 - a. The humanness of Jesus is brought to focus in the dread that gripped His soul as He realized the “hour” had come.
 - b. Nevertheless, Jesus understood that the overriding necessity of the cross is the glory of His Father.
- 2. Jesus pled for the Father to be glorified (vv. 28, 29).
 - a. “Honor my obedience by fulfilling the purpose for which you brought me into the world—to save the world.”
 - b. The crowd demonstrates incredible spiritual dullness.
- c. Jesus clarified the misunderstanding of the people (vv. 30–36).
 - a. He intended to accomplish a monumental task (vv. 31–33).
 - 1) The judgment of the world system and the overthrow of the god of this world, Satan
 - 2) The salvation of His people and their restoration to Himself
 - b. The objection of the people and His appeal for them to walk in the light (vv. 34–36)

Lessons

- 1. The greatest gift that Jesus gave was Himself. He asks us to give ourselves to others in the same way.
- 2. God is not glorified by our personal elevation in the eyes of others but by humble selfless service to those who cannot repay. The Lord makes that sacrifice fruitful.
- 3. Are you following Jesus to serve Him or for what you can get from Him?