We are continuing to look at the last week of Jesus’ earthly ministry and today’s passage.

Jesus says in this passage that His hour has come – we are coming to the culmination of all of Jesus’ work and teaching so far – rapidly approaching His death on the cross.

**PRAY**

**SLIDE** **John 12:20-23**

**Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.”**

As we saw last week, some estimate that around 3m people congregated in Jerusalem at Passover time – not all the people would have been Jews, nor was the Temple limited to only Jewish worship.

Between **v19 & 20** a day or two has passed - Jesus was no longer travelling – from what Matthew’s gospel tells us, He was teaching daily in the temple precincts.

John tells us there were **certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast**: We don’t know their background, they may have been:

* Greek converts to Judaism.
* Greek travellers who were sight-seeing, or just curious about this man of whom they had heard so much.
* God-fearing Greeks who had not converted.

That last possibility may have a great truth contained within it. **Mark 11:15-17** tells us Jesus removed the traders and moneychangers from the Temple - so that the place might fulfil its divinely ordained purpose of being **a house of prayer for all nations Isaiah 56:7.**

Specifically, Jesus had cleared the outer court – the only place that Gentiles were allowed in the Temple area to worship God.

Did these Greeks see Jesus’ action as being just for them, so they came to give thanks and praise?

Whatever their motivation, those Greeks had heard of Jesus and they knew they wanted more. They wanted to meet Him and have a personal relationship with Him.

That should be us today - to take our relationship beyond the fact we have heard of Jesus and His miraculous acts and claims.

To get to a point where you have a personal relationship with Jesus.

You may imagine yourself in the Christmas story as being amongst the Magi, setting out to find the Saviour, to worship Him. If that is you, you can now imagine yourself as seeking Jesus out as He brings His earthly ministry.

One commentator said, ‘…these Greek men from the West set forth at the end of the Life of Jesus, in the same way as the Magi from the East set off at His beginning – these latter-day men come to the Cross of the King, as those earlier men came to His cradle.’ (Stier)

So the men approach Philip – possibly him as he is the one disciple with a Greek name – asking to see (presumably meet) Jesus.

It is one of those questions that Scripture does not answer, as we are never told whether that meeting ever took place, because when Philip approaches Jesus with the meeting request, Jesus responds with and answer that doesn’t give us an answer.

Jesus replies, **The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.**

Twice before, John has recorded Jesus saying that the time had not yet come (**John 2:4, 7:6**). Although Jesus was not taken by surprise about the events that were going on, possibly He took this opportunity to make His declaration as Gentiles were now seeking after His saving grace.

In saying that His hour to be glorified, Jesus is very clear previously (**John 7:6**), that God’s time is always here. There is no moment or occasion when we should not be giving glory to God.

The word used in the original text actually means **The hour is come** – it is intended to be a continuous process. Effectively, Jesus is saying ‘there is no turning back’,

As Jesus refused to turn back on the decision He made for you, you need to be as resolute in your determination not to turn back on any decision you have made to follow Him.

**SLIDE** **John 12:24-26**

**“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. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 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 honour.”**

Jesus follows by giving us this strange teaching about the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies.

He is saying that His glorification is dependent on His death and burial – before the power of resurrection can be shown, there needs to be death.

In the same way, a seed needs to be buried, before it can flourish into the plant it is destined to be.

If that principle is true for Jesus, it must be true of His followers. We should not fear death, rather see it as the route to God’s Heavenly glory.

That is why Jesus said, **He who loves his live will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life**.

We are called treat our life as something that we freely give up for God. Our life should be precious to us, especially if we can use it in the service of Jesus our Saviour.

That service should be lifelong – it doesn’t necessarily mean you stop your job to serve God and Jesus, rather it means you carry on working, caring, studying etc., as a servant of Jesus, a follower of Jesus.

Jesus tells us to follow Him.

There are at least two words for servant in the Greek language and here John uses diakonos – meaning a servant in attendance, in close proximity.

The other word for servant doulos – allows service to be done at a distance. John was careful about his use of words – you are not to be serving at a distance – you are meant to be doing His service close to those who need it, in obedience to Jesus’ command.

The reward for serving Jesus is to receive honour from God the Father.

**SLIDE** **John 12:27-30**

**“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. Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.” Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.” Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake.**

Jesus is clearly troubled, knowing the agonies that the cross would bring.

John doesn’t recount Jesus prayer whilst in Gethsemane, but these verses reflect His anguish.

In John’s account her, Jesus doesn’t express the desire to avoid the task ahead – nor would He. He has no intention of giving up on His ministry.

One commentator has noted, ‘The very object of His Incarnation, the reason of this His Coming into the world and of His continuance to this hour was to meet this Suffering.’ (Trench)

Jesus response to such human thoughts was to say **Father, glorify Your name**. Despite or maybe because of, the events that were to come, Jesus wants His Heavenly Father to be glorified.

That should be your attitude – whether you are doing something that is difficult or enjoyable, you should give glory to God.

**SLIDE John 12:31-36**

**“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” This He said, signifying by what death He would die. The people answered Him, “We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?” Then Jesus said to them, “A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.**

Jesus is telling us that this world will be judged by the way it treats Jesus on the cross.

For those who are believers and put our faith in Jesus’ death and His blood being spilt, have the assurance of an atonement with God – we have a restored relationship.

Yet, for those who put their trust in **the ruler of this world they will be cast out**.

They will be cast out of any right to claim a place in God’s Heavenly kingdom. They will be thrown out in the same way that the wedding guest was thrown out in Jesus’ parable – because He was improperly dressed. All of the saints in heaven, we can read, will be wearing robes of white.

The believers will be instantly recognisable from the unbelievers.

Jesus was lifted up in terms of being put on the cross, but He was also lifted up when He took His rightful place on His Heavenly throne.

But Jesus is also saying His death on the cross will **draw all peoples to** Himself.

All means all – the only requirement God makes for entry into His kingdom is a belief in His Son’s death on the cross and from that a repentance of sins.

Spurgeon said, ‘I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me’; and the history of the church proves how true this is: the muster-roll of the converted includes princes and paupers, peers and potmen.’

Jesus knew what He was about to go through – pain, humiliation and finally death, but He obeyed God’s will – and because of that He will live forever.

Yet, the people listening to Jesus speak, were unsure – they knew in their Scriptures of one who would be a triumphant Messiah.

But they appear unaware of the passages that spoke of His suffering (such as Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53) – a fact that remains today.

So, they question if Jesus is really the Messiah, the **Son of Man**.

The people will happily welcome a political conqueror, but seemingly not someone who is determined to have a sacrificial death. It didn’t fit in with their idea of what the Messiah should be.

From the time sin entered the world, a Messiah was needed and Jesus clearly taught that His earthly ministry required Him to die.

Here He indicates that time is almost upon Him. **A little while longer the light is with you… While you have the light, believe in the light**.

Jesus assured them that He would be with them only a short time longer, then the light of His earthly ministry was about to go out.

Despite Jesus being in Heaven with God the Father, we must have faith in Him in the same way as those people in Jesus’ time - while the light is there, because it won’t last forever.

**CONCLUSION**

When Jesus said **The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified**, He didn’t mean that He would be **glorified** in the eyes of men.

That type of glorification had happened a few days previously at the triumphal entry.

The glorification Jesus pointed to here was being **glorified** on the cross.

Something the world would only see as disgraceful humiliation and failure - Jesus saw as being **glorified**.

**Genesis 6:3** tells us that God’s Spirit will not always strive with man, meaning God warns us that our time to make a decision for Him is limited.

The time to make that decision for Jesus is now – you should not delay – and if you have already made that commitment, the time is now to intensify your work for His kingdom.

We have so much for which we should be grateful.

**OFFER / PRAY**

**READINGS**

**John 12:20-36**

**20Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. 21They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘we would like to see Jesus.’**

**22Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.**

**23Jesus replied, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. 25Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.**

**27‘Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? “Father, save me from this hour”? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.**

**28Father, glorify your name!’**

**Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.’ 29The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.**

**30Jesus said, ‘This voice was for your benefit, not mine. 31Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. 32And I, when I am lifted up[**[**f**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+12&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-26613f)**] from the earth, will draw all people to myself.’ 33He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.**

**34The crowd spoke up, ‘We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain for ever, so how can you say, “The Son of Man must be lifted up”? Who is this “Son of Man”?’**

**35Then Jesus told them, ‘You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. 36Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.’ When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.**

### **Psalm 53**

**1The fool says in his heart,
    ‘There is no God.’
They are corrupt, and their ways are vile;
    there is no one who does good.**

**2God looks down from heaven
    on all mankind
to see if there are any who understand,
    any who seek God.**

**3Everyone has turned away, all have become corrupt;
    there is no one who does good, not even one.**

**4Do all these evildoers know nothing?**

**They devour my people as though eating bread;
    they never call on God.**

**5But there they are, overwhelmed with dread,
    where there was nothing to dread.
God scattered the bones of those who attacked you;
    you put them to shame, for God despised them.**

**6Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!
    When God restores his people,
    let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!**