

John 12:12-50

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[0 : 00] John chapter 12. We're going to look from verses 12 to the end of the chapter. It's a large section but I think it hinges together. John's Gospel is a book of two halves. We finished off the book of signs which is the first half of the book.

And chapter 12 is the climax of the first part and the bridge to the second part. And what we see is the Lord Jesus in three particular focuses. Look with me at verses 12 to 19. Jesus appears there as the coming king riding into Jerusalem on the donkey.

In chapter 20 to 33 he appears before us as the dying seed. He's introduced to us by some Greeks. They come to Philip with that great question.

Sir we wish to see Jesus. And Jesus begins to enlarge upon that theme. And then the crowd begin to respond to Jesus in verse 34.

And he diagnoses the real nature of their response. We see the rejected saviour. The coming king, the dying seed and the rejected saviour.

[1 : 30] First of all let's look at the coming king. You're probably really familiar with it. And the great crowd that had come to Jerusalem comes out of Jerusalem. They're there for Passover.

And they're probably visitors whom Jesus has performed some of these remarkable signs and wonders around the country. They're in the city. They're in the city. And word gets them that Jesus is approaching.

And they come out in large numbers, greater than we might imagine. And they come to meet Jesus. And they take with them palm branches which are like flags.

It's like a mode of greeting. They go out to meet him and they cry Hosanna. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the king of Israel.

And Jesus begins to make his way into Jerusalem. There's a profound sense in which the crowd is right. They're right in their acclaiming of Jesus.

[2 : 29] Crying out Hosanna or save now. They're using Messianic language. Here is the one long expected. Language from the Old Testament about how the Messiah would come in the name of the Lord.

The king of Israel. And then Jesus does an extraordinary thing. No doubt these people are going out to welcome him as their king.

That they longed for. You'll remember at various times in previous chapters they longed to make him king. They looked at Jesus and they thought here is the one who will set us free from the tyranny of Rome.

And they go out on this particular day. They'd heard about how Jesus had triumphed over death in Lazarus. They realized that he could triumph over the very last enemy.

So surely he could triumph over the powers of Rome. And they go out to greet him. And Jesus finds a young donkey. And he sits on it.

[3 : 34] In order to fulfill the scriptures of Zechariah 9. Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion. Behold your king comes unto you. It's a Messianic prophecy. And when you read Zechariah chapter 9.

You discover that what the prophet is describing is a king who is righteous. Who will bring salvation. And yet he is a gentle king. And he is lowly riding on a donkey.

And in that most amazing and mysterious way. The Messiah is going to be a king. But a king with a difference. He's not a king riding on some powerful charger in a chariot.

At the head of a mighty army. With his minions all around him. Preparing the way for his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. There to banish the city of Rome.

And sit upon the throne of David. Instead. Jesus rides into Jerusalem slowly on a donkey. The symbol of the king of peace.

[4 : 40] And when he arrives in Jerusalem. He does not reign over it. From the other gospels. We know that he weeps over it.

The king weeps. And he says. Oh Jerusalem. Oh Jerusalem. But he is coming as a king. Though not the king that they wanted.

To make him. He was coming to conquer. But not in the way that they expected. Do you remember Pontius Pilate? He was puzzled, wasn't he?

By the title. The king of the Jews. And he asked Jesus. Are you a king? And Jesus replies. My kingdom is not of this world.

If my kingdom were of this world. Then my servants would fight. But my kingdom is not of this world. And Pontius Pilate thought. Such weakness. And here Jesus.

[5 : 37] Riding into Jerusalem. On a donkey. Seems weak, doesn't he? He seems pathetic. And these people are waving their branches. And crying Hosanna.

It almost seems like. A kind of Monty Python-esque. Kind of comedy thing. And when Pilate began to examine Jesus. And he spoke to him.

About the power and authority. That belonged to him. Against which Pilate had no power. Even though he was the representative. Of the Roman Empire. He says to Pilate.

Do you not know? Do you not know? Pilate says to him. Do you not know? That I have power to crucify you. Or power to release you. And Jesus says. You would have no power over me.

Except it were given to you by God. And as he rides into Jerusalem. These people are learning. That Jesus' kingdom is not of this world. He was going to stoop.

[6 : 35] To conquer. And as he came by the cross. Ultimately. They would discover. That by his death. He was going to gain a kingdom.

That would reach. Far beyond the boundaries. Of the Roman Empire. He would make the Roman Empire. Appear narrow and small. And so this morning.

Two thousand years later. The kingdom of Jesus Christ. Stands and grows forever. His people. His subjects. Meet in every corner of the world. This morning.

And one day. Every knee will bow. And every tongue will confess. That Jesus Christ is Lord. To the glory of God the Father. And so for this journey.

Into Jerusalem. As the king with a difference. It was a journey. That is preparatory. It was a journey. That is a trailer. For the day. When he will not just come into Jerusalem.

[7 : 32] But he will come into this world then. With great power. And with great glory. And every eye will see the king. And all of creation.

Will bow down before the king. And Jesus gives us. John gives us. Just a little glimpse. Of Jesus the coming king. And the Pharisees.

So greatly disturbed. Look at them in verse 19. The Pharisees say to one another. You see. You're gaining nothing. Look. The world has gone after him. And it must have looked like.

This great crowd. Following him. Was symbolic. Of. A future. Where people from all over the world. Will follow him.

And that brings us to the next section. Where we read about Jesus. The dying seed. People come to Jesus in verse 20. Can you see where they're from? They're from Greece. They are representatives of the Gentiles.

[8 : 34] The world outside the confines of Israel. That is the significance of the Greeks. And they come to Jesus. In fulfillment of what the Pharisees have just said.

The whole world is beginning to go after him. Greeks who came up to worship. At the feast. They're probably among the Gentile God fearers. Who were found in the court. Court of the Gentiles.

Outside the temple. They come to Philip. And they request him. Sir. They say. We would like to see. Jesus. It's a beautiful statement. Philip went and told Andrew.

Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And it's very interesting. That Jesus doesn't just come out. To them. And reveal himself to them. But he begins to speak.

Doesn't he. Of his coming death. In the form of a parable. Can you see the parable? It's in verse 13. And it's the parable of a dying seed. It's about his death.

[9 : 33] Verse 23. Jesus answered them. The hour has come for the son of man. To be glorified. All the way through the gospel.

Jesus has been saying. My time has not yet come. My hour has not yet come. Remember chapter 2. In the wedding of Cana of Galilee. And Mary comes to him. With that problem. Of they've run out

of wine.

And Jesus says at that point. He says. My time has not yet come. And again and again. He says something similar to this. At various points. In his life and ministry.

My hour has not yet come. My time is not yet. But in verse 23. He says my time has arrived.

The hour has come. Here is the moment. For the son of man to be glorified. And he's teaching us now. More about how he is going to be. The saviour of men and women.

[10:32] And boys and girls like you and I. Verse 24. 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. And that parable. Is Jesus' picture. Of the necessity. Of his coming death. The people around him.

And even his own disciples. His disciples. His followers. They had not wanted to listen to him. When he spoke about his coming death. They didn't like hearing about.

His suffering. His sin bearing. And then his resurrection. But now he says. There is a principle here. Which you need to grasp. The principle of bringing life.

Of producing harvest. That I have come into the world. To bring a multitude of people. Who would be. The people of God. And how will this harvest come about.

[11:31] Of which the Greeks. Are a little first fruit. And Jesus' answer is this. He says. The way that it happens in nature. Is the way that it will happen in grace.

The way that it happens in nature. Is the same way it happens in the kingdom of God. So unless a grain of wheat.

A little seed. Goes into the ground. And dies. It will remain just a single seed. But if the seed goes into the ground.

And dies. It will produce many seeds. Much fruit. The principle is really obvious. Really clear. It's the seed. That falls into the ground. That gives up its own life.

And out of the husk. New life. Bursts forth. And many seeds come. Much fruit comes. And ultimately. There is a great harvest.

[12:28] Because the one seed. Went into the ground and died. Jesus says. The principle is this. The son of man. Will have to give up his life. In death.

In order that the harvest. Of the gospel be reaped. In the lives of people like these Greeks. And he applies it in verse 25.

To himself. And to others. Look what it says. It says. Whoever loves his life. Loses it. And whoever hates his life. In this world. Will keep it for eternal life.

The word hate there. Is a comparative word. It's whoever gives up his life. Whoever loses his life. Whoever gives away his life. Jesus is saying to his followers.

Isn't it? You want me to hold on to my life. Do you remember when Jesus. Explained something. Of the coming. Suffering that he would endure. His death.

[13:25] His arrest. His betrayal. His mockery. And the disciples. Had said. No, no, no. That's not going to happen. Far be it from you. When he told them about.

Suffering. And death. And calvary. And his pain. And anguish. And how he will bear. The sins for his people. They said. Far be it from you Lord. And Jesus says.

Unless I give up my life. It will produce nothing. It is in my death. That fruit will be born.

And we've seen how gloriously true that is. The necessity. Of his death. For our place. For our salvation. But can you notice here again.

Jesus takes the same principle. That he says about himself. And he applies it to his people. That it's not only a pattern for his dying.

[14:24] As our saviour. It's the pattern for our living. As his servants. Look at verse 25. Verse 25 says. Whoever. That's you and I. Whoever. Loves his life.

Loses it. And whoever hates his life in this world. Will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me. He must follow me. And where I am. There will my servant be also. He's issuing.

This. Claim. That if you are going to be my. Follower. If you are going to be his servant. You need to live on this principle too. And so he says to you and I this morning.

If you want to hold on to your life. And keep it for yourself. And if you refuse the Lord Jesus Christ. And his call to come to him.

And if you refuse to deny yourself. And abandon everything. For the sake of Jesus Christ. And if you want to hold on to your life. It will actually slip through your fingers.

[15:21] And that's what will happen. And if you come. As these people came to Jesus. And you refuse.

And you reject him. In all the fullness of his demand for discipleship. They held on to their lives. They kept them for themselves. They did not experience the cost.

Of giving up everything over to Jesus. Of losing their life. For his sake and the gospel. They kept them. Their own little plans. Their own little treasures. Everything that they decided.

That they were going to live for. My life is my own. Do with what I please. And what happened was. Their life fell through their fingers.

Like a liquid. That you cannot hold on to. Like a fistful of sand. That just goes through your fingers. And what Jesus is saying.

[16:17] Is the only way. For you to find your life. Is to count it as nothing. And to give it away for the Lord Jesus. Do you see what he's saying?

A man or woman who loves his life. Will lose it. While the man who refuses to do that. Who hates his life. In this world. Will keep it for eternal life.

Whoever serves me. Must follow me. Where I am. There my servant will be also. So there's the principle. It's a principle. That applies to the Lord Jesus.

But it's a principle. That applies to his church. Church as well. And Jesus. Goes on to describe. Notice. And what his death. Is going to mean to him. People often say.

There's no. Gethsemane. In John's gospel. That it doesn't occur. In John's gospel. And of course. That is true. In a strict sense. But verse 27.

[17:17] Is really John's equivalent. Of Gethsemane. Where Jesus says. My heart. Is troubled. The word is.

That is weak. It's more profound than that. It's my soul. Is in anguish. My soul. Is in distress. A distress.

That runs through. Every area. Of my life. It's what Jesus. Is speaking about. When he says. My soul. Is troubled. Within me. What shall I say. He says. My soul.

Is troubled. And what shall I say. Father. Save me. From this hour. But for this purpose. I came into the world. Father. Glorify. Your name.

It's exactly. The same kind of thing. That Jesus was facing. In Gethsemane. Do you remember. He said. Let this cup. Pass. From me. But nevertheless. Not my will. But yours be done.

[18:16] And that anguish. That Jesus felt. In Gethsemane. That shadow. That passed over him. In Gethsemane. Is exactly the same. As John is describing here. Why is Jesus. So troubled.

It's not merely. That he was facing death. And physical hurt. And pain. But because he was facing. What it meant. To be the sin bearer.

As he looked out. Over Jerusalem. As he looked out. Over these people. Now. Surrounding him. And he realised. That death. On the cross. Was to mean.

That all the. Great burden. Of the sins. Of his men. And women. And boys and girls. Was to come upon him. And he was to bear it. In his body.

On the tree. He was to know. What it was. To experience. The judgement of God. Upon sin.

[19:12] And he cries out. My soul is. Troubled. What shall I say. And he longed. To be spared that. But he says. My hour has come.

And Jesus. Realising. The full horror of it. But in verse 28. He says. Father. Glorify your name. And then a voice. Comes from heaven. Saying. I have glorified it.

And I will glorify it. The crowd. Stood there. They heard it. They thought. That it had thundered.

That's what the voice. Sounded like. Others said. An angel had spoken. And Jesus answered.

The voice is for your sake. And not for mine. Now is the judgement. Of this world. Now will the ruler. Of this world. Be cast out. The devil. And when I'm lifted up.

From the earth. I will draw. All people. To myself. And he said this. To show what kind of death. He was going to die. The Greeks.

[20:13] Who come. And say. Sir. We want to see Jesus. Are just a little preview. Of that. Of him drawing. All people to himself. So here is Jesus.

Giving himself. To be cast into the ground. To bear the sins. Of many. To be the object. And the judgement. Of a holy God. In order that he might.

Set you and I. Free from it. But finally. John goes on. To reveal to us. A third picture. Of Jesus. Not only as the coming king. And the dying seed. But the rejected saviour.

Yet some of this. From verse 34. When the crowd. Began to debate with him. Who is this son? Verse 34. The crowd answered him. We've heard from the law. That the Christ. Remains forever. How can you. Say that the son of man. Will be lifted up. Who is this son of man? And Jesus. Begins to describe. To them. The danger. Of rejecting.

[21 : 13] The saviour. There's two dangers. I think. The first danger. Is that of departing light. Of the light going out. And the second danger. Is that of a hardening heart.

Just notice. How Jesus describes. This danger in verse 35. He says. The light is among you. Just 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's going. While you have the light. Believe in the light. That you might become. The sons of the light. And when Jesus.

Had said these things. He departed. And he hid himself. Hid himself from them. Of course. We know. Don't we. We've come through. John's gospel. And we've seen that picture.

Of Jesus. As the light. Again and again. He's the light. Of the world. But here. Can you see. What Jesus is talking about. Is the departure. Of the light.

[22 : 10] For three years. The light of the world. Has dwelt on earth. The light of the world. Has lit it up. These were people.

Listening to him. Who'd been around Galilee. They'd seen the miraculous signs. They'd seen what he'd done. They'd seen him. Heal the sick. And. Feed the five thousand.

Bring back the dead. To life. They'd watched him. They'd heard him. And the light of the world. Was shining. Upon them. Do you see what is happening. They're rejecting the light.

And Jesus says to them. Put your trust. In the light. While you have it. So that you become. Sons and daughters. Of the light. Because you will only. Have the light. A little while longer.

I think this is a note. That's consistently found. In the Bible. That when people. Are rejecting God. And they reject his voice.

[23 : 09] And his word. There comes a point. Where God. Withdraws his word. You see it again and again. In Israel's history.

When the day of grace. When the day of opportunity. Comes to an end. And here for these people. It certainly was true. Wasn't it? Verse 36.

That there shouldn't be a division. Between 35 and 36. It goes straight on. I don't know why they've done that. When Jesus said these things. He departed. And hid himself from them.

And as far as we know. This is the last time. Jesus preached. And taught publicly. And one of the ways. That we reject Jesus. Is by putting him off.

And it's a really dangerous thing to do. There are many people. Who have a period of time.

[24 : 07] In their life. We call it a season of God's grace. Where God speaks to them. He gives them. Opportunity. And they treat it lightly.

And they're not bothered. To do anything about it. And the days pass by. And the opportunity passes. I've watched it in people's lives.

Times when God has been graciously. Dealing with someone. And God has been pleading with them. And God has brought his light. To bear upon their lives. And they've paid very little attention. And to those people. Jesus says. You will have the light. Just a little while longer. You've got a moment of opportunity. But that window of opportunity.

Will come to an end. Do you notice the other thing. He focuses his attention on. Verse 37. There's this whole principle. Of hardening hearts. It's linked with the departing of the light.

[25 : 14] And Jesus quotes from Isaiah 53. And then Isaiah 6. He says this. He's blinded their eyes. Hardened their hearts. Lest with their eyes. They see with their eyes.

And understand with their hearts. And turn and I would heal them. And the reason is because. There's this process of hardening. It's taking place. It's really interesting.

That John says in verse 41. Isaiah said these things. Because he saw his glory. And spoke of him. The people. Who are listening to Jesus.

Are in that very position. They've seen his glory. And God was speaking to them. And they were experiencing. A hardening. Let's just imagine.

It was sunny this afternoon. Alright. And it was warm. Do you remember that? We long for it. Don't we? I'm yearning. Just for a bit of heat. Isn't it? Let's just imagine. It was a sunny day outside.

[26 : 15] One of those really boiling. Baking hot days in London. And we took outside. And on one plate. We put. Ice cream. And we put it in the sunshine.

And on the other plate. We got play dough. Out of the plastic container. And we squashed the play dough down. And we put that on a plate. Next door. To the ice cream.

And they're left. In the baking hot sunshine. What happens to the ice cream? It melts. What happens to the play dough? Gets hard.

It bakes. We know. Don't we? What would happen. Wasn't it? The sun. Would melt the ice cream down. It would bake hard. The play dough. Then it would become useless. You'd have to check it out.

One would be melted. One would be baked down. The same opportunities. The same sun. The sun. And the sun of righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ. The grace of God.

[27 : 12] He shines. The light of the world. The same expression. Of his love and tenderness. And when the light of Jesus Christ. Shines. It does one of two things.

This morning. Right here. Right now. One. It melts. Those before God. In willing obedience. And the other.

Terrifyingly. Is baked hard. And becomes more. And more impenetrable. To the voice of God. And that's why Jesus says to them.

Like he says to you and I this morning. Walk. In the light. While you have the light. Let me finish. And point out to you other ways.

People rejected the saviour. Look at verses 42. To. Nevertheless. Many. Even the authorities. Believed in him. But for fear of the Pharisees. They did not confess it. So they would not be put out of the synagogue.

[28 : 09] They valued their position. And here's the killer. Verse 43. For they loved the glory that comes from man. More than the glory that comes from God. And you wonder just how long they went on.

Being more afraid of man. Than God. Maybe that's you this morning. Jesus highlights another. In verse 47. He says.

If anyone hears my words. And does not keep them. I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world. But to save the world. The one who rejects me. And does not receive my words. Has a judge. The words that I have spoken.

Will judge him on the last day. It's a different kind of rejection. It's the kind of rejection. Well it's a churchgoer's rejection. It accepts the word. It enjoys the words.

It even believes it to a certain degree. But doesn't obey it. It's the tragedy of people. Who sit in churches like this. Week after week. After week. And somehow enjoy it.

[29 : 09] But don't obey it. And Jesus says. There will be judgment. For someone who rejects me. And the judge. Will actually be the word. That I've spoken.

On the day. When the king of glory. Comes not on a donkey. But comes in splendor. And in glory. Do you know what he's saying here? What he's saying is. The very word. That you refuse to obey. Will sound in your ears.

As the judgment of God. So really. The lesson to be learned. From this this morning. Is very very simple. It's saying to you.

That the place. Where you are going to find. Real life. Is when you. Give it away. To the Lord Jesus Christ. And are. Ready.

For any cost. For the sake of doing that. If the apostle Paul. Was preaching. This sermon. This morning. He would finish it.

[30 : 06] In this way. I'm pretty certain. That the apostle Paul. Would say. I count everything. As loss. Because of the surpassing worth. Of knowing Christ Jesus.

My Lord. For his sake. I've suffered the loss. Of all things. And I count them. As rubbish. In order that I may gain.

Christ. Keep hold of your life. Keep hanging on to it. You will lose it. Give it away.

To the Lord Jesus Christ. And you will find it. Let's pray. Amen. Amen.