

JOHN 12:27-43

THE SON IS GLORIFIED

“So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” (12:13). After this triumphal entry into Jerusalem by Jesus that we celebrate today Jesus said, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” (v. 23). But how would He be glorified beyond this parade with palm branches and loud hosanas? The people thought He was coming to be declared King of Israel. Jesus talked about death and eternal life.

How do you think Jesus is glorified? What does being glorified look like to you? How would it feel to be glorified? Jesus said, “Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour” (12:27). Who would feel troubled when they’re about to be declared king? Saul felt troubled and he hid when Samuel came to declare him as king of Israel (1 Samuel 10:22). Being declared king is a big responsibility, and so it would be understandable for anyone to feel nervous about being raised to such a position of glory.

However, Jesus knew that He was about to be raised to an even more glorious troubling position. His next parade wouldn’t involve donkeys, palms and loud hosanas. Rather in that parade Jesus would have to carry His own throne – the cross – there would be thorns instead of palm branches, and the cries would be, “Crucify Him!”

Jesus told the people that this change of venue was coming when He said, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself” (12:32). The people understood that He was referring to death by crucifixion, but they didn’t understand how a dead man could be their king.

Yet, that’s what we look at today, this triumphal entry into Jerusalem is Jesus heading to His death by crucifixion. Jesus would be lifted up from this earth on a cross. Such an image isn’t very uplifting for those who are celebrating and awaiting the coronation of Jesus as King of Israel.

‘Wait a minute’, they say. ‘That doesn’t seem right!’ The joy is being sucked out of them, and they want to stop Jesus from talking this way. When the joy is being sucked out of your life, you want to change things, don’t you? So, you try to do that. You try to change the situation. You go to a doctor for a healing. You go to dad to get your toy fixed. You talk to your coach so that you can play in the game. You talk to your boss so that you can get better working hours. You call the government to find out why you didn’t get your pension cheque on time. The people engaged Jesus in a debate about the Law.

Jesus had said that He must be lifted up, must be crucified, and in this way He would draw all people to Himself. What would come after that crucifixion would be a burial, an empty tomb and a resurrection. This is how He would draw all people to Himself through faith in His defeat of death and His resurrection to eternal life. But the people didn't want to think of bad stuff such as death. They only wanted the glory of an eternal kingdom.

We're no different than them. We don't want the bad stuff, we just want the good stuff. We don't want vegetables; we want desert. We don't want to work hard, but rather win the lottery so that we can enjoy retirement. We don't want suffering, but only a quick cure. We don't want to hear about God's laws that tell us to do things or not do things, or even that we're forgiven for the sins we do when we break God's Law. We only want to hear that Jesus loves us.

So let's engage Jesus in this debate. Who is this Son of Man who says He must be crucified to draw all people to Himself and give them eternal life? The people said that God's Law says that the Christ remains forever. Therefore, if Jesus is the Christ He cannot die.

Yes, Psalm 110(4) tells us that the Messiah would be "a priest forever". Ezekiel (37:25) told the people that a descendant of King David would "be their prince forever." And Daniel (7:13-14) said that the dominion of Son of Man "is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

And so the people looked for a Messiah, a King, the Son of Man who would establish an everlasting Kingdom. Yet, they looked for an earthly kingdom. Their Messiah, their Christ couldn't die. They wanted to know what Son of Man Jesus was claiming to be if He was going to die. If He was going to die, how could He be their eternal Messiah? It didn't make sense to them.

Jesus didn't try to explain away their doubts. He only asked that they trust Him. That's all Jesus asks us to do – have faith in Him. Jesus is the object of our saving faith. He is the Light of the Word that we're to look to for eternal life. Don't look to the darkness of your thoughts. Even these very educated people whom Jesus spoke with couldn't understand what Jesus was trying to tell them.

Yet, Jesus didn't give up on them. He doesn't give up on us either as long as we're willing to listen to Him and talk with Him. The people didn't understand the grain of wheat dying and coming back to life as a plant with more grains of wheat to illustrate Jesus' death leading to eternal life. So, He starts to talk to them about light and darkness. He uses this illustration many times in His teachings.

Jesus is called the true light of the world (John 1:9). But “people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). There’s that law again that we don’t like to hear, but we have to hear it. So, Jesus tells people plainly, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). Do you want to get out of the dark and have life, then follow Jesus. After our lesson Jesus says, “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness” (John 12:46).

In our lesson Jesus tells the people to believe in the light and they would become sons of the light. After what we’ve learned we can change those words to say, ‘Believe in Jesus and you’ll be children of Jesus.’

You don’t need all of your questions answered. All you need is to listen to Jesus and to believe in what Jesus tells you.

Today Jesus told you that His death leads to life, a glorious life, an eternal life. Jesus told you that the purpose of His life was to die. Through Jesus’ death and resurrection God is glorified, Satan is cast away from you, and you’re drawn to Him to have your own eternal life as a child of God.

This is the answer to the question that the people have in our lesson. Christ Jesus remains forever because He rises to eternal life. The kingdom that He reigns over is a Heavenly Kingdom, not an earthly kingdom. To be part of this Heavenly Kingdom you must believe in Jesus, but first Jesus draws you to Him so that you can believe in Him. And after you die with faith in Jesus you’ll rise to eternal life in God’s Heavenly Kingdom.

"Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" (12:13). Amen.