
LIFE IN HIS NAME

THE FOUR GLORIOUS RESULTS OF THE CROSS

John 12:27-36

“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. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you 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 is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

This passage is really about the cross -- that Jesus Christ will be lifted up on the cross and that he will die. And strangely, and I mean that literally, strangely it's about the glory of the cross. Let me just fit this passage into what's happening. This scene is near the end of Jesus' earthly life in ministry. It's just beginning the last week. Jesus has entered into Jerusalem. People are hailing him as the King. “Here's the Messiah, the King of Israel! He's going to save us!”

Jesus *is* the King, but he's not the kind of king they're looking for. They are looking for someone who will fix all of the problems outside of them, but they are unaware of their need to be saved on the inside. They are unaware of their need for personal salvation. **Jesus wants to bring a kingdom that's much greater than just fixing some problems on the outside of your life. And he will do that by paying the penalty for your sin, by dying on a cross, by being crucified to pay the penalty of sin, to give you a new heart so that you can follow him.** He rides into Jerusalem on a donkey as an expression of humility, to say, “Listen, I'm not raising up an army. I'm not coming to conquer. I'm coming to give my life so that you can have a relationship with God.”

Then something happens. Some Greeks show up, some Gentiles show up, and they ask to see Jesus. Here we are in Jerusalem. Israel is feasting. It's the Passover. It's a major, major holiday, and when these Gentiles ask to see Jesus, it signals to Jesus “My hour has come. It's time for me to die.” **The significance is this: Jesus isn't a savior for just one kind of person, for just a certain ethnic group. He is the savior of the world.** Again, they are not making these connections. They are not understanding it.

A lot of times, if we get a glimpse of Jesus and we are thinking, “Yeah, wow, maybe there really is a God, and maybe there really is a Son of God, Jesus,” we usually start to think about how he could make things better for us. “I’d like him to fix this, and fix this, and fix that.” We don’t grasp that his work is so much more profound. He wants to give you a new life. He wants to give you a new *you*. Jesus is saying to all of Israel, “I’m not just here for you. I’m here for everyone.”

This leads us to today’s text, where he actually explains that the way he’ll do that is he’ll be lifted up on the cross. He tells us, “This is glorious.” In fact, when the passage starts his soul is in deep anguish as he considers the pain he’s going to suffer -- not just the physical pain, but what he will spiritually endure by taking the weight of sin upon himself and being separated from God. He considers that and he’s troubled. He’s like, “What do I do? Do I pray to be delivered? No, I came for this hour. God! Father! Glorify yourself!” Then God speaks from heaven.

People don’t really understand it. They just realize that something supernatural is happening, but Jesus tells us that what the Father speaks is this word of glory. “I have glorified my name and I am going to do it again.” **He is connecting this whole idea of the cross and glory.**

Let’s just stop there for a minute, because that is a very unusual thing. It’s like saying, “I glory in the electric chair. I glory in being hung. I glory in execution.” It’s something that we identify with as someone who is guilty, someone who is a criminal, condemnation, judgment, shame. Jesus is saying, “No, no, no, this will glorify the Father.”

Some of our members do CrossFit. They generally sit over here in this section, so if you want to steer clear, I’ll just give you this warning. One of the CrossFit athletes, Rich Froning Jr., has Galatians 6:14 tattooed down his side. Galatians 6:14 says this: “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

First of all, Rich Froning does two things that I never do. One --- he works out like a beast, and secondly -- he takes his shirt off in the gym. I don’t do either. Here you have this chiseled man who takes off his shirt and he’s got this tattoo that says, “I am bragging about the cross of Jesus Christ. This is glory!” That’s quoting Paul. Paul says, “One thing is most glorious. One thing I boast in.” **You were made for glory, and you are always hungering for it. You are always looking for it. You are always drawn to it.**

I grew up in the Washington, DC area and I became a Redskins fan as a boy. So, I’m a Redskins fan and a Dolphins fan. God knew I would need a little extra tension in my life, so I married a girl from Dallas who is a Cowboys fan. If you don’t know it, the Redskins and Cowboys don’t get along. That’s an understatement. They are rivals. So the second my kids were born, I began to indoctrinate them in following the Washington Redskins. But when we adopted Joshua and Caleb,

Beth was the first to meet them and she got a leg up in the whole indoctrination stage and she misled them to root for the Cowboys. Today Washington plays Dallas, so *do not* come to our house today.

When we watch and I see these athletes, it's glorious. It really is. Three hundred pound men are running faster than most of us can run, hitting one another. We are drawn to it because of the spectacle of glory. We love it when we see people accomplish feats and when we see great talent, great ability, great wealth, great wisdom, great integrity – all the various forms it comes in. **We are drawn to it because we were made to experience ultimate glory, which is the glory of God. Honestly, when we're not right with God we've got to have that glory fix, so we look for it everywhere. We look for it in created things and created ways, and it gets us in trouble, because it can only ultimately be found in God.** So, glory in the cross? Yeah. **Glory in the cross. It restores us to God. It restores us to glory.** Specifically, in this passage Jesus teaches on it.

As I set up to give you four points today, let me just say this. A few years ago we simplified the name of the church. We had a name and we said we were going to just simplify that to Riverside Church. We did that and we did what we call rebranding. We had our logo changed a little bit. Our creative design person did that for us. Here's what we were after. We have just this cross, this banner. When we did stickers for the car, we didn't do the church name. It was deliberate. We wanted to draw attention to the cross. We wanted to draw attention to Jesus Christ. As a church, we don't want it to be about one person or even so much some of our distinctives. **We want people to see Jesus, because that's what we are about. We want to help people follow Jesus. We want to help people know him and follow him. This is an important message, because the cross makes that possible. The cross restores us to the whole experience of glory in God.**

"The Four Glorious Results of the Cross" – are you ready? Let's jump in.

I. Judgment.

Verse 31: "Now is the judgment of this world." Jesus is proclaiming: "My hour has come. I am troubled. I am going to the cross. Father, glorify your name. This sacrifice will glorify you." The first thing that Jesus tells us about it is that the cross is an act of judgment. What? Yeah -- God judges sin at the cross. The penalty for sin for all who will trust in Jesus is put upon Jesus at the cross and he is judged for our sin.

The whole idea of judgment is perhaps not really a popular idea, but it's very important for us to understand.

Foundationally, God is holy. God is without sin. And he is just. He judges that which is wrong. He doesn't ignore it. He judges it.

There is a scene in the bible in Isaiah 6 where the great prophet Isaiah has this vision of God and he sees God in his glory in the temple. It's a magnificent scene, but when he beholds God in his glory he is immediately aware of his own sin. The first thing he says is: "Woe is me! For I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." **In the light of the glory of God, he sees his own need before God. He experiences, you might say, judgment.**

John tells us that Jesus has been developing this theme throughout his entire ministry. He does it again in this passage. He talks about how he is the light and he is coming into the middle of darkness. Just by his very presence, just when light comes into darkness, it exposes what's in the dark. It illumines. It makes light.

Some of you who are Christians experience this in some of your friendships. Rightfully so, you have friends who don't know the Lord and may do things that you used to do before you knew the Lord, but you don't do now. Sometimes those friends are uncomfortable that you don't do those things, and they want you to do those things. They say, "Go ahead! Come on!" They coax you to do those. You see, your not doing them is like light shining on them doing them. It may not be your intention. Sometimes, even in relationship, you'll be there -- you're not doing it, they're doing it, and it creates this awkwardness. Just imagine for Jesus what that was like, because he is perfect. That's what happens when we get in the presence of God. That's been there all of Jesus' ministry. He is the light of the world.

But now, the cross ultimately highlights that. He takes our sin upon himself as an act of judgment and here's what happens. **This is the separating point. You will either embrace Jesus as the payment for your sin, or you'll reject him. The cross is the point of separation. The cross is the point of judgment, where you remain under the judgment of God, or you are set free because you have received Jesus' payment in your place -- Jesus as our substitute.**

So, the first thing that Jesus teaches us about the glory of the cross is that God judges sin. He judges sin, but in his love for us, he takes that judgment upon himself. It helps us to just be honest about who we are.

II. Satan is defeated.

This is the second glorious result of the cross. Same verse, verse 31: "...now will the ruler of this world be cast out." Scripture tells us that you cannot be explained as just a collection of physical cells. There is more than physical matter. You are a spiritual being. Spiritually, there is good and evil, and the scripture tells us that there is personal evil. Satan exists. We are told here that the cross is a defining moment spiritually in that Satan is cast out. His power is changed forever.

How does that work? **You and I need to understand that Satan is a very powerful enemy. You have an enemy that desires to destroy you. But he can only work through legal access in your life, and sin gives him that access. Your guilt before God gives Satan access to work. The cross disarms your enemy because it removes that legal access.**

Let's look at Colossians 2:13-15. Paul writes: "And you, who were dead in your trespasses" (dead in your sin) "and the uncircumcision of your flesh..." Your heart, Paul says, needs to be circumcised, needs a complete renovation. You were once like that, but God made you alive "...together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses." **You go to the cross, you are forgiven of your sin, Jesus does a work in your heart, and you are made alive spiritually.** That's what he's describing.

Verse 14: He did this "...by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." Everything you've ever failed to do or everything that you've done wrong -- when you come to Jesus and ask for forgiveness and believe that he's paid the penalty, all of it is forgiven and set aside. It's glorious! And here's the result. Verse 15: "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."

Have you ever known what it is to just be tormented in your soul? Tormented with fear? Tormented with anxiety? Tormented with patterns that are destructive, in relationships, and for yourself? Have you ever had that moment of revelation where you see how your weakness, your shortcomings impact other people and bring destruction? Have you known the grief of that? Have you looked at your life and said, "You know, there's something not connecting at a deeper level in my heart. There's something that's off, because I don't just occasionally do these things. I return to them. This cycle defines my life."

Then you start to search. "What did I do? Where did I go? Did someone do something to me? Did I do it? Why am I like this? Why is life like this?" **When Jesus comes in he says, "Listen, here's what gave access to that torment, and I'm taking all of it and I'm paying for it. Everything done to you and everything done by you is paid for by Jesus Christ. And the enemy is disarmed in your life."**

Now, this is what you want to do. To all of our guests, I'm going to speak to just the members for a moment. By that, I mean to individuals who would say, "Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior. I am a Christian." If that's not you, I'm so glad you're here. You should be here. Thank you for being here. But I'm just going to speak to Christians for a moment. If you're not careful, you will try to do this second point "Disarm Satan" yourself, based on how well you are doing in life. You don't have the spiritual power to disarm this enemy, because the only way to disarm him is for your sin to be judged and paid for. And you and I can't do that.

Here's the good news. God is holy. He demands payment, and Jesus pays it for you. Now, because God is holy, he's not going to demand it from you again! You are trying to pay a paid debt! Jesus has paid it! We never could pay it. And Satan is disarmed in your life. Live in the reality of that. It starts in some ways by just acknowledging, "I'm a

spiritual being and I'm made for more than just this life and this world and this moment." Jesus has defeated my enemy.

Let me give you a practical application of this before we move on. Ephesians 4:26-27: "Be angry and do not sin" -- that's tough to do, isn't it? "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil." Here is what Paul is talking about here, another reference from Paul. He is saying that when you get angry and you sin and you leave it unresolved, you give access to Satan in your life. You give him an opportunity. You give him a legal plot of land in your heart to stand.

I thought about this in my own life. I'm aware of this verse. I've taught it before. I thought about my relationship with Beth. We've been married almost 30 years -- 28 years -- perfect, marvelous years. In those 28 years, two or three times we've had an argument. Yeah, some of you got the point that we've had friction. I can't tell you how many times this has happened. Let me just give this qualifier. This does not define our lives. This does not define our marriage. I'm happily married. I don't remember when this happened the last time. We did not have a fight today. We have not had a fight this week, have we? I don't think so.

But there have been moments where I have been bothered, agitated, irritated, and pretty sure I was right. It's the truth. And I've gone to spend time with the Lord. I'm there with the Lord and I get, by God's mercy, a little glimpse of his glory. Just a little bit. Then, you know what it is? It's Isaiah: "Woe is me." When you are before God, all the arguments you are making in other relationships just don't work. I can't tell you how many times, just a moment before the Lord, I then come out of that and I'm sending a text to my wife: "Sweetheart, I'm so sorry. Please forgive me."

Again, that hasn't happened recently, I don't think, and I don't want you to think that it characterizes all of our relationship, but I do want you to know that I want to practice this. Because this dear person who is one with me -- we've experienced what it's like when Satan gets in, when you say, "No, I'm right. I'm always right, and I'm holding onto my rightness. I don't care. I know I was wrong, but he was more wrong, or she was more wrong." You suffer the destruction and make the connection, you will see. I would rather live with Jesus paying the penalty for my sin, me receiving forgiveness, and me just owning it. Amen?

Now I need to ask you to pray. Again, the Redskins play the Cowboys today and I'm confessing our sins before you. We've looked at this before. I'll just leave this with you before we leave this point. John 10:10: **"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy." That is Satan's agenda for your life. Give him no access. Jesus died to free you from that torment. Embrace in faith what Christ died to make possible in your life.**

III. Jesus is exalted.

Verse 32: “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” This reference: “When I am lifted up from the earth,” indicates two things. It’s a phrase that identifies the kind of death that Jesus will die. He will be lifted up on a cross and he will die. Jesus is telling us that, but it’s put into the language of praise. In that moment he will be exalted. He will be lifted up. First of all, it uniquely identifies Jesus’ manner of death, while at the same time it is saying he will be exalted through his death. The reason is it magnifies the love of God. John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Friend, think just for a moment. If you hear nothing else today, consider this passage. Jesus is aware: “I’m going to die. I’m to die so that not just Jewish people, but all people can be saved. I’m in agony, so much so that I’m tempted to say, ‘God, just take this from me.’” What would motivate Jesus to do that? The answer is: It will glorify God as God’s love for you is put on open display. **Jesus gave his life so that you could be set free from your sin, and the penalty of it, and the judgment of it, so you wouldn’t have to suffer the judgment, so that the torment that is brought into your life can be removed in Jesus Christ. It happens gradually by faith in this life. It happens ultimately and forever, for all of eternity, when we are in Christ. That is glorious good news! Amen?!**

It is just the act of the Father loving us by giving his Son, and the Son loving us by giving himself. My biggest tests often have been when I’ve felt like my children were hurt. Watching them hurt or suffer, it’s just...and my heart goes out to those of you who have had severe tests in this area. God the Father gave his Son for you. It’s love that is incomprehensible, and Jesus is exalted.

We live by this principle. We lift up Jesus. We tattoo Galatians 6:14 down our side. **We want to direct people to his magnificent display of love, taking the penalty that we deserved upon himself as an act of love that we might be forgiven.** Proverbs 3:5-6, just a general principle that is applied here: Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” Acknowledge the Lord. Acknowledge Jesus. Acknowledge the cross and that your life is found in his death.

IV. People are drawn to Jesus.

This is the fourth glorious result of the cross. Jesus said, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” As people see the cross, as they see Jesus’ sacrifice for our sin, we are drawn to him.

Remember last week we said that something triggered this in Jesus? Greeks arrived at the scene and said, “Hey, can we speak to Jesus?” Jesus then said, “My hour has now come. I’m going to tell you now what kind of humble servant I am. I’m going to give my life for the payment of your sin as an act of love. And when I do that, these Gentiles, these Jewish

people, *everyone* will be drawn to me so that they can be forgiven and restored.” The Glorious Results of the Cross of Jesus Christ.

How do we conclude? **I want to give you one practical application on what we should do with this glorious good news, and that is to walk in the light that you have. Believe in Jesus. Walk in that light. You may want more light, but walk in whatever you have.**

What do I mean and why do I say that? The passage ends with Jesus giving this reference. The Son of Man is going to be lifted up and all people will be drawn to him. The people kind of get it. They are like, “Hmmm. I think he’s talking about his death. But we thought the Messiah, the Christ would live forever! We don’t understand.” Jesus comes out of that by saying, “Listen, I’m here. I’m the light. Walk in the light while you can, because when darkness comes, you’ll stumble around.” Basically, that’s what he says, as a paraphrase.

They have a limited understanding. They are not completely grasping what he’s talking about. Here’s what I would expect. I would expect Jesus to say this: “Okay, listen, I know you don’t understand now, but wait till after the cross. Wait till after I’m raised from the dead on the third day, then you’ll get it.” He doesn’t do that. In fact, he never tells people, “Wait to believe in me.” He tells them: **“Believe in me now, so that you can believe in me later.”** The inference here is that if you’re not drawn into Jesus and acting on that faith, you are going the other way. That doesn’t mean that you have it all figured out right now. You don’t have it all figured out. In fact, there are two great examples right here in this chapter, one we read today.

This is really an unusual thing in this passage. Jesus has this conversation with his Father. He says, “Father, glorify your name,” then God speaks from heaven. But the people don’t understand it. What do they say? “Well, maybe it’s an angel. It thundered. It’s a supernatural event.” They don’t get the benefit of comprehending what Jesus heard. Then Jesus makes this statement: “That was for you, not for me.” “No. I heard noise, but I didn’t get it! I didn’t understand.”

What is the meaning of that? Well, I think the only thing you can take away from it is the simple fact that it was this divine affirmation pointing to Jesus, and that’s all they got. In essence, this is God’s message to you and me: **“The only way for you to know me is through Jesus.” So at whatever level you have understanding, you go for that. You put your faith in that, and you keep moving, and as you move towards that, you’ll have more and more light. Be honest about your objections. Be honest about your doubts. Be honest about your questions, but confront them. Deal with them so that you can move through to a place of faith.**

The second example came earlier. You remember, Jesus rides in on a donkey and the people are throwing palm branches before him. We are told in verse 16 after the prophet is quoted, we read this: “His disciples did not understand these

things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.” They only got it later. I know that many times we are following God and we are trying to trust, but we don’t really understand. We don’t have the comprehension we want to, and I think that’s a takeaway from this passage. **Trust in Jesus. Trust in the cross, his substitute for you, and God will help you to understand as you are ready, as you are able.**

We are concluding. **Do you trust in Jesus? Are you trusting completely in him from your heart? There is no other way for you to know God and the life that he has for you.** Let’s pray.