

# Jesus; Lifted Up

*The Story Of Jesus*

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**Bible Text:** John 12:27-50  
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I think this morning we should be able to complete this wonderful chapter. As we find our place in the Bible, let's keep in mind that what we read today are the last words of Jesus, let's say it this way, the last public teaching of Jesus. We're in the last week of his life and after we get through the material here in chapter 12, Jesus will spend time with his disciples, he will teach his disciples, he will speak to them, he will encourage them, but this is it for his public ministry. These are his last words in public because of the rejection. He's rejected. So this entire chapter is significant from the anointing that takes place in the first few verses when Mary anoints Jesus, which Christ recognized that she was preparing him for burial; that's not so much spelled out, I don't think, in the book of John, but it is in Matthew, Mark. And we know that the disciples were indignant at what they perceived as waste, "This could have been used for some other reason or cause. Could have been used to feed the poor, but she's putting all of this, all of this perfume, this spikenard on Jesus. She must be out to lunch. What's she thinking?" Well, Jesus covers her. Jesus shields her from the disgust of the disciples. Judas was the one who was most outspoken, but the disciples joined in.

And then you move through that, there's the triumphal entry, Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. The king, this was prophesied in Zechariah that the Messiah would enter on a beast of burden and there Jesus is on the beast of burden. Nobody, no ruler, no potential ruler would ever just get on a donkey and ride into town. They would be on a stallion. They would walk and lead their troops. But Jesus is leading people with palm branches and they're shouting hosannas. But this is according to prophecy. This is according to the word of God that the Messiah would enter this way. And they didn't understand that Jesus would be looking at a cross, and that this king that they would welcome would die. He's a king that would die for the people. What king does that? What king dies for his subjects? But at last, that's what Jesus came to do. He came to save, and the only way to save was that there had to be a death because of sin because sin separates us from God. And it's not just that we sin a little, it's not just that we're touched or tainted by sin, it is that we are fully, 100% depraved. At the same time, we don't sin as much as we could by the grace of God. But we are sinners and the only way to be saved is that Jesus, the King, would not turn toward the seat of Roman government and Roman power in order to defeat the Romans and overthrow their government, but that Jesus would turn toward the temple

and that he would set his eyes, his focus on doing the will of God and that would mean that Jesus, the King would die on a cross.

And then following that, we see this chapter fully unfolding as the Greeks seek Jesus and that's so astounding. Here Jesus is in the hotbed of Judaism, a city inhabited by Hebrews and the Greeks. There's some Greeks there for the feast and they're seeking Jesus and we love that, what they say there in verse 21, "Sir," they're approaching Philip, one of the disciples of Christ, "we wish to see Jesus." And Philip told Andrew, Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus, and then Jesus begins to speak. It's in this moment, the Greeks kind of fade into the background. We never hear from them again but we hear Jesus talking and speaking words that those Greeks needed to hear. Indeed, this was the signal that the hour has come. Verse 23, the hour has come. The Greeks want to see Jesus and that signals in the heart of Jesus that the hour has come. Up to this point, the hour, it was not his time, but now it is his time and he says it's time for the Son of Man there in verse 23, to be glorified. It's time for the Son of Man to be glorified. The Son of Man is a reference that Jesus used of himself more than any other reference. It's a reference to his humanity and it is a reference to his divinity. And he says it's time to be glorified and this will, this is a theme, this is a subject that continues through this narrative.

So verse 24, he says, "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." Now our sermon outline can be taken from that one verse and it incorporate the rest of the chapter, because that is what this is all about. So three points this morning that we need to hear. We could ask these, we could put them in the form of a question. First of all, what did it mean that Jesus was glorified? Glorification is a big deal here. Jesus uses it in this verse 23, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified," and this idea of being glorified comes up again there in verse 27, 28 and following. What does it mean that Jesus was glorified? Very important. Secondly, what was the abundant harvest that would come from that glorification? What was the wonderful blessing, what was the overarching blessing that would come from his glorification? And then thirdly, but not lastly or leastly, what is your response to his glorification? What is your response? Because we know, if we know anything, we know this, that Christianity is public. It is a public thing. How many of you have thought about that lately? Christianity is a public thing and we'll see this, it will be, Jesus will, he will drill down on that idea at the end of this chapter leaving no one in doubt that Christianity is a public thing.

So let's get started. We'll pick it up there in verse 27. We'll read it. I'll try to remember to refer back to 24 because I said our outline could come from that one verse. There it is, "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies," we're at 24. So that has to do with his glorification right there. He uses a very common illustration. The wheat goes into the earth, that seed dies, and he says, if it dies, he says, "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone," in other words, it has to die, "but if it dies," there it goes, "it bears much fruit." That's the first two points. Jesus' glorification has to do with his death and then the blessing of that glorification is an abundant harvest. It bears much fruit.

And then he goes on, he talks about how we respond to him. "He who loves his life loses it. He who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal." That's what this is about, it's about eternal life, it's about a way of living, a way of life that begins now but goes on long after this life on earth, this physical life, this life that we have now is over.

And then he says, "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also." That is the goal that we are with him for all eternity, forever and ever, that once this life is over, that we are with him and there will never be a time that we will not be with him. He says, "if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

Verse 27, "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour." There's a lot to be said on that verse. It's basically what we have in Matthew, in Mark, in Luke regarding the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. We see a perfect mixture of the humanity of Christ, as well as the divinity of Jesus right here in that verse. He says, "But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Here Jesus is in prayer and Jesus is intimately connected with the Father. He doesn't do anything but what the Father directs him to do. He doesn't say anything but that the Father has directed him to say. They are unified in this mission of mercy and Jesus says, "glorify Your name," and "Then a voice came out of heaven," here we have a surprise. A voice comes out of heaven. A voice that could be heard and understood. The Father says, "I have both glorified it, and," what? Your name. He says, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." So the Father is putting his approval on all that Jesus has done, on every sign, every wonder, every teaching; everything that Christ accomplished, the Father says, "That's good. I've glorified it." And then he says, "and I will glorify it again," which means, "I have glorified it. I have approved of all that You have said and done. And at this juncture, at this crucial time, I will not leave You. I will not forsake You." Things get difficult. We have that in the life of Jesus.

"So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, 'An angel has spoken to Him.'" Everybody's always got an opinion.

"Jesus answered and said, 'This voice has not come for My sake, but for yours.'" That's really interesting since the voice came for their sake, yet they're the ones who misunderstood. The benefit of that voice, think about it, whether you understood it literally or not, they knew there was a voice from heaven. Later on, those disciples would think back on this time and that prayer and they would know beyond a shadow of a doubt, that when Jesus' hour had arrived, when that hour had come, the hour of his glorification, and that prayer was offered, they would remember that in response to the prayer of Christ, there was a voice from heaven. Whether they knew exactly what it said or not, God had spoken. This is the third time in the New Testament, in the Gospels, that we've heard the voice from heaven: one at the baptism of Jesus, and then one on the Mount of Transfiguration. But we've got to move on.

"Jesus answered and he told them this voice was not, it's not for me, but for you. Now, verse 31. These verses here are... I mean, Jesus is just... he is spouting truth here. Those

words right here, 31 and 32, I think they're still hot. They are right there meaningful to us and we would do well to hear the words of Jesus. The "now" there in verse 31 and the "now," the second "now" in 31, 31A now, 31B now, those words are emphatic. Jesus says, "Now judgment is upon 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 men to Myself." Jesus is speaking particularly of his glorification. John 3, I think it's verse 14, "As the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness." Remember that? The children of Israel out in the wilderness being bitten by these poisonous snakes and Moses goes to God on behalf of the people, "Lord, what are we going to do? These people are being bitten. These snakes are poisonous." And that was a judgment on those people for their complaining and their ways. But God told Moses, he instructed him, "Take a bronze serpent, a bronze serpent, put it on a pole, raise it up and instruct the people that if anyone is bitten, look to that bronze serpent and he will be healed." So that's Old Testament, but we have it in John 3, that wonderful chapter on the new birth. Jesus said, "if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself," and he is referring, John says in verse 33, to his death, "but he was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which he was to die and this is his glorification." What does it mean that Jesus was glorified? It means that he was lifted up. He was lifted up from the earth. He was lifted up. Having been nailed to the cross, he was then lifted up. I like to think Jesus wasn't shot down. He wasn't run down. He wasn't cut down to size. Even in his death, he was lifted up so that all would see and so that all would be drawn to him because after all, it's really not about, it's not about church or church stuff, that going to heaven and being forgiven, it's all about Jesus. It's all about what he did and it's all about your response and my response to his glorification, which began with him being lifted up on the cross from the earth. And he said, if that happens, and I'm pretty sure that's an "if" of certainty there, not an "if" of uncertainty, he indeed would die, he would be lifted up from the earth, and he indeed would draw all men to himself. Right there and if you go back to verse 24, he says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies," there it is, "it bears much fruit." I like to put those together, the "much fruit" with the "drawing all men to Himself." Notice this salvation is initiated by the Father and the Son.

We move on verse 34, we've got a little ways to go. Verse 34, "The crowd then answered Him, 'We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, "The Son of Man must be lifted up"? Who is this Son of Man?'" Once again, the people didn't get it. What does it mean that the Son of Man is going to be lifted up? We believe that he's going to remain forever. So which is it? The answer is, yes. The Son of Man will be lifted up. He will die on a cross. It will be an agonizing and ugly death. But the story doesn't end there. He'll be taken down from that cross. He'll be buried and he'll rise again from the dead. Praise God. But the story doesn't end there. He rose from the dead. He appeared to many people in his glorified existence. And then what did he do? He ascended. We call that his exaltation, his ascension to the right hand of the Father. So Jesus is lifted up, here's his glorification. Listen carefully, don't miss it. He's lifted up in death. He rises up in resurrection and he is exalted at his ascension and in all three of those, he is what? Lifted up. Our Lord was lifted up. He will never be confined to the earth. He has risen and this rising and this exaltation speaks to his ultimate victory over this world and over the enemy that was cast out at his death. And the people, "Well, how

can you say this? We thought He was going to be here forever." Well, he is, but he had to die first.

"So Jesus said to them, 'For a little while longer the Light is among you.'" I tremble reading these verses for those of us who live like the life that we know now will continue indefinitely because that's not the case. Look at that verse. What does Jesus tell them in that context there? He says, "while you have the Light, believe the Light." Jesus knows he just has days left on earth. In fact, this is his last public teaching. "Believe while you will and believe while you can." Today, we have the Bible open before us, we have the Holy Spirit working among us, we have the encouragement of the body of Christ. I'll just put it the way he put it, we have the Light and Jesus says, "while you have the Light, believe in the Light." We've just talked about his glorification. Doesn't really get brighter than that. "Well, that sounds real good. I've just never really responded to that. I've never really believed in that. I just, I find it fascinating. I find it interesting. I, I don't, I don't know what to do with that." Well, Jesus says there's a point to this. He has come to be glorified, to live, to die, to rise, to be exalted, that you would believe. That you would believe.

So believe. Believe. Believe today. If you've never believed before, believe today. Believe while you have the Light. Believe while you have the Bible. Believe while you have a caring parent, a caring friend, a grandmother, a grandfather that cares and would support you in this belief. In fact, they wouldn't just support you, they would rejoice with you in this conversion, in this belief in Christ. Believe in the Light. And to think that this just goes on indefinitely is wrong. We are not guaranteed tomorrow and even if we have a tomorrow, we're not guaranteed that it will look like today. We should know that better than we've ever known it having gone through 2020, having gone through what we've gone through as a people, We should cherish the Light. We should cling to the Light. We should walk in the Light. We should be the sons of the Light and daughters of the Light. And we should be forever grateful to God that we have breath in our lungs and that while we are on this earth, we will give testimony to his glorification.

He says, "Walk while you have the Light, so that," listen, "darkness, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes." I'm still trembling because I know folks who walk in darkness and they do not know what's ahead. They do not know the judgment they are walking into. They do not understand the hellfire that awaits them and separation from God because they have rejected Jesus, they have rejected the Light and they are walking in abject darkness.

There it is, verse 36, "While you have the Light," we have the Light, we have the Scriptures, we have the Gospel, we have Jesus, we have Jesus glorified in front of us, we have Jesus defeating the world and casting out the devil right before us. This is all confirmed in Scripture. "'While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.' These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them. But though He had performed so many signs before them," this is so interesting, we delve into the world of unbelief and those of us that have been drawn by

the power of Jesus, to him, to his glorification, marvel at the unbelief that we once lived in, at the unbelief that many even this day live in. Did you see that?

"But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him." Verse 37. John records seven signs; there were many more that Jesus accomplished, and do you know the Jews really never, they admitted the signs. Remember Nicodemus? Nicodemus, a teacher of the Jews, he was the main man, came to Jesus by night under the cover of darkness and he says, "Jesus, no one can do what You do. No one can perform the signs that You perform except God be with him." Well, what are we doing, Nicodemus? What are we waiting for? Well, Nicodemus waited a while. The signs were there. The Jews really, even the ruling Jews did not discount the signs. They couldn't. There were so many signs performed. And now it gets dicey. I love dicey, don't you? Well, in some respects. I just love it that the Lord, you know, he's facing death, he's going to be forsaken by his friends, and he's just going to give everybody something to think about right now and I like the way he did. I think this is his way of saying, no matter who you are and no matter how far you've come spiritually, I think this is Jesus' way of saying, "I'm God, and I know, and you will never understand it all." But it's enough to understand his glorification. But look at this thing called unbelief.

So it goes on, 38, "This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: 'Lord.'" Now, what was fulfilling the word that they didn't believe? Right there, verse 37, the last part of that verse, "yet they were not believing in Him. This, they're not believing, was to fulfill the word of Isaiah, the prophet, which he spoke." What did Isaiah speak? Well, here it is. "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" And the answer to that was not many, if any. I mean, when the Lord called Isaiah, he basically said, "Hey, Isaiah, I've got a vision for you." Isaiah saw the vision. He said, "I've got a job for you." And he gave him the job and he said, "You're not going to be successful. You're going to preach it. They ain't gonna believe it." Yay! That's what it says right there.

"Who's believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For this reason," there it is, "they," meaning the Jews, "could not believe, for Isaiah said again," oh boy, he's going to quote Isaiah again for us, "He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart and be converted and I heal them." Okay. I mean, it's like Jesus is going to be glorified. He's going to be lifted up. He's bringing the truth. He wants people to believe in him, but the Jews are not going to believe in him and he goes all the way back to Isaiah and says, "Isaiah spoke of this time." And Jesus says it this way, they would not believe, and then they could not believe. Now, I want you to get that in your mind. We don't think of that often. They wouldn't believe in spite of the miracles, in spite of what God had done. We read about it in Deuteronomy 29. There it is. They wouldn't believe. So that was on them. And then in God's sovereignty, ultimately, they could not believe. There it is. Think about that. Talk about that over lunch.

"These things Isaiah said," now look at this, this is stunning, "These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him." So Jesus goes on to say, Isaiah said

those things that we just read, because he saw the glory of Jesus. That's what the "He" refers, the "His" there refers to Jesus and he spoke of Jesus. I wonder when that might've happened. Isaiah 6, how's it start? "And I saw the Lord on a throne high and lifted up and the train of His robe filled the temple." Another reference to the glorification of our Lord Jesus. The idea is that Isaiah saw, what John is saying is that Isaiah saw Jesus there in Isaiah 6, that he saw his glory and he spoke of him.

"Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him." Now, we're looking at unbelief right now, the unbelief of the Jews specifically and the rejection, their rejection of Jesus. Notice how this unfolds as we wrap up the chapter. Why did they not confess Jesus? Verse 42 is interesting because "believed in Him" is generally considered saving faith but it's not here. There it is, "Nevertheless many even of the rulers," of the ruling Jews, "believed in," Jesus. Well, that's the whole point that they would believe in him. "But," but that's a big adversative, "because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him." Why? Right there it is, "for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue." So there it is. They knew in their own minds what Jesus did. They knew his signs were real. They knew what he taught. He taught like no man ever taught, but they, even though they believe the facts about Jesus, they would not bring themselves to confess Jesus. Why?

Verse 43 tells us, "for they loved." That word "loved" is a big deal. "They loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." Now he's getting to what true belief is. Believing in Christ, trusting yourself, your life with Christ, turning your back on the world. Why would we want the approval of a world that passed judgment on our Lord Jesus Christ? Why would we want that? Why would they want that?

"And Jesus cried out," and that word "cried out," he's raising his voice and he said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me." Once again, he is making that connection between him and the Father and a rejection of Jesus is a rejection of the Father. The acceptance of Jesus is the acceptance of the Father. The Father and the Son are on the same mission, although they have different roles.

"He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. I have come as Light into the world," this is his last public address, "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness." Thank God that we do not walk in darkness. We have the light of life. We have the light of the Scriptures. We have the light of Christ in us, that we see the truth and we can revel in the truth. We can walk in the truth, recognize the truth. We can resonate with the truth.

He says, "If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world." Does that sound familiar? John 3 again. "I didn't come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." The word will judge him at the last day, "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak." And what is that commandment that he tells us? This is so beautiful.

What is the commandment of the Father? "I know that His commandment is eternal life." That's what he commands. Now if you have an NIV, they completely mess up the wording here. The NIV says this, it says that it will lead to eternal life, "I know that His commandment will lead to eternal life." The literal there is, "I know that His commandment is eternal life." There's a difference. One's stronger. "Therefore, the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me." He's just telling these unbelieving Jews that because you've rejected, you've rejected me, but not just me, you've rejected the Father and they've turned their backs on Christ, and now the ministry will narrow, the ministry of Jesus will narrow its focus on the disciples from chapter 13 on through the rest of the Gospel.

*Father in heaven, we thank You for the day and we thank You for the Light. The Light shines in darkness and the darkness comprehends it not. Lord, I pray today You would touch us, You would draw us, that we would express true faith in You, that we would confess You before others, that we would not dare be ashamed, that we would not seek the approval of men more than Your approval, because ultimately Your approval is all that matters and what You want for us, Lord, is so much greater than what we could even want for ourselves, eternal life, life with You, that we would be where You are. And that in the meantime, in this world, in this life, we would walk by the Light, we would confess You, and we would see many more turn to You in faith, and we would actually see the abundant harvest before us as You draw all men to Yourself. Now, Lord, if there's anyone here who's never come to You in simple faith and trust, we pray, God, that they would be born again by Your Spirit in this moment. We pray in Jesus' name and God's people said, amen.*