

The Cross for the World

When the Greeks approach Phillip with a request to see Jesus, it certainly seems like an insignificant event. But Christ's response lets us know that we are in a turning point in the Gospel of John. For 11 chapters Jesus has said, "My hour has not yet come." Now after the request of these Greeks He suddenly says, "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." He then goes on to speak of his death on the Cross.

There are two mistakes we sometimes make when thinking of the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross. One mistake is to see the Cross as the defeat and the Resurrection that follows as the victory. The other mistake is to see the Cross only in sentimental terms, that its primary purpose is the demonstration of God's love for us. Here in this passage we see that the Cross itself is a victory with an even deeper purpose than love.

20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. **21** So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." **22** Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. **23** And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. **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. **25** Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **26** If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

The Son of Man Must Be Lifted Up

27 "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. **28** Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." **29** The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." **30** Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. **31** Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. **32** And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." **33** He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

1. The Centrality of the Cross (vv. 20-26)

- a. The request of the Greeks seems to ignite a fuse in Jesus where He begins to speak of this key "hour." This "hour" is the Cross and it is the center of Jesus' ministry, of human history, and even of the life of His followers.
- b. The Cross is CENTRAL to the life and purpose of Jesus. You cannot separate the ministry of Jesus or the great teachings of Jesus from the event of the Cross. Without the Cross they do not make sense.
- c. The Cross is CENTRAL to human history. The Cross is the "hour" upon which all of human history turns.
- d. The Cross is CENTRAL to the followers of Christ. Jesus lets His followers know that this death, this Cross, will mark their lives both in their salvation and service.

2. The Glory of the Cross (vv. 27-30)

- a. As in other parts of John's Gospel, in these verses we get a glimpse of a conversation between the Father and the Son. While Jesus is "deeply troubled" at the thought of the Cross, He is determined to fulfill his mission, the glory of the Father. God, the Father, responds saying that He has been glorified in Jesus' life, and He will be glorified in Jesus' death.

b. It is here that we understand that the primary purpose of the Cross is not the salvation of God's chosen ones. The primary purpose of the Cross is to glorify the Father. We also see here that the victory of this glorification is not just in the Resurrection, but it is also in the suffering and death of Christ on the Cross.

3. The Power of the Cross (vv. 31-33)

- a. As Jesus concludes His words about the "hour" of his death, He reveals four ways the Cross will demonstrate the power of God.
- b. The Cross will bring Judgment to the World. In the rejection of Christ, the world is found guilty. In the necessity of the Cross the world is found guilty.
- c. The death of Christ on the Cross will serve to cast out the "ruler of this world." The Cross will deal a fatal blow to Satan's work.
- d. In the Cross Christ is exalted, lifted up before the world as Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 52:13-15.
- e. Through the Cross, Christ will draw the world to Himself.

Discussion Questions

1. How do our misunderstanding about the Cross keep us from seeing the fuller purpose of Christ's death?
2. What are some of the teachings of Christ that would be hard to truly understand apart from the Cross?
3. Though the purpose of the Cross does involve the salvation of sinners, why is it important to understand that the primary purpose of the Cross is that the Father might be glorified?
4. How does Christ's work on the Cross result in the defeat of Satan?
5. How does the Cross draw the world to Christ?

Going Deeper

1. How has your life been shaped by the Cross?
2. Jesus said that His followers must hate this life in order to keep eternal life. What does that mean for you?