

John Chapter 12

Sermon outline

John 11:47-57 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. **11:48** If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. **11:49** And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, **11:50** Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. **11:51** And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; **11:52** And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. **11:53** Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. **11:54** Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. **11:55** And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. **11:56** Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? **11:57** Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew *it*, that they might take him.

John 12:1 Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

Bethany was a village about two miles east of Jerusalem, on the other side of the Mount of Olives; the scene of the resurrection of Lazarus. Jesus moved through Jericho in a kind of triumphal procession, with vast multitudes thronging His steps. Jesus traveled not to seek seclusion, but to attend a public feast. The time for all concealment was now past. This was the time of the second cleansing of the temple and His final appeal to Jerusalem recorded in Matthew Chapters 21-23. Now He seems to seek publicity, and also to invite the malice of His enemies to do their worst.

John 12:2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

It is not said in whose house they ate , but Matthew and Mark say it took place at the house of “Simon the leper.” Simon may have been some other relative, or, dead and Martha his widow. Christ may have healed him of his leprosy. The only thing certain is that the feast was at his house. “They” has no antecedent to tell us who it was and it is as likely to refer to the people as anyone else.

John 12:3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Spike-nard was an aromatic herb imported from an early age from Arabia, India, and the Far East. It was the costliest of all the anointing oils of antiquity and was sold throughout the Roman Empire. Its price put it beyond any but the most wealthy. Mary bought a pound of it. It was all for Christ and nothing was kept back. She anointed first His head, and then stooped down to His feet. The anointing of the head was a distinction conferred on the guest of honor, cf: Luke 7:46. The house was filled with the odor; this ointment was VERY fragrant.

John 12:4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, which should betray him,

John, as knowing who had whispered the first word of blame, fixes the judgment on “Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son,” who could see nothing in the lavish gift but a “waste.”

John 12:5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

A penny here is the denarius, a Roman silver coin about the size of a 1964 American silver dime worth about \$2.50 in today’s money, so we’re talking about \$750. This wretch, is going to sell the only Son of God for 30 pence (pieces of silver), each about the size of an American silver quarter worth today about \$6.25 each times 30: so, Judas sold his Lord for \$187.50 in today’s money. Judas was a punk, he could have gotten a million pieces of silver!

John 12:6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Judas was treasurer of their little company. It was too much for him to see this much money thrown away on a mere sentiment of love. It could have gone into the treasury from which he could steal it, for he was a thief. He tried to gain the

true disciples over to his side by pleading the love of the poor. He was the embodiment of all those treasurers and cashiers who steal trust funds.

John 12:7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

No doubt Judas felt he had been robbed, but Mary had anticipated the hour of Christ's death was at hand.

John 12:8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

Jesus is teaching: you will have plenty of opportunity to aid the poor. It is the lack of love, not the lack of money that allows the poor to suffer.

John 12:9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

The language indicates that they stayed there several days, from Friday to Sunday. Jesus is not seeking privacy now.

John 12:10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

John 12:11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

Lazarus was a living testimonial to the Divine power of Christ, and the Chief Priests decided to get him out of the way.

John 12:12 On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

This is Palm Sunday. The Jewish historian Josephus says that between 2 and 3 million Jews attended each Passover. All the Gospel writers give an account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Cf: Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, and Luke 19:29-44.

John 12:13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

They carpeted Jesus' pathway with their garments and the gigantic leaves of palm trees, which were 12 to 16 feet long. The procession was made up largely

of Galileans, but the reputation of Christ and the resurrection of Lazarus had caused the crowd to increase. “Hosanna” a Greek modification of the Hebrew words “save now, I beseech thee” found in Psalm 118:25-26. It is used as an expression of praise like, hallelujah. Jesus is God’s ambassador and thus as the Palmist prophecies a thousand years before He came in the name of the Lord.

Psa 118:22 The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner. **118:23** This is the LORD’S doing; it *is* marvellous in our eyes. **118:24** This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. **118:25** Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. **118:26** Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD. **118:27** God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.

John 12:14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

The people expected Him to become king at once. The asses colt was borrowed, Christ went upon the water in a borrowed boat, ate the Passover in a borrowed upper room, and He was buried in a borrowed grave.

John 12:15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

Each of the four gospel writers quote Zechariah 9:9 but let’s look at the context

Zechariah 9:9-11 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. **9:10** And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion *shall be* from sea *even* to sea, and from the river *even* to the ends of the earth. **9:11** As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein *is* no water.

Genesis 49:10-11 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*. **49:11** Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

John 12:16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him.

Jesus' ministry never became clear until He had suffered and risen. The Holy Spirit was like the clear light like a sunbeam.

We Have Learned:

- 1. Affection desires to express itself in costly sacrifices for the loved.**
- 2. The motive, or, the love, gives value to the deed.**
- 3. The worldly heart can never understand the blessedness and power of enthusiasm, and gifts of love.**
- 4. Bad men always put forward good motives for their bad deeds.**
- 5. We ALL need sympathy.**
- 6. God doesn't need our gifts: he wants the *giving*, and the spirit of sacrifice.**
- 7. The gifts for the gospel, for the church, for Christ's sake, always increase the gifts to the poor.**
- 8. *Reasons for Triumphal Procession.* Till then He had withdrawn from popular expressions of homage; but once, at least, He wished to show Himself as King Messiah of His people.**

John 12:17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

John now pauses to observe that the miracle of Lazarus at Bethany had an affect. For now vast crowds began raising acclamations, shouting and proclaiming His Kingly glory. The people who had seen the miracle of Lazarus bore record.

John 12:18 For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

Thousands who had not seen the miracle of Lazarus were moved by the story of the eyewitnesses and eagerly went out to meet Jesus. They were not believers but a fickle crowd who went with the tide.

John 12:19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

Jesus has now entered Jerusalem as the old kings of Judah entered with shouting crowds around Him doing Him homage.

John 12:20 And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

These were not Grecian Jews from the Dispersion for those were called in the original Greek hel-len-is-toi, cf: Acts 6:1. But these who seek to visit Jesus here, are called hel-len-es, a term used only for the Greek race.

The visit of these Greeks to Jerusalem shows that they failed to find in Greek idolatrous mythological heathenism satisfaction for their souls. In the court of the Gentiles, in the Temple was an inscription over the gate way "let no Gentile go further under pain of Death.

John 12:21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

Jesus observed much in the Temple that required correction. The next day, Monday He drove out the live-stock traders and money-changers.

Both Phillip and Andrew are Grecian names. This probably explains why the Greeks came to Phillip. He had a Greek name and was acquainted with their race.

John 12:22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

Even though He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel this great teaching was relevant to the Greeks who had come to Him as well as to the Jews.

John 12:23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

The time of His glorification had come, which would draw all men to him. After his glorification there will be no new Walls of partition between Jews and Gentiles.

John 12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

A grain of wheat may remain in a granary for a thousand years and be preserved but it is useless there. It neither reproduces nor is it food in a granary. Grains have been found in the wrappings of Egyptian mummies. The grain becomes fruitful by giving itself up. So to must Christ give Himself up. He must die, be placed in the ground before he can be glorified and drawl all men unto Himself.

John 12:25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Christ announces the principal that underlies all exaltation. He gave his life and found eternal exaltation. The grain gives its life and lives a hundred fold. Those who consecrate their lives, give them up for others and dedicate them to Christ work will live eternally. Those who seek to save their lives and live for pleasures, gains and honors shall lose their life.

John 12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

This is Christ's direct answer to the Greeks. His service is to be rendered not by secret interviews but by obeying him. For obey I how the word "follow" should be understood. To obey or follow Him is to make Him your Lord and master cf:

Philippians 2:10-11 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; 2:11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

John 12:27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

A sudden change of spirit comes over Christ as if he is alone with His Father. The horror of His coming crucifixion which is just before Him falls on His souls with terrific power. Jesus had hated His life and given it for his work sake.

John 12:28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

Here the Father's voice speaks in approval. Three times the Father's voice was heard from the sky. First when Christ was buried in the Jordan River, which was a

type of His own burial in a grave. The second time was, when Moses and Elijah talked with Him at the mount of Transfiguration. The third time was, here when He had this struggle and viewed His coming death.

John 12:29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

All heard the sound of the Divine voice, but it was not clear to all what it was.

John 12:30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

This voice was to confirm the faith of his disciples who still stumbled over the prospect of his death.

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

The hour of the cross was to be the hour of judgment. This is the hour of crisis which shall determine who will rule the world. The cross became a throne and the cross gave Jesus a crown. For Satan the cross cast him out, dethroned him, he is now a usurper and shall finally be cast into a lake of fire.

Revelation 12:7-11 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 12:8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.

He is to be lifted up, first to the cross. He is to be lifted up, second from the grave. He is to be lifted up third, to heaven to sit on David's eternal throne. The crucified, risen and exalted Savior becomes the power to draw all men unto Him, Jews, Greeks, and all the Gentile nations. Christ does not declare every individual but every race will be drawn.

John 12:33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.

The great events that shall follow shall become a regular sequence of events

John 12:34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

They believed Christ to be the King. Their idea of the Messiah was an eternal King. But, now He spoke of death. They asked two questions: First about the "lifting up" and second who is "this son of man" of whom He spoke?

John 12:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

Jesus the light was then present with them and He was shining and teaching. Let them seek the light and walk in the light while they had the opportunity.

John 12:36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

To receive the light they must believe on Him, their unbelief closes their spiritual eyes to His words. Unless you believe and receive the light you cannot become children of the light.

Christ should be the desire of all nations.

Christ came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but his mission was to all the world.

The wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down and nailed to the cross.

The Cause of Unbelief

Matthew Chapters 22-23 records Jesus' final teaching to the Jews in the Temple.

Now John has recorded Jesus's final admonition to the people and not to the Jews was to seek the light and walk in it.

All of Israel troubles arose from the fact that they were adverse to the light and preferred darkness. With this admonition John next shows how the Jews had turned away from the light.

John 12:37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

John only records seven miracles as representing the types of miracles that Jesus worked. But he often refers to Jesus as working a great number of miracles. Many had an intellectual belief that He was a man of God, or the prophet of Galilee. But they did not have saving faith.

John 2:23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

John 4:45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

John 7:31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?

John 20:30-31 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

John 12:38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

This prophecy is found in Isaiah 53:1. John means to say Isaiah predicted the state of things in Israel and the Jews so acted that it might be fulfilled.

Isaiah 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

John 12:39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

Isaiah 6:10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

In the exercise of their free agency, they had made themselves by the operation of God's moral laws incapable of belief.

John 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

This explains why they could not believe. If God did it by direct act, they would not be responsible. If however God did it by a Law of the Universe that whoever turns from light shall become blind and whoever steels his heart against the truth shall find his heart hardened then they were morally responsible.

The champions of unbelief such as Voltaire and Paine, did not wish to believe

Matthew 13:14-16 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. **13:14** And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: **13:15** For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and *their eyes they have closed*; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Verse 15 shows how they were blinded. "Their eyes they have closed".

John 12:41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

John 12:42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

These were members of the Sanhedrin. They had intellectual faith but it was not saving faith which is trust with reliance in Christ to save us.

Romans 10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

These rulers not believing with their heart, did not make confession because they feared the Pharisees and Sadducees. The fact that they did not confess Him because they feared only added to their sin. They refused openly to take His side when they believed Him to be the Christ. There is not a shadow of hope to anyone who refuses to confess Christ openly.

John 12:43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

John 12:44 Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

Now the appeal to the Jewish nation is closed.

Jesus declares his oneness with the Father who sent Him.

John 12:45 And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.

John 12:46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

It was the office of Christ to make all things clear. His mission and purpose is to illuminate our being so that we might see our own destiny in its fullness. Those who abide in Christ's life and become Christ-like will have your doubts solved, mysteries cleared up, and all the clouds will roll away from your future.

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

John 12:47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

In the judgment day Jesus shall sit upon His Throne of Glory. His purpose will not be to condemn the world but to give the world the way of salvation.

John 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

The words that he left in the world shall decide the destiny of every man.

John 12:49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

He gave a commandment what the Son shall say.

John 12:50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

The commandment is not just to bestow life to men but the commandment is life. Because, there is life in the truth of God when it is received into the hearts of men and becomes the law of their lives.

Thus John closes the record of the revelation of Christ to the world.

In the next five Chapters will be a fuller revelation of Himself to His disciples.

Sources: KJV, e-Sword, Clark's Commentary but mainly B.W. Johnson's Commentary.