

Palm Sunday, April 5, 2020

“Guts, Glory, Jesus”

John 12

(highlighted numbers indicate corresponding slide)

Timothy Quindt, LLD

1 Grace and Peace to you on this Palm Sunday from our Lord, Jesus Christ, Amen.

2 I don't know if you know this, but a benefit that our congregation provides to you is called RightNow Media. This service is like a Christian version of Netflix and offers many kinds of resources from Children's content to apologetics and beyond. One of the things I found especially insightful was *The Promised Land* Series. A point I tried to make during my Ash Wednesday message a couple of years ago was location mattered to Jesus and this series shows the places these events took place at. If you can't travel to the Holy Land to see the places where Jesus walked, this is a good substitute. Now that many of us are homebound, this is an excellent series to watch. Scripture really comes alive when you can see the places where it happened.

3 In the series, we get to see the Upper Room

4 the place where Jesus died

5 the location of the Triumphal Entry

6 and the steps Jesus walked up to enter the Temple. This is where we pick up our story.

7 Our story begins with the crowds coming to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival, one of the Old Testament Festivals that God used to prepare Israel for Jesus' coming. The crowd is following Jesus after He raised Lazarus from the dead in nearby Bethany. They recognize this sign as a Messianic prophecy and so they come out to greet Jesus and by doing so Jesus combines two Old Testament festivals, Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles.

8 These two, along with the other festivals were to prepare the Jewish people for the coming of the Messiah and when Jesus comes, they greet him with the Lulav, a mixture of Palm branches, willow branches, and a citron. The crowd was waving them around shouting, “Hoshiana! Hoshiana! (Save us now)” Hosanna is a derivate of the Hebrew. Then instead of building the booths with them, they lay them on the road to welcome Jesus. Jesus performs another miracle here while he fulfills a prophecy in Zechariah, but the fact that He was able to ride a donkey's colt without being thrown is a miracle in itself. If you have ever tried to break in a horse or donkey, that first ride is usually not a pleasant one or a long one.

9 Jesus then walks up these steps and entered the Temple. Today these steps don't go anywhere, but back then they lead to the Gentile Court, or the outermost court. Here Jesus encounters a group of Gentiles seeking Him. Our text says that they were there to worship Yahweh at the festival. So in just a few verses, Jesus has actually combined

not just two, but three Jewish Festivals. The two loaves of leavened bread at the Feast of Pentecost symbolize the time when the Jews and Gentiles would be brought together by the Messiah. Here, Jesus brings Jews and Gentiles together. A common theme in John is that Jesus is the superior replacement for the Old Covenant. He is Israel reduced to one, but instead of messing up, Jesus does it right. Jesus is doing that right here in that the coming of the Messiah renders the old festivals obsolete.

10 All of this symbolism is building up for a big crescendo, the Father's voice. We heard it before at Jesus' Baptism where the Father combines Isaiah 42:1 and Psalm 2:7 saying "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him." In other words, Jesus will be a King, but a servant king. We hear the voice again at the Mount of Transfiguration, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him." We have heard how that has come to fruition here and now we hear the Father yet again. Jesus asks the Father to Glorify His Name, Yahweh. This time the Father responds, "I have glorified it and I will glorify it again." So the Father has glorified his name Yahweh in the past and will do so again. How so?

John tells us that Jesus existed from the beginning with the Father. This is confirmed in Genesis. Jesus shares a divine essence with the Father and when the Father decided to send Jesus into the world, He honored and glorified Jesus by providing a virgin birth. The Father also glorified and honored Jesus at His baptism and at the Mount of Transfiguration. The Father will do so again at Jesus' resurrection and ascension but look at the text closely. Jesus asks the Father to glorify His name "Yahweh."

11 In Hebrew, "Yahweh" translates into English as "I am, who I am," or "I am who I will be." Hebrew is also a pictographic language. Each symbol represents an idea, in addition to the sound. Do you know what "Yahweh" translates to if you read it pictographically?

12 "Behold the hand, behold the nail." The very name of Yahweh is Trinitarian. The Father was even glorifying Jesus back in Exodus 3 with Moses at the Burning Bush, and even further back in Genesis. Every single time Jesus mentions an "I am" statement, He is glorifying the Father and the special relationship He and the Father have.

13 This is the relationship God wants to have with us too, but we lost that relationship when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. At the time Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, Yahweh promised the restoration of that relationship through Eve's offspring. Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise and here Jesus announces that the time has come for this prophecy to be fulfilled and Satan's defeat. Jesus announces through His death, He will restore all people to Himself. This is the promise of Pentecost and Jesus had already begun this work. The fact that there was a "Gentile's Court" at the Temple proves that Jesus was bringing all people to Him.

So why does all of this happen? Jesus gives us the answer. He tells us that the voice came for the sake of the crowd, not Him. The crowd unfortunately, due to their unbelief,

does not fully grasp Jesus' two natures, even though it is clear as day in the Old Testament. They don't get it, but even then, Jesus invites them to take advantage of the fact that He is with them and to walk with Him. Sadly, John tells us that even though many people believed in Jesus, they kept silent for fear of the Pharisees. They cared more about the glory that comes from man rather than God. Are we any different?

14 How many times has Jesus invited us to share the Gospel, but we kept silent out of fear of push back? We have all failed too many times, but fortunately for us, Jesus' invitation still stands. *"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."* So, how do we walk in the light? We walk in the light when we do what the Father told us to do, listen to Jesus. When we do that, we glorify His name.

15 We also walk in the light when we receive Jesus in His Word and Sacraments. Jesus says, "This is my body broken for you," and "This is my blood shed for you." He is truly present in this meal. When you come to the Lord's Table, He invites you to walk with Him and receive the forgiveness and atonement that Jesus won for us on the Cross. Jesus is the superior replacement for Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. As He announced in our text, He will atone for our sins, once and for all. When we receive the gifts that God desires to give us, we also bring glory to God and glorify His name.

Even though we sometimes fail to follow Jesus' light and listen to Him, He still gives us the opportunity to repent and follow Him. Yes, there is a cost of Discipleship. We may lose friends, family, influence, jobs, and maybe even our temporal lives. Compared to Jesus' glory, these things seem very trivial. When we give these things the proper perspective and put Jesus first in our lives, all we have to do is listen to Jesus and follow Him. We let the chips fall as they may, knowing that Jesus is there for us walking beside us. It doesn't matter what you've done. It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from. The pain of this life does not last forever. It only matters what Jesus did and who He is. Jesus atoned for your sins and is walking beside you. When we keep that in mind, we can handle anything this world throws at us.

In Jesus name,
Amen.