

# The Cross Is Near

Sunday, March 25 – 8:00 & 10:45

Sixth Sunday in Lent – 2018

Holy Week: TH at 11 & 7; FR at 11 & 7 | Easter Sunday at 7 & 10:45

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: It's Palm Sunday, *so the cross for Jesus is rapidly drawing near!* Just before today's sermon text, Jesus made His grand entrance into Jerusalem and was greeted by many – *especially those who knew He had raised Lazarus from the dead!* Now we focus on the nearness of Jesus' cross and part of John chapter 12.

## 1. How Was Jesus Reminded About the Cross?

- a. <sup>20</sup> Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup> So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup> Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup> And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." // Jesus' ministry was mostly among the Jews, so when "some Greeks" (similar to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8) expressed an interest in meeting Jesus, *that was a reminder that His ministry was coming to an end and His cross was drawing near!*
- b. <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> If anyone serves me, he must

**[let him] follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.**" // A seed has GREAT POTENTIAL to grow a tree and *produce many more trees*; however, FIRST it must die! **Let us give wholehearted thanks to Jesus who died, in order that we may live!** Then, *for all who live through Jesus*, He calls them to **hate their lives in this world** in order to **keep them for eternal life!** Lenski noted, "**Many will at last hate themselves bitterly for not having hated themselves properly in this life**" (864). *Let US not be among such people!*

## 2. **What Made Jesus Ready for the Cross?**

- a. Resolve: <sup>27</sup> **"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.** // Sometimes we think and plan, *but we cannot execute the plan when the time comes*. For Jesus, it was the Father's plan and it included HORRIBLE **mental**, **physical**, and **spiritual** ANGUISH; nevertheless, *Jesus was determined to do it!*
- b. The voice of the Father: <sup>28</sup> **Father, glorify your name.** **Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."** <sup>29</sup> **The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him."** <sup>30</sup> **Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine.** // We have all sinned, *so we have all fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23)*. But Jesus, *even in the face of dreadful circumstances*, remained our perfect substitute by going forward to **finish the Father's will** and **buy back every man, woman, and child!**

c. Victory: <sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, when [if] I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. <sup>33</sup> He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. // From Satan's rebellion until Jesus' death, Satan exercised much power; however, Jesus' death on His cross, which looked like defeat, *was actually His victory!* Now, by grace through faith in Jesus, *we share in His victory!*

3. **What Was the Point?** <sup>34</sup> 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?" <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." // Did you note the response of the crowd? *It was concerned that Jesus would not remain forever.* But Jesus got right to the point: "I am the Promised Messiah, *so believe in me and YOU will live forever!*" As this busy life tries to consume us with unimportant things, *may we keep our eyes on Jesus!*

4. **Why Did Isaiah Prophecy Unbelief?**

a. <sup>36b</sup> When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. <sup>37</sup> Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, <sup>38</sup> so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" <sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe.

For again Isaiah said, <sup>40</sup> “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.” <sup>41</sup> Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. // From one angle, it sounds like God decided to condemn certain people; *then He blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts.* But that conclusion is *contrary* to Scripture; we know that God “desires all people to be saved” (1Ti 2:4 ESV). So what is the answer? Lenski wrote, “The announcement of their fate in advance by prophecy is due to the foreknowledge of God” (889). God knows all things in advance, so he knew those people would **✦keep refusing to repent and ✦keep rejecting Jesus!**

- b. <sup>42</sup> **Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue;** <sup>43</sup> **for they loved the glory that comes from ~~man~~ [men] more than the glory that comes from God.** // Believing without confessing and loving the praise of men more than the praise of God; *those are HORRIBLE things.* For those deny Jesus, He will deny them (Matt. 10:32-33)! So let us realize HOW MUCH we are blessed through Him **AND gladly confess Him!**

**Conclusion:** Since today begins Holy Week, let us **✦think** more about our sin and our Savior, **✦read** Mark, chapters 11 – 15, and **✦gather** here on Thursday and Friday!

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, keep us in awe of Your great love and Your great sacrifice for us poor, miserable sinners!

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Podcast: Benefit from the Bible | Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230