**Livin’ the Life**

**The Glory of the Cross**

**John 12:27-36**

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We are back in our series on the Gospel of John, Livin’ the Life, looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises. We are in John 12:27-36 today, considering Jesus’ purpose. Let’s take a look at 12:27-37 today and see what Jesus has to say about glory and the cross.

**The Glory of Jesus’ Obedience (27-30)**

This is Jesus’ hour, the cross is days away (23-24) and Jesus is wrestling with God as he contemplates his suffering and death. At first, he asks for deliverance[[1]](#footnote-1) but then resolves that he came for this very purpose (27).[[2]](#footnote-2) What is the purpose of his coming to this hour? To glorify God by his death on the cross. At the end of his wrestling, Jesus chooses the path of obedience to his Father because he was committed to glorifying God. The Father hears Jesus’ prayer and answers, I have glorified it and I will glorify it (28). Glorifying God in the past may be pointing to Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (11:40) or more broadly to Jesus’ life and ministry (1:14). The glory of God was the ultimate motive in the death of Jesus. The reason I make much of God’s glory is that God makes much of his glory!

**The Glory of the Cross (31-33)**

Then Jesus describes four ways God is glorified in the cross. First, God is glorified in the cross by judging the world (31). John, chapter five sheds light on this phrase (5:24-29). These verses tell us first, that judgement happens through Jesus (5:26-27). And that there will be a future final judgment (5:28-29). And third, that those who believe in Jesus to be reconciled to God will not come into judgment because they are no longer condemned to spiritual death but have been justified to eternal life (5:24). The cross judges all people because it is the judgment for sin and divides those who are condemned by unbelief and those who are justified by faith. All of us are born into condemnation because of our sin and our only escape is accepting the offer of forgiveness (3:18). So, God is glorified in the cross by bringing the final judgment into history so that Jesus can bear our condemnation for us.

Next, God is glorified in the cross by casting down Satan, the ruler of this world (31). But how since we know that Satan is still active in the world and we are not immune to his attacks (Eph 6:10-20; 1 Pet 5:8; Eph 2:2-3; 1 John 5:19; Heb 2:14-15). We know that Satan will enter Judas so that he will betray Jesus (13:27). Then later Jesus tells his disciples, the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but *I do as the Father has commanded me* (14:30-31). Satan was making his last ditch effort against Jesus by making Jesus’ final hours so hard, trying to destroy Jesus’ faith and obedience, and so undermine the work of salvation. Jesus’ perfect obedience to his Father in his life was necessary for him to earn our salvation and secure our eternal destiny. Satan failed and in the process was defeated, disarmed, and judged (16:11). The defeat was not final but was decisive and secures and guarantees his final defeat when Jesus returns. And Jesus’ death disarmed Satan by taking away his greatest weapon he had against us, the accusation of unforgiven sin. It is as though a prosecuting attorney comes into the courtroom but he has no evidence for a case against us because Jesus’ death secured our forgiveness and our acceptance by God. So secondly, God is glorified in the cross by defeating Satan and removing the basis for any accusation, unforgiven sin.

Third, God is glorified in the cross by drawing people to himself (32). This can be taken a few ways. It cannot mean God will draw all people to salvation (ie Judas). Some take it that God will draw all kinds of people to himself, not just Jews but Gentiles because Greeks just came to Jesus marking a shift that will occur after Jesus is lifted up on the cross (12:20-25; see also 10:16). Or it can be taken to mean that God draws all those the Father has given to him (6:37, 39). The same verb for draw is used when Jesus said no one can come to me unless the Father draws them (6:44). I think this makes the most sense since the gospel puts such an emphasis on this point.

Lastly, God is glorified in the cross by Jesus shining as the light in the lives of those who believe in him (36). The crowd wonders how Jesus can be the Messiah, if he is going to die. The Old Testament promises that the Messiah remains forever (34; Ps 89:35-27, 72:17, 110:4; Isa 9:7; 52:13). Jesus ignores their question and makes what has been saying very personal. Jesus challenges the crowd to believe in him, to follow him while they have him with them otherwise the darkness will overtake them and they will not be able to escape it (35). Darkness describes human sin and Jesus tells us that we cannot overcome our own darkness. The only way to overcome it is the light of Jesus. This is because the light reveals the truth. Jesus reveals the truth of things so we see the world as it truly is. The light gives us a clear picture of reality. Secondly, the light gives us life. We need light for life to exist in our world; without light there would be no life on earth. In the same way, Jesus gives us life and transforms us. Sons of light means that you take on the character of the light, you become like Jesus. Jesus frees you from your darkness so that the light of Jesus shines in and through you. If you believe in Jesus, your sin will be forgiven, Jesus will give you life and transform you so that you become like him. The only solution to your darkness is Jesus, the light.

Life Group Questions

1. Describe a time you wrestled with God in prayer?
2. Why did Jesus wrestle with God in prayer?
3. Why did Jesus succumb going to the cross?
4. How is our obedience to God tied to God’s glory?
5. Is your motivation to trust and obey God driven by God’s glory?
6. How did the cross remove Satan’s ability to accuse Christians?
7. How do I fight my flesh or Satan when they accuse me over my sin?
8. How is Jesus light for us?
9. How does Jesus’ light shine through us?
10. How is he not shining through you? ie what struggles with sin are you having?

1. There is no need to make the statement into a question as some translations do. To do so empties it of the reality of Jesus’ struggle and prayer with his Father. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Jesus is quoting Psalm 63:3-5 in his prayer but instead of seeking deliverance as the psalmist does, he submits to God’s will and his death. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)