

John 11:55 – 12:50 – Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

Read John 11:55 right through to John 12: v. 50. (N.K.J.)

<sup>55</sup> And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. <sup>56</sup> Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, “What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?”

<sup>57</sup> Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it*, that they might seize Him. <sup>12</sup> Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.

<sup>2</sup> There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

<sup>3</sup> Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

<sup>4</sup> But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, who would betray Him, said, <sup>5</sup> “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” <sup>6</sup> This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

<sup>7</sup> But Jesus said, “Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. <sup>8</sup> For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.” <sup>9</sup> Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came,

not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup> But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, <sup>11</sup> because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

<sup>12</sup> The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, <sup>13</sup> took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: “Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ The King of Israel!”

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: <sup>15</sup> “Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey’s colt.” <sup>16</sup> His disciples did not understand these things at first;

but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him. <sup>17</sup> Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness.

<sup>18</sup> For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. <sup>19</sup> The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!” <sup>20</sup> Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast.

<sup>21</sup> Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup> Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. <sup>23</sup> But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

<sup>24</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. <sup>25</sup> He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me;

and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him *My* Father will honor. <sup>27</sup> “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

<sup>28</sup> Father, glorify Your name.”

Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, “I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.” <sup>29</sup> Therefore the people who stood by and heard *it* said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.” <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake.

<sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.” <sup>33</sup> This He said, signifying by what death He would die. <sup>34</sup> The people answered Him,

“We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how *can* You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?” <sup>35</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you;

he who walks in 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.” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them. <sup>37</sup> But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,

<sup>38</sup> that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?” <sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: <sup>40</sup> “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,

Lest they should see with *their* eyes, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.” <sup>41</sup> These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. <sup>42</sup> Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him,

but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. <sup>44</sup> Then Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.

<sup>45</sup> And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. <sup>46</sup> I have come *as* a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. <sup>47</sup> And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

<sup>48</sup> He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. <sup>49</sup> For I have not spoken on My own *authority*; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

<sup>50</sup> And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

## Introduction

Chapter 11 to Chapter 20 form a section of John’s Gospel that begins and ends with a “Resurrection” miracle.

It starts with the raising of Lazarus and ends with the resurrection of Jesus. In between these events are some of the deepest teachings from Jesus about the cross as He communicates to His disciples about His impending death.

Throughout chapter 12 the achievements of Jesus’ death are given a high priority.

We begin to see that John is telling us that the life of chapter 11, where Lazarus was raised from the dead, can only come through the death that is foretold in chapter 12.

It is important that we have some Old Testament back ground into chapter 12 because the Old Testament is quoted twice by John to explain the story of the entry into Jerusalem.

In v. 13 John quotes from Psalm 118. This Psalm is one of a group of Psalms that looks back to the great Exodus from Egypt. This was the time when God rescued His chosen people, the Israelites, from slavery and bondage in Egypt.

The final plague which resulted in their release came when the Angel of death killed all the first born sons and animals in Egypt.

The children of Israel were protected by killing a lamb without blemish and applying its blood on the doorpost and lintel of their houses. (Exodus 12: v. 1-13)

These Psalms were always sung to celebrate the “Passover”. This particular Psalm was used to welcome pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem for the festival.

In the context of this Passover, the crowds were using this Psalm to welcome the person that they perceived to be the Messiah, the person that had come to rescue God's chosen people.

The second Old Testament passage quoted by John is taken from the prophet Zechariah.

It would be good if we could turn to Zechariah chapter 9 and read v. 9-13.

(Read Zech.9:v.9-13)

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
Behold, your King is coming to you;  
He *is* just and having salvation,  
Lowly and riding on a donkey,  
A colt, the foal of a donkey.  
<sup>10</sup> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
And the horse from Jerusalem;

The battle bow shall be cut off.  
He shall speak peace to the nations;  
His dominion *shall be* ‘from sea to sea,  
And from the River to the ends of the earth.’

<sup>11</sup> “As for you also,  
Because of the blood of your covenant,  
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

<sup>12</sup> Return to the stronghold,  
You prisoners of hope.  
Even today I declare  
*That* I will restore double to you.

<sup>13</sup> For I have bent Judah, My *bow*,  
Fitted the bow with Ephraim,  
And raised up your sons, O Zion,  
Against your sons, O Greece,  
And made you like the sword of a mighty man.”

There are three features about the arrival of this King that his prophecy points out.

1. The arrival of the King will bring the end of war – v. 10.
2. The King will proclaim peace to the nations, extending His reign to the ends of the earth. – v. 10.
3. The arrival of the King will release prisoners, on the basis of the blood of God's covenant. – v. 11.

Most of the time preachers emphasize the prophecy of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt. However many fail to see that this is just a part of what Zechariah said in his prophecy. It is this other part that the disciples failed to recognize until a later date.

I will divide our passage today into 4 sections.

1. Preparation for the death of Jesus – Chapter 11:55 – 12:11.

The Jewish Passover was getting near. Six days before this event Jesus returned to Bethany. Bethany was only a few kilometers from Jerusalem and it was the place where Lazarus was raised from the dead. The story about Lazarus was still influencing people to believe in Jesus as the Messiah.

Jesus was having a meal with Mary and Martha and Lazarus and His disciples were there also. An event took place at the supper table which was a sacrificial act of great love on the part of Mary. She used a very expensive fragrance of oil to anoint the feet of Jesus. We are told that the cost to purchase it would have been about 300 "Denarii". This was equivalent to about 1 year's wages.

(Today in Japan it would be about 3 Million Yen - £16,000 or \$25,000)

We would be shocked today if anybody spent one year's salary on a perfume and then anointed somebody's feet. We would call this very extravagant.

Mary's actions were criticized by Judas, one of Jesus' disciples.

However, Jesus, instead of being critical about the actions of Mary, actually commended her. Jesus said her actions were in preparation for His burial.

Mary didn't realize the significance of her actions. All she did was to show extravagant love towards Jesus.

William Barclay the famous Scottish preacher said this of the passage.

"After Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with this costly perfume, Judas ungraciously questioned her action as sheer waste. Jesus silenced him by saying that money could be given to the poor at any time, but a kindness done to Him must be done now, for soon the chance would be gone forever"

It is a solemn thought that opportunities to serve Jesus come and go. Sometimes if we think about the cost, we don't do it. Actions motivated by the Holy Spirit prompting us to do an act of kindness will never be wasted. God will see that you are rewarded somehow.

Quote Matthew 10: v. 40-42. (N.K.J.)

<sup>40</sup> "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. <sup>41</sup> He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

<sup>42</sup> And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

Let us look for opportunities to bless God's people not opportunities to be critical of their actions.

2. We see the arrival of Jesus on his way to His death – v. 12-19.

This passage is normally taught on what we call "Palm Sunday" which is the Sunday before Easter. It was a celebration time for the Jewish people because they thought that Jesus was riding into Jerusalem to set the Jewish people free from the Roman power that was in charge of their country.

However although Jesus received "Praise" from the people, it wasn't a celebration time for Jesus. He was 1 week away from His death. It wasn't a normal death, it was the cruelest death that has ever been allowed in a civilized society.

It was a slow death hung on a cross. On top of this Jesus was about to receive the cruelest punishment of all, separation from God and His wrath poured out for our sins.

The point about this passage is that the people missed the point about this passage.

It says in v. 16 "His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him."

The people failed to see what kind of Messiah Jesus was going to be. Even though the people quoted from God's word, they didn't understand what God's word was saying. The reason is, that the Bible is a "Spiritual Book" and therefore it must be spiritually discerned in the context of the whole Bible and in the context of the writer's intention at the time. John has certainly intended us to see the spiritual nature of these prophecies.

You have to go back into Zechariah and note the context of His prophecy as we did at the start of this message in order to see the significance of what the disciples saw later.

3. We see the death of Jesus explained and hear the Father's approval. – v. 20-36.

Firstly we notice in v. 23 that God's time had now come for the death of Jesus.

This is in contrast to John chapter 2: v. 4 where Jesus at the wedding in Cana in Galilee said "My hour has not yet come".

God has His timing for all the important events in history, and God also has His timing for the events in our lives. This doesn't always fit into our plans.

"The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way."

Psalm 37:v.23.

Jesus then gives an illustration of what his hour involves. He also explains the cost of following Him thereafter in order to benefit from His great act of sacrifice.

In v. 24 Jesus gives a good illustration from nature about His impending death.

The death of a grain of wheat is the germination of life for a great crop of wheat.

Without the death of any seed there is no life for any crop. It is a fact of nature.

In the days when Jesus was walking on this earth people lived largely in an agricultural society. They understood the process of sowing seeds in order to bring forth a crop and also understood that the seed must die in order for it to happen.

We know from the Bible that in order for eternal life to be available to anyone, Jesus had to die on the cross. His death was absolutely necessary, there was no other way.

Jesus also said that in order to follow Him and benefit from His death then we have to lose our life in this world. It is the "Great Exchange". We give up our life in order to receive the life that Jesus can give us.

Quote: 2 Corinthians chapter 5:v. 21. "For He made Him who knew NO sin to be SIN for US that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

We give up all our sins and the life in the flesh in order to receive a life that not only satisfies our heart, but will eventually result in a new body in order to live with Jesus forever.

This begins as soon as you trust Him as your personal savior. It never ends because it is eternal.

Many people hold on to this earthly life like a magnet. It pulls them down and it seems that they are chained up like a lion in a Zoo. They are held down and they can't seem to set themselves free. Life for them is a downward trend that ends in death.

When you put your faith and trust in a personal Jesus, when you really understand that it was YOUR SIN that nailed Him to the cross. When you actually say sorry to Jesus from your HEART and ask His personal forgiveness. And when you are willing to give up your life on this earth and follow Him, then it will seem as your chains have broken and your heart is set free to follow Jesus.

The Christian Hymn writer Charles Wesley said it like this is the famous song;

“ And can it be...”

And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain—  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

In v. 27-30 we have the “Father’s witness”

We are told that the soul of Jesus was troubled. It is no wonder, He had the weight of the sins of the world upon His heart.

Jesus wanted to be saved from this awful thing that was about to come upon Him.

But He knew He couldn't. Jesus had left Heaven and come into this world for this purpose.

It was very difficult for Jesus to follow the will of God in the last week of His life here on this earth before His death. However without His obedience we would have no hope of eternal life.

It seemed as if God encouraged Jesus by speaking from Heaven and His voice was like “thunder” to the people around Him. However In v. 30 Jesus told the people that the voice of God had not come for Him but for their sakes.

The voice of God from Heaven was probably an encouragement for the disciples. They were going to witness something that they were going to find very difficult to understand. At least the voice from Heaven was God's approval of these events. The disciples could look back later and make sense of these events.

It is a fact of life that we don't always see the hand of God working through the events of our lives. It is only as we look back do we see that God closed doors for our benefit and opened doors for His Glory.

It is often said “we can trust the one who died for us” That is certainly true, we can trust God with the circumstances of our lives as we yield ourselves to His control and His will in our lives.

In v. 31-33 we are told the achievements of the cross

We are told in these verses that there are a number of things that the death of Jesus will achieve.

a) Judgment on the world. – v. 31.

Although the final judgment comes at the end of the age, the text clearly says that it begins with the first coming of Jesus.

What does this mean? The answer is always in the text. This time we need to go to other parts of John's Gospel.

John 3: v. 17-21 – read it in N.L.T.

<sup>17</sup> God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. <sup>18</sup> “There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son.”

<sup>19</sup> And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. <sup>20</sup> All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed.

<sup>21</sup> But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants. [a]”

We have a choice, we can have our sins judged now and receive forgiveness from Jesus, or remain in our sins, and this means that we are already judged, waiting the final punishment.

b) The ruler of this world is cast out. – v. 31.

Who is this ruler and what does it mean? In the New Testament there are many titles for Satan. One of them is the prince or ruler of this world. When Jesus died on the cross it seemed as if Satan had won a victory. However it was his defeat.

The reason being is that every time a person believes in Jesus, they are set free from the kingdom of darkness and are transferred into another kingdom, God’s kingdom.

It says in Col. 1: v. 13 in the N.L.T.

<sup>13</sup> For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.”

There is victory in Jesus for every believer because Satan’s power was broken through the work of Jesus on the cross.

(This is a vast subject and one day I will teach about it, but for now just believe it.)

c) Jesus will draw all peoples to Himself – v. 32.

As a result of Jesus death on the cross it will open the way for all peoples in the world to put their faith in Jesus. Up to that point it was all about the Jewish nation, God’s chosen people. Now the Japanese people could be received into God’s family. Yes everybody in the world was now a target for the love of Jesus. Through God’s Holy Spirit Jesus will draw people to Himself, at least those who are open to the Gospel?

The ministry of Jesus was coming to a close and He gives His final appeal to the crowd.

They didn’t understand how Jesus could die and remain forever and still be the Messiah!!

So Jesus replies in v. 35 -36. – N.L.T.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus replied, “My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. <sup>36</sup> Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light.”

After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them.

Jesus certainly challenged the crowd that day with His final appeal. From now on His ministry would be to His close disciples.

4. Jesus explains the unbelief of the people – v. 37-50.

John tells us that the unbelief of the Jews has been prophesied. (Told in advance) Therefore it is not unexpected. (v. 38) however some Jews believed secretly. V. 42.

In v. 44-50 we have Jesus final public words which we are told He cried out and spoke them.

This is another appeal to those who are not yet believing to change their minds.

The main emphasis here is that the unbelief of the Jews will lead to their judgment.

Jesus declares that they are not His words but the words of Almighty God.

### Application

There are a number of applications I have touched upon during my message but I would like to highlight 2 important ones.

Firstly never be afraid of being extravagant in the giving of your money to serve Jesus or to support those people who are called to serve Him. The Bible teaches that this should be done in the main through your local Church, the place where you worship. Mary spent 3 Million Yen on perfume to anoint Jesus. She did this because she loved Jesus, not knowing that it was to prepare for His death.

Being sacrificial or extravagant in our giving to the work of Jesus may be something that others may criticize but given as prompted by the Holy Spirit through love will always receive a smile from Almighty God. He will approve of the things that Glorify Him.

Many years ago a young boy of 16 was obliged to leave home because his father was too poor to support him any longer. So he trudged away with all worldly possessions in a bundle dangling from his hand, resolving as he journeyed to set up in business as a soap maker in New York.

When the country boy arrived in the big city, he found it hard to get work. Remembering the last words of his mother and also the godly advice given him by the captain of a canal boat, the youth dedicated his life to God, determining to return to his Maker an honest tithe of every dollar he earned.

So, when his first dollar came in, the young man sacredly dedicated ten cents of it to the Lord. This he continued to do. And the dollars rolled in! Soon this young man became partner in a soap business; and when his partner died a few years later, he became sole owner of the concern.

The prosperous businessman now instructed his bookkeeper to open an account with the Lord and to credit to it one tenth of all his income. The business grew miraculously. The honest proprietor now dedicated two-tenths of his earnings; and then three-tenths, four-tenths; and finally, five-tenths. It seemed as if his sales increased in exact proportion to his generosity, so that soon his brand of soap became a household word throughout the world.

The late William Colgate was this man whom God so singly prospered in return for his faithfulness to his Maker.

The Challenge is "What are we going to do?" How much do we love Jesus?

### The second application

Losing your life for Jesus in order to gain a blessed life now and an eternal life in Heaven.

Perhaps you are not a Christian yet and today God is calling you to make a commitment to follow Jesus. You need to count the cost of what it means to follow Jesus. It is death to your old life and seeking to follow Jesus in your new life.

If you really understand what Jesus did on the cross and what awaits those who believe in Him, giving up your old life will not be a problem.

Jesus gave us His life so that we might have a "New Life" in Heaven with Him forever. A life free from death, free from sickness and free from sin. He offers this life freely by GRACE, to all who will REALISE, REPENT and RECEIVE Him into their hearts.

"Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts....." ( Hebrews 3: 7)