

Jesus' Strange Glory

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Date: 04 March 2018

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[0 : 00] Okay, good morning. It's good to see you. I trust you've had a good week and it's wonderful to look at God's Word again together. If you don't know me, my name is Kevin and I'm one of the leaders here, I guess.

Now, over the last four weeks, we've been journeying through the Gospels and we've been looking at this person, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we've been asking the question, who is this man? Who is this man that turned the world upside down? This man that turned people's lives upside down? Who is this man that even still today, thousands of years later, has turned billions of people's worlds upside down?

And so we've been going through the Gospels and looking at how Jesus across the centuries, in every culture, every corner of the world, Jesus has had this remarkable impact.

Who is this man? Now, when you read the Gospels, especially Mark's Gospel and John's Gospel, about halfway through, the narrative takes a sharp turn.

[1 : 03] And what happens is that in the first half of these Gospels, the Gospel writers are answering the question, who is this man? But then it changes about halfway and they start to ask the question, who is this king?

And we see this in John chapter 11 and Mark chapter 8, as the narrative starts to change and it focuses on the cross. And so we as a church are on this eight-week journey, going through the Gospels, making our way towards Easter.

And we're going to follow the journey of the Gospels. And so today we're asking the question, not so much who was this man, but who is this king? Who is King Jesus? And so today we start off in John chapter 12, and we're going to look at Jesus' strange glory.

Jesus' unusual glory. Now, the passage of Scripture that we read is a difficult passage. And I want to ask you to really gauge and think about it.

It's a passage that in some ways requires some maturity to think about. It's not an easy passage. I'm going to try my best to not make it too complicated. And I'm going to try and keep it simple.

[2 : 11] But it's a passage that requires us to really think about it. Okay? So are you ready for that? Okay. Great. Just the three of us. But okay. Well, I'm going to pray for us.

I'm going to ask God to speak to us from His Word, and then let's dive in. So won't you join me in prayer? Father God, there's no one like you.

You're real, and you're live, and you're living. And you speak to us from your Word. And God, today as we look at this difficult passage, won't you be here in power?

Won't you be here by your presence? Won't you open up your Word to us and open up our hearts to see you? God, today at the end of this sermon, we don't just want more information about you. We want to have met you and encountered you. God, whether in a complex way and a simple way, won't you help us to meet you in your Word this morning? So Holy Spirit, I ask you to be here.

[3 : 10] Take the words of these pages and apply them to our hearts. Help us to see you in reality. Won't you bless the preaching of your Word, we pray. In your name, amen.

Amen. Okay. So we read John chapter 12. Now, just before the context, John chapter 11 actually starts off with this.

Right at the end, it says this. Now, the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover. So remember, the Passover is the feast that is celebrated as the Jewish men and women remembered God's amazing grace to them in the nation of Egypt.

God delivered His people, saved His people by the blood of the Lamb. The fact that innocent lambs died in their place, that they could be set free from Egypt and from slavery and become free men

and women.

By the blood of the Lamb, these men and women were set free, and so every year they celebrate Passover as a remembrance, as a reminder of their liberation at the expense of somebody else.

[4 : 19] And John is getting our attention here. He's saying Jesus is about to go to the cross, but note the fact that the cross is like the ultimate Passover. Jesus dies in the place so that we can be free.

And then go to verse 20, and it says this. Now, among those who went up to worship at the Passover feast were some Greeks. Okay, so these are Gentiles. They're not Jewish men and women.

They are possibly some converts that have become converted to Judaism. And it says, these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and they asked him, saying, Sir, we want to see Jesus.

Now, it's well known that at the time of this, there were a bunch of Gentiles, non-Jewish men and women, Greek-speaking Gentiles, that had become disillusioned with the Greek gods.

They had become disillusioned with the fact that the Greek deities, there were so many of them.

There was a god of agriculture, a god of money, a god of the family, a god of fertility.

[5 : 18] And they kind of thought, there are all these gods, but who's the one supreme god? Surely there must be one god that is god of all these gods. And so something of Judaism attracted them.

The fact that Judaism is monotheistic. There's one true god, says Deuteronomy chapter 6. And so a bunch of them are attracted to Judaism. But secondly, they disillusioned because the Greek gods, it was religion, but it had no bearing on their everyday life.

Yeah, they went to the temple, and they worshipped, and they sacrificed, and they brought their money. But actually, it didn't tell you how to live. It had no bearing on morality, or ethics, or it didn't instruct you on your everyday life.

But Judaism, actually, the nature of who God is, had a huge impact on how you live your life from day to day. And so a bunch of these spiritual seekers convert to Judaism in search of the one true God, and the God that's actually going to speak into their everyday life.

And now they encounter Jesus. They've heard about this man called Jesus. And they're wondering, is this the Messiah? Is this the king that the prophets have been speaking about for hundreds of years?

[6 : 26] Is this the one that we've been waiting for? And so they come to Philip, who was from a Greek-speaking area, and they say to him, We want to have a meeting with Jesus. Can you help us meet Jesus?

Now, what are they really saying here? They're saying, Jesus, we've heard about you. We've heard about the good things that you've done. Some people say you're a good moral teacher. Some people say you're an excellent man.

Some people say maybe you're even divine. Maybe you're the Son of God. We want to know who you really are. Jesus, if you're the king that for centuries we've been waiting for, show us your glory. Show us your glory. And friends, if you're wondering about that question, Jesus, who are you?

You're in a great place. It's a question every one of us need to ask. Every human being needs to ask this question.

Who is Jesus of Nazareth? And is he really who he said he is? You're in the right place to ask that. And Jesus is going to answer their question, but he's going to do it in the most unusual way.

[7 : 26] The way that nobody expected him to. Now, before we get there, think about this. They've heard that Jesus is possibly a king. He's maybe the Messiah we've been waiting for.

Now, every king, every queen, every monarch knows that part of being royal is the display of your glory. You've got to somehow let people know that you're a king.

What's the point in being a king if nobody knows you're a king? Even the most benevolent kings, even the most humble monarchs use their position and their power to serve their people.

That's part of what it means to be a king. You have position. You have power. You have glory.

That's what comes with the job. That's what it means to be a king. And so this is what the nation of Israel are waiting for.

The anticipation of the Messiah is boiling. Israel's redeeming king is coming to rescue them from the oppression of the Romans. Someone who would overthrow their enemies and restore Israel to their former glory.

[8 : 25] All of Israel, those that were Jewish by race and those that have converted to Judaism, are waiting for the coming king. He is going to rescue and restore Israel and restore it to its former glory.

And you know what? In our hearts, we all long for a king like that. In our hearts, every one of us long for a king that will set us free. Long for a king that will make our lives more comfortable. Long for a king that will deliver us and make our lives more convenient. A king that will set us free. And so here come these spiritual seekers. They want to find out if Jesus really is the king. And so what does Jesus say? He says, verse 23 I think it is. He says, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Here it is after all the waiting. All the anticipation. All the wondering. All the scrutinizing. After three years of Jesus going around saying, Repent for the kingdom of God is near.

[9 : 27] Finally Jesus says, Now is the time. It's here. The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. To reveal His glory. And the disciples must have been thinking, It's about time.

Finally, we left our family business. We left the tax office. When other disciples abandoned Jesus and left Him, we stuck with Him through thick and thin.

In the good times, in the difficult times, we believed in Jesus. Now is the time. Jesus is going to finally let everyone know He's the king. It's payday.

Right? We've sacrificed lots for Jesus. Now it's payday. We're going to finally be proved we were right to believe in Jesus. Jesus says, It's here. Now has the time come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Glorified. But then Jesus says the most anticlimactic, the most disappointing things, I think, in the entire gospel. He says, Now is the time for the Son of Man to be glorified.

[10 : 30] And then what does He say? Unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Verse 27.

Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No. For this very purpose, I have come to this hour.

Father, glorify Your name. Friends, one of the strangest things about this king, about King Jesus, is that Jesus is unequivocal about the fact that His moment of glory, the high point of His life, the moment, in fact, His whole life was moving towards is actually in one and the same time His moment of greatest shame.

It's His moment of death. It's the moment He was hung on the cross as a criminal and crucified and left there to die. J.C. Ryle says it like this. The Lord Jesus Christ would have us know that He came not to wear a crown, but to bear a cross.

He came not to live a life of honor, ease and magnificence, but to die a shameful and a dishonored death. And the kingdom He set up was to begin not with a coronation, but with a crucifixion.

[11 : 44] The glory of His kingdom was to rise not from victories with the sword, not accumulated treasures of gold and silver, but from the death of its king.

This morning, I want to give us, there's lots of reasons why the cross is Christ's moment of glory. I want to give us just three, actually four reasons why the cross is Christ's moment of glory.

Okay? Why this fateful Friday afternoon, the day of Christ's excruciating death, the day when the whole world turned dark, the day when the world seemed to be rocked to its very core, was actually at one and the same time the most tragic day in the history of the world, but also the most glorious.

Okay? A couple of reasons. First thing is this. The cross of Christ gloriously reveals the perfect nature and the character of God. Okay? It reveals who God really is.

Remember a few weeks ago, we looked at Psalm 115 and says this. It starts off saying, not to us, O God, not to us, but to your name give the glory. Do you remember that? Okay? And we asked the question, what is the glory of God?

[12 : 53] And what does it mean that God glorifies His name? And the answer we came up with is, the glory of God is the totality of all of God's divine attributes.

So God's holiness and His justice, His mercy and His grace, His sovereignty and His patience, all of God's attributes together is like a gigantic multifaceted diamond, and every one of His characteristics is like a facet of this diamond that reveals who He is.

Okay? And then we said that to glorify God is to reveal or to remove the cover that shrouds His glory. It's like putting the multifaceted nature and the character of God on display, making it visible for people to see.

Okay? That's what it means to glorify God. So for instance, you glorify God when, because of the gospel and what God's done in your heart, you forgive somebody that's really hurt you, someone's really wronged you, and you forgive them.

Why? Because in a way you're making visible, you're revealing, displaying the infinite, forgiveness of God, that because of what Christ has done for you on the cross, you can forgive those around you.

[14:06] Or another example, you forgive God, you glorify God when you run a marathon, right, to borrow from my friend, in such a way that it says to those around you, Christ is more precious to me than the gold or the silver that I might win.

When you run in such a way that says whether I do well or I do badly, Christ is precious in my life. That glorifies God. You're making visible the infinite, perfect nature and the character of God.

Does that make sense? You tracking? Sort of? Okay, great. Now, Jesus says this, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Now is the hour coming for you to really see me for who I am. Now is coming my glory, my perfect nature and character that has been hidden throughout the ages. Now you're going to see me for who I really am.

Friends, how is Christ's excruciating death on the cross, how does that reveal who Christ is? Well, think about this. It reveals that Jesus is sovereign over everything in the world.

[15:09] Christ is supremely sovereign. Think about how for hundreds of years God has been speaking through his prophets and he's been saying to them, the hour is coming when I will send my deliverer, I will send my rescuer, he will save his people, he will save them from their enemies out there but as we heard last week also from the enemies inside, God had been speaking and saying I will send my rescuer to save my people and 700 years earlier God sent a specific prophet called Isaiah and God had promised that this deliverer would come not as a king who destroys his enemies but as a suffering servant.

God promised I will send my Messiah, my deliverer, he will be familiar with pain and suffering. He will be despised and rejected. He will be one that men and women scoff at and ridicule.

In fact, my deliverer will come and he will be pierced for the transgressions of his people. And then Isaiah said he will stand trial but during his trial he will remain silent.

He won't argue with the unfair judgment that's brought upon him. And John tells us that Isaiah said these things because he saw the glory of God, he saw who God was. You see friends, Jesus Christ didn't die because Pontius Pilate had career ambitions, he didn't want to get on the wrong side of the Romans and so he thought I better please the Romans.

No, of course it happened, that's not why Jesus died. Jesus didn't die because Judas Iscariot betrayed him for 30 pieces of silver. Jesus Christ didn't die because the Jews were jealous of him and handed him over to Pontius Pilate.

[16:45] All those things happened but those were simply tools in the hands of a sovereign God. the God who had chosen before the creation of the world that his son would die on the cross to save his people.

Jesus said this in John chapter 10. He said, I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for my sheep. No one takes my life from me. I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again. Friends, the cross of Christ reveals to us that Jesus Christ is sovereign over everything even over wickedness and great evil. Think about how the cross reveals to us the holiness of God, the justice of God. Look at verse 27 with me. Jesus says this. He says, Now my soul is troubled.

Why was Jesus so troubled? Why was Jesus so agitated before the cross? Is it because he's seen what the Romans do to people when they crucify them and he can't bear to face the pain?

[17:49] He thinks, That's going to be so painful I can't bear it. Is that why Jesus is agitated? No, of course not. If that's the reason, then many martyrs face their death better than Jesus.

Friends, the reason why Jesus' soul is so troubled is because not merely the excruciating pain he's about to face, but because the full and the final judgment of God, the wrath of God is for all the world.

the final wrath of God at the sins of those that would believe in him is about to be put on his shoulders, is about to be poured into the depths of his soul. In a sense, Christ is about to drink the very worst of hell itself.

And the reason why Jesus would do this is because this is the only way that a perfectly holy and righteous God could welcome unholy and unrighteous people like me and like you into his family. Jesus is about to do that for us. The cross reveals the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, the perfection of God. Friends, the cross demonstrates God's passion for his holiness.

[18 : 57] God is so holy and so set apart that he cannot even tolerate even an ounce of sin in his presence. And so he utterly and totally dealt and destroyed sin by dealing with Christ on the cross.

Friends, think about how the cross demonstrates the mercy of God. That though we don't deserve it, God welcomes us into his family and doesn't give us what we deserve but gave it to Christ instead.

The apostle Paul writes, he says, though we were dead in our sins following the ways of this world, though we were slaves to our sin, because of God being rich in mercy, because of his great love for us, even when we were dead in our sins, God made us alive together.

Think about how the cross reveals the profound love of God. That God, because he, Jesus loved God the Father, he loved his glory, he loved you and I, he loved his creation that he made, and he saw that we were wayward and gone and so lost that we couldn't even find our way back to God, he went and he died for us.

Romans says this, he says, scarcely will someone die for someone else. Not very often will someone say, hey, I'll die in your place, but maybe if you meet a very good man, a very righteous man, maybe if you meet a very honorable man and you're really humble, you'll lay down your life for that person.

[20 : 19] But God so loves us that this, while we were sinners, while we were enemies of God, while we had given God the middle finger, God sent his son to die for us.

Friends, think about how the cross reveals the profound love of God for us. Friends, the cross of Jesus is not just a good example to show us how to live, not just to teach us to forgive those that have hurt us or how to turn the other cheek.

It does all those things, but more than this, the cross reveals to us the perfect nature and the character of Jesus. Jesus says, now is the time that you're going to see me for who I am.

Now is the time that I'm going to be glorified. Now is the time you're going to see me for who I really am. Now is the time that you'll get to know me as God. Friends, for hundreds of years God had been speaking to his people through the prophets, through the angels, through signs and wonders, through the temple, through the priests, and in all those moments he was showing them just a glimpse of his glory.

He was showing them just a tiny percentage of who he was. But here, fully and finally, in a far more dramatic way than had ever been seen before, as Jesus hung on the cross, God says, this is who I am.

[21 : 35] I'm the sovereign God, I'm sovereign over everything. I'm the God of profound mercy. I'm the God who is holy and just. I'm the God of profound love. Friends, if you want to know God, you want to know who Jesus really is, you understand who this God is, you have to find him at the cross.

Don't just come to him as an example. Don't just come to him as a martyr, as a good man who was a victim of his times. You have to come to the one who said, for this purpose I was born. I came for this hour.

You have to find him at the cross. Okay, so first reason, how does the cross glorify Jesus? It shows us who he really is. Second reason is this, that's the longest one.

Second reason is this, the cross reveals the power of God, the profound power of God to change lives. Now remember, who is it that comes to Jesus, that provokes Jesus to make this dramatic statement?

Who comes to him and says, we want to see you? It's the Greeks, right? It's the Gentiles. It's not the Jewish people, it's the Gentiles. And where are they? They're in Jerusalem.

[22 : 43] They've come to Jerusalem because they want to worship. They've come for the Passover festival. Now, many of us will know that the Gentiles were able to come to Jerusalem, they were able to go to the temple, but they could only remain on the outside of the temple.

They couldn't go to the inner court. There's two courts, there's the inner court for the Jews, and then there's the outer court where the Gentiles had to remain. Now, some of the Gentiles, if they had fully converted and been circumcised and gone through all the things, some of them could have

gone to the inner court, but for most of them, the Gentiles had to remain on the outer court, and there's actually a wall that divides the Jews from the Gentiles.

And in Jesus' day, there are big signs on the wall that say, stay out, no Gentiles allowed in the inner court. Okay? And of course, it wasn't just in the temple.

For centuries, Jews and Gentiles didn't get along. They wouldn't eat together. The Jews were meant to be a light to the Gentiles, to welcome them in, and the Gentiles should have respected the Jews.

They're both to blame. But for centuries, they've been at each other. They wouldn't eat in each other's houses. They wouldn't share a meal together. They wouldn't cross the door, the threshold of the door, to go into each other's houses.

[24 : 01] Certainly wouldn't be in partnership and business together. And so here the Jews and Gentiles don't get along. But what we read is just a few chapters later in Acts chapter 10, Peter, a Jew, goes and has a meal with a Gentile.

He goes inside his home. They break bread together. They worship together. The Holy Spirit falls on both of them and they end up praising God together. And later on the apostle Paul writes to a bunch of Gentiles and he says, remember how just formerly you were called the uncircumcision by those who regard themselves as circumcision.

You were called dogs and inferior by those who recognize themselves as superior. But now, he says, in Christ Jesus, you who were once inferior, you who were once far off, you who were once regarded as second class, now you've been brought near, how?

By the blood of Christ on the cross. For Christ is our peace. He has broken down the dividing wall of hostility and he has created in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace.

Friends, for the very first time in the history of the world, here can both Jew and Gentile, slave and free, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, male and female, worshipped God, come together, stand shoulder to shoulder, knowing that they are equally chosen in God, equally loved by God, equally sinners for whom Jesus died on the cross.

[25 : 36] Why? Because Christ, by dying on the cross, broke the power of sin and self-centeredness and self-righteousness and now for the first time both Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and slaves and free and rich and poor and educated and uneducated have a new identity that says I'm loved and chosen by God.

Friends, the cross is at one and the same time the most awful day in the history of the world but it's the most glorious day in the history of the world as Jesus broke the power of sin. Jesus destroyed our self-righteousness.

Jesus destroyed our self-centeredness in the lives of his followers. How else do you explain what happened to the apostle Paul? Right? The apostle Paul, he goes around and he's destroying the church.

Anyone even gives a hint that maybe they're a follower of Jesus and he arrests them, he puts them in jail and maybe some of them even die. And a few years later, something happens and his life turns around.

And the church starts to say, we don't know what happened to this man but one thing we know, the man that was once persecuting us is now preaching the very message he tried to destroy. How do you explain that?

[26 : 48] Except by the power of the gospel. Paul writes this and he says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel. Why? It is the power of God for salvation to change lives around. Back in Cape Town where we come from, one of my very good friends there, one of my closest friends, his name is Gordon.

You call him Gordy. And Gordy became a Christ follower about eight or nine years ago. And before that he was a heroin addict. He had been in and out of rehab many years and his parents had tried everything.

Anyway, one day he comes out of rehab and he says, this is the time I'm going to sort out my life. This is the time I'm a changed man. I'm not going back to drugs. But it's not too long before his addictions get the better of him.

And so one night he calls his drug dealer up and he says, hey, I need you to help me out. He goes and he meets his dealer and he buys some heroin. And he's driving home and on the way home he gets a vision of Jesus Christ.

And he's so petrified that he stops his car at the next traffic light, opens his door, throws the drugs on the floor, calls his friend and says, Garth, something's happened to me, I need to speak to you.

[28 : 06] Drives to Garth's house. Now Garth had just become a Christian about six months before. These two guys used to party it up together and now Garth had just become a Christian. And so Gordy phones him and says, Garth, I need to talk to you.

And he goes to Garth's house and Garth helps him, explains what happens and that night Gordy surrenders his life to Jesus and he becomes a follower of Jesus. About five days later, Gordy comes to our CG.

He's a brand new Christian and he looks a mess, right? He looks like a gangster or something. He's got a big gold chain on, he's got a cap pulled down low and he doesn't look very happy but something's happened to him.

And he goes through that CG and he's talking and he's contributing and Gordy can't say one sentence without swearing. He's just swearing the whole night long. He goes outside for smoke just now and but he kept on coming back to Christ.

He kept on coming back to the cross. He kept on coming to Jesus not just as an example but as a savior. About a week later, our CG goes to a combined church service.

[29 : 11] A whole bunch of churches in Cape Town come together. We have a combined service. And Gordy says to me, he says, Kev, there are people here I thought I would never see in a church.

And I said to him, hey bud, I think they're thinking the same thing about you. But you know what? His life turned around. His life changed.

And in one sense there was a dramatic change but another sense it was a slow change.

Sometimes Gordy would phone me at one o'clock in the morning and say, Kev, you need to come to my house. I'm about to do something stupid.

I need someone to pray with me. He'd go there, pray. But he got into the scriptures. He loved God's word. He kept coming to Jesus as savior. He kept coming to the end of himself. I remember at one point I said, he was struggling with addiction.

And I said, Gordy, you've just got to get through one day. He said, I've just got to get through one minute. If I can get through one minute at a time, that's a victory. But friends, today he's an elder. Or just a few months before we left, he became an elder in the church.

[30 : 11] He got married in January. He's a different person. Why? Because the gospel is a power that changes lives. The gospel is not just the good news of how to be a better person, how to be a moral person, how to be a better husband.

The gospel is a power that changes our lives. It changes us from the inside. God. And Jesus came to do that. J.C. Rowe said, Jesus Christ is a complete Savior. He doesn't merely take away the guilt of a believer's sin.

He does that, but he does far more. He breaks its power. In Colossians chapter 2, Paul writes this. He says, you were dead in your transgressions and sin.

Me, I was dead in my sin. But God made us alive together with him. He forgave us our sins and he canceled the record of debt that stood against us. And then he says this.

And God disarmed the rulers and the authorities, the spiritual rulers and authorities. God disarmed them by putting them to open shame, triumphing over them in Christ on the cross.

[31 : 14] Do you remember in Genesis chapter 3, Adam and Eve fall, they sin, they listen to the snake and they don't listen to God. And God speaks to Adam and he says, hey, there's consequences.

To Eve, there's consequences. consequences. And then God says to the snake, to Satan, he says, you will forever torment God's people. Sin will always be close to them.

But there is going to come a son of man. There is going to come a human being and you will bite his heel. In other words, as a snake, you will attack him. And you might think you've got the better of him.

But in the way that you bite him, the way that you torment him, he will crush your head. He will destroy you. Friends, that's what happened on the cross. On the cross, Satan thought he got the better of Jesus.

He was like a python that thought he had taken a bite of Jesus. He thought he got the better of him. He thought, now Jesus is dead. But in the very moment that Christ was hanging on the cross, Christ was crushing the head of his enemy.

[32 : 12] Friends, on the cross, Jesus Christ accomplished the most astounding victory when he dethroned sin. He overcome evil and he defanged Satan. Even though it looked like sin and evil

was getting the better of him, Christ was accomplishing a victorious and magnificent victory.

On the cross, as strange as it seemed, as unusual as it seemed, Jesus is about to die and he cries out, it is finished. What is finished?

The atonement. He's paid the price for our sin, but also the victory over his enemy. It is finished.

First, friends, the cross of Calvary is a strange glory.

It's an obscure glory. It looked like the most shameful day in the history of the world, but actually in that moment, Christ was achieving his greatest victory. How does the cross reveal the glory of God?

It reveals the power of Christ over his enemy. Third thing is this. It reveals Christ's radical passion for his glory, for his father's glory. Look at verse 27 with me.

[33 : 17] Verse 27 says, Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, for this very purpose I've come to this hour.

Father, glorify your name. Throughout the gospel, Jesus demonstrates radical devotion and radical obedience to the glory of his father.

Jesus is constantly saying things like, I've come not to do my will, but the will of my father in heaven. I've come not to please myself, but my father in heaven. I have a job to do.

It's to fulfill the work of my father. Jesus is radically committed to the glory of his heavenly father.

Now contrast that with verse 42. Look at what it says here.

It says, Nevertheless, many of the authorities believed in Jesus. So intellectually, they've done the sums, they've done the accounting. They reckon there's more evidence for Jesus than against him.

[34 : 15] They believed in him intellectually. Yet, for fear of the Pharisees, they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue. For they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

Friends, it's not only kings and queens, presidents and governors that love to display their glory.

This thirst for the praise of men and to be made much of, to be praised and honored is actually something that lives inside each one of us.

And it makes us make crazy decisions, doesn't it? It drives us to trade that which is important for that which is temporary. It causes us to sell our souls to the highest bidder.

And yet the irony is the one man, the one human being who deserved the glory, the one human being who deserved to be honored and glorified, the creator of all things, including the very people that were nailing him to the cross, the sovereign God before whom every knee will bow, the one man who deserved for men and women to bow down before him, in that moment lays aside his glory so that you and I can be welcomed into his glory.

Friends, if ever there was an irony, this is it. Christ, the king of glory, should allow himself to be mocked and scorned so that you and I can enter his glory. Jesus, the cross demonstrates Christ's profound devotion to his father's glory.

[35 : 41] Fourth thing and finally is this. Why is the cross glorious? Why is the cross more glorious than a crown? Fourth thing is this. It shows us the pattern of the godly life, the Godward life.

Now, this is the final point. In some ways, this grounds all this theology into everyday life. I want us to stay awake. Okay, we're almost done. The counter-cultural, counter-intuitive message of the cross is that what is true for Christ our Savior and what the apostles soon found was true for them is actually true for every follower of Jesus.

And that is that the way to glory passes through Calvary. The way to glory passes through Calvary. Jesus' hour revealed not only his glory but also our way to glory.

Look at what happens in verse 24. Jesus says this. He says, Truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. And that's the glory of the cross, right? From this moment on, Jesus is going to die but it's going to yield a harvest of millions of souls around the world, right?

[36 : 56] Jesus dies that we can live. But then Jesus looks at each one of us in the eye and he says, What's true for me is also true for you. He says, Whoever loves his life will lose it.

And whoever hates his life in this world, comparatively speaking, will actually find life. If everyone serves me, he must follow me. Follow me where? To Calvary, to the cross, to Golgotha.

For where I am, there my servant will be also. But then he gives this hope. He says, Don't be disheartened. Those who serve me, the Father will honor them as well.

Friends, this is what differentiates true faith in Christ from man-centered religion. In man-centered religion, we come to Jesus to make our lives more comfortable and convenient. We come to Jesus to make our lives better, to make our lives not as difficult.

But true faith is when we come to Jesus and say, Christ, I'll follow you. I'll follow you to the cross. Just as the Gentiles came to Jesus and say, God, what can you add to our religion to make our religion better?

[37 : 58] How can you help us? So we do it so often. But Jesus says that actually, the way to true life, the way to glory, is to follow him through Calvary. Now, there's two implications of this to think about.

The first one is this. That which seems glorious is often not. Okay? So think about this when you go to work. Think about this when you go to school this week.

Think about this when you choose a university. Think about this when you choose a career. Think about this in the way that you parent your children. Think about this in the way that you spend your money. You seek that promotion. You look for a job.

You look for a house. That which seems most glorious is often not. But we started off talking about the way that kings and queens love to be honored. Right? They love to display their glory.

And a few minutes ago we said that's not just true for kings and queens. It's actually true for all of us. All of us love to be glorified. We love to win the marathons that people can say we've done well.

[38 : 57] Right? And we all do that in our own way. And the world has a way of seducing us in such a way that that which seems glorious and praiseworthy is attractive.

But actually the upside down nature of the gospel is that these things pass away. These things which look so promising and promise us so much actually often disappoint us.

Those things which promise us happiness and contentment actually often leave our souls empty and dry. Isn't that what Jordan just said to us a few minutes ago? He said he was running marathons in pursuit of glory.

But that didn't make me happy. Friends, can I ask you this? What are you going to spend your one and only life in? What are you going to invest your one and only life in? How are you going to spend your life?

Are you going to invest in that which will puff you up? Make you feel important? Make you feel special for a day? A year? Maybe even a decade? Friends, will you spend your life pursuing what our culture says is honorable and glorious and beautiful, but in the end will just pass away like the grass?

[40 : 03] Blow away like a cloud on a cloudy day. Friends, why don't you invest your life in that which is going to last? It might not look glorious. It might not look beautiful. You might not get the praise of men and women, but it's the thing that will satisfy your soul and it's the thing that will count.

Second thing is this. That which seems hopeless is actually not. The cross tells us that the things in life which seem most hopeless, most redundant, most meaningless and without value are actually often the places where God himself is.

The sickness of a child, the pain of being retrenched, the hardship of financial difficulty, the shame of persecution for sharing your faith, being passed over for promotion and everyone else in the office gets promoted except you, the death of a loved one, being diagnosed with an incurable disease.

Friends, in these moments, if we come to Christ and find our glory, if we come to Christ as our hope for glory, often in these places we'll drink deeply of the wonder and the beauty and the majesty of God.

We'll find something about the glory of Christ that you'll never find in high street. In the bitterness of soul, we taste the sweetest delights. Friends, today Jesus calls each one of us to follow him.

[41 : 22] He calls us to follow him not in splendor, not in ease, not in comfort and convenience. He calls us to follow him to Calvary. He calls us to follow him to the cross.

Jesus calls us to pick up our cross, to die to self, to die to our sin, to crucify our pride. But he says in that place you'll rise again to new life. In that place you'll discover a life you could never have dreamt of, never imagined in your wildest dreams.

Friends, the way of self-crucifixion seems foolishness. It seems meaningless. It seems wasteful to our world and our culture. But friends, there's never lived a single follower of Jesus who hasn't

found that dying to themselves and saying yes to Christ has not been the way to meaningful life and eternal life.

Friends, this is the way to glory. This is the way to real life. This is the way to eternal life. This is the way to life that you were made for. Let's come to him now.

Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Jesus Christ, God, we so need you to see the world the way it really is.

[42 : 50] Let's pray together. God, our culture would love to disciple us, telling us to pursue our own glory, telling us to pursue a life of comfort and ease, to seek our own glory, God.

And yet, Jesus, as you told us, the way of self-glory leads to death. Father, as a church, won't you lead us to follow you?

Won't you help us, Christ, to become more like you, God? Jesus, in our everyday life, God, won't you help us to fix our eyes on you and in you to find our glory?

Jesus, help us to be like the apostle Paul who said, I had everything going for me.

I had the career, the reputation, the money, the wealth, the prestige, the honor, but all those things I consider as rubbish compared to knowing Christ.

[44 : 09] Jesus, won't you help us to live an upside-down life, contrary to the way of the world?

Lord. Christ, we come to you now.

God, we confess that so often we live for ourselves. Father, won't you forgive us? God, don't just forgive us, won't you reorientate our lives?

Won't you bring us back to the cross? Jesus, won't you lead us to the cross? Lead us to that place where your love and your mercy, your holiness and your justice, your sovereignty and your grace met.

Father, I pray, may we, as followers of Jesus, not march to the drumbeat of our culture and of our time.

[45 : 29] May we get a glimpse of who you are. March to your drumbeat. God, may we live differently because we've seen you, because we've seen your glory. Friends, maybe just as we sing this next song, I want to encourage you to respond.

Won't you come to Jesus and in your own words, won't you ask him to open your eyes to see his glory? In your own words, won't you come to him and confess how easily we live for our own glory? In your own eyes, won't you ask him to lead you back to the cross? Let's respond to him in worship.