



Sermon Growth Guide

February 28, 2021

To Give His Life – For This Reason

John 12:26–36

Key Verse: John 12:32

“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

Big Idea: We are drawn to Christ, asked only to release our life into the hands of God by faith.

Foundations

Why did Jesus come? To give His life away so that we might receive the eternal gift of entering into the family of God through the righteousness of Christ.

Through the cross, we are drawn into right relationship with God, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself,” (Jesus, John 12:32).

Pastor Tim writes that Jesus came to “rescue, to purchase, to snatch you up in His grip of grace. It’s not on you to find your way to Him. It’s on you to release your life into His hands, to believe, and to be humbly, gratefully, saved.”

This week we are taking time to thank God for the open door He has made for all who will enter in through faith in Christ. We’re also taking time to help one another grow our faith, faith that gives us the courage to release ourselves fully into the arms of God.

Gathered together with your circle, open your time of study in prayer. Ask the Spirit to guide and guard your spiritual formation, your growth in Christ. Pray to be given the courage to walk with Christ joyfully in every circumstance.

Understanding God’s Word

Spend several minutes helping each other understand the context of John 12:26–36. Where is Jesus? What is “the hour”? What is the overall tone of this passage?

What are the benefits to Jesus being “lifted up” given in verses 30–32?

Applying God’s Word

What does it look like for you to freely and fully release your life into the arms of Christ? How can our Life Groups become even deeper places of catalyst where faith and gratitude are cultivated in our hearts?

Witnessing God’s Word

Tim continues, “The third thing that happens on the cross is that the universal call of the Gospel is published, and the covenant of God opens up for any and all who will come in through faith in Jesus Christ.” Together, spend time thanking God for this open door to heaven through Christ. Pray deeply for saving faith to grow in the hearts of those around you who do not yet know Jesus as their Savior. Identify one action step you can take this week to continue to extend God’s love to a yet-believing neighbor near you.

A young lady decided to gift her technologically challenged grandparents with an iPad. She knew they loved cooking together and were always looking for new recipes, so she figured they could use the iPad to find some new ones. "Merry Christmas" she wrote. "Thought you might enjoy this in the kitchen." A few weeks later she got the thank you card. "Thanks so much for the glass cutting board from California. It is sure good for apples, but we also love it for salads. We put it out the other night as a cheeseboard. It fits perfectly in the dishwasher. Much love, Nana." The primary purpose of something can be useful information. What was Jesus' primary purpose? He knew what His reason for coming to earth was. Do we? He came to give His life.

It matters what you think Jesus came to do. Who is Jesus? He isn't just an idea. He's a person in history. What was He up to? Maybe He was an inspiring teacher. Much of Western Civilization is built up in one way or another on things He said and taught. Maybe He was a moral inspiration. People who get associated with Jesus seem interested in morality and motivated to be better behaved. Maybe He was a spiritual guru. Jesus led people to inner peace. Jesus was and is all those things. But what is He primarily? What did He come to do? If you think of Jesus as a teacher, it's on you to learn from Him and apply it in hopes it will be enough. It's on you to learn and be a good student if Jesus is just a good teacher. If He's a moralist, it's on you to be moral. If He's a spiritual inspiration, it's on you to be inspired and spiritual. But if He's a Savior, that's something different. If He's a Savior then He came to rescue, to purchase, to snatch you up in His grip of grace. It's not on you to find your way to Him. It's on you to release your life into His hands, to believe, and to be humbly, gratefully, saved. "Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?' Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent'" (John

6:28-29). Jesus is a Savior. Only believe and be saved.

Let's return to the scene. Jesus is in the middle of a huge crowd. I almost imagine Him having to shout to be heard, like when you're at a ballgame or a concert. (Remember those? Sigh). Communication is hard, but Jesus has things to say and things He wants His disciples to know even in the middle of the crazy. We saw last week how Jesus turned the hearts and minds of the disciples from excitement about a ministry just about to break global to a call to die to self, to fall into the ground like a seed. He continues in that vein: "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me" (John 12:26). To follow Jesus is to follow Jesus to the cross. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Whoever serves me must follow me, says Jesus, and that means to the cross. But, He says, you can follow with trust. My Father honors anyone who serves and follows me. The seed falls to the ground, but also into the hands of the Father who raises it up again.

Then we get a moment of intimacy in the middle of the crowd. Jesus shares His heart. John was always very close to the heart of Jesus. "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour" (John 12:27). It's a precursor to the agony Jesus will go through in the Garden of Gethsemane. Should I ask to turn away from this sacrifice? Should I ask God to save my body and my spirit from all this pain? I'm troubled. I'm upset. I'm hurting here. But, did you catch it? Jesus says,

"No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour." It was for this very



reason I came, says Jesus. For this very reason. Not primarily to teach. Not primarily to heal. If Jesus came primarily to teach, He only taught so many. If Jesus came primarily to heal, He only healed so many. Primarily, Jesus knew, He came to give His life.

So, no. He won't turn away from it even when it's hard. He has an appointment to keep. Are you ever tempted to turn away from things when they get hard? Not me. I do hear that happens to some people. We all feel that way, and sometimes we do run. Jesus says, no, I'll walk straight through it. "'Father, glorify your name!' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again'" (John 12:28). Boom! Some said it was thunder! It's a crazy crowd. Lots is happening. Hard to figure it all out at once. Jesus explains, "You know, I didn't need to hear that. You needed to hear that." "Jesus said, 'This voice was for your benefit, not mine'" (John 12:30). Jesus already knows. He knows why He came. He knows what He needs to do. He knows how this all works.

Now Jesus tells His disciples exactly what it means for Him to die. This is a big couple of verses right here. "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:31–32). Right here, on Jesus' own lips, from the mouth of Jesus, we get three things Jesus knows will be accomplished when He dies on the cross. For this very reason He came to this hour. **(1) Judgment on this world, (2) The prince of this world driven out, and (3) Jesus says, "I will draw all people to myself."**

(1) Judgment on this world. We have a just and holy God, a God who pours out His wrath against unrighteousness. God sees to it that justice is served. Jesus says, now is the time for this judgment to come. You are about to see God's hand move against unrighteousness and sin. But here's the thing, the wrath of God against injustice, sin and disobedience, God's divine "No" spoken against all the ways we disregard Him, hurt ourselves

and hurt others, all that recompense—it's poured out on the shoulders of Jesus the Son of God, not on us. When Jesus dies on the cross, He dies with the sin of all mankind on Him. The debt of sin is paid by Jesus. Our penalty is laid on Him. "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). God continues to bring justice to the world and motivate us to do the same. People are held accountable. But now, in Christ, forgiveness is possible. We can be forgiven in Jesus Christ. He died to take our penalty, the judgment on this world, on Himself. "Till on that cross as Jesus died; The wrath of God was satisfied; For every sin on Him was laid; Here in the death of Christ I live."

(2) The prince of this world driven out.

The "prince of this world" is how Jesus talks about Satan, the devil. The second thing Jesus knows will happen when He dies on the cross is that the claim of Satan over us will be made void. What's the claim of Satan? The devil lays a claim over all of God's creation that will not submit to God's rule. Jesus told a parable where a master hands out money to three servants, and when they use the gifts well to serve him the master says, "Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the joy of your master." What if you can't say that? Either you enter into the joy of the Master, the Lord, or you do not serve, you do not submit, you refuse to enter the joy of His Kingdom, and so you belong ultimately to another. Satan says, "This one is mine. See how he despises you, Jesus. He doesn't want your Kingdom." Instead of "enter the eternal joy of the master," the claim of Satan is "enter into the eternal punishment of my kingdom, forever tortured and tormented at my hands. Sinners belong to me." But what if Jesus died to pay the penalty? Then that claim is void. "You, sinner, you belong to me," says Satan. "Yes, I am a sinner. That's true," I reply. "But Christ has paid my debt. I appeal to the cross of Christ. I am forgiven by His blood. For I am His, not yours, forever." Do you know the power of this truth?

(3) “I will draw all people to myself.”

“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:31-32). The third thing that happens on the cross is that the universal call of the Gospel is published, and the covenant of God opens up for any and all who will come in through faith in Jesus Christ. God made a covenant, a promise, with Abraham. “From you I will build a nation, my people Israel, my daughter Zion, a people of my own possession.” These are the covenants God made all through the Old Testament. Now Jesus initiates the New Covenant, the final and consummating covenant, made by His own blood shed on the cross. We will hear Him say very soon when He lifts up a cup of wine at the Last Supper, “this cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood shed for you.” The New Covenant is a breaking out of the Kingdom of God over all nations, all peoples, any and all. All may come. All may enter in. All may be counted children of God through Jesus Christ. “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

““And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.’ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die” (John 12:32-33). Lifted up means the cross. For this very reason I came. But it means more than the cross. It also means the resurrection. “When I am lifted up from, out of, the earth.” Christ has come. Christ had died. Christ has risen from the grave. This is our claim. This is our Gospel proclamation. When we preach that message, the Holy Spirit touches hearts and convinces them of the truth of it, and Christ draws people home to Himself. Yes, in Jesus, judgment is rendered and paid, the claim of Satan is void, the covenants of God are mine, even mine, a sinner saved by grace.

Jesus knew this. He knew He came to give His life. God wants you to know it. I mean, a voice thundering from heaven! This voice, Jesus says, wasn’t for me. I’ve

heard it. I’m covered. That voice is for you. God wants you to know something. “Then Jesus told them, ‘You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.’ When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them” (John 12:35-36). There’s something Jesus knows. There’s also something God wants you to know.

God doesn’t let us know everything. It is the glory of God to conceal, says the proverb. “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever” (Deuteronomy 29:29). There are things God conceals, but there are things God wants you to know with absolute clarity. We don’t understand everything, but God wants you to understand and know what Jesus did for you, the way of salvation Jesus won for you. It is published and declared and brought into the light for all to see. And there is urgency. The light won’t shine forever on you. There are moments in our lives when, for whatever reason, we are open to the Gospel. We are ready to hear the voice from heaven. We seem to grasp what Christ has done. Jesus says here, do something. Act on it. Take a step in the light. Believe. “Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light” (John 12:36). Believe and become. Jesus came, Jesus died, Jesus rose again for this very reason.

