

(John) 16 - the Light Shinning

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath's sermon on John 12 explores the themes of love, sacrifice, and the significance of Jesus' final days before the crucifixion.

Duration: 46:44

Scripture: John 12

Topics: "John"

Description

The video is a sermon on John chapter 12, which marks the close of Jesus' public ministry. The chapter is divided into five sections: Jesus and His disciples, Jesus and the multitude, Jesus and the world, John's verdict on Jesus' work, and Jesus' verdict on His own work. The sermon focuses on the first section, verses 1-11, where Jesus talks about the hour of His glorification and the importance of dying to bear much fruit. The speaker emphasizes the significance of Calvary and how Satan tries to keep Christians from embracing the message of the cross.

Transcript

I hope you've had a good weekend, as good a weekend as I've had. Simply thrilling. I was back at Durham.

I don't suppose many of you know where Durham is. Perhaps you've never heard of it. Many, many years ago, before you ever thought of, I used to be at school there, and it was turning the clock right round, and I went into that great old cathedral in Durham.

Beautiful place. Sat down where I used to sit down as a teenager and go to sleep every Sunday. We had to go there four years running every week, twice a Sunday.

Had a jolly good sleep. Didn't understand a word of it. But it's good to be back and see it all.

But better still to go to a Christian union in Durham, with over 300 students there, packed, full, and intense listening. I'm sorry, you can well imagine how on earth they ever took it, but I found myself having spoken for more than an hour, and all sensing the presence of God. And many of them really seeking the Lord.

It was a tremendous evening. And the next morning to go to St. Nicholas Church in Marcus Square in Durham, to find a church absolutely full, overflowing with crowds of people, hungry, eager for the Lord. An Anglican church, with a very, very fine vicar and curate.

Great to speak for 20 minutes to that group. It was, well, just something very special. Well, back to John.

John Chapter 12. John Chapter 12. And this is a very special chapter.

John Chapter 12, the beginning of it. Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made him a supper.

Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at table with him. Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, he who was to betray him, said, Why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. And as he had the money box, he used to take what was put into it. Jesus said, Let her alone.

Let her keep it for the day of my burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me. When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus, but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

So, the chief priest planned to put Lazarus also to death, because on account of him, many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. The next day, a crowd, a great crowd, who had come to the feast, heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion. Behold, your King is coming, sitting on an ass's coat. His disciples did not understand this at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him.

The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they had heard he had done this sign. The Pharisees then said to one another, You see that you can do nothing? Look, the world has gone after him.

Among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. Philip went and told Andrew.

Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, bears much fruit. He who loves his life, loses it. And he who hates his life in this world, will keep it for life, for eternal life.

If anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am there, shall my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

We leave it there for the moment. If you may, that's the first 26 verses of John, chapter 12. Now, have you got your outline handy? Just be sure that you have it there.

Chapter 12 is the life saving and the light shining. And in the outline, this marks the controversy concluded by the life saving in verses 1-11 and the light shining in verses 11-15. And you notice this chapter marks the close of our Lord's public ministry.

Just glance down it to get the general idea of what it's all about. Actually the whole thing is in five different sections. I'll give them to you, so you can jot these down in your notes.

Ready? Verses 1-11, Jesus and his disciples. Verses 1-11, Jesus and his disciples. And verses 12-19, Jesus and the multitude.

And verses 20-36, the first part of 36, Jesus and the world. And then, the fourth part, from verse 36, the second part, to verse 43, John's verdict on Jesus' work. I mean by that, of course, the writer of the gospel, John's verdict, not John the Baptist, John's verdict on Jesus' work.

Verse 36 to verse 43. And finally, there's 44-50, Jesus' verdict on his own work. And we look at these and take them in turn.

I'll just give you them again, in case you haven't got them quite clear. Verses 1-11, Jesus and his disciples. Verses 12-19, Jesus and the multitude.

Verses 20-36, Jesus and the world. Verses 36-43, John's verdict on Jesus' work. And verses 44-50, Jesus' verdict on his own work.

Now that's how the chapter seems to proceed. So let's look at each one of these in turn. Not this morning, we won't finish them all.

But we look at verses 1-11, Jesus and the disciples. Now, there's some interesting things here. I need to just ask the Lord to clear your mental vision.

In verses 1-11, here's the account of a feast at Bethany, and the anointing of Jesus by Mary. Now, the dating of this in John's gospel, and also the detail, and emphasis really, is different from that which is given in other gospels. If you have a Bible there with references, you'll be clear, but let me just give you this story appears in Mark, chapter 14, verses 3-9.

Matthew 26, verses 6-13. And there's one very like it in Luke, chapter 7, verses 37-50. Got those? The problem is really one of Bible criticism and chronology, dating.

You remember that. You see, John's account, for instance, ties in very closely with Luke's account. His account of the anointing of Jesus by a woman who was a sinner.

But that story, and that account, occurred a long time before his death. A long time before his death. John, however, identifies this unknown woman as Mary, the sister of Martha.

And in John, of course, it's dated within days of the crucifixion. Some people hold the view that Mary anointed Jesus twice. Once, when he caught up with her in her path of sin and rebellion.

And later, again, Bethany. I wouldn't know that that's a suggestion. As to the dating of it, you notice John dates this incident six days before the Passover.

Verse 1. Mark, however, in chapter 14, verse 1, dates it two days before the Passover. Just note that. The difference in the two.

And this is perhaps, I'm not stating this as definite, but perhaps, and some commentary and so on suggests it. Because of the uncertainty of the actual date when Jesus was crucified. The actual time in the Passover feast.

Not to get too heavy on this, or to be too concerned about it, but just to give you a little thought. Ground for thought, anyway. Probably one of the best commentators on John, on many books of the Bible, is Bishop Westcott, of Durham, incidentally.

He dates this incident on the eighth day of the month. Passover was, of course, as you know, in the first year of the Jewish New Year, Nisan. And he dates it on the eighth day of the month.

As there would be strong reasons, he says, for the crucifixion taking place on the fourteenth of the month. Because, strictly speaking, the Passover only lasted one day. But combined with it, and following it, there was the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Which went on from the fourteenth day right through twenty-first. Maybe you've had lots of study on this in the tabernacle, and so on. So I don't want to enter into any controversy about it.

But it was placed on the fourteenth, if that was a fact. And this incident in Mary's home took place on the eighth. Jesus would have arrived on the last Jewish Sabbath before the Passover.

Arrived in Jerusalem. Other people date this incident on the tenth of the month. That was the day when the Lamb was set apart.

That Jesus was crucified on that day. Well, that doesn't clear the situation altogether, but at least gives you food for thought and thinking round about it. And you notice another thing in this story in John.

That it precedes the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem. Whereas Mark, it follows it. Asked me to explain it, can't.

There you have it, to think through. Having got you thoroughly fogged, you notice now that we meet some friends here again. Martha, who serves, in verse three, you'd expect her to do that, of course.

And Lazarus, he's present, bless his heart. And Mary, who worships. This is in the third verse of the chapter.

Mary took the pound of crusty ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped her feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. That immediately aroused criticism. Judas, he protests, in verse four, and calls it waste.

Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor? If you ever do anything costly for Jesus, somebody is sure to object. If you ever do anything really costly for Christ, someone is sure to object. So I must ask myself, you must ask yourself this, is the driving force of my life logic or love? Do I do something because it's logical, or do I do something because I love? Don't have anything to do with the Judas cult, this he said, verse six.

Not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. And as he had the money box, he used to take what was put into it. He's a rascal.

But if the master, Jesus, endorses what I do, if he endorses it, verse seven and eight, let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial. The poor you always have with you, but you, you do not always have, you do not always have me. If, if Jesus endorses what I do, I don't think I'll mind what other people say about it.

If he approves, I don't care what other people think. Of course, Judas wasn't moved really by any concern for the poor at all. But Mary's, Mary's act of love is contrasted with the calculating motives of Judas.

Mary's act of love is contrasted with the calculating motives of Judas. If you'd ask him, he could have found some reason for stopping that extravagant giving. If you'd ask Mary, she couldn't have explained why she did what she did.

Judas could. All calculating motives. Mary couldn't.

Couldn't explain it. But she did it because she loved. Ever found you're doing something for somebody? Most of all for Lord Jesus.

And you can't explain why you've done it, except that you love. That's it. You only know how much you love somebody by the amount you're prepared to sacrifice for them.

So you have the contrast between Mary's love, which pours itself out, and the covetousness of this man, Judas, that's slowly and surely maturing into hatred. Those two streams flowing in a life. They mature.

Till love? Can't explain it. Till this motive of calculation and niggardliness becomes hate. Read verse 9 through 11.

When the great crowd of Jews learned that he was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus, but also to see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead. So, the chief priests planned to put Lazarus also to death. How pathetic.

He'd just come alive again. Poor old man. Now the only thing he could do with him was put him away again.

Isn't it pathetic? Because on account of him, many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. Isn't that wonderful? Hmm. Poor Lazarus.

The motto of those Jews was this. If you can't disprove Christian testimony, get rid of the person who witnesses. That's all they could do.

If you can't disprove Christian testimony, get rid of the one who speaks. So, Christian goes out to the missionary overseas, indeed in Britain, goes out to put his head on the block. Puts his head on the block.

Because if they can't disprove what you're saying, get rid of him. Kill him. Jesus and his disciples.

Now look particularly at Jesus and the multitude in verses 12 through 19. Verses 12 through 19. Now again, similar accounts in the other Gospels.

If you've got references, you're okay. If you haven't, Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19. Mark, Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19.

Just for a second, turn to Luke's account. Chapter 19 of Luke's Gospel. Verse 29 to 36.

Let me read this to you. Luke 19, got it? Verse 29. When he drew near to Bethpage and Bethany at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, Go into a village opposite where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat.

Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, why are you untying it, you shall say this, The Lord has need of it. So those who were sent went away, found it as he had told them.

And as they were untying the colt, its owner said to them, Why are you untying the colt? And they said, The Lord has need of it. And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their garments on the colt, they set Jesus upon it, and as he rode along, they spread their garments on the road. That's all rather wonderful.

Notice particularly, the two disciples, just notice what they did, jotted down, who went for this donkey. They went where he told them to go. Verse 30 to 32 of Luke 19 Verse 30 20 rather 30 yes 30 to 32 Go in the village opposite, you'll find a colt tied, no one has yet sat on it untied, so bring it here.

If anyone asks you, why are you untying it, you shall say, The Lord has need of it. So those who were sent went away, and found it as he told them. They went where he told them to go.

They said what he told them to say. The Master, The Lord has need of it. And they did what he told them to do.

Verse 30 33 35 They were untying the colt, and they brought it to Jesus, throwing their garments on it. Underline, underline in those verses the importance of obedience, even among people who were anonymous. I don't know who they were.

Two of the disciples. Verse 29 Underline the importance of obedience even among two who were absolutely anonymous. Now you can get back to John.

There's something very sad about the welcome given to Christ on this Palm Sunday. Because all too soon it was to be a crown of thorns. At first a welcome, but it was going to lead to a crown of thorns.

It's always easier to shout for Jesus in a crowd than to stand for him alone at Calvary. Always easier to shout for him in a crowd than to stand alone for him at the cross. Notice in verse 19 what the Pharisees said.

The Pharisees said one to another, you see what you can do? Nothing. You see that you can do? Nothing. Look! The world has gone after him.

I wish that were true. But listen and please note. The excitement of everybody convinced the Pharisees.

The excitement of everybody convinced the Pharisees of their weakness in face of Jesus' power. We can do nothing. The sheer excitement of the Pharisees, of everybody, convinced the Pharisees of their utter weakness in the face of Christ's irresistible power.

And notice that John quotes a prophecy in verse 15 from Zechariah chapter 9 and verse 9. Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold your king is coming sitting on an ass's coat. Don't miss the fact that this coat had never had a rider in its life before. Very unlikely that it should be tamed so quickly for Jesus to ride on it without any resistance.

Quite a wise ass. That prophecy in Zechariah was being fulfilled, was beginning to be fulfilled and the light was beginning to shine on that day. Beginning to shine.

Now just a word concerning Jesus and the world. You find in verses 20 through 36. 20 through 36.

Among those going to the feast were certain Greek converts. And they sought to see Jesus. Verse 21.

You notice they came and asked Philip. Verse 21. I think that's probably because he was from Bethsaida in Galilee where many Greeks had settled.

They asked Philip. Possibly they knew him. What they said to Jesus, I don't know.

Not recorded. But from his answer I think I can make a reasonable suggestion. Look at his answer in verse 23.

Jesus answered them The hour has come for the son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly I say to you unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground, into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

He who loves his life loses it. And he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me.

And where I am, there shall my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honour him. That was the answer that Jesus gave to a question that isn't recorded.

But I'll suggest to you what the question was. You can accept it or reject it. But I think Jesus must have said this.

I'll say it quite slowly because I'd like you to put it down and think it through. Here are the Greeks and here they're speaking to Jesus and saying Your own people have rejected you. We will receive you.

Come with us. I'll just give you that again. Your own people have received you.

Have rejected you. Yes, that's correct. Thank you.

We will receive you. Come with us. And Jesus saw in the approach of these people the first fruit of a harvest which was going to be reaped but only because of Calvary.

Now think into Jesus' answer there and think into the fact that these Greeks had come to see him for that one purpose and think again into my suggestion for their question. Your own people have rejected you. We will receive you.

Come to us. But Jesus saw in their coming to him, in their approach to him, the first fruit of a harvest which was to be reaped because of Calvary. Notice his declaration in verse 23.

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Remember in John's Gospel before, often, my hour has not yet come. But here, the hour has come.

The hour has come. The declaration. The hour which Father, Son and Holy Spirit had planned from the beginning of eternity whenever that may be.

The thought that was in the mind of God from the very start. Calvary. Therefore, couldn't go over those Greeks.

That would be the easy way out. Have you ever realized, I'm sure you have, that the devil before the cross did everything he could to keep Jesus from it. And since the cross he's done everything he can to keep people from hearing about it.

He wasn't successful in the first bit, but he has been in the second. Very. Always.

Always through his ministry, Christ has been tempted to get some other way out. Keep away from the cross. Satan dreaded it.

Absolutely dreaded Calvary. Come with us, say the Greeks. Come with us.

Your own people are rejecting you. Oh. The declaration in verse 23.

My hour has come. And the illustration in verse 24. I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground, into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Fruit in the Christian life is by dying and not by doing. Four most important words in Christian experience are there.

Four words. Ten letters. Most vital words in Christian experience.

And Satan does everything to keep every Christian from but if it, and Jesus applies that truth to himself and to his disciples, his mission must end in death if it's going to produce a harvest. Travel must precede satisfaction. Isaiah 53 verse 11.

He shall see of the travel of his soul and be satisfied. The Son of Man, the Lord Jesus, is glorified through the sacrifice of his life. Just notice it.

What death means in nature? Verse 24. Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and dies, it remains alone. You must sow to reap.

What death means to Jesus? Verse 23. The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. He lived to die.

And what death must mean to us? Verse 25. I lose in order to win. He who loves his life loses it.

He who hates his life in this world will keep it for life eternal. The saying in verse 25 is recorded in every gospel. In verse 25.

He who loves his life keeps it, loses it. And he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. That's Matthew 10, 39.

Mark 8, 35. Luke 9, 24. Be very clear that you have understood this.

I think I gave it in another context here some weeks ago, but put it down again. To hate my life does not mean I despise it. But it does mean I reject it.

To hate my life doesn't mean despising it. It means rejecting it. Compare that with Luke 14, 26.

Luke 14, 26. And Romans 9, verse 13. Romans 9, 13.

Jacob have I loved. Esau I have rejected. Hate.

It's the same word. If you hate somebody, you're on the very brink of murdering them. Next step, murder.

That's not the meaning of the word in the Bible. The word in the Bible means reject. Except a person hates his wife, husband, brothers, sisters, he cannot be my disciple.

I may have mentioned to you, but I've often looked at that verse. Luke 14. I looked at various commentaries, and they all say that means your love for Jesus must be like hatred, compared with your love for him.

Can't buy that. But except a man rejects, I can buy that. Give up my right to my family.

He cannot be my disciple. That's the word. Rejecting.

Giving up my right. Acknowledging that they're God's gifts to me. That they're His.

And I reject my claim upon them.

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