

Introduction: As we think of our risen and ascended Savior, and as we behold the culmination of Christ's saving work in the glory of His Cross, with our theme taken from Jesus' victorious words in the face of death, (John 12:28) "Father, glorify your Name," may God open our eyes more and more to our glorious, crucified Savior who not only endured our punishment on the Cross but who also gloriously restored our humanity by rising from the dead.

Monday: John 12:20-23 & 12:31-33. Our opening verses, in which Greeks unsuccessfully seek an audience with Jesus, could be misunderstood as a refusal of access to the Lord. Jesus does appear unresponsive to these Greeks in verses 20-22—burdened as He was with the troubling prospect of the Cross (John 12:27). But nothing could have been more inviting for these seekers than for Jesus to point them to the Cross in verse 23 and verses 31-33. For through that Cross, any and all sinners who believe have access into the very peace and blessing of God.

Meditate and Pray: Ponder prayerfully the words of this hymn about the Cross (# 258 in the Trinity Hymnal):

Sweet the moments, rich in blessing, which before the Cross I spend, life and health and peace possessing from the sinner's dying Friend.

Here I rest, in wonder viewing all my sins on Jesus laid, here I see redemption flowing from the sacrifice He made.

Here I find the dawn of heaven, while upon the Cross I gaze, see my trespasses forgiven, and my songs of triumph raise.

O that near the Cross abiding, I may to the Savior cleave, naught with Him my heart dividing, all for Him content to leave.

James Allen, 1757

Tuesday: John 12:27-30. See how Christ teaches us how to find light in dark places: despite His anguish in verse 27 at the thought of the Cross, "Now my heart is troubled," Jesus comforts Himself knowing that even His suffering will result in glory for His Father. Moreover, the Father confirms the glory that will issue from Calvary by declaring in John 12:28 that He will glorify His Name through the events unfolding in Holy Week. Jesus could rest in His Father's assurance that the Light of Glory would flow from the darkness of those three hours on the Cross. He wants us to rest in such glory too. For after all, this voice promising Glory is, as John 12:30 says, "for our benefit" too.

Meditate and Pray: Do we strive to make the Cross such an abiding place of rest, sweetness and even delight? Too often Christ's saving work on the Cross can be taken for granted by those who assume they grasp the basics of what went on there. But the Cross is not just for simple minds, nor is it merely a piece of jewelry or piece of furniture. The Cross is life for the believer, and the wounds which Christ suffered on it are powerful proof of our standing in heaven. May the Lord make the following words from hymn # 708 (v. 4) true for us this week:

"O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee; I lay in dust life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be." (George Matheson)

Wednesday: John 12:27-28 and Luke 9:28-31. In John 12:28 God the Father promises to glorify Jesus “again,” implying He has already done so. Surely the Transfiguration comes to mind as a place where the Father had already revealed the sparkling whiteness of His Son’s glory and spoken in testimony to Peter, James and John: “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to Him” (Luke 9:35). Yet even at that moment of great glory, the topic of conversation on that mount between Jesus and two Old Testament prophets (Moses and Elijah) is all to do with His upcoming death. (Luke 9:31) They spoke about His “departure,” (in the original Greek “exodus”) which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Meditate and Pray: We can do no better than Moses and Elijah. After waiting for hundreds of years to see the promised coming of Jesus, their focus was all upon the saving work which Jesus was to accomplish at Jerusalem on the Cross. We too must make sure that we glory in the Cross as they did. Let us not become distracted with the world’s continual problems. War, terrorism, poverty, social injustice and nation-building (or nation-destruction) are problems that will torment this world until the end of time. We are to fix our minds on the glory of what Jesus has accomplished on the Cross. May we resolve with Paul to “know nothing...except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Thursday: read John 12:30-41. Though God revealed Himself to Jesus’ generation through voices from heaven and countless miracles and signs (John 12:37), they refused to acknowledge the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. They would not accept that their King, the Messiah, would be a Man of Sorrows, as Jesus was. When Jesus spoke about His upcoming death as the “Son of Man” in John 12:23 and again in John 12:32-33, His Jewish audience obstinately claimed that the Messiah would never suffer in that way – “We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’?” Throughout history mankind has resented the depths to which God was willing to go in order to rescue men from sin. Such a picture of the suffering God-man is a painful reminder of how serious and hell-deserving sin is – a reminder men want to deny at all costs.

Meditate and Pray: Let us enter into the spirit of hymn # 257 (v. 3) in our hymnal which urges us to adopt a proper estimate of sin by looking at the Cross, instead of denying the suffering of the Messiah as the Jews of Jesus’ day: *“Ye who think of sin but lightly nor suppose the evil great here may view its nature rightly, here its guilt may estimate. Mark the sacrifice appointed, see who bears the awful load; ‘tis the Word, the Lord’s Anointed, Son of Man and Son of God.”*

Thomas Kelly, 1804

Friday: read John 12:41 and Isaiah 53:1-5. The blindness of Jesus' generation, roundly condemned by our author in John 12:37-40, is magnified when contrasted with the clarity of Old Testament believers' faith. Not only Moses and Elijah saw Jesus' glory. Isaiah also "saw Jesus' glory and spoke about Him" (John 12:41). To Isaiah, who saw Christ by faith even through the mists of centuries to come, it was a bewildering mystery to behold so many who were so blind to Christ: "Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1).

Meditate and Pray: Have you been given the secret insight of faith, to see the beauty of One who, in the world's eyes, is a mere "root out of dry ground," shriveled, unbecoming and almost lifeless? (Isaiah 53:2) Thank God that, in the words of Professor R.A. Finlayson, "He broke our darkness, scattered the clouds that enveloped us, and lo! The day dawned, we saw light, spiritual light..." Let this prayer for illumination be our closing thought and desire this day:

*Gracious Spirit, Dove divine, let thy light within me shine;
all my guilty fears remove, fill me full of heav'n and love."
Speak thy pard'ning grace to me, set the burdened sinner free;
lead me to the Lamb of God, wash me in his precious blood."*

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