

Dying to Be Like Jesus

John 12.20-36

It hardly merits a passing mention: Some Gentiles ask to see Jesus. But that request prompts Jesus to suddenly declare, “The hour has come...!” It was time for His crucifixion. This is what He had come to do. He was dying to fulfill His mission – and pointed His followers to fulfill theirs.

What started it: Some Gentiles seek Jesus (20-22)

Dying to Bear Much Fruit (23-26)Dying to Glorify the Father (27-30)Dying to Draw All Men to Himself (31-33)Dying to Bring Light in Darkness (34-36)

1. The flow of the context in John 11-12 is significant. It begins with Jesus raising a dead man to life, and ends with Him announcing His own death to give eternal life to the world. But the ‘hinge’ comes in John 12.20-22. What did Jesus just do (vv12-18)? Whose king was He coming as? What was the Jewish leaders’ response (v19)? Now, *who* wants to see Him (20-21)? What do we know of these Gentiles? Compare them to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert (Acts 10.1-2).
2. Evidently the coming of these Gentiles prompts Jesus to declare that “The hour has come...” (v23). Always before, it was “My hour has not yet come” (2.4; 7.8) or “His hour had not yet come” (7.30; 8.20). What was ‘this hour’? Why does Jesus say it is “for the Son of Man to be glorified”?
3. What does Jesus mean when He says that a person “who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal”? How can we ‘keep’ this life in eternity? What does v26 say a person who serves the Lord now will receive in eternity?
4. In v27, we get a glimpse of the humanity of Jesus. While we cannot understand what it would’ve been like for Jesus to be fully God and fully human at the same time, we can empathize with His humanity. Jesus said God spoke audibly for the sake of those people who were present. Why do you think God did that? What did He want them to know? Compare this to John 11.41-42.
5. There’s a lot of theology tucked away in these verses. In v31, Jesus, looking to His death, decrees judgement on the world. In what sense is this world judged (John 3.18)? He says the ruler of this world will be cast out. When does this happen? How many people did Jesus die for (v32)? For more evidence of this, see 1 Tim. 2.4; 1 John 2.2.
6. Jesus exhorts the crowd to “believe in the Light” while they have it (vv35-36). His expressed desire was *always* for people to believe in Him. While He is not here physically now, His ‘light’ can still shine through us. Read Matt. 5.14-16. Is Jesus’ light shining through you?