

**Greeks Seek Jesus**  
**Pastor Ty Blackburn**  
**John 12:20-24**  
**December 8, 2013**

Please turn with me in your Bibles to the 12th Chapter of John. We move into a new section of this 12th Chapter today, beginning with Verse 20. The larger section, I think, runs all the way through Verse 36, but we're going to focus this morning on Verses 20-24. What we're going to see is that, I said earlier that as the Greeks come to Jesus, they come and they make a straightforward request, and yet it sets off a surprising reply/response by Jesus. It is because what is happening there is much more than meets the eye, and it is in a wonderful way, emblematic of the coming together of all of God's purposes, His eternal purposes converging at that moment into the hour for which the whole world has been waiting since the fall.

We're going to see that Jesus, in replying to them, says, "My hour has come." Remember John has been careful throughout his Gospel to record for specific events, and this is true of all the Gospel-writers, but John is careful to tell us his purpose in the end of his Gospel, John 20:31 when he says, "Many other things did Jesus in the presence of His disciples." He tells us that if they were all written down, books couldn't hold them. "But I've told you these things so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and believing you may have life in His name." The idea is, "I selected carefully out of all the things I could have said about the glory of Christ. I've carefully, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, given you a precise catalog, so that it would convince you that He is truly who He said He was." And in doing that, we've seen that John has been building an argument, a case for Christ.

And one of the things that we've seen as we've seen these different miracles that Jesus has done, that John has highlighted, and these different discourses of Jesus where He has revealed Himself as the great *I AM*, again, and again, and again, we've also seen Jesus say, "My hour has not yet come." John has reminded us when they were trying to seize Him in the temple, we've seen this opposition growing against Christ, and the religious leaders, the chief priests want to put Him to death. They want to seize Him on a number of occasions but we're told His hour had not yet come. This is anticipation, the hour is not yet. We're going to see today, the hour has come, and that the trigger for this realization on the part of the Son of God, is the coming to Him of some Greeks, some Gentiles. That signifies that the defining moment for which His whole incarnation is pointed, His whole

life was aimed at one moment, one hour. His hour is the hour of His redemption, the cross, the resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus. That is His hour, and it is here.

Look with me at John 12. I want us to read Verse 19 because I think that John ties together Verse 20 and Verse 19. There may have been some elapse of time between this. In fact, I think there probably was. Remember he is selectively picking out different accounts, and we know we're in the last week of Jesus' earthly life and ministry because we just had *Palm Sunday*, in at Verse 19. The Sunday before Jesus is crucified. It is traditionally believed to be on Friday, *Good Friday*. So He is in the last five days of His earthly ministry, but possibly it has been a couple of days when we come to Verse 20. Maybe it is Monday, maybe it is Tuesday, but I want you to see Verse 19 because John doesn't tell us any intervening material. There is a lot of stuff that happens, when you read the other Gospels, they are telling you things. Jesus cleanses the temple again. Jesus curses a fig tree. There are a lot of discourses that he shares, that Matthew, and Mark, and Luke tell us about, but John wants us to see this side-by-side, Verse 19 and Verse 20. Remember what the Pharisees said at the end of the day of *Palm Sunday*. Verse 19:

***John 12:19-36 ~ So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."***

***20 Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; 21 these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." 22 Philip \*came and \*told Andrew; Andrew and Philip \*came and \*told Jesus. 23 And Jesus \*answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. 26 If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.***

***27 "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." 29 So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." 30 Jesus answered and said, "This voice has***

*not come for My sake, but for your sakes. 31 Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” 33 But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. 34 The crowd then answered Him, “We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?” 35 So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.” These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.*

Let’s pray together.

*Father, we ask that this morning that You might grant, by Your Spirit and through the power of Your word, that in Your light, we might see light. That You might open our eyes to see the wonder and glory of Your Son. We pray in His name, Amen.*

Now the message today, I want us to observe the text, to just kind of walk through it. There is a narrative, a story. We want to walk through it and see what is happening and read it as we ought to when we come to a narrative passage, and think about what is happening in the text, and ask the questions that we need to ask of the text. But as we do, we are going to gather our thoughts around three points.

#### 1) A Simple Request:

First of all, we’re going to see that John wants us to see a simple request. That is our first point this morning, a simple request, Verse 20-21. Without much fanfare, he just records for us:

*John 12:20-21 ~ Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; 21 these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”*

“Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.” A sermon that was preached at my seminary, basically graduation service, was preached on that passage, that particular verse, “Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.” Someone was reminding me just a week or two ago that that phrase, “Sirs, we wish to see Jesus,” was often placed in prominent places

in Scottish churches where the pastor would see it before he mounted the pulpit. “Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.” That is really what it is all about. What we need more than anything else is to see Jesus, and so we see in this a simple request, and basically what these guys are saying is, “We just want an audience with Jesus. We probably can see Him, but we would like to talk with Him.”

Now who are these Greeks? The word that is used here, there is some debate about does it mean Greek-speaking Jews, or does it mean Gentiles? I think it really means Gentiles. I think that the response of Philip and Andrew seals the deal on this question really because if you see that there seems to be kind of a mini-crisis when this simple request is offered. “Hey, we’d like an audience with Jesus.” They come to Philip, and I think the natural thing to expect would be, “Sure, come on with me and we’ll go see Jesus. I’m sure He’d like to talk with you.” But Philip goes to Andrew and he is a little nervous about this request. “There are some Greeks who want to see Jesus. What do we do?” Well, why is that a problem? It is a big deal when Gentiles are coming to seek God, to seek the Prophet, to seek the man who speaks for God. So there is a little trepidation, and the word actually, that is translated ‘*Greeks*’ is different here than the word that is used in Acts 6 of ‘*Greek-speaking Jews*’. Remember in Acts 6 where there is the disagreement in the early church because the Greek-speaking widows are being neglected they feel like, in favor of the Hebrew-speaking widows? So the word that is used there of the ‘*Greek-speaking Jewish widows*’, the adjective there is different than this word ‘*Greeks*’. I believe he is talking about Gentiles here. Gentiles come, and I think that is why Philip is thrown a little bit.

In fact, it is interesting, you know the Greeks, John bothers to tell us who they went to ask. I mean, think about that for a moment. They could have just said, “Some Greeks came and wanted to speak to Jesus.” Why do we need to know Philip? Why do we need to know that Philip, and be reminded that Philip is from Bethsaida of Galilee? I think this is connoting and telling us again they went to one of the disciples who had a Greek name. Philip is a Greek name, it is a Greek derivation. It is not like most of the disciples who have Hebrew names. They went to a guy with a Greek name who was from Galilee, Bethsaida, up near the region of the Gentiles, not far from the Decapolis. They might have been asking, “Hey, we’d like to talk to Jesus,” and they are talking to some Jews, “Why don’t you go talk to Philip. He is the guy who reaches out. He is the one that can help your request.” And, “Philip, that sounds good.”

It is kind of like if you went somewhere and say I know different cultures. We are more acclimated to certain names being Americans. We've had Hispanic names for a long time around us, and so Jose is not one that is tough. But if you meet someone from the Far East, or they come to America and they often change their names, because their names are so different. I guess we would do the same if we went there to live because the sounds are so different. So you hear a name and you don't know it, so sometimes you'll have someone who says, "Well, call me Peter," or "Call me Andrew," even though their name might be something very different in Japanese, or Chinese, because the sounds are different. Imagine these guys are coming with names that are very different, and they hear a name that is like theirs. "One of the disciples is named Philip. Oh, let's go talk to him." John tells us this I think to show us that these were Greeks, these were Gentiles who were coming to Jesus. Then when you see Jesus' response, I think it makes clear that these are Gentiles.

Now these are not just your run of the mill Gentiles, these are God-fearers, much like, remember the story of Cornelius in Acts 10? These were not full proselytes, that is Greeks that had gone through the ceremonies of becoming a Jew—baptism, and proselyte baptism, circumcision, but these were people who had great reverence for the God of the Jews, and who loved the Jews. There were a number of these people who would come to Jerusalem each year for the feast. So apparently these Gentiles are there, and remember that in the temple there was a Court of the Gentiles. There was a certain level that Gentiles could come into the temple. Now they couldn't go past the Court of the Gentiles. In fact, there were warning signs posted all around, moving from the Court of the Gentiles into the temple proper that you cannot enter if are a Gentile upon pain of death. If a Gentile crosses over into the temple proper they were to be put to death immediately. I think that is what Paul has in mind when he talked about, in Ephesians 2, the dividing wall of hostility. It is a great chasm to be outside of the Commonwealth of Israel, and so when these Greeks, these Gentiles come wanting to speak to Jesus, this is laden with significance. Philip and Andrew are unsettled a little bit by it, but in reality it is still a simple request. "We would like an audience with Jesus," and so John shows us that Philip takes that request to Andrew, and Andrew and Philip go and they tell Jesus.

## 2) A Surprising Response:

And then we come to the second part, the second point, which is a simple request leads to a surprising response. "There are some guys that would like to see You," and this was Jesus' response, "The hour of the Son of Man has come." He doesn't

give an answer to their request. Not a direct answer. In fact, He launches into a discourse that goes from Verse 23 to Verse 36, and John never bothers to tell us the outcome of their request. Did they get to see Jesus or not? We're not told. Now that's because it is really irrelevant whether they got to see Him or not. We are going to see in fact, that He does answer their question, but just not the way they expected. But at first, it is a surprising response. He doesn't answer it directly. You would think it is, "Yes," "No," and we could anticipate, based on different passages in the Gospels themselves, that it might be one or the other.

Remember how He responded when they Syrophenician comes to Him? Remember there is a woman crying out, a Syrophenician, she was a Gentile. She is crying out to the Lord for His attention and He is ignoring her. The disciples say, "Master, please say something to her. She just keeps on. We can't get her to quiet down," and Jesus turns around and says, "What do you need?" and she says, "I need You to heal me." Jesus says to her, "Should I take what is precious away from the children and give it to the dogs?" That was a hard word of Jesus. He is saying that if you are not a Jew in some sense spiritually, you are a dog. An astonishing reply! Remember how she responds with great faith, a heart that had been opened to see the glory of God, and His real compassion that was underneath that testing reply of Jesus? She says, "Lord, even the dogs get to eat the crumbs that fall from the children's table," and Jesus marveled at her faith and said, "Go your way, your faith has received its response." He healed, He responded, but it acknowledged there was this distance. Remember He had told the disciples when they went out, and when the 70 were sent out, "Go only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." So it was possible that when Philip was wondering about this request, "I don't know if He is going to see these people," because the Jewish Messiah is for the Jewish people, and there is a sense in which salvation does come first to the Jews.

In fact, remember, Jesus said the same thing, and here is that paradox in John's Gospel. Remember John 4? Jesus is reaching out to a Samaritan woman, a Gentile, but He says to her, "Salvation is from the Jews. It comes first to the Jew, and then to the Gentile." Like Paul says in Romans 1:16, "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe, first to the Jew, and after that to the Greek." So Jesus' response at first, and at a surface glance, seems to be completely evasive. He seems to ignore or evade the question. "Can these people see You?" The reality is, the response is not an evasion, it is actually a superb reply, and that is the third point. We are going to spend the rest of our time on this point.

### 3) A Superb and Sufficient Reply:

It is really a superb and sufficient reply to their question. “Can we see You?” Now He says, “The hour has come for the Son of Man.” He never references them directly in anything He says from Verse 23 to Verse 36, but He answers the underlying question superbly. The question really is, think about what their question is, “Sirs, we wish to see Jesus. Sirs, we wish to be in the presence of Jesus. Sirs, we wish to be in the presence of the Son of God. Sirs, we wish to come into the presence of God.” How can that happen? Jesus says, “The hour has come. The only way for those who are far off to come into My presence is for Me to go to the cross.” And so He is answering their question. “Can you come into My presence? I have come to make it possible.” He is announcing the glorious news, and at the same time we see His humanity in this, as He wrestles in the shadow of the cross. Verse 27, “My soul has become troubled, and what shall I say, ‘Father save Me from this hour.’?” He sees the cross and it is terrible agony looming before Him. He realizes it is necessary, and in His humanity He wavers, much as He does in Gethsemane. But here again you see His commitment, “But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.”

Jesus hasn’t ignored their request at all. He is, in fact, answering the question that is embodied, and underneath their request, in the most wonderful way. It is interesting, let me note a couple of things here. His first thing that He says is, “The hour has come.” It really seems that what is happening here is that this moment, when Jesus hears this, and you have this beautiful blend, I mean, Jesus lived as a man. He is fully God, but He lives as a man. That is He lives in dependence upon the Father. He doesn’t use His divinity, His deity, for His own purposes. Like, for instance, He doesn’t seem to be using His omniscience. It is not that He ceases to be God, but somehow He ceases to be dependent in the way that we are.

He relies upon the power of God to do the miracles even though He Himself has the power, and in some ways, it’s sustaining the world, upholding the world by the word of His power even as He’s a man, but yet He lives in dependence upon the Father. John’s Gospel makes this clear again and again and again. “The things that I am doing are not My own, but the Father who has sent Me is doing the works,” He says. “The words that you hear Me say are not My own, but the Father who has sent Me has given Me what to say.” Though He is the glorious Son of God, He lives a life of perfect dependence, and you see it even in this.

In fact, D. A. Carson mentioned this in his commentary, and I agree with him. It seems to be almost analogous to what happened with John the Baptist. John the Baptist asked the question, “How will I know the one that I am to go before? How will I recognize Him?” John the apostle tells us about John the Baptist in John 1. “How will I recognize Him?” and he tells us there he was told by the Lord, by the Father, that you would recognize Him when you see the Spirit descend like a dove and remain upon Him, and John says, “I have seen that, and I testify that this is the Son of God.” So when the Spirit comes down, that’s the moment you know.

It seems that Jesus had the word from His Father that when the Greeks start seeking You, that’s the hour, and so when He’s told by Phillip and Andrew, “There are some Greeks who want to speak to You, there are some Gentiles who want to speak to You,” it presses upon Him at that moment, “Now is the time.” You know, it’s when like you’re anticipating some event. Something is coming up but you don’t know exactly when it’s going to happen. You’re waiting for a call. You’ve had a test and you’re going to get a call, and when the call comes, you’ll know what the results are and if you need to have the surgery. Or was the test positive or was it negative? This is kind of like that. In His humanity, He receives the word at that moment that, “The Greeks are seeking You,” and it presses upon Him, and He remembers, “Yes, the cross,” and the weight of it just is heavy upon His soul, and yet in that moment, He unveils His glory, and He answers their question much more wonderfully than just saying, “Yeah, come on in and we’ll talk.” He shows them the great price that needs to be paid for salvation.

Now the hour is coming. It’s interesting Jesus was born to redeem the nations. There’s kind of an *inclusio* in Jesus’ life. There’s His earthly life. Think about at His birth, the people that know about what’s happening, the shepherds, the outcasts in Israel, they’re the first ones to greet Jesus. On the night He’s born, there they are. There’s Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds, but then some months later, some guys come probably riding camels, because they know. They have found out from the stars. The Lord has revealed to them in a way they could understand, that the Light of the nations has come, and these Gentiles come from the farthest reaches. They come to Jerusalem, and they say, “We have come to worship Him who has been born King of the Jews,” and nobody in Jerusalem knows what’s going on, but they do. The Lord revealed it to them. So at the very beginning of Jesus’ life, He’s reaching out to the Gentiles, and here at this moment—remember, His ministry has focused on the lost sheep of Israel, because salvation comes to them first. There are little blips of it, like His ministry in Samaria, His ministry up toward the Decapolis, but here when the Greeks start coming to Him, that signals it’s come full circle. Now it’s the time of the cross.

In fact, when you look at Matthew 2, turn back over to Matthew 2, the account of the wise men, and I want to show you how this theme is a thread that weaves through the scriptures.

***Matthew 2:1 ~ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”***

Now, a lot of passages that go into that, probably they were referring to Numbers 24:17, which says:

***Numbers 24:17 ~ ...A star shall come forth from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel,...***

Those are words on the mouth of that strange prophet Balaam. The Lord puts a word of truth in his mouth.

***Numbers 24:17 ~ ...A star shall come forth from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel,...***

That is, there will arise a great leader, and the scepter of God's reign is going to be held in His hand. He's going to extend God's reign to the whole world, and you'll know it when His star rises. And then you see Isaiah pick it up. Look with me at Isaiah 42:6. Now, this is actually the beginning of the servant of the Lord passages. It said in Verse 1: ***“Behold, My Servant,...*** speaking of the coming Messiah, ***...whom I uphold;***

Look what he says about Him in Verse 6:

***Isaiah 42:6***

***“I am the Lord, I have called You in righteousness,  
I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You,  
And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people,  
As a light to the nations,...***

He's saying that when the Messiah comes, He'll not only be a covenant to the people of Israel, but He'll be a light to the nations. Turn to Isaiah 49:6. He continues to tell us about His glorious Servant. Verse 6:

### *Isaiah 49*

- 6** *He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant  
To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel;  
I will also make You a light of the nations  
So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”*
- 7** *Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One,  
To the despised One,  
To the One abhorred by the nation,...*

He’s saying, “I’m going to raise You up and You’re going to restore the people of Israel, but You’re also going to be a light to the nations. He continues in Isaiah 51:4. He says:

### *Isaiah 51*

- 4** *“Pay attention to Me, O My people,  
And give ear to Me, O My nation;  
For a law will go forth from Me,  
And I will set My justice for a light of the peoples.*
- 5** *“My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth,...*

When the people start seeing the light, then you know God’s Messiah has come. This is a clear teaching of the Old Testament, in that you will know that God’s Messiah has come when the nations start streaming in. The Jews completely missed this, but John is making the point in his Gospel in John 12. I really believe he’s included this event not just because it leads to the discourse, but because it proves his point that Jesus is in fact the true Son of God.

In fact, it’s interesting to think about the structure of John’s Gospel. Remember he’s trying to prove, he’s basically making a case that’s really analogous to a legal case. He’s writing to people who are skeptical about the identity of the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, Jews who do not believe, and he’s basically making the case by bringing evidence. He says, “Look at all the signs.” Remember how we’ve seen that the first twelve chapters are really the book of signs? There are seven great miracles that he puts before his readers and says, “Consider these things,” and a sign is something which is an outward testimony to an inward fact. It signified something. It authenticates. It certifies that Jesus is in fact God, that He’s the Son of God.

He tells us the sign of the miracle of changing the water into the wine, the healing of the nobleman's son, the feeding of the 5,000, walking on water, and the healing of the lame man. Remember the miracle of healing a man born blind, the sixth miracle, and finally the seventh sign was the raising of the man Lazarus from the dead. These seven signs are exhibit A, exhibit B, all the way to exhibit G. "Look at this these seven signs." Well, he does that all the way through chapter 11, and then in chapter 12, we have no more miracles of Jesus, but what we have is not signs done *by* Jesus, but we really have in a way three signs done *to* Jesus. Think with me about this for a moment. The focus becomes on what other people are doing to Jesus.

First of all, in the first 8 verses of chapter 12, we have the woman Mary breaking the expensive vial of perfume and anointing Jesus for burial, in which she breaks a bottle of perfume worth a year's salary. Something like a \$25,000 bottle of perfume, she pours it out upon Jesus. Remember, Judas is indignant, John tells us. "This money is wasted. We could have used a \$100 bottle of perfume. Why are you using a \$25,000 bottle of perfume?" John tells us that Judas was really just greedy. But Mary's saying, "No, the worth of the One here is so great. This is a paltry offering." So she's telling us He's worthy of great worship, and she's also telling us He's going to die.

Then we saw the next event, what's done to Jesus is in the next passage, the worship of Jesus by the multitudes. The whole nation acclaims Him to be the King of David, the Son of David, the King of Israel. They wave their palm branches and they acknowledge Him to be the victor. So this woman says He's worthy of worship. The whole nation says, "Now is the moment. The King is here," and we saw that the King is a Priest. And then the third act is that Greeks seek Jesus.

So John wants us to see kind of like these seven signs, and then he says, "Now look at these three different acts that are done to Jesus," and the third is that even Gentiles, even lost pagan Gentiles in the outer darkness can see the reality and the glory of His light. He's laid this before the people, and really I think in the larger argument, that's his main point here, because what's going to happen after Jesus has this discourse is John's going to say in Verse 37:

***John 12:37 ~ But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him.***

He's going to say, "With all of this evidence before them, they're still not believing." So this moment is the defining moment. This is the hour. Because the Greeks have come, it fulfills all of the plan of God throughout the ages. Salvation is here. But the only way that the Greeks can come into the presence of God is if Jesus is glorified, that is, if He dies. He must give His life. He's showing us that the distance that we are, we minimize our sin, we have a low view of God, and this is the nature of man in sin. We have a small view of God, and a high and exalted view of self. This is indigenous to us as fallen people, and we still wrestle with it after we're born again. Our problem is that God is too small. "He's the man upstairs," people say. They say horrible things like that about the Lord. And people acknowledge, "Yeah, I'm a sinner. I'm human," but we don't see sin as it really is.

We don't see the great distance that it really brings between us and a holy God, that God is so exalted, so worthy, He's been so good to us, and our sin, our disobedience, is so offensive to Him. It's not just that we just miss the mark and we just miss the target. It's that we hate Him and we're rebelling against Him. We're in active, open conflict with Him. We come into this world as insurrectionists. We're like cells of people that are here to destroy, to bomb America. We're like that to God. From the womb we're like that. We want our way, and we're determined to have our way, and we hate Him. We don't think we hate Him, because we have in our minds an imagined God that we can live with. But when the God of the Bible really shows up and says, "I am the God of heaven and earth. I hold your life's breath in My hand. Everything you are belongs to Me," we hate Him because we want to be our own gods. We want to live our lives our way for ourselves, and in our wickedness we sin against Him, we despise Him, we attack Him, and our sin is ugly.

Our stains are so great that no amount of—when you have a low view of God and a high view of self, it seems like just a modest change will suffice. "I need to start going to church. I need to do certain things, make some adjustments. I'm willing to do that. I'm willing to acknowledge that I am a sinner and that I need some help." But when we really see ourselves as God sees us, we are beyond help and beyond hope. There is no way, and this is what these Gentiles needed to see, and this is what the Israelites around them needed to see, that the reality is that the distance between us and God is so great that it will require something beyond our imagination to cover that distance. What must happen is the God of glory must come into this earth, live a perfect life, and then be treated with incredible wrath and anger and indignation, and He must absorb all of that if you and I are to be saved. That's the only thing that can break down the dividing wall that can allow us to come into the presence of a holy God.

Jesus is saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you, a grain of wheat when it falls to the earth, it bears much fruit, and I must fall to the earth so that I can bear much fruit. The only way that you can come to be a part of My kingdom is if I die.” And it’s not a small thing for Christ to die. That’s why He says, “My soul has become troubled.” Some scholars argue that John has taken the Gethsemane account and moved it back into John 12, that is, that John seems to be borrowing from that, like inflating it, that he’s mistaken. These are obviously liberal scholars who want to edit the Bible, and D. A. Carson made the point that well, if Jesus was nervously anticipating His death in holiness but still anticipating His death and trembling at the prospect, it’s certainly obvious He would have been doing it on more than one occasion. And here we have Him maybe on Monday, maybe on Tuesday, certainly before Thursday, and as He thinks about the cross, His heart trembles inside.

He’s not just trembling because of the physical agony of the cross, which is extraordinary, but He’s trembling because of the spiritual agony of the cross. He knows what it means to be filled. He who is perfect in righteousness is going to taste the ugly fruit of our sin. He’s going to be covered with our guilt, covered with our pollution, and in some sense, experience separation from the Father, and that’s what it takes for us to be saved. The hour has come. The Gentiles are coming. “It is time for Me to go to the cross.” He trembles and yet He surrenders. Praise God He surrenders. “Father, save Me from this hour, but for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your Name.” You see the perfection of the Son of God.

This is what the author of Hebrews is talking about in chapter 5, where he says He was perfected, He was made perfect, in His obedience. He kept obeying His Father, but it wasn’t easy. It wasn’t a light thing. He wasn’t just jumping over little, tiny hurdles. He was jumping over giant hurdles, and this hurdle was so great that the Father as He hears His Son say, “Father, glorify Your Name,” it says that the Father can’t contain Himself, and He speaks out, saying, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it,” comforting His Son. “You are doing exactly what I want You to do.” You see the love of the Trinity again here, the Father for the Son, the Son for the Father, the Son submitted to the Father. “Lord, Your will be done. Glorify Your Name,” and the Father says, “Everything is on track, Son. You are doing abundantly above and beyond everything necessary. You are pleasing to Me.” So we have a Savior who has done everything necessary.

That's the message that we take from this passage, is that He has done everything necessary, and that's the answer He gives to those Greeks. "I have done everything—I am about to do everything necessary so that you can come into My presence. I will finish with sin. My death will bring you into My throne room and then you never have to add another thing to what I do." The blood of Christ pays it all. Praise God for a glorious Savior and a glorious salvation.

Let's go to Him in prayer...

*Our Father, we marvel at Your amazing kindness, Your tender mercies, that when we were enemies, You did not look on us as we deserved, but You loved us and You demonstrated Your love to us by sending Your Son to die for us. We pray this morning that those who are here that have not yet been reconciled to You, that today they might make peace with You through Your Son Jesus Christ, that they might see that He is the sufficient and able Savior, that no matter how black our sins are, He can make us white as snow. Father, grant grace for repentance and faith. May You help all of us to glory only in Christ Jesus. Especially during this season, may we be filled with the joy and wonder of what it means that You sent Your Son into this dark world. We thank You for the Light of Christ. We pray in His Name, Amen.*

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