

TOPIC: My Hour Has Come (Dying for the Glory of Christ)



But Jesus answered them, saying “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

~John 12:23-26 (NKJV)~

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible contains several scriptures that speak to death and life. While the reference to death and life finds its full understanding to mean our state of eternal existence when this life is over, we also understand it to mean death and life as in dying to the things of this world and taking up a new life set upon the things of God. Except a man be born again, he or [she] cannot enter the kingdom of God (*cf. John 3:5*). From this scripture we draw the conclusion that our new life must be obtained while we are in the world or else our entering the kingdom of God would not be possible.

In our study text (John 12:23-26), we find Jesus sharing with his audience that his hour has come or the time of his suffering for the sins of mankind is at hand. Jesus tells his listeners that it is time that the Son of Man should be glorified. Jesus then uses a metaphor to explain the process of dying and rebirth when he states “unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it produces much grain.” Out of Christ’s death comes much life and through this life Christ is glorified. Jesus also instructs his audience that if anyone is to serve him they can only do so by following him which means their hour will come as well. Out of his followers death will also come much life and this life will also bring glory to Christ.

Question: *Are You Willing to Die for the Glory of Christ?*

OUR STUDY

We recently taught a lesson “Set Apart for God (Understanding the Process of Sanctification)” wherein we shared how we must be willing to set ourselves apart from any and every thing that would separate us from our Father God and our Savior Jesus Christ. This process of sanctification, made possible at salvation, requires participation on our part. We must be willing to purge ourselves from all sins of the flesh striving to become vessels unto honor that are meet or fit for every good work of the kingdom. In this lesson, we will delve a little deeper into what it means to purge ourselves or to die to our flesh (to our self).

Dying to the Flesh...

This is an often heard phrase among to the church community. When I first came into Christ my former pastor, who was a missionary at the time, would often tell me that I needed to die to this; I needed to die to that. Being a newly saved Christian and one who was very analytical, I was perplexed and confused every time she uttered this phrase in my hearing. I found myself asking her the same question Nicodemus asked Jesus: *“Can a man enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”* I bless God for my Dr. Prideaux being a teacher anointed and sent by God for truly she took the time to share what it means to die to the flesh. Except we die to our self we will not be victorious in our living for Christ.

To gain a better understanding, let’s look at definition for the words “dying” and “flesh”:

Dying:

- To put an end to
- To cease existing

Flesh:

- The carnal nature of humankind
- Sensual appetites

(definitions taken from: www.thefreedictionary.com)

From these definitions, we can say that dying to the flesh means putting an end to those sensual appetites associated with our carnal nature. Our sensual appetites reigns within us when we let our physical rather the spiritual mindset dictate our decisions and choices. This happens when we seek to please the flesh (ourselves) rather than seeking to do those things that bring glory and that please God.

How do I die to the flesh?

1. Realize that I have been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20).

- Here, the apostle Paul explains that just as Christ was crucified in the flesh so were all who received Christ. We must consider ourselves as identified with the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be so connected with Christ that when he was crucified and raised again, so were we. The life we now live must be lived by faith in and through Christ. Our lives must be totally influenced by the Spirit of God that it is no longer us but Him who does the living in us. Our state, our sentiments, our feelings, and our conduct, are all based on Christ and our faith in Him. Our belief of the truth of Christ is the regulating principle of our conduct. We no longer think or feel or act in the manner of our former self—like a man born merely after the flesh. All our opinions and habits are subject to the truth about Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us and we live devoted to him who died devoted for us. This, my brother and sister, is what it means to be crucified with Christ.

2. Be willing to take up my cross and follow Christ (Luke 9:23-24).

- Although Jesus offered salvation as a free gift, He also warned that following Him would entail suffering and hardship. Take up your cross and follow Christ is a call to absolute surrender. This surrendering is an all-inclusive act on the believer’s part. We must be willing to surrender to all that has been assigned for us to endure. The good, the bad, and the ugly must be embraced as we take up our cross. As our study text says “if we love our life we will lose it, and if we hate our life in this world, we will keep it for eternal life. We mustn’t draw back when faced with trials, tribulations, and troubles that come our way. Instead, we must face our cross with faith that in the end, He will deliver us. Hebrews 10:35 encourages us not to cast away our confidence because it will result in us receiving a great reward after we have done the will of

God. Saints, if we say we have been crucified with Christ then we must realize that we too, like Christ must carry our cross. Our hour of suffering will come and like Christ, when we go through God will be glorified.

3. Walk in the Spirit so as to not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-17).

- The only consistent way to overcome sinful desires of our human nature that seek to control us is to live step-by-step in the power of the Holy Spirit as He works through our spirit. Walking or life in the Spirit is a journey. There is no shortcut to learning how to walk in the Spirit. It's not just for ultra-spiritual people nor is it reserved for charismatic Christians. Life according to the Spirit is not simply trying to do the right thing, nor is it trying to live according to God's law. Walking in the Spirit is the central metaphor for describing what it means to live as a Christian. As taught in our lesson on sanctification, living as a Christian takes total surrendering to God. The surrendered life or the life lived walking in the Spirit is the life lived embodying the fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5:22-23. This is the one who loves in spite of; who has joy in spite of; who has peace in spite of; who bears longsuffering in spite of; who displays true kindness in spite of; who maintains goodness in spite of; who remains faithful in spite; who is gentle in spite of; and who is temperate in spite of. All these can only be effective in our life as we walk in God's Spirit or surrender ourselves to Him.

4. Do all things to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31-33).

- Everything we do, we are to do it to bring glory to God. Being without offense to anyone is a lot harder than reading the verse. We must buckle in for the bumpy ride that Satan is bound to cause. In order to do it, we must make a deliberate decision to put God first every day. Otherwise our thought processes can get us into trouble by making self first. We must realize that when we are following after God and seeking to please Him above all others, we will acquire enemies. The devil is always on his job in his attempt to throw us off ours. When we realize that in all things God is to be gloried, we will be ever mindful to consider Him before we consider satisfying ourselves. Jesus tells us in Matthew 15:11 that it's not what goes into the mouth that defiles it but it's what comes out of the mouth that defiles a man. In other words it's not how others treat you that you will be judged against it's how you treat them regardless of whether it's their fault or not.

5. Make prayer a part of all I do (Philippians 4:6; Romans 8:26-28).

- The apostle Paul exhorts the church (Philippians 4:6) to pray about every circumstance faced instead of worrying over them. We mustn't take matters into our own hands; instead, we are to place them in the Lord's hand in prayer. Paul continues his discourse on prayer in Romans 8:26-28 letting us know that there will be times of weakness as we journey along the Christian way. It is in these weak moments that we go to the Lord in prayer so that His Spirit can strengthen us in our weakness. Realize that there will be times, in the midst of our situations, wherein we simply will not know what to pray for. It is in these times that the Spirit will make the connection or intercession for us. The Spirit searches our hearts and knows that we have a mind-set that is focused on him, even if we do not know exactly what we are to pray for.

6. Rejoice in the Lord always (Philippians 4:4).

- In the midst of difficulties, in the midst of all situations, we are to rejoice. As Christians our joy is not based on agreeable circumstances, instead it is based on our relationship to God. We will face trouble in this world, but we can rejoice in the trials and troubles we face because we know God is using these situations to improve our character and bring glory upon Himself and His Son

Christ. We can take consolation in knowing that God is ever present with us in all we endure. He promised to never leave nor forsake us. When we consider this, we rejoice.

CONCLUSION

As Christians, our chief end is to glorify God. When we glorify God we set God highest in our thoughts holding a revered esteem of him. Our adoration and worship is unto Him. We bring glory to God because all our hopes hang upon Him who hung upon the cross for our sins and to bring us back into right relationship with Him. Our adoration and glory toward God is not dictated by what we endure. No suffering and no trial can amount to the love the Father has shown toward us. We must take confidence in the promise of God that after we have endured our lot of suffering, we will receive what He has in store and all our suffering will be worth it. Then we can say like the apostle Paul said in Romans 8:18 *“I consider that the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Be encouraged my brother and my sister and stand strong as witnesses unto the good work of God being wrought in your life.

God’s peace and blessing be upon you....

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