

6th Sunday in Lent
March 28, 2021

"The Son of Man's hour has come to be glorified...for all!"
(John 12:23)

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LSB 441

"Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today's text for this Sixth Sunday in Lent is from our Gospel reading John 12:23

"But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified." Here ends our text.

This was Jesus' response to the request by some believing Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. They came to worship, but they also came with a special request which they made known to Phillip. What was that request? They wanted to see Jesus.

This brings to mind a similar incident that occurred at the birth of Jesus – Gentiles from the East came to worship the King of the Jews. At both Jesus' birth and His death, He is sought by the Gentiles!

Palm Sunday is a day when all people are invited to worship the Son of David, the King of Israel, the King of the Jews and also the King of the Gentiles. All people are invited to lift their palms with praise singing Hosanna to the Son of David. Literally this means "Help the Son of David save, help the Messiah succeed".

The Messiah's success is absolutely needed for both Jews and Gentiles for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So Paul tells us in Romans 3.

"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (Romans 3:23-24)

I. Jesus is glorified through His death and resurrection that saves all

What was Jesus' response to the request from the Greeks that Phillip and Andrew presented to Jesus?

“But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.”

It was a response of comfort and assurance that the Son of Man was going to be glorified for them – for all! The time had come where there was no longer any need to make distinctions. There was no need to make distinctions that Jesus came first for the lost sheep of Israel and then to bring in others, the Gentiles, who were not in the fold.

No, the hour had come for the universal atonement for all people, Jews and Gentiles alike. John's Gospel includes this story of the Gentiles to remind us that Palm Sunday is about all sinners being saved. Palm Sunday is an invitation to you and me, believing Gentiles to see that the hour had come for our salvation!

Yes, Jews and Gentiles, you will see Jesus this week for He will be glorified by His serving of His Father's will by dying on the cross for the sins of all people. You will see Him on the cross, laid in a tomb and raised from the dead.

“Father, save Me from this hour”? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

For both Jews and Gentiles to be saved, this hour, could not be avoided. There was no other way to save all mankind. This coming into Jerusalem on a donkey was foretold by the prophet Zechariah in chapter 9 of our Old Testament reading.

Jesus couldn't just become a man, heal people of their diseases, raise people like Lazarus from the dead, help people who were hungry and then go back to heaven. No, this hour had to come. For the greatest disease yet needed to be cured for all people! The Father's voice from heaven approved of all that His Son had done so far – His name has been glorified, but there remains more to be done. “I will glorify it again” when Jesus dies on the cross!

This hour doesn't appear to have much glory, does it? Jesus would be betrayed, mocked, spit upon, whipped, beaten and killed. So, we heard Jesus tell the disciples these words very clearly last week on His journey to Jerusalem.

Now, in the temple after entering Jerusalem on the donkey, the Father's voice is heard giving testimony that what is about to happen is for God's glory and man's good!

“Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” This He said, signifying by what death He would die.” (John 12:30-33).

For our sake, this morning, we hear the Father once again approving of His Son's work. This was the 3rd time that the Father's voice was heard. First, it was heard at Jesus' baptism, then His transfiguration and now at the hour of His death. The Father is well-pleased with His Son. And, that gives us assurance that all is going according to plan.

When Jesus is lifted up from the earth, this is the only way that Jesus could save all people. And this is what Jesus says. He will draw all peoples to Himself. All people include the Jews and the Gentiles. It includes you and me. The Lamb of God is sacrificed for all. The hour had come – our hour of salvation had come! Thanks be to Jesus!

Sometimes in our lives, there are certain hours of reckoning that we don't look forward to. Most people don't like tax time. Once again, the IRS postponed this hour until May. Some people don't like to go to the dentist or go to the doctor because of possible bad news they might get. Some people don't like to take exams or tests. Some are putting off getting the vaccine.

Yet, the hours that we delay the most, are nothing compared to the hour that Jesus faced, alone. He didn't delay or procrastinate. For this purpose, Jesus came, and Jesus faced the hour that we should have faced – our soul's reckoning for our sin. We should have faced the wrath of the Father and be sentenced to eternal condemnation for our trespasses.

But, we didn't because Jesus did. He took all our blame, our guilt and punishment so that we would receive glory. We don't deserve glory, but Jesus humbled Himself so that we would be exalted.

By His death, He conquered the devil and the sinful world. Listen again to Jesus telling the people these important words.

“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” (John 12:31)

The devil can no longer accuse Jesus' followers. Jesus is judged guilty and the world is judged innocent.

II. Sinners are glorified through faith in Jesus' work on the cross

The hour has come for Jesus, the grain of wheat, to fall into the ground and die, and then bear much grain. Jesus tells Jews and Gentiles alike:

‘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 12:25-26)

Holding onto this sinful life and not hating one's sinfulness will only result in losing one's life eternally. But, he who repents and follows Jesus will keep his or her life eternally. The Father promises to honor the believer. What does that mean?

It means that the believer is the new grain that was produced when the kernel of grain died. The believer in Jesus receives the blessing of what Jesus has won on the cross – eternal glory! Paul says in Colossians 3.

“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” (Colossians 3:3-4)

Our future glory is connected to Jesus' glory through our baptism that just as Jesus was raised from the dead, so we too will walk in newness of life. (Romans 6)

As we follow Jesus and raise our palms of praise to Him, we know that as Jesus suffered, we too will suffer affronts on behalf of Him. This also brings glory to

God and rejoicing in our hearts that we are counted worthy to suffer for Him. Paul says in 2 Corinthians in chapter 4.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” (2 Corinthians 4:17)

Again, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10.

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Our hour of suffering in this world is light compared to the time when our hour of glory comes in heaven. In heaven, we will raise our palms in victory to the Lamb of God on His throne and give Him all honor and glory. While we wait the Holy Spirit strengthens us in our following of Jesus.

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:16-18)

All glory be to God! Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)