

WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

The Glory of the Christlike Life

INTRODUCTION

Dawn Wilson, a contributing writer to Crosswalk.com started an article¹ that she wrote with these words:

“The first time I heard about becoming a Christian, I was at my grandmother’s side. “Just ask Jesus into your heart, sweetie,” she said, “and you won’t go to hell.” What girl in her right mind would reject that invitation?”

Ms. Wilson recounts a story that many of us have either practiced or been taught in our Christian experience. Contrary to modern evangelicalism, a survey of the Gospels reveals to us a startling truth: Jesus never made it easy to follow Him. Now to be clear lest we fall onto the other ditch, let me affirm this:

The cost of discipleship is not the price to be paid to be saved; it is the expectation of the saved.

Dying to self will not save you.

Taking up your cross will not save you.

Losing your life for Christ sake will not save you.

These are attitudes that accompany faith in Christ; they do not earn you salvation. Salvation is by grace through faith, but saving faith is always accompanied by a radical change in perspectives. We need to keep that in mind as we draw from today’s passage.

READ TEXT: [John 12:20–26 \(ESV\)](#)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The coronation or the enthronement of Jesus is John’s subject in this passage. Jesus has entered Jerusalem as the humble King of the nations. His throne will be a Cross where He will be lifted up. (We’ll be talking about that in the next part of this Gospel.) His apparent defeat will be victory over sin and death. By His sacrifice He will save sinners. He will be glorified.

As He made His procession into Jerusalem as King of kings, the Jewish authorities grew increasingly vexed by His popularity. Their words led them into a perfect segue into our text of study this morning. If you were writing a story, you could not write one any better than this. The Pharisees decry: “Look, the

¹ <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/what-does-jesus-expect-when-he-says-follow-me.html>

world has gone after him”² and then we read: *“Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.””* (John 12:20–21, ESV).

We know so little about these Greeks. We don’t even know if they had their meeting with Jesus. But this we do know that their desire to have a meeting with Jesus sparked a thought in Jesus that relates to all who seek to know Him and be His disciple.

EXPOSITION

The approach of the Gentiles signaled something momentous for Jesus. He said, *“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”*³

When Jesus interacted with his mother at the wedding of Cana, John records him saying, *“My hour has not yet come.”* (John 2:4b, ESV) Previously when the Jews tried to arrest Jesus we read, *“ . . . But no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.”* (John 7:30 and 8:20, ESV) Now the hour has come. This prompts Jesus to say,

“And Jesus answered them, “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. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.” (John 12:23–26, ESV)

Jesus sees His own death in an agricultural metaphor. Just like seed goes into the ground and dies; and in its death produces new life, so His death will bring life to those who believe. But then Christ looks upon the would-be disciples with the word “whoever”. He says, *“Whoever loves his life loses it.”* And He adds that a hatred to your life in this world will bring eternal life. If the would-be disciple that’s in view focuses on a worldly life will have nothing in the end. This is not new teaching in the Gospels (Matthew 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; 17:33). Paul said this clearly in Romans 8: *“For to set the mind on the flesh is death . . . For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”* (Romans 8:6–8, ESV)

Then Jesus states a different metaphor: *“If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”* (John 12:26, ESV) Jesus was on His way to the cross. Christian service follows Christ through the crucified life, the cross-centered life. The crucified life is a life that seeks God’s will above their own will. The crucified life is a life that pursues holiness and kills sin by the Spirit. That is the life that is honored by the Father.

Just as Jesus’ path is the road to glorification, so the disciples’ path of denying self is the path to glorification. The key here for the concerned disciple is that we deal with worldly self-love, not by acts

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 12:19). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 12:23). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

of self-rejection, but by acts of Christ exaltation. We hate our life by loving the life Christ offers. We deny self by serving Christ. Several years ago, I talked to a person in the lawncare industry. He told me that to kill weeds in my lawn I must flood the lawn with good grass. The good grass will choke out the weeds. This is the same process in following Christ, we starve sin and self by flooding our life with the delights and treasures of Christ.

MAIN THOUGHT

Jesus thinks of His own death and He reminds His listeners that a characteristic of a Christ-follower is one that also participates in death to self and worldliness. As Christ's death brings Him glory, so to those who follow Him into death to this life will also participate in that glory. Re-stated, we can say that:

**A lover of this life treasures his or her life more than Christ.
A hater of this life treasures Christ more than this life.**

CONCLUSION

This is not unusual teaching by our Lord. For example:

- *"Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24, ESV)*
- *"Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. . . . So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:25–33, ESV)*

This sounds like strong language: "hating your life in this world" and "hating" your family – "renouncing all". Our gentle, passive western mindset recoils at such language. I wish for us to heed the words of John Piper: "Whatever you do, don't domesticate the radical teachings of Jesus. If they make you uncomfortable, let them do their work. They are designed to create real disciples who are ready to lose all to gain Christ."⁴

Here's the key. Our lives are gifts to us. The New Testament reminds us that God "richly provides us with everything to enjoy."⁵ Certainly our families are precious gifts to us. In so many words our text teaches us that our love for the Giver is to be so intense that our care for the things of this world seem like hatred, in comparison.

I want to apply this in two different directions.

⁴ <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/if-you-dont-hate-your-father-you-cannot-be-my-disciple>

⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (1 Ti 6:17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

MOTHER'S DAY APPLICATION

Today is Mother's Day. It's a day we honor mothers. Mothers have a God-given passion and instinct to care for their children and their homes. It is an honorable sight when we see this passion. The question you must answer this morning is this: "Do you love your life, your children, your home, more than Christ?" To be a disciple of Christ we must beware of setting these good gifts above our passion and priority of Jesus.

Christian mothers are often given the credit that they are serving Christ by caring for their children. But there's a warning here. We do not serve Christ by exalting our families above Him. By elevating our families above Christ, we may lose them entirely. But the good news is that by exalting Christ above everything we may keep them.

GENERAL APPLICATION

When we share the Gospel with others, we would do well to exemplify Jesus and call men and women to count the cost. We do a disservice to people to simply have them pray the prayer, ask Jesus into their heart – done deal!! The teaching of Christ is clear: to be His disciple is to die to self and this life and live in priority to Him. We need to call people to count the cost.

This exchange of priorities will not make your life easier. If anything, it will bring conflict and trouble. Disciples must be willing to offend family rather than offend your King. But at the end of time, disciples of Jesus will realize that the loss that seemed so intense today will appear minimal when they see Jesus face-to-face in all His glory.

Verse 1

When all my labours and trials are o'er
And I am safe on that beautiful shore
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore
Will through the ages be glory for me

Chorus

O that will be glory for me
Glory for me glory for me
When by His grace
I shall look on His face
That will be glory
Be glory for me⁶

⁶ Charles Hutchinson Gabriel | Marilyn White © Words: Public Domain Music: 2010 Lillenas Publishing Company (Admin. by Music Services, Inc.)

A disciple is a servant. A servant follows Jesus – through death to this life and onward to glorification. Such a servant will be with His Master and hear His Voice, “Well done!”