

## JOHN 12:37-50

Good morning. I have mixed feelings about being here getting to teach this morning.

I love the Word of God. A few weeks ago was the 500 year anniversary of Protestantism when Martin Luther “nailed” the 95 Theses to the door of the Cathedral in Wittenburg. What came to pass out of that act is known as the Protestant Reformation and the Reformation is characterized summarily by The Five Solas:

*Sola Gratia; Sola Fide; Sola Christos; Sola Scriptura; Soli Deo Gloria*

*We are Saved by Grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone to the Glory of God alone and our authority is Scripture alone.*

I hold firmly...FIRMLY...to Sola Scriptura. That Scripture in its purest form is the supreme authority for our lives as it is the very WORD of God without error or change.

I hold FIRMLY to this truth, but being the hard and sinful man that I am, there are parts of Scripture that are very difficult to understand and very difficult to swallow, because I just don't like them. In my flesh, I don't like them.

And still...sola Scripture.

This morning's text is one that I think is a difficult one to wrap our minds around and difficult still to teach. So we must ask ourselves this morning what we will do with this text and I would beg you this morning to strip away any preconceived notions and to loosen our grip on traditions that we have and decide before anything else, to trust Scripture and believe what it says, even if it confronts and bothers us in our flesh, or is difficult to swallow.

So with that: I want to pray. Ask God to teach and speak, not me.

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This which we are reading is the final act of Jesus' public ministry. From here on out, everything else is behind closed doors, and so if Christ is God – and He is – then we really need to pay close attention to what He says and what is said of Him because these are His last public actions and words and He knows it.

Let's read.

### 37-50

- Jesus' public ministry was extraordinary. The Gospels give account of 36 miracles of Jesus (healings, raising the dead, stilling the storm, etc) but give summary statements like **John 21:25** that account for infinitely more...more than all the books in the world can contain.

- So Jesus' ministry was ultra convincing and yet rampant unbelief surrounded Him. WHY DIDN'T THEY BELIEVE?
- Two Reasons:
  - They Wouldn't
    - It was deliberately fostered. Willful ignorance.
    - This is **vs 37-38**.
    - Extremity of God:
      - Psalm 8:3 – create suns and galaxies (finger)
      - Exodus 32:11 – exodus from Egypt (hand)
      - Yet here, miracles of Jesus (arm)...but written off
  - They Couldn't.
    - It was divinely foretold.
    - There came a day out of their willful ignorance when the switch was flipped and what they wouldn't do, now they couldn't do.
    - This is **vs 39-41**.
    - There are none too far from the grace of Jesus, but this is clear that there comes a time when those who hear and see Jesus and still refuse to believe...there comes a time when their hard hearts are permanently hardened by God.
      - We see this in the Exodus with Pharaoh. Pharaoh continued to harden his heart against God after each plague until the day when God hardened it for Him.
        - Man's responsibility and God's sovereignty
      - And we know that this is what happens here in response to Jesus because of these two OT prophecies but also because of the words of Simeon in **Luke 2:34-35**

### **Luke 2:29-35**

Simeon was an old man in the Temple and God had told him before he died that he would see the Messiah. And when Jesus was only a few weeks old, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to Jerusalem to be consecrated at the temple. When Simeon saw Jesus he knew that the day had come and said: "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

- Jesus will be opposed. Many will fall because of Him. And that's what this text in John 12 is about.

So this is a painful reality, but we must embrace the truth that Jesus and John do not say things that are sad and painful to leave us sad and filled with pain, but that we might be joyful and glad. **THE PURPOSE OF THE DARK THINGS IN SCRIPTURE IS TO SHOW THE GLORY OF THE LIGHT!**

- This is Jesus' promise in John 15:11, "I say these things...that your joy will be full."
- How does the hardening of these hearts in the text show light and bring gladness and joy? Well, without getting too much into it, but so that we can see the end result, God's hardening of their hearts directly heads to the Cross where our salvation was purchased. These same people cried "Hosanna" (God Save us) 3 days ago, and in 3 days they will cry out "Crucify Him." So you can thank God that His hardening act is always in His will and in His plan...deliberately fostered, and divinely foretold.

And so, these here are the ones spoken of who WOULDN'T turn and then COULDN'T turn and believe. So let me beg you friends, today, if you hear and you comprehend this, please know that the Holy Spirit is giving you understanding that you may believe and respond. DO NOT DISBELIEVE! For one day it will be too late! And I don't want that for you. Repent and believe today! Out of the darkness, and into the Light. Please, if nothing else, hear THAT this morning.

The next portion of our text reveals that there were some who believed in secret but their cowardice kept them from following Jesus wholeheartedly. And I'll be honest, I don't know if these have saving faith in Jesus...I don't think that is what John is communicating here. I do know that John (same author) writes in **Revelation 3:15** that indifference to the Gospel and to following Christ is disgusting to God.

These men believed but were more worried about men liking them than following Jesus. Jesus has said, "Anyone who wants to follow, then deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow" **Matthew 16:24**

- They surely weren't doing that! It's safe to say that we shouldn't want to be like these guys. The warning, and it IS a warning, is to not love the glory of man more than the glory of God.
- And if that's you, then get off the bench and into the game. Your lukewarm-ness is insulting to God, so let's be hot or cold...not in between.
  - I'm not pointing fingers. I've had to wrestle with this all this week too. These words of Scripture are as much for me as they are for anyone.

So, let's believe fully, and let's engage fully...PJP & MHF!

And then Jesus speaks

**44-47**

- Jesus has disappeared and then suddenly he CRIES OUT. We don't know where he was or what he was doing, but suddenly BOOM, he cries out. And I think the context is left out here because this is a summary of Jesus' ministry. This is what He has said from the beginning and he's stressing this, so that they know what all the signs and miracles, all the teaching, all the serving, was about. I and the Father are the Same.
- I, Jesus, am the radiance of the Glory of God. And this is huge considering the warning about the half-hearted followers that he has just given. They loved the glory of man more than the glory of God.  
I AM THE GLORY OF GOD. YOU LOVE ME, YOU LOVE THE FATHER!
- He says, I didn't come to judge the world, but to save it.
  - Is he saying He is not the judge...no. What he's saying is that his first coming was a mission to provide the way of salvation...to reveal the glory of God...to exhibit the Father and His love.
    - The Israelites thought Jesus would come and judge their enemies so they weren't expecting Jesus to be like He was. But he says, "I came to save...not judge. What you want the Messiah's mission to be is not what the Messiah's mission is. You want me to judge Rome, but I want to save Rome. You want me to glorify Israel. I want Israel to glorify me!"  
And this will be the beginning of the end for Jesus. Because He came for the rising of many...that He might save. But He came

for the fall of many also, that at their hands and by the hardness of their hearts, he would die...so He could save.

- And so, as I close, I want you to know that my prayer this morning is that all of us in here would respond not in hardness and unbelief before it is too late, not in fear of man and loving the glory of man more than the glory of God, but rather that we each would echo Simeon as he looked into the face of the Messiah, "Today, my eyes have seen your salvation!"

And thus concludes Jesus' public ministry. Would you bow your heads with me?