**John 12**

I. The Context (v. 12-19)

A. The expectations of the crowd

1. Passover is about to take place: a time when people remember how God raised up a deliverer to free his people from Egyptian oppression. Now they are hoping Jesus will be another deliverer who will free them from Roman oppression.

2. Jesus has just raised Lazarus from the dead. That has really increased the sense of expectation on his ministry

B. The crowds

1. What they do: wave palm branches as a sign of honor (v. 13)

2. What they say

-Hosanna = save now

-Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord (Psalm 118)

-Blessed is the King of Israel

3. This has all the hype of a political rally

C. Jesus rides in on a donkey, not a war horse (he is not coming to wage the war they expect)

II. Jesus’ Words (v. 21-28)

A. This must have been such a poignant moment for Jesus: experiencing the praises of the people yet knowing that the cross was less than a week away.

B. The hour has come for him to be glorified (v. 23)

1. He will be glorified not on a throne but on a cross.

2. He has come to play the role not of Moses rescuing them from political oppression but of the Passover lamb rescuing them from the judgment of God

C. The metaphor of the grain of wheat (v. 24)

1. Seeds must die and be laid in the ground, but if they do they produce an amazing multiplication of life.

2. Consider Dave’s sunflower seeds that sat on a shelf for two years and produced nothing vs. the corn seeds that were buried and produced a harvest.

3. Jesus’ life is the seed. He is tempted to keep his life safe and be the king but everyone wants him to be, but he knows God has a larger plan. So he gives his life away on the cross, and through his death, he brings about a great harvest of life (all Christians throughout the centuries including us today!)

4. This is why he can refer to the cross as his hour of “glory” in v. 23. There is nothing glorious about crucifixion, but through that death, so much life comes.

D. Jesus invites us into that same kind of life (v. 25-26)

1. v. 26: our lives should follow the same pattern of death for the sake of life

2. Think of the original apostles. Almost all of them were martyred for their faith, and yet their faith helped bring such a harvest of new Christians in the first century.

3. We are called into that same kind of life today

a. Every day we have opportunities to die to our own comforts and interests for the sake of God’s kingdom and for the sake of others

b. Examples

1) we can die to our reputation to share our hope with a neighbor

2) we can die to our materialistic pursuits to give to those who need it more

3) we can die to our comforts to take in foster children

c. Every situation is opportunity to be either the seed that sits on the shelf or seed that is buried for sake of kingdom

4. This is very challenging and even scary

a. We’d prefer to simply receive from Jesus’ sacrifice and continue to live safe and comfortable lives

b. But there is a harvest to be had, and that only works if seeds continue to die in order to bring more life

5. In the end, a life spent giving itself away for God’s kingdom is the safest and most secure life we can have (v. 25)

a. If we “love” our lives and try to keep them safe and comfortable, we will actually lose our lives for all eternity.

b. If we “hate” our lives and give them away for God’s kingdom in this life, we will secure our lives for all eternity

III. Conclusion

A. Consider Jesus’ final words in v. 27-28. He had two options:

1. “Father, save me from this hour” (to be the seed that remained safe and comfortable on the shelf)

2. “Father, glorify your name” (to be the seed that is given away for the sake of God’s glory)

B. These words depict two very different ways to live

1. “Save me”

= My life is about me, about my personal happiness. And I bring God into that goal of personal happiness and ask him to fulfil my dreams

2. “Glorify your name”

= My life is about God, his glory. My greatest passion is for people to see just how great he is. My life exists in order to serve towards that greater goal.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Our theme this Easter week is “behold the man.” Palm Sunday is a familiar scene for many of us. As you considered the man Jesus in this moment, what did you come to appreciate in a deeper way either from the scene itself or from Jesus’ words?

2. Consider the grain of wheat analogy that Jesus uses in v. 24. There are many implications of that analogy. What struck you most about that analogy especially as it relates to your own life?

3. Consider v. 25. What exactly is Jesus saying in that verse? Try to put that in your own words and consider the implications together.

4. On Sunday we were left with the challenge of considering a specific situation in which we are tempted to play it safe and to stay in a comfortable place, but where God might be calling us to die to our comforts and interests for the sake of something greater. Does anything specific come to mind as you consider that?