

Dr. David L. Turner, The Gospel of John, Session 14, John 12:1-50, Podcast Audio Overview

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All right. So are we ready to jump into John 12? It's a chapter packed with miracles and prophecies, you know, and we see some pretty strong reactions to Jesus. Yeah.

It's a huge turning point in John's gospel. We see Jesus back in Jerusalem. The tension is rising.

And that whole raising of Lazarus thing, right? Really adds fuel to the fire. Oh, the raising of Lazarus. That's a fascinating one.

It's like this incredible display of Jesus's power over death. But then it kind of backfires, doesn't it? Well, yeah. You have to see it from the perspective of the religious leaders, right? They're already suspicious of Jesus.

And then he pulls off this unbelievable miracle, challenges everything they thought they knew about death and resurrection. It's like a direct threat to their authority. Exactly.

And they can't just ignore him. He's living proof, walking around. What must that have been like for Lazarus, right? Brought back from death, only to become public enemy number one.

It really highlights the high stakes involved, you know? This isn't just some theological debate anymore. It's life or death, literally. And we see that theme of life and death playing out with Jesus's own fate.

He keeps saying, "My hour has not yet come. But then in John 12.23, something shifts. He says, " The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified, which is interesting.

Okay. So what does it actually mean for Jesus to be glorified? Seems like a pretty big concept. Yeah, it's a good question.

In this context, it points to his death and resurrection. So his ultimate victory. Right.

But it's also about revealing God's glory through sacrifice. It's not a simple thing. So it's not just about Jesus.

It's about fulfilling God's purpose, too. Exactly. And to get this across, Jesus uses a powerful image, a kernel of wheat.

Like the seed has to die to bring new life. Right. And if we connect that to the Eucharist, well, the bread represents Jesus's body; it's broken and shared.

He nourishes us through his death. Yeah, like the kernel of wheat. Okay.

So we've got the sense of sacrifice and the conflicts building, and then we get this episode with those Greeks who want to see Jesus. It seems like a minor detail, but it really raises some big questions. So who are these Greeks anyway? Are they just tourists, Jewish converts, or what? Well, it doesn't sound like casual tourists, right? They've come to worship at the festival, so it seems more deliberate.

They could be God-fearers, you know, those Gentiles who were drawn to Judaism but didn't fully convert. That's definitely possible. Maybe they were attracted to the God of Israel, but still rooted in their Greek culture.

Maybe John's hinting at the universal reach of the gospel, you know, even before Jesus's death and resurrection. Like planting a seed. Which leads us to that huge moment, the triumphal entry.

Such a vivid scene. What are your thoughts on it? It's loaded with meaning, that's for sure. We see the crowds shouting Hosanna, waving palm branches, laying down their cloaks.

Like it's straight out of Zechariah 9.9. Exactly. John wants us to connect the dots. This isn't just a random parade.

It's prophecy being fulfilled. Jesus is presenting himself as the Messiah. But not the conquering king everyone expected, right? Right.

There's this contrast, you know, the humble donkey versus the expectation of a powerful ruler. It really speaks to the nature of Jesus's kingship. It's about servant leadership.

Yes, exactly. Jesus is king, but his kingdom isn't of this world. His power comes through love, humility, and ultimately through sacrifice.

So how do you explain the crowd's reaction that, after all the signs and the fulfilled prophecies, they're still all over the place? Well, it shows you how complex faith is. Even with all this evidence, people react differently. Their own biases, fears, all those things get in the way.

John seems to be really struggling with this unbelief. Like, why wouldn't they believe after seeing so many signs? To understand it, he turns to the prophet Isaiah, you know, the Lord who has believed our message. And then that bit from Isaiah says where God tells Isaiah to speak to people whose hearts are hardened, ears deaf.

So it's like sometimes people just choose not to see the truth. Yeah. But John also talks about what we might call ambiguous faith.

You know, those who believe, but are too scared to say it out loud. Like Nicodemus, the one who comes to Jesus at night. Seems interested, but not ready to commit.

And John's pretty blunt about their motivation. He says they loved human praise more than praise from God. That's so relevant today, isn't it? We're often afraid to say what we believe because we don't want people to judge us.

It's a tough balance, trying to stay true to your faith when the world is pushing you in another direction. It definitely makes you think, and maybe we can explore that tension more in the next part of our deep dive, picking up where we left off, right? We're looking at the tension building around Jesus in John 12. And I find it interesting how John takes us from those public scenes to a more private moment with Jesus and kind of gives us a glimpse into his inner struggle.

Yeah, John 12.27. It's like we see this raw human side of Jesus as he's wrestling with his mission. You know, he says, " Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this purpose, I have come to this hour.

You can really feel the weight of what he's going through, like knowing what's coming and the anguish of that. But then there's the shift, right? Almost immediately. And he prays, Father, glorify your name.

It's a complete surrender to God's will, even when facing such suffering. And get this, his prayer is actually answered, like audibly. John tells us that a voice came from heaven.

I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. Wow. So everyone heard this voice from heaven confirming Jesus's mission.

What was the reaction? Well, it's funny. Some thought it was thunder; others, an angel speaking. It's like that theme we see in John, you know, people misinterpreting Jesus and his actions.

Looking for easy explanations that fit their worldview. Right. And I think Jesus's prayer in this moment teaches us something powerful.

Instead of asking God to rescue us from trials, we can pray, Father, glorify your name. A whole different way of thinking, right? Surrendering our own desires and trusting in God's plan. And it's interesting, this prayer comes right after the Greeks want to see Jesus.

Maybe not a coincidence. You're right. Like John's hinting that Jesus's sacrifice will spread the gospel beyond the Jewish people.

A global mission. Yeah. Like a seed being planted.

And this theme of a universal mission keeps going in the last part of John 12. It's like Jesus gives a final summary of his teachings. A call to believe, almost.

He says, " Whoever believes in me believes not in me, but in him who sent me. So believing in Jesus means believing in God. They're connected.

And then he calls himself the light of the world. I have come into the world as light so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. That's a powerful image.

Like moving from blindness to sight. Then he gives a warning, not a threat, but a call to action. You know, if anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person.

For I did not come into the world to judge the world, but to save the world. So true belief is more than just saying you believe; it's about living it out. Exactly.

But he also says that some will reject his message. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not receive my words. The very words I have spoken will condemn them on the last day.

It's a reminder about the consequences of rejecting Jesus, but it's not meant to be scary, right? It's more like a plea to turn towards the light. And it all comes back to his authority as God's Son. He makes that clear, you know.

For I did not speak on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.

It's like he's emphasizing the source of his message and his authority. So John 12 ends with this sense of, well, impending doom, but also this glimmer of hope, you know. The passion is coming, but we're also reminded of the ultimate victory.

And that victory is for everyone who believes, for those Greeks and beyond. It's a message that goes beyond time and place. Before we move on, I think we should go back to the raising of Lazarus for a minute and how the religious leaders react.

It's really important. It shows how much the opposition to Jesus is growing. They didn't just believe.

They were like, totally freaked out. They couldn't deny the miracle. So they tried to, like, get rid of the evidence, the witness.

They wanted to kill Lazarus. The guy Jesus just brought back to life. That seems pretty extreme even for them.

I know, right? But remember, they see Lazarus as a threat. He's walking, talking proof of Jesus's power. So if they get rid of him, they can maybe control the narrative and suppress the truth.

It's like a desperate attempt to hold onto their power, even if it means violence. It's kind of scary how far people will go to protect their own interests. And it makes Jesus's courage stand out even more.

He knew the risks, but he didn't back down. It shows how committed he was to his mission, to God's plan, even if it meant death. You know, it's crazy to think about the pressure Jesus was under.

Those religious leaders weren't just against him. They wanted to get rid of anyone who supported him, even Lazarus. It shows you how powerful fear is, right? How it can push people to do extreme things.

They felt so threatened by Jesus, by his growing support, that they'd do anything to stay in control. And Jesus just keeps responding with love, compassion, and forgiveness. He could have been angry.

He could have fought back, but he didn't. He stayed focused on his mission. Yeah.

His response really shows his divine nature. You know, the power of his teachings. He didn't play their game.

He stayed on track with God's plan, even though it meant facing death. It makes you think about what true strength is, right? It's not about power or force. It's about love, humility, and being willing to sacrifice for something bigger than yourself.

And think about the historical context too, right? Roman occupation, political unrest, social injustice. Jesus was talking about hope and liberation. It must've been so appealing to the people who were struggling.

So it's no surprise that the authorities saw him as a threat. He was shaking things up, challenging the status quo, pushing for real change. And you know what? John's gospel isn't just for those people back then.

It's a message for us today too. It's timeless. It makes us look at ourselves, our own beliefs, and ask, "Are we really following Jesus? Are we willing to stand up for what's right, even when it's hard, even when it's dangerous? Are we letting fear or what other people think control us? Those are the questions John 12 forces us to face.

That's what's so great about this chapter. It's not just a history lesson. It's a living text that still speaks to us.

It challenges us, inspires us. It makes us think about faith, courage, sacrifice, and how good ultimately triumphs over evil. So as we wrap up our deep dive into John 12, what are some of the main points you hope people will take away? For me, it's the power of love in a world that's so full of fear and anger and division.

John 12 reminds us that love is stronger than all of that. It's what drove Jesus, and it's what can build a just and compassionate world. And I think about courage: being brave when things get tough.

John 12 is full of people struggling with their beliefs, facing opposition and persecution. But even in the dark times, there are moments of amazing courage and faith. It shows us that we can find strength, even when things are hard, by connecting to something bigger than ourselves.

And the biggest takeaway maybe is that God's love and grace are for everyone. Think about those Greeks searching for Jesus. The prophecy is about a scattered but united people.

John 12 points towards a future where everyone is welcome in God's love. It's a message of hope and inclusion that still matters today. Well said.

And everyone listening, we hope this deep dive into John 12 has given you some new insights. Things to think about, whether it's Jesus's courage, the ups and downs of faith, or the power of love. There's so much to explore in this chapter.

Remember, the journey of faith never really ends. Keep exploring, keep asking questions, and keep searching for truth. Until next time, keep diving.