

## Significant Final Appearance—Tuesday of Holy Week

Lenten Midweek #5 – 03/17/21 – Mt. Calvary Luth.  
Text: John 12:23–36 Pastor Keith Besel

v. 23, [Jesus said,] **“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”**

### **Introduction**

- ⊗ If you only had one final, public appearance to make in your life, what would you say? What would you want those listening to remember? What would you want those same people to do?
  - ➔ Our text tonight occurs toward the end of the day on Tuesday of Holy Week. And it is significant because it marks Jesus’ last public appearance prior to His arrest and crucifixion.
  - ➔ It’s the final time that He and the crowds in Jerusalem will exchange words before He is arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane and placed on trial.
- ⊗ So, what does Jesus want you and me to remember from His *Significant Final Appearance*? We’ll answer that question by focusing our attention upon several of the statements Jesus makes in this last public appearance.

### **I. By dying Jesus will be glorified & bear fruit.**

- ⊗ First, in verses 23-24 He states, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 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”.
  - ➔ Now, those of us with the hindsight of history know that Jesus is clearly speaking about His coming crucifixion, death, and burial. He is the grain of wheat that dies and is buried in the ground, only to spring up and bear fruit.
- ⊗ Several times before this day, Jesus was adamant that His time had not yet come. But now things have changed; now His time has come.
  - ➔ And it’s all happening according to His timetable, which is of course the timetable of the Father as well. All is now ready for Jesus to endure all that He had come into the world to endure; for Him to accomplish the task and purpose for which the Father sent Him into this world.
- ⊗ Christ; the promised Messiah would be glorified – but not in the way most were expecting. Sorry folks, He was not bringing about a revolution or establishing an earthly kingdom that He would rule over with subjects bowing down to Him.
  - ➔ No, instead Jesus would let others triumph over Him. Jesus would actually bow down His head in death on a cross.
  - ➔ It’s there that He would voluntarily offer His life as payment – payment for the full penalty of all sin and all evil. For that to be accomplished, Jesus had to suffer the wrath of God and die. So this, you see, is how Jesus would be glorified. Being crucified for all of the world would bring glory to both the Christ and the Father’s name.
- ⊗ So Jesus would not reign from a palace. Instead He would hang from a cross. He would not be laid on a luxurious bed of ivory, but would lie on the cold stone of a tomb.
  - ➔ In the end He would not be wrapped in the finest fabrics, adorned with gold and jewels, but instead He would be wrapped in burial cloths.

→ Yes, it is through this unlikely manner that the King of the universe would die, and in so doing He would “bear much fruit” indeed. Jesus compares His own death and burial to that of a grain of wheat bearing much fruit after it has been dead and buried in the ground. It is a most significant paradox to be sure: life comes by way of death.

✘ And what is the fruit that Jesus is talking about? What is it that comes about by His death? Well, it is us, friends.

→ Yes, because of Christ’s death, life comes for us! How is that possible? Because, in His death, Jesus destroyed death’s power to harm you and me. Jesus destroyed sin’s power to condemn us. Sure, we will all likely die, but death is no longer the end, is it? The grave is not our final resting place.

→ As Jesus said one chapter earlier in the Gospel of John, chapter 11:25-26, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die”. Jesus dies and He bears much fruit, for us!

## II. Jesus willingly suffered all for our eternal life.

✘ We also see in this final public appearance of our Savior a great deal of transparency and vulnerability. He shows that He is truly human. As the appointed time is drawing near, Jesus says in verse 27, “Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour”.

→ Those words remind us of what Jesus will soon pray to the Father in approximately 48 hours in the Garden of Gethsemane, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me” (Mt. 26:39). So here in advance, Jesus is already struggling with it, “What shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour?’”

✘ Why would Jesus even have this struggle as the Son of God? Because, as the Son of God, Jesus knew all things. And so He knew well the horror of what was ahead of Him. He knew His future included being beaten, being whipped, being spat upon, being mocked, and suffering excruciating pain as He hung on the cross.

→ You and I, we can only imagine the pain, anguish, suffering, and shame Jesus would endure for our salvation.

✘ Yet nothing could compare to the isolation of being abandoned by His very own Father; the One with whom He is one with the Spirit; being abandoned as He would be hanging there on the cross. So troubled would Jesus be that He would cry out for all to hear, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Mt. 27:46)

→ You and I know the answer to that question, don’t we? Jesus was forsaken by His holy Father because He was bearing our sin; the guilt that should have forever separated us from God, and this not just for the few of us here in this room, no, but for the entire world of souls throughout all of history. Is it any wonder then that His soul is troubled at this point?

✘ Yet, just as Jesus would do in the Garden of Gethsemane, so He does here. He will not let His human emotions take hold and override the will of His Father. He will not let them outweigh the reason that He came into this world or the mission that He came to accomplish.

→ No, in the Garden of Gethsemane, we hear how Jesus was quick to add these words to His request to let this cup pass from Him, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Mt. 26:39). And so also here, Jesus says, “But for this purpose I have come to this hour” (v. 27).

✘ Yes, for this very purpose He came into the world, and for this very purpose He came to this specific point in the history of the world. Jesus reviewed that purpose to Himself in Matthew

20:28, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many".

→ To put it even more directly, Jesus came to die so that you might live, not just here and now but for eternity in the presence of the one and only God.

### **III. Jesus died so we may believe & become sons of light.**

✘ As for the third point Jesus wants us to remember from His final appearance, let's look at His final words in verse 36, "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light".

→ This is one final appeal from Jesus that those hearing His words would trust and believe in Him forever. Even as He's facing all of the personal anxiety, Jesus' concern is not for Himself, but for all who are within hearing distance of His voice. He wants everyone; every man, women and child to believe in Him; to trust in Him; to have confidence in Him as their Savior.

→ In this, Jesus and the Father are fully united. They want no one to perish, but rather to come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved!

✘ This folks is where you and I come in, because as a part of Christ's church and as individual members in His Church, our message to those who are walking in the darkness of sin and unbelief must be the exact same message that Jesus delivered in His final public appearance prior to his arrest: "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light" (v. 36).

→ No one knows; no one can ever know how many more opportunities a person who is outside of faith in Christ will have to "believe in the light" before the darkness of death comes to them and it is then too late?

→ So, I'm certain that you all join with me in the prayer that God will use each one of us to bring the light of Jesus to those living in the darkness of sin and unbelief, right? That must be our most earnest of all prayers.

✘ May Jesus use you and me; both our actions and our words, as His instruments of light and life in this world; in my world of contacts and friends and family; in your world of contacts, colleagues, friends and family as well.

→ May He strengthen you and inspire you and equip you to share His light while you have His light to share with others; to break through the darkness in their lives and souls so that they "may become sons of light" forevermore.

### **Conclusion**

✘ Well, now we come to the end of Christ's final public appearance before His arrest; an appearance in which He announces that His time has come; that He will be buried; and that in doing so, He will produce much fruit.

→ And yes, He speaks about His fear and trepidation concerning the horrific events He will endure in the next few days, but He also appeals one last time for the conversion and faith of all who hear Him and His Word of glory and truth.

✘ It truly was a Significant Final Public Appearance for Jesus indeed! Amen.