



CHRIST CENTRED • SPIRIT FILLED • BIBLE BASED

BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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~ Brent Russell ~

- The Bible is full of **paradoxes**
- Full of things that **don't seem to always fit together**
- **Statements that seem to be one thing and yet are something totally different**
 - **God is three Yet God is also one God**
 - **Jesus - fully God yet fully man**
 - **Mans foolishness is God's wisdom**

Then at Easter two more that I want us to look at today

- **That the cross should be a moment of Glory**
- **That in death there should be life**

John 12: 20-33

Romans 6:1-14

- Jesus is in the Jerusalem area **awaiting his crucifixion**
- **Waiting for his death as the fulfillment of his three year ministry on earth**
- **Imagine Jerusalem - stalls animals, festival, noise, people**
- Some **Greeks** come to Jesus at the time of the Passover
- We don't know how they knew Jesus
- Perhaps they heard about Him on **Palm Sunday** as he entered

- And the Greeks come with a simple request to Philip
- **"Sir we want to see Jesus"**
- Hopefully you have come to church today with this same request
- **"I want to see Jesus"**
- It does not seem from John's account that Jesus ever sees the Greeks
- But Jesus answers the request to see Him

Read vs 23 - 28

- **Jesus answer is full of strange paradoxical statements**
- In his answer to the request Jesus shares **two spiritual truths**
- **Two truths that are timeless**
- **Two truths that are of special significance**

The crucifixion was a moment of Glory

- *"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be Glorified"*
- Jesus speaks here of his crucifixion
- His glorification will happen on the cross
- When we see **crosses in churches they are always so sterile on some level**
- They are **simple, clean, modern**
- Even the churches who have **the image of Jesus** on the cross it is still sterile - very little blood and in fact **Jesus looks quite healthy**
- I want you to imagine for a moment what **Jesus must really have looked like**
- **Whips** with bits of metal and bone had lashed into his back tearing out pieces of flesh

- On Jesus head was a **crown of thorns** that had been pressed into his scalp - And anyone who has had even a small nick on their head will know how much blood this must have caused
- Jesus **eyes where swollen shut** because of the beatings, his face bruised and beaten with sticks
- Jesus had **become so weak** that he could not even carry the 40kg cross beam the 600m to Golgotha
- Finally Jesus hanging between two **common criminals**
- **An undignified and painful death**

- This is **not a pretty sight** by anyone's imagination
- **How could this possibly be a moment of Glory?**
- *"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified"*
- What is glorious about the blood, pain, humiliation and death?
- So what is so special about Easter
- What is the Big Deal about the crucifixion

- The cross is the **defining moment of the Christian Gospel**
- **The cross is where it happened**

- According to John the last words of Christ on the cross where
- **"it is finished"**

- **The cross is where Jesus work came to completion**
- **In vs 27 of John 12 Jesus says that the hour of the crucifixion was the very reason he came to earth**

- The glory in the cross is this:
 - that it was at this point that Jesus **overcame death**
 - It was at the crucifixion that Jesus **triumphed over sin**
 - It was then that Jesus **crushed satan**

- **The Cross to those who do not know Jesus seems foolishness**
- It seems weak , it seems a loss
- But the cross is a moment of victory
- **A moment of success**
- **It is the moment of our salvation**

ILLUSTRATION ABOUT WHEN WHERE YOU SAVED?

- **The cross is the center of all we are as Christians**
- **The cross is where we come to see Jesus in His Glory**
- **Sir, We want to see Jesus and they would have to see him on the cross**

Only through Death is there Life

- Jesus then goes on to speak about death bringing life
- **Only through death is there life**
- *Read vs. 24 & 25 in John 12*
- **The paradox here is that in Jesus death there was life for us**
- He became like a **grain of wheat** that falls into the earth and with the heat of the sun and moisture of the rain it sprouts forth a plant that brings more seed
- For each and every person who has placed there trust and faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior **His death has brought them life**
- **Isaiah 53** speaks of This suffering Servant who poured out his life as a guilt offering for us
- **Jesus had to die so that our sins could be covered and that we could have eternal life**
- But this great truth that death brings life does not only apply to Jesus death
- **It applies to us**

- **In vs. 25 Jesus says the Man who hates his life in this world shall keep it for eternal life**
- **What Jesus means here is that we need to be ready to give our lives to Him if we want to have eternal life**
- **If we are going to cling to the sinful nature**
- **If we are going to love our lives and all our sin, all our greed, hate, jealousy then we shall surely lose our lives**
- **We cannot come to Jesus and want to remain as we are**
- **Jesus accepts us FULLY as we are but he cannot leave us to stay that way**
- **I spoke last week on us being transformed into Christ likeness**

- **Part of that transformation is putting off the old sinful nature**
- **Listen to what Paul says in Galatians 5:24 - Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.**

- **We need to come to him and put part of who we are on that cross with Him**
- **We need to share in Jesus death**
- **We need to allow our old self to be crucified if we are to have any part in the resurrection**
- **Unless we give up the sinful nature we will NEVER see Jesus**
- **Unless we let our old nature with it's passions and desires die on the cross we will not see Jesus**

Conclusion

- **"Sir , we want to see Jesus"**
- Jesus tells them this paradoxical statement "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life"
- And the message is this
- **It is only if we come to the cross and allow our sinfulness to be crucified with Christ that we can share in joy of the resurrection on Easter Sunday**
- **If we cling to the old nature and are not ready to let it go**
- **Then the resurrection is meaningless**
- **It is only through the death of our old selves that we can see Jesus**
- **It is only through our identifying with Jesus on the cross that we can identify with him in his resurrection**
- **It is only by being made weak that we can be made strong**
- **We need to come to Jesus and we need to admit our weakness, sinfulness**
- **We need to admit to our need of a savior who died in Glory on the cross at Calvary.**

- Ritual - cigar and beer after a child is born, celebration at a marriage
- Liturgy - last nights quietness and darkness
- If they are done for their own sake then they are meaningless
- Tools to help us remember and actions are very powerful

- And today I want us to do something together as we remember Jesus on the cross
- I want us in a moment to prayer our prayers of confession
- Write one or two areas of your life that need to be transformed by Jesus Grace onto the piece of paper
- Fold paper and stick the nail through it
- Confidential

- After a moment of silence I will hammer mine to the cross and I want you to do the same
- The wood is soft and it should require a very small blow of the hammer to get it in
- After you have hammered the nail in please place your tithe on the table up front

- There are a number of hammers but if you have to wait that is OK
- I want you to listen to the song...you have the lyrics on paper
- Just be quiet and meditate as you recall what Jesus Did for you
- I want us to start from the front and as you see that people from the pew in front of you are returning won't you stand up and come and hammer your old self onto the cross

- For some of you this may be the first time that you are acknowledging Jesus sacrifice for you
 - For others it may be a rededication
 - But if you want prayer there will be elders up front to pray with you
 - You don't have to do this if you don't want to
 - This is a voluntary act of worship and devotion to Jesus
 - Let us pray
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- Lord Jesus it is at Easter that we realize more fully the divine mystery of your time on earth. We begin to understand the mystery of your death on the cross for us. For our sins. Whilst we did not even know you - you died for us!
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- Lord we want to have part in your forgiveness. We want to share in your death so that we might have life - life everlasting
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- Lord as we come and nail to the cross our papers with the parts of our lives that we don't like, let your Holy Spirit work in us. Transform us, renew us, let us become more and more like you Lord Jesus. Let us reflect your character, glory and love to the world, give us new minds and new hearts that understand more fully the amazing grace that you have given us...
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- Thank you Lord that we can come to you ,That we can see you. Lord that you that you have forgiven us, thank you that you have strengthened us and restored us in your sight.