

## Sermon for Lenten Midweek #5

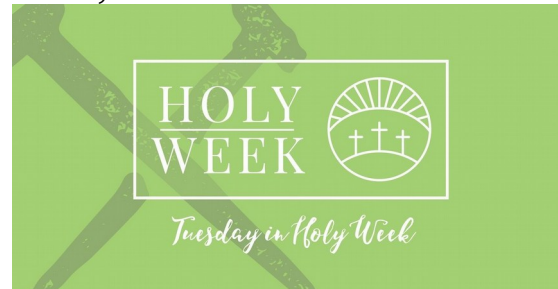
**Date:** March 17, 2021

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Numbers 21:4-9

**Epistle Reading:** 1 Peter 2:1-10

**Gospel Reading:** John 12:23-36



significant

**Sermon Text:** John 12:23-36

**Sermon Title:** Significant Final Appearance: Tuesday of Holy Week

**Psalm:** Psalm 13

### Hymns:

LSB 420 – Christ, the Life of All the Living

LSB 933 – My Soul Rejoices

LSB 419 – Savior, When in Dust to Thee (*Tune: TLH 166*)

### Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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## **Text: John 12:23–36**

And Jesus answered them, “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. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

“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. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

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Grace to you, and peace, in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you had only one final public appearance to make, what would you say? What would you want those who would hear you to remember? What would you want those who would hear you to do?

The Gospel reading we heard takes us to the end of the day on Tuesday of Holy Week. This section of the Bible is significant because it marks the significant final appearance by Jesus before His arrest and crucifixion. Today I'd like to focus on some of the statements Jesus makes in this significant final appearance.

First, 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.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus is clearly speaking about His coming crucifixion, death, and burial.

On several occasions Jesus has stated that His time had not yet come, but now His time has come. All is happening according to His timetable, which is the timetable of the Father, which is the timetable laid out before the foundations of the world were laid.<sup>2</sup> All was now ready for Him to endure all that He had come: to endure, to accomplish; the things the Father had sent Him to do.

Christ would be glorified, but not in the way we would expect, not the way we would plan, not the way we would write the story. He would not bring about a revolution and establish an earthly kingdom where He would rule. That is what the people thought the Messiah would do. That is why they had such a hard time recognizing Him as Emmanuel.<sup>3</sup> Jesus had not come to rule that way.

He would let others rule over Him, and He would bow His head in death in humiliation on a cross. There He would voluntarily offer His life for yours. He would offer His life as payment in full for all your sin. The way to glory for Jesus was through the cross. He would not reign from a palace. He would hang from a cross. He would not lie on a luxurious bed of ivory and silk. He would lie on the cold stone of a tomb. He would not be draped in the finest fabrics. He would be wrapped in burial cloths.

1 John 12:23–24

2 Ephesians 1:4

3 'Emmanuel' is a Hebrew word that means: 'The God of creation with us.'

It is through death that He will “bear much fruit.” Jesus compared His death and burial to that of a grain of wheat, bearing much fruit, after it has been dead and buried in the ground. Jesus, the Author of life, would give life by His death.

The fruit, the life that Jesus is talking about, is yours. It is not a good life, or an healthy life, lived here. This life comes for us through Jesus’ death. By His death, Jesus has destroyed death’s power. He has destroyed sin’s power to condemn us. Death is not the end. The grave is not our final resting place. He comes to give life eternal. Jesus said:

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.<sup>4</sup>

We see in this significant final appearance of our Savior, a great deal of transparency and vulnerability. He is truly human. As the appointed time draws closer, He says:

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.<sup>5</sup>

These words are a foreshadowing of the words He will pray to the Father in just forty-eight hours, in the Garden of Gethsemane:

My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus knows the horror of what is ahead of Him. It would include being beaten, whipped, spat on, mocked, and suffering horrid, violent, pain as He is nail to to posts, to a cross. We cannot imagine the pain, the anguish, the suffering, the nightmare, the shame He would endure.

That is bad enough, but it is not all. Nothing would compare to the isolation of being abandoned by the Father. As He, while He yet breathed, was in the very real Hell. So troubled He would be that He would cry out for all to hear:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?<sup>7</sup>”

It is hard for us to hear. Especially because we know the answer. You know the answer to that question. Jesus was forsaken because He was carrying your sin. How can the sting of guilt not bit?

4 John 11:25–26

5 John 12:27

6 Matthew 26:39

7 Matthew 27:46

Just as He did in the events we read to day, just as He did in the Garden of Gethsemane, so He does on that cross. He will not let His human emotion rule. The will of the Father, the reason He came into the world, and the mission He has come to accomplish will be accomplished. In the Garden of Gethsemane you hear why.

“Not as I will, but as You will.”<sup>8</sup>”

It is for this very reason and purpose He came into the world, and for this very intention He came to this specific point in time. As He said:

The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.<sup>9</sup>

He came to die so that you might live, not just here but eternally.

This is the significant final appearance. This is Jesus’ final words of teaching. So what would Jesus’ say before His arrest and crucifixion? He says:

While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become children of light.<sup>10</sup>

He issues one final appeal to trust and believe in Him. As He faces all of the personal anxiety and worry, His concern is not about Himself. It is for you. That you would believe in Him, trust in Him, have confidence in Him as your Savior. That you would repent of your sin and receive the gift He was now about to give. He and the Father are united in wanting no one to perish, but that everyone should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved.<sup>11</sup>

We say the words so often. It is easy to miss what they mean. The gift Jesus is about to give is given to all, but not received by all. Hear the words again:

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.<sup>12</sup>

Repentance, admission of guilt, admission of falling short, no matter how pure our intentions might be, repentance is the vehicle by which the gift of forgiveness and life eternal, come.

8 Matthew 26:39

9 Matthew 20:28

10 John 12:36

11 1 Timothy 2:4

12 1 John 1:8-10

As a church, and as individuals, our message to those walking in the darkness of sin and unbelief is the same message Jesus gave in His significant final appearance before to His arrest:

While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become children of light.<sup>13</sup>

Pray God will use you to bring that light of Jesus to those living in the darkness, in unrepentance. May He use each of us as instruments of light and life in this world.

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,  
Encourage one another in faith,  
Witness to God's love and  
Serve all people**



13 John 12:36