**Lenten Midweek 5**

**Significant Final Appearance—Tuesday of Holy Week**

**John 12:23–36**

**Sermon Outline**

**What Does Jesus Want Us to Remember from His Significant Final Appearance?**

**I. That by dying he will be glorified and bear much fruit.**

**II. That he would willingly suffer all to accomplish his purpose: our eternal life.**

**III. That we may yet believe in him and become sons of light.**

**Sermon**

**If you only had one final, public appearance to make in your life, 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?**

**Our text takes us to the end of the day on Tuesday of Holy Week. Tuesday had been a very busy day. This section of Scripture is significant because it marks the final public appearance by Jesus prior to his arrest and crucifixion. It’s the final time he and the crowds in Jerusalem will exchange words before he is arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane and placed on trial.**

**What Does Jesus Want Us to Remember from**

**His Significant Final Appearance?**

**Let’s focus on several of the statements Jesus makes in this significant last appearance in public.**

**I.**

**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” (vv 23–24). Jesus is clearly speaking about his coming crucifixion, death, and burial.**

**On several earlier occasions, Jesus had stated that his time had not yet come. But now, his time had come. It’s all happening according to his timetable, which is the timetable of the Father. All was now ready for him to endure that which he had come into the world to endure—to accomplish that for which the Father had sent him into this world.**

**Christ would be glorified—but not in the way some were expecting. He would not bring about a revolution and establish an earthly kingdom in which he would rule with subjects bowing down to him. No, instead he would let others triumph over him, and he would actually bow down his head in death on a cross. There he would voluntarily offer his life as payment in full for all sin and all evil. The way to being glorified for Christ was by way of crucifixion.**

**He would not reign from a palace. He would hang from a cross.**

**He would not lie on a luxurious bed of ivory. He would lie on the cold stone of a tomb.**

**He would not be wrapped in the finest fabrics. He would be wrapped in burial cloths.**

**And it is through death that he will “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 paradox to be sure: life comes by way of death.**

**The fruit, the life that Jesus is talking about, is ours. Life comes for us by way of Christ’s death. By his death, Jesus has destroyed death’s power to harm us. He has destroyed sin’s power to condemn us. Death is no longer the end. The grave is not the final resting place. As Christ said one chapter earlier in the Gospel of John, “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” (Jn 11:25–26).**

**II.**

**Secondly, we see in this final public appearance of our Savior prior to his arrest a great deal of transparency and vulnerability. He is truly human. As the appointed time is drawing closer, he states in our text, “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” (v 27). These words call to mind the words he will pray to the Father in approximately forty-eight hours in the Garden of Gethsemane, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (Mt 26:39). So also in our text, Jesus speculates, “What shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’?”**

**Jesus knew the human horror of what was ahead for him. It would include being beaten, being whipped, being spat upon, being mocked, and suffering excruciating pain as he hung on the cross. You and I can only imagine the pain, the anguish, the suffering, and the shame he would endure.**

**But nothing would compare to the isolation of being abandoned by his own Father as he would hang there on the cross. So troubled would he be that he would cry out for all to hear, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mt 27:46). Sadly, you and I know the answer to that question. Jesus was forsaken because he was bearing our sin, our sin that should have forever separated *us* from God. Is it any wonder that his soul is troubled at this point?**

**Yet, as he did in the Garden of Gethsemane, so also he does here. He will not let his human emotions override the will of the Father, the reason he came into this world, and the mission he has come to accomplish. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he was quick to add to his request to let this cup pass from him the words, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will” (Mt 26:39). And so also here, he adds the words, “But for this purpose I have come to this hour” (Jn 12:27).**

**Yes, for this very purpose he came into the world, and for this very purpose he came to this specific point in time. As he said himself, “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28). He came to die so that you might live, not just here but eternally in the presence of God. For this reason, he came into the world.**

**III.**

**And finally, what would be Christ’s words of his final public appearance prior to his arrest and crucifixion? He says, “While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light” (Jn 12:36). He issues one final appeal to trust and believe in him. Even as he is facing all of the personal anxiety, his concern is not for himself, but that all who are within hearing distance might believe in him, trust in him, have confidence in him as their Savior. He and the Father are united in not wanting any to perish, but rather that everyone should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved.**

**As a church and as individual members of our Lord’s Church, our message to those walking in the darkness of sin and unbelief is identical to the message Christ 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). Who knows how many more opportunities anyone outside of faith in Jesus Christ will have to “believe in the light” before the darkness of death closes in and it is too late? I know that you join me in praying that God will use us to bring the light of Jesus Christ to those living in the darkness of sin and unbelief. May he use each one of us, our actions and our words, as his instruments of light and life in this world.**

**And thus concludes 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 he will produce much fruit. An appearance in which he speaks about his fear and trepidation concerning the horrific events he will endure in the next few days. An appearance in which he appeals one last time for faith on the part of his hearers. It was a significant final public appearance indeed! Amen.**