

INTRO: Turn your Bibles, or turn them on, to John chapter 12. Although I'm only reading two verses today, I would like very much if you read along.

Today is PALM Sunday. It is designated as such, because on the Sunday before His resurrection, Jesus makes His well deserved triumphal entry into Jerusalem as recorded here in the 12th chapter of John. In this chapter, we see Jesus turn His eyes and heart toward the cross. He spends one last evening with His friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany. He then Makes His way to Jerusalem. When He gets there, in order to fulfil scripture prophecy, He rides into town on the back of a young donkey. The people, in a spontaneous praise, place palm branches before Him, and cry out, "*Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord!*" It's the fanfare you would expect for the coming Messiah.

Then in a private time with His disciples, Jesus speaks of the death He should die. And in a simple, yet amazingly profound statement, Jesus speaks of the cross. Let's read it together...

John 12:32-33 "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33 He said this to indicate the kind of death He was going to die.*"

Today, I have titled my sermon, THE BEAUTY OF THE CROSS. Notice with me that the cross has great beauty because of...

I) THE PERSON OF THE CROSS: **v 32** "*And I, if I be...*" Notice that the pronoun "*I*" is strongly emphatic. This statement is in opposition to "the ruler (prince) of this world." And in this verse, "*if*" is not an uncertainty, but rather, a consequence. (if I...then, I will) It expresses no doubt, it only sets forth the condition. "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*"

No other religious leader that has ever lived, has been able to say that. Not Muhammed, not Buddha, no one other than Jesus.

Jesus is bravely and beautifully unique! No other has ever compared to Him. He alone changed time and the world. THINK OF IT! Our calendar is set by His coming. There is no one more famous, no one more loved and hated. He alone took upon Himself the responsibility of humanity. He lived selflessly for others.

Luke 19:10 "*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*"

John 10:10 "*...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*"

The old song says, "No one ever cared for me like Jesus. There's no other friend so kind as He. No one else can take the sin and darkness from me, O how much He cared for me."

Do you know Him? If not, it's because you have chosen to turn away from His love for you. He loves you but you have turned a deaf ear to His calls. Today, what will you do with Jesus? How will you respond to the one who's been lifted up in your eyes and heart? You can't help but see Him. You can't change what He's done for you. His act of kindness and selfless ambition toward you will not be denied. The "I" of this verse "is" demanding recognition of His gift and response to His grace. What will you do now?

I) THE PERSON OF THE CROSS: v 32 *“And I, if I be...”*

Notice, secondly, that the cross has great beauty because of...

II) THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS: v 32 *“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw...”* Christ has an allure about Him. There is something unique about Jesus that has elevated Him above all others throughout history. And the Cross, the cross is the magnet of Christianity. The Cross, so repulsive, has, through the death of Christ, become an attraction.

There are two Greek words for “draw” in the N.T., one of which necessarily implies violence, or the use of force, the other does not: it is the latter that is used only here and in **John 6:44**, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him;”

The other use is found in **Acts 14:19** “Then some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, presuming he was dead.”

The PURPOSE of the cross is to DRAW men to Christ. And what possible allure is there to a cross, but Christ?

For those who have come to Him, the cross has ceased to be an INSTRUMENT OF BRUTALITY, and has become an IMAGE OF BEAUTY and salvation. THINK OF IT, why would anyone wear a cross around their neck, or its image on a ring? God, somehow took what was repulsive, and in placing His perfect son upon it, has caused it to become beautiful and alluring. And in doing so, He is able to fulfill the purpose of the cross, to draw people, all people, to Himself.

Now, notice the third thing that makes the cross so BEAUTIFUL...

III) THE PROMISE OF THE CROSS: v 32 *“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”* You will notice in the Authorized Version, that “men” in this verse is in italics. That means it was not in the original writings but was added by the translators to give definition and clarity. Because of that other translations read, “all people”, or “everyone”. It literally reads, “I will draw ALL to me”. WHAT A PROMISE!

The cross brought God into reach of all mankind. It brought Him to us. We beheld Him, and were drawn to Him. And we can, from this proximity, call out to Him.

Romans 10:13 “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Acts 2:39 “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off...”

CONCLUSION: In conclusion, let me give you a few POINTS TO PONDER...

1) Your Brokenness is healed through the Christ of the Cross: **Isaiah 53:4-6** “Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

1) Your Brokenness is healed through the Christ of the Cross: CONTINUED

1 Peter 2:24 *“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”*

Notice the second POINT TO PONDER...

2) The emptiness in your life can be filled by the Christ of the cross: We're drawn to Christ because there's a need for Christ. Much like our body craves food when it's hungry and in need of nutrition, so too, our soul craves the Christ that can meet the inward spiritual need of all mankind.

Acts 17:28 *“For in him we live, and move, and have our being...”*

3) Your past failures does not not limit the Power of God in your life:

Ephesians 3:20 *“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,”*

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THAT BEAUTIFUL CROSS TODAY?