

# St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups. April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006

## Jesus tells of his death

### John 12: 20 – 33



#### Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

John chapter 11 tells of the raising of Lazarus. Martha berates Jesus for not getting there sooner. Part of Jesus' response is these words: *"I am the resurrection and the life"* (11:25) Jesus assures Martha of who he is. The story of the raising of Lazarus spread like wild fire. So it's not surprising that a number of Greek, probably God-fearing people, wanted to see Jesus. It must have seemed as if the whole world wanted to see Jesus and he replies to Philip *"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."* Bruce Milne writes in his commentary of this verse *'He whom the Father had consecrated and sent into the world, whose food is doing the will of him who sent him and finishing his work now brings final glory to the Father in a supreme act of obedience unto death.'* Jesus knew that by dying his life would have an effect beyond belief and so he describes himself as a kernel of wheat falling to the ground and dying. But by dying it produces many seeds.

Jesus response to the disciples is to lay down a challenge: <sup>25</sup>*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.* There probably isn't anyone who doesn't love this life and its material benefits. How hard it is for each one of us to give up what we have. A Ugandan Christian said, 'I didn't know that Jesus was all I needed until he was all I had.' But this amazing son of God knew what it was to suffer and as he looked towards his own death, we hear the anguish of his heart when he said; <sup>27</sup>*"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name!"* How often do we remember that Jesus was only in his early 30s when he died in our place on the cross? How fantastic that God gave such assurance of his saving love by letting those who could hear the Father's response to Jesus cry of *'Father glorify your name'* by saying *"I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."* To those who could hear, it brought assurance and comfort. But to others it was the sound of thunder and others said it was an angel that had spoken to him. May the ears of our hearts be always open to hear his words of assurance and love? This remarkable passage reaches its climax when Jesus explains for us the power of the Cross when he says; <sup>31</sup>*Now is the time for judgement on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup>But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."* <sup>33</sup>*He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.*

Firstly the cross brings judgement on this world. It exposes the sin of each one of us because Jesus was sent by God and our rejection of him is rejection of God himself. The cross is judgement upon the whole world and within that God's judgment on each one of us. But it is also the symbol of his divine love, because by his death on the cross he bears the judgement of us all.

Secondly Jesus' death drives out the prince of this world. To the one looking on from the outside this must seem like a victory for the devil himself, but by Jesus' death on the cross Satan and the power of death itself is utterly defeated and broken forever. The holiness of Jesus broke the devil's power. We, who are now the church – the body of Christ - must never forget in our ministry this note of victory.

Finally Jesus said *but I when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."* This is a paradox because by being lifted up in crucifixion he was also lifted up in exaltation and his exalting tells us that he is the one who reigns forever. Through this amazing selfless act, he draws all those who will come unto himself. His outstretched arms on the cross seem to be a poignant expression of his embrace for the whole world.

#### Witness: Questions to discuss



1. How do we react to a young person's death today compared with our reaction to Jesus dying at 33 years old?
2. How do we in the affluent west understand that Jesus is all we need?
3. What did Jesus mean when he said, 'the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life'?
4. Discuss the paradox of the cross? How can it be both judgement and love?
5. What does the death of Jesus mean to you? How does his death affect our community, our country and the world?

