

Sermon Series: The Glory of the One and Only: A Series on the Gospel of John

The Glorious Apogee – John 19:17-30

March 22nd , 2020 // Daniel Hickenbotham

- Introduction: Self, Circumstances, Series
- Because we derive MEANING from context it is important to remind ourselves where we are in the story
- Every good story has four fundamental components, four elements that make it a comprehensible narrative and not just a description of disconnected random events.
 - Beginning/Exposition (Introduction of characters, of context, and the conflict)
 - Complication/Conflict (Conflict blossoms, main part of the rising action, we see the development of the characters for good or for evil)
 - Climax (Point at which the outcome of the conflict is decided, the point of highest emotion, the hinge point)
 - Resolution/Consumation (rising action peaked in the climax, and descends into some kind of landing)
 - EXAMPLE
- These elements are used in communicating stories in more than just fiction. Biographies, histories, forensics, even accounting, etc. all represent reality using story, using some variation of these same four components.
 - We even use this same linear thinking to try and forecast or engineer future events.
 - But all of them are operating from some kind of story...
- Important to look for where we are in this very historical and very theological story:

Then they took Jesus away.[e] 17 Carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called Place of the Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. 18 There they crucified him and two others with him, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. 19 Pilate also had a sign made and put on the cross. It said: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. 20 Many of the Jews read this sign, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. 21 So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Don’t write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that he said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’” 22 Pilate replied, “What I have written, I have written.” 23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, a part for each soldier. They also took the tunic, which was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. 24 So they said to one another, “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it, to see who gets it.” This happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled that says: They divided my clothes among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing.[f] This is what the soldiers did. 25 Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” 27 Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After this, when Jesus knew that everything was now finished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he said, “I’m thirsty.” 29 A jar full of sour wine was sitting there; so they fixed a sponge full of sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it up to his mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.

 - What do we do with a passage like this? How do we make sense of this ugly reality, because this isn’t just some fiction novel we have been reading in book club... how do we find meaning here?
- Over the last few weeks Pastor Ryan and Pastor Patrick have done a tremendous job of walking us through the moments leading up to this one. They have helped put us get in the shoes of the disciples to walk around and feel the confusion of the last supper... the crushing weight of Christ’s betrayal and

abandonment... His humiliation and unjust treatment at the hands of the religious elites, and the brutality and evil committed against Him by Rome and the crowd.

- If we are not careful to identify where we are in the story, we can end up drawing all the wrong conclusions about this moment, like the disciples did.
 - Disciples ran away in fear because they thought all of this... was the resolution of the story.
- They likely thought that the climax of the story was when Jesus had vast crowds following Him, or when He came riding into Jerusalem to the shouts of Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!
 - And now... seeing Jesus dead on a cross beneath a sign calling Him their King... they were thinking that this is how it ends for political revolutionaries... this how it ends for even peaceful insurrectionists... the Jews and Pilate believed this was the resolution as well... BUT
- MAIN POINT OF THE PASSAGE: **The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ Is the Climax of the Entire Story.**
- It is the climax of the story in three ways:

The Crucifixion is the climax of Jesus' earthly ministry.

- The Gospel of John is laid out as a steady march to the cross. All of the rising action leads right here.
- Jesus makes it plain in John 2, John 7, John 8, and John 12 that His hour had not come.
 - But as this dumpster fire of a miscarriage of justice gets ignited, He recognizes: "Father, the hour has come, glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you..."
- WE MUST BE CAREFUL: The same way that the disciples THOUGHT Jesus earthly ministry was one thing (political liberation)... and we have the tendency to make Jesus' ministry exclusively about what's important to us.
 - Theology nerds say His primary ministry was teaching and revealing of proper theology and right belief.
 - The more mystical types say His ministry was focused on restoring our emotional intimacy with God and re-establishing our personal identity.
 - Those focused on social justice say His ministry was to love and serve the poor, marginalized, and politically oppressed.
- But JESUS knows and defines what His ministry is, and in the Gospel of John, He defines it by this moment...
 - Right after the triumphal entry, what looked like a moment of climactic glory from all earthly perspectives, Jesus says he is going to be glorified by being delivered into the hands of sinful men to die. Then He says:

27 "Now my soul is troubled. What should I say—Father, save me from this hour? But that is why I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name." [g] Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." ... 30 Jesus responded, "This voice came, not for me, but for you. 31 Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 As for me, if I am lifted up[h] from the earth I will draw all people to myself." 33 He said this to indicate what kind of death he was about to die.

 - Did Jesus care for the poor and the needy? Yes. Did He engage with the injustice of political oppression? Yes. Did He teach about true theology and right belief? Absolutely...
 - But Jesus' primary ministry was the cross.... making atonement for sinful humanity and drawing to salvation all those who will be saved... conquering of the world, death, and the devil.
 - It is His glorification... it is His highest earthly work...
- Brothers and sisters, more than health or home or community or food or water or toilet paper, our greatest need, our neighbors' greatest need, our world's greatest need is for the due penalty of sin to be removed from our account, for our rebellion to be quelled and for a peace treaty to be enacted, to have our hearts of stone removed and to receive hearts of flesh with God's instruction tattooed on them... We need to be returned to right standing with God... We need to be rescued
 - We as a staff preach and teach and lead worship here Sunday after Sunday knowing this your greatest need, and knowing we are helpless to meet that need... we are helpless to save you...
 - This is why our goal is to preach Christ, to prick your consciences about Christ, and to promote a response of faith to Christ.
 - Because Christ came meet this need, and the CROSS IS THE MOMENT THAT THIS RESCUE IS ASSURED.
 - The crucifixion is the climax of Jesus' Earthly Ministry, exactly because:

The Crucifixion is the climax of God's plan of redemption from eternity past.

- Jesus isn't God's lame attempt to try and woo some people back, and then things gets out of control and He gets crucified, and then God has to raise Him from the dead because of the injustice of it all.
 - WE have seen over the last 4 weeks, every time things seem out of Jesus' control, He is actually fully in control of that moment.
 - Ironically, it is the people opposing Him who do not realize they are acting to fulfill God's purposes... His purpose to redeem His fallen creation.
- WE have seen throughout this whole series, the Gospel of John draws upon and links us to, not just the other 3 Gospels, but to the entire OT:
 - Christ's entrance into Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate connects us to the return of the departed glory of God in Ezekiel and to the path in the wilderness in Isaiah 40.
 - Christ's claim to be the Good Shepherd connects us to the prophecies in Ezekiel 34.
 - Christ comparing Himself with the bronze serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness.
 - Christ contrasts Himself with the Manna in the wilderness.
 - 7 times in the book of John, there is some variation of the phrase ___ HAD TO HAPPEN SO "that the scriptures might be fulfilled", two in this passage alone.
 - We have seen Him literally say: "Your pore over the scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me." John 5:39
 - Later on the road to Emmaus
- There are two specific OT types, two roles, two capacities that Christ fulfills and demonstrates that the crucifixion is the climax of God's plan of redemption:
 - The first, is that Jesus is the new and better, the obedient, Adam. ROMANS 5
 - We all know the story of Adam and Eve and their failure to obey God's command and blessing in the Garden.
 - We know the chain of events this kicked off.... In fact, in the story of God, it created the complication... the conflict...
 - CONFLICT: As descendants of Adam have an intimate relationship with darkness.
 - Not only are we overcome by it, but we invite in, make it a meal, and take it home to meet our parents.
 - Jesus says in John 3:18-19 that what we are condemned for is that the light has come and we have LOVED the darkness
 - But where Adam, and we, have disobeyed... at every point, and in every way, Jesus OBEYED God's command, ... "I do the will of my Father in Heaven"
 - He obeyed so entirely, it took him through the vilest abuse and now sees Him hanging on a cross...
 - We see this radical obedience to God's law even while hanging on the cross.
 - LAW = Love God, Love Neighbor.
 - On the cross we see Jesus' obedience to God is genuine and total because it translates into his loving care of His mother, Mary.
 - You can only imagine the bitter horror Mary must have been in. (Expound)
 - You put me in Christ's position, and all I would want, all I would expect, all I would demand is that my mother comfort me...
 - Yet with Christ, we see that He comforts her... cares for her... honors her...
 - He **literally obeys** the 5th commandment before our eyes as he is dying on the cross.

- Jesus is the new and the better Adam, and He takes the old Adam's punishment and drinks it down and FOREVER meets obligation of it.
 - Romans 5:18-19
18 So then, as through one trespass there is condemnation for everyone, so also through one righteous act there is justification leading to life for everyone. 19 For just as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."
- So Jesus is our New Adam... But what is the second type..
- Most would immediately jump to the Passover Lamb.
 - This was the lamb that was slaughtered and whose blood, if splattered upon the door frame and the lintel of the house, caused the Angel of Death to Passover the inhabitants during the Plague of the Firstborn while Israel were still slaves in Egypt.
 - The festival was being celebrated in Jerusalem when Christ was crucified was Passover.
 - (Pastor Patrick) Even the right TIME OF DAY for the slaughtering of the Passover lambs...
 - So yes, it is CLEAR that Jesus is the fullest revelation of the Passover Lamb.....
- But... there is another lamb that this story calls us back to... another hill... another son... another sacrifice...
 - It calls us back to Abraham... Abraham who had an only son... a son who He loved...
 - In Genesis 22 God calls to Abraham and says: 2 "Take your son," he said, "your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." (TRADITIONALLY THIS WAS THE TEMPLE MOUNT)3 So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt offering and set out to go to the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to worship; then we'll come back to you." 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac. In his hand he took the fire and the knife, and the two of them walked on together."
 - Sound familiar... a man marching up a hill near Jerusalem... Carrying on his back the wood upon which he is going to die as a sacrifice...?
 - But what does Isaac ask as they approach the site of the sacrifice? Where is the LAMB for the offering?
 - Abraham assures Him, that God will provide the lamb...
 - (Story ends well) What ends up being sacrificed as a burnt offering after God stops Abraham? A RAM caught in a thicket... not a lamb...
 - And Abraham prophetically names the place "Yahweh Yireh"... the Lord will provide...
 - And thousands of years later, the Lord DOES provide a lamb. He provides THE Lamb. The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. God does not withhold His Son, His only son, The Son that He loves as the sacrifice that provides salvation for many.
 - Jesus isn't God's plan B. He is God's plan from eternity past. The crucifixion is the climax of that plan, and thus:

The Crucifixion is the climax of all human history.

- I am fascinated with history. All of it is captivating to me. Yet, despite how expansive the timeline and the diversity of characters, most of human history is kind of the same.
 - It is just fallen humanity trying to accomplish the work of being fruitful and multiplying... and attempting to get back to the paradise of Eden... to create Heaven on Earth... all without submission to God.
 - People pouring their lives out trying to create a Heaven on Earth, but all without the Heavenly authority
- No matter how hard they try, humanity:
 - Can't get away from the fact they are created, and created for a place and purpose...
 - Can't get away from the fact that things are not how they are supposed to be...
 - Can't get away from the fact they are unique... Image Bearers of God...
- Yet they REJECT Him and His authority time and time again.
 - They eat the "forbidden fruit" because they would rather be God than be blessed by God.
 - Remember... God's blessing to Adam and Eve came in a command to obey... "Be fruitful and multiply... eat of every tree, except one..."
 - Adam and Eve (HUMANITY) desired equality with God rather than the blessing of God that comes with obedience...
 - Romans 1 points this out, in humanity's continual rejection of God they become fools and are given over to their own degrading passions and worthless thinking, eventually becoming haters of God and inventors of evil.
 - **The Crucifixion is the epitome of this.**
- In the cross we see humanity's willful rejection of both God's authority and blessing: the rejection of GOD HIMSELF and the perpetration of the greatest evil in history.
 - The cross that Jesus is hanging on, who was it intended for?
 - Barabbas... who, in a way, represents all of condemned and rebellious humanity.
 - Jesus has gone out in the place of Barabbas... In our place... He has gone out to become the curse, so that we might receive blessing...
 - Humanity seeks to reject and humiliate God even further... (
 - The titulus, the statement hung on the cross above Christ's head, was not Pilates backdoor attempt to honor Christ
 - It was intended for humiliation: LOOK WHAT ROME CAN DO TO THIS TINY KING AND HIS KINGDOM
 - The dividing of clothes, right before the eyes of a dying man, was intended to strip them of their dignity and show them their tiny kingdom was being looted
 - The sponge and vinegar... this was not an act of mercy either... this sponge was likely the ancient equivalent of toilet paper from a nearby latrine...
 - The cross is the place where Man's rejection and rebellion find their Zenith...
- And yet
 - In the crucifixion, we see God overcoming humanity's rejection and rebellion.
 - We see Jesus centered between Man's wrath and God's wrath drinking down the enmity between both parties... and bringing reconciliation.
 - We see the just penalty for our sin eternally paid by God Himself
 - In Jesus, as the new and better Adam, we see Man perfectly submitting to God...

- We see Jesus being coronated and proclaimed as the King in all the languages of the known world... and by both Rome and the Jews...
 - Now, we have seen the ironic way that the Jews recognized Christ as King in order to get Rome to kill Him... but...
 - If you synopsise all the Gospel accounts of Christ's crucifixion, what you see is that the Romans were mockingly taking Jesus through the coronation process for a new Caesar.
 - In Rome, before a new Caesar would be publicly presented as ruler, he would go into the praetorium, the barracks of Caesars private guards, where he would be crowned, given a scepter, and the Praetorian Guard would be the first to hail him as Caesar and worship him.
 - Only after this, would he go out into public and be presented to the world as the Emperor.
 - So you see, even though it was filled with vitriol and mockery, the crucifixion served as the coronation of King Jesus...
 - 1 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers conspire together against the Lord and his Anointed One: 3 "Let's tear off their chains and throw their ropes off of us." 4 The one enthroned[b] in heaven laughs; the Lord ridicules them. 5 Then he speaks to them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath: 6 "I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain." (Psalm 2:1-6)
 - This is the inverted nature of the Kingdom of God... What man intends for evil, God intends for good.
 - This is why Paul says, if the rulers of this world had known what they were doing, they would have NEVER crucified the Lord of Glory....
- This is the dividing climax of human history, because from here onward the end is assured.
 - Christ is King... and will be King for Eternity...
- When Jesus says, it is finished, he is not only talking about His suffering...
 - He is saying from this moment on, we are in the falling action, on the way to a glorious Resolution of the story.

Jesus is clearly the hero... so who are we?

- The crowd, passively swayed by the current trend?
- The religious leaders, actively opposing the work of God while thinking ourselves holy?
- The soldiers, enforcers of the worldly system whether it is just or not?
- The disciples, worried and hiding because we thought the climax was the resolution?

- I say we are the criminals hung on the cross beside Jesus...
 - Both guilty... both rebels... both destined to die...
 - One continued on in his love affair with darkness, hurling insults, taunting, and blaspheming Jesus...
 - The other saw the wonder in what Christ was doing, the glorious way Christ took on death, and with what little understanding he had he reached out His heart of faith and said... "Remember me..." and Jesus says DONE... you will be with me in paradise... your debt is paid... it is finished.
 - These are the only two sides that exist when it comes to Jesus...
 - The cross of the unbeliever and the cross of the believer...

- Tell the story of seeing/comprehending Christ bearing your sin...
 - Same can be true for you.

If you are a believer... where are you in the story of God?

- Do you still think you are caught in the conflict or the rising action and it is undecided?
- Or do you see that all of this... is the falling action headed towards its consummation?
 - Is the "It is finished" of Christ a comfort for you?
 - Because it is a tremendous comfort...
 - Hiedleberg Catechism.