

John 12 (Part 4) :44-50 • A Final Appeal for Faith

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Well, we are in the book of John. So, open your Bible there, the Gospel of John. We're having the hardest time getting out of the 12th chapter. This is the fourth part of John chapter 12. And so, here we are, still in this 12th chapter. We will finish it today, beginning in verse 44, John 12:44. Have your Bible or your device open there. And there aren't that many verses to this, it's just verse 44 to the end of the chapter, which is verse 50. So, let me read it, you follow along, and then we'll pray.

“⁴⁴And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. ⁴⁵And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. ⁴⁶I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”” (ESV)

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we delve into Your Word this morning, we open our hearts to You, to hear Your voice. We pray that You'd forgive us, Lord, God, for our sin, our mistakes. Lord, we don't want anything standing in the way of being able to hear Your voice today. So we ask You, Lord, God, to cleanse us through that work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Cleanse us anew, and now open our hearts, give us ears to hear, eyes to see, and shine light into our hearts. We pray in Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

I want to just remind you of the context of these verses; Jesus is in Jerusalem, The Passover celebration is about to begin, this is the last earthly Passover that Jesus will celebrate. He is just days away from His arrest and crucifixion, and He is giving an appeal here. And, by the way, I wanted to tell you something else, this is the last public appeal that Jesus is going to make here on earth, through His own lips. Everything else that He says from this point forward, will be spoken in private and yet, He makes this appeal to a city of Jerusalem that is

rapidly filling up with pilgrims from all over Israel, and even beyond, as people come for the Passover.

And the very first words that we read here this morning I think are very significant. Enough so, for us to pause and consider their meaning. And they are the simple words: “⁴⁴*And Jesus cried out...*” And the reason I want to ponder those words here this morning is because, again, this is His last public appeal, this is the last thing He's going to say publicly. And it comes to us as an urgent and rather, final appeal for the people who are listening to turn from unbelief to faith. And, in this final appeal, John tells us that: “. . . *Jesus cried out...*” I looked up those words in the Greek, because they just kind of hit me. And I didn't find anything terribly special, you know. It can mean everything from somebody just screaming, to somebody just making an appeal, you know? Which is what we see Jesus doing here.

But it got me to thinking about all the reasons that people cry out. I thought about the reasons that I've cried out in my life. We cry out to God when we're hurting, which we should do. We cry out many times to let others know that we're hurting, you know. Sometimes we cry out to save people from hurting, and that's kind of what Jesus is doing here, in the sense that He's not crying about His own issues, He's crying out about what other people are facing, in an effort to try to save them from what they are facing. And we do that from time to time.

But I also got to thinking about the times that I've cried out to try to save someone from what they're facing. And I thought, you know, even that is different from what Jesus is doing because, when I cry out, whether I'm crying out about my pain or crying out trying to save someone from pain, there's still a lot of me involved. In other words, when I cry out to people, encouraging them to make a good decision, I'm still fairly selfishly motivated, I want them to be okay, so I will be okay, you know how that goes.

But that really got me to thinking about why Jesus cried out, because He's not motivated by the same things we're motivated by. In other words, Jesus didn't cry out for Himself, He didn't cry out that day to meet some inner need, He didn't cry out to plead with the people because of some lack inside of Himself. That's often the reason we cry out. And I was reminded of the fact that God is very different from us. And yes, I said “God.”

That's the other thing that made me think about this. I got to thinking about the fact that Jesus is God, hopefully we've settled that here. We've gone through John enough to...we've seen over, and over, and over again, how John has

communicated to us that Jesus is God in human flesh. I mean, he started off from the very first verse and told us that: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* He was with God in the beginning, and Jesus continued to repeat that throughout this Gospel account. “Jesus is God.” Well, what that means is when we hear Jesus saying something, we're hearing God saying something. When Jesus cries out, that's God crying out. And I think we can probably all agree that if God is crying out about something, it'd be best for us to listen, right? Wouldn't you think? Because again, He doesn't ever, ever cry out because of anything He needs, it's always outside of Himself, because God doesn't lack anything, and God has no need.

And I know that may sound crazy to your ears, but God has no needs. He is entirely self-sufficient unto Himself. Let me show you a wonderful quote by my favorite author, A.W. Tozer. He writes:

“To admit the existence of a need in God is to admit incompleteness in the divine Being. Need (he writes,) is a creature-word and cannot be spoken of the Creator. To God alone nothing is necessary.” - **A.W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy***

Just try to wrap your brain around that one for a minute or two, before you start doing back flips. God has no need. To Him, nothing is necessary because He is unto himself sufficient. So, once again, I repeat to you, that when God cries out, it's not to meet some internal need, it is for you and me, and it's for us to pay attention to.

And as we look at what Jesus says in these verses, we can kind of break it up into four different declarations that He was trying to communicate as He cried out. I'll put them up on the screen here for you, for those of you taking notes:

What Jesus wanted them/us to know...

1. His union with God the Father (:44-45)
2. His purpose for coming into the world (:46-47)
3. A serious warning (:48)
4. The source of His message (:49-50)

So, let's get into this. We'll start with the first point that Jesus wants to make and that is His union with God the Father. Look with me again at those verses, those two verses say: ⁴⁴*“And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me (and, by the way, that means: not only in Me. But He says,) but in him who sent me. ⁴⁵And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.”* And

what Jesus is doing here is He is talking to us about the connection of faith between Him and His Father that we are to express. And He's not discounting faith in Himself when He says: who .". *believes not in me, but in him who sent me.*" Because, in a couple of chapters He's going to talk about faith in Him. Let me show you this from John 14. This will be coming here, in a few weeks. He says:

John 14:1 (ESV)

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me."

So, we see that Jesus wanted us to believe in Him, He wanted us to believe in the Father. But the point of what He's making here is that it's not a twofold faith or even a threefold faith. People struggle so much, I have learned, with the idea of the Trinity, the nature of God. People will write to me and say: "So, when I'm praying, who do I pray to?" As if you can separate God from God. You guys know that there's only one God, right? There aren't 2, 3, 4, 10 or 11, there's one God. So, you start off your prayer and say: "Dear Lord God...", you've addressed all the persons of the Trinity.

We fixate on these minute and really irrelevant details. Because God has revealed Himself as one God in three Persons. But not so that we would put Him under a microscope and try to separate the Persons in such a way, as to divide them. And Jesus is communicating here, "When you believe in Me, you believe also in My Father."

You do know that, right? It's not a twofold faith. We have faith in God, singular, right? It's not like "I'm putting my faith in God, but I'm not sure about this Jesus guy." Or "I believe in Jesus, but God the Father kind of freaks me out sometimes, I'm not really sure about Him." No, no, no. And this is what Jesus is saying.

John the Apostle went on in his first letter to talk about this in even a slightly different way. Let me put this on the screen. 1 John 2:23, it says:

1 John 2:23 (ESV)

No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

No one who denies the Son (that's Jesus) has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son (this is the converse) has the Father also.

Now, so this is interesting. John says that if someone were to say, “I don't believe in Jesus. I don't believe in Jesus as the Son of God, but I believe in God.” John says, “No. Uh uh. Package deal, package deal.” Literally, “*No one who denies the Son has the Father.*” Now, those aren't my words, those are John's words. Those are the authority of Scripture. “*No one who denies the Son has the Father.*” You cannot separate these Persons in the Godhead. And you can't have One without the Other from that perspective.

The second point that Jesus is crying out to communicate to us is highlighted on the screen there for you, and that is that His purpose for coming into the world is given here.

What Jesus wanted them/us to know...

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- 2. His purpose for coming into the world (:46-47)**
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He says in verse 46 and 47:

“⁴⁶*I have come into the world as light, (we're going to talk about that. You might underline that word or circle it in your Bible) so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. (We'll talk about what the word “remain” means in a moment too. And then He says:)* ⁴⁷*If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; (and then He goes on to explain again, His purpose for coming, He says:)* *for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.*”

And there's, you know, several actually recorded statements by Jesus in the Gospels about why He came, these are just two. But we do need to look at them. First, in verse 46, He says: “*I have come into the world as (a) light...*” We'll talk about the second one, in verse 47, in just a moment.

So, this first statement deals with light and darkness. “*I have come...as light.*” And then He went on to make a statement about that light, He said, “if you put your faith in that light, and that light, of course, comes from Him, He says that person will no longer “*remain in darkness,*” but will walk in the light. What does it mean when Jesus says, “If you put your faith in Me, if you believe in Me, you'll no longer remain in darkness? What does that tell you? That tells you you started off in darkness, doesn't it? In other words, you began in darkness.

We all start this life on earth in darkness. When does it change? When we put our faith in Jesus Christ.

And then Jesus says: “You no longer have the need to remain in darkness any longer.” Right? “Because I have brought you into the light.” And today we are watching as our culture walks in darkness, aren't we? Do you find it difficult to watch? I do. I not only find it difficult to watch, I find it very difficult to endure the public celebration of people walking in darkness. That's very challenging. Very, very challenging. Because what people are doing is they're stumbling in the dark. You guys know what that's all about, right?

Have you ever gotten up in the middle of the night and going into another room and forgot that you put a chair or something in your path, and down you go, yikes! Can be a painful sort of a deal. What happens when you turn the light on? Oh, you can see the obstacles now, and you can go around them, you can avoid them. Well, that's what this whole light and darkness thing is all about. And that's why Jesus is saying: “When you put your faith in Me, you begin to walk in the light.” You're literally brought into the light. In fact, He's even going to go on to say, “You are light.” (Matthew 5:14). And that light shines in the darkness and it illuminates our path so that we don't deal with the usual stumblings that we see the world going through.

And, you know, have you noticed too that the world gets favorite stumblings, and it goes through...you know, how children go through phases. We see the world going through phases. Right now, they're in this phase of stumbling over gender, and it's the biggest, hot, political, social topic of the day. Everything's all about gender, and this and that. Well, we look at this thing and what do we see? We see people stumbling all over this thing because they're not walking according to the light of the revelation of God's Word.

Sue and I were praying yesterday, and I was kind of impressed how Sue was actually thanking the Lord in our prayer time. She said, “Lord, thank You for delivering us from some of the usual stumblings of the world.” And it's not something we congratulate ourselves for. He did it by shining His light into our lives. And I'm not saying that we, Christians, don't stumble, because we do, but can I make a rather bold statement?

Christians stumble less than people in the world because we have the light. It doesn't mean we always choose to walk by it, it doesn't mean we always choose to turn it on and abide in it, but it's there, and it's not God's fault if we stumble, right? He's made that light possible for us. That's what He has done in us.

And there's so many passages in the Bible that speak of the purpose of light and so forth. Let me share just a few with you. On the screen from Psalm 119. I love this:

Psalm 119:130 (ESV)

The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.

And by the way, that's me. I'm the simple. You look up in the dictionary, "simple" it'll say, "See, Paul." That's me. And I need the Word of God to instruct and show me what's what. And then 2 Corinthians 4:6. Paul writes and says:

2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV)

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

This light that He's given to us, not only illuminates our path and keeps us from stumbling in the things that are in that path, but it illuminates us as it relates to God Himself. And that's what he's saying here. He has given us the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus. We see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But then, there's another interesting statement that Paul makes concerning the light in 2 Corinthians chapter 6, where he says:

2 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)

...what fellowship has light with darkness?

Do you guys remember the word "fellowship"? It's that Greek word "koinōnia," and it speaks of an intimate sharing. And so, he's basically saying to you and me what intimate sharing is appropriate between light and darkness?

We have to deal with people who are in darkness. We deal with them all the time, every day, in business and sometimes even in our own homes and families. But Paul says, when it comes to intimate sharing, that koinōnia, light and darkness can't get along because the darkness has nothing to say to somebody who's living in the light. Isaiah 5:20 tells us why light can't get along with darkness.

Isaiah 5:20 (ESV)

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness...

I mean, if that isn't a commentary on our world today, I don't know what is. And God pronounces a woe to the world that says: "that's light" when it is in fact darkness, and "that is darkness," when it is in fact light. "*Woe to those...*" "*Woe to those...*" Right? So, what fellowship can light have with darkness? Yeah, I get it, you know. Ephesians 5:8 says:

Ephesians 5:8 (ESV)

...at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.

Isn't that interesting? We didn't just walk in the darkness. Paul tells us here, at one time we were darkness. That kind of gets personal, doesn't it? At one time you were darkness, but now you're light because He has shown His light inside of you. So, what are the implications of that reality? Now walk it out, walk it out.

So many people stumble over that verse that says: "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,*" (Philippians 2:12). Oh, I don't know how many times I've been asked that. "So what does that mean, Pastor Paul, when it says, 'work out your salvation?'" And they want to know if this is maybe a contradiction in the Word that tells us that we have to work for our salvation, which is nothing of the sort.

It's Paul simply saying, "walk out the reality of who you are, now in Jesus. Now that you've been made a child of God. Now walk it out." In other words, live your life in a consistent manner with who you now are. And who are you? You are light in the Lord. Now walk that way, don't walk according to the darkness of this world. We don't walk that way, you know. We're not going to do that. We're not going to play their game.

One of the biggest hot-button questions that Christians are asking today is, what do I do if somebody says: "this is my new gender identity" or "this is my new pronoun" or something like that. "Should I follow that?" Paul says: "No! We're not going to do that." They're literally walking in the darkness, the deception of darkness. That's, guys, that's deception! I'm not going to play that game. I love people too much to play that game. I'm not going to go there, I'm not going to follow along in their deceptive thinking, right? We're not going to do that. We are light in the Lord, shine that light.

That doesn't mean we go around being mean, or cruel, or anything like that. We're supposed to speak the truth in what? Love. It's hard, I know, I know. It's a

very difficult balance, speaking the truth, and speaking the truth in love, because some people get fixated on truth and they're no longer loving. Some people get fixated on love and they no longer speak the truth, they begin to compromise. It's challenging, but still, it's our calling, you know. At one time you were darkness, don't live that way anymore, right? Then Peter finally says, in 1 Peter 2:9:

1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)

...you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Isn't that just a glorious thought that God has called us out of darkness? The things that you see the world stumbling in right now whenever you read the news, turn on the tv, read a newspaper, or however you get your news, He's called you out of that. Why? So that you might "*proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of (that) darkness...*" Right? And then you'll remember in verse 47, Jesus spoke of his purpose saying: "*... I did not come to judge the world but to save (it).*"

And I want to remind you that Jesus is coming to judge the world the second time, but that wasn't His purpose for the first coming. And Jesus says it right here, it's very simple. The first coming, He said, "I came to save the world." And I love that, it's so simple. Jesus came to save the world. He came to save the world. I like it because it's so easy to say.

If you're sharing the Gospel with someone, can I encourage you not to get all complex when you share Jesus with people? Because I think people do try to make it more complex than it needs to be. "Pastor Paul give some tips for sharing the Gospel." "All right, here you go. Ready? Jesus came to save the world." You know.

"How do you do that?" "He bore the penalty of your sin and my sin on the cross. And now He says: 'if you'll put your faith in Him, your sins are forgiven, and you'll have eternal life.'" How long did that take me? Guys, a child can understand that. I can share that with a four-year-old and they can understand. So, don't get complex when people try to pull you into this intellectual argument, you know, about all these things. "Jesus came to save the world, okay? There you go." And we're not saved by being good people, we're saved by putting our faith in the only One who ever was good, Jesus Christ. So, there you go.

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The third statement that Jesus cried out and wanted people and wanted us to hear was a fairly serious warning in verse 48, where He said:

“The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; (and that is) the word that I have spoken will (that’s going to) judge him on the last day.”

And He is reminding us in this simple single verse that a day is coming when all who reject His words, did you hear me? All who reject His Word will stand in judgment for their unbelief. We get so caught up... there are a lot of passages that talk about people being judged for their sin, and that is true.

In fact, let me show you one from Revelation chapter 20, it says:

Revelation 20:11-12 (ESV)

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

And those are important words, "*according to what they had done.*" But can I just clear something up for you? What they had done had to be judged because they rejected the One who came to take their judgment, okay? Jesus came to earth to bear our judgment. This He did for those who put their faith in Him. Those who reject Him must bear their own judgment.

But why must they bear their own judgment? Because they refused to let Jesus bear it for them. He made an offer that was free and they said, "No, thank you." And now they stand before the throne of God to be judged according to their own sin. But again, they're not being judged specifically because of their sin. The fact that their sin is even there, is because they rejected the One who offered to take away their sin.

And so, ultimately, people are being judged for their unbelief, do you get that? It comes down to faith or unbelief. It doesn't come down to specific sins. Like, “if you do this, you're going to hell. Doesn't matter what you believe, or who you are, or whatever, if you do this sin right here, you're going to...” No, no, no, no, no, no.

People go to hell because they reject Jesus. But through unbelief they say, “I don't accept, I don't believe, I reject what Jesus did on the cross.” And so for them, there's no other option. They have to stand before God for their sin because they refuse to let the Son of God stand in their place. And I hope and pray everybody here, and within the sound of my voice, has invited Jesus to stand in your place for your sin, because that means for you, there will be no judgment of sins on that day because Jesus already bore it for you. It's done, it's finished. But this is the warning that Jesus is giving, you know, in this passage.

And then, finally, the fourth thing that He cried out saying, had to do with the source of His message in verses 49 and 50.

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And He said, “⁴⁹*For I have not spoken on my own authority,*” Can I just stop right there, for a moment, and say that really messes with people's minds, and I'll talk about that here, in just a moment, okay? What it does is it causes people to question whether Jesus is really God because He keeps saying things like, “I'm not speaking on My authority. I'm speaking on My Father's authority.”

So, they say to me quite often, “So, if Jesus is God, then why didn't He speak on His own authority? Why did He have to only speak on the Father's authority?” I'll explain it in just a moment. But He goes on here, and He says, “*but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment (in other words, a message) —what to say and what to speak. (That's the message and He says) ⁵⁰And I know that his commandment (or if you will, His message) is eternal life. (Or it gives eternal life, and He says) What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.*”

And what Jesus is doing here, and this is just another one of those statements where Jesus is speaking to the people, and He is stressing His submission to God the Father, and He's saying...this is the simple point of what He's saying, "Our message is one." Now, you might think, is that all that important? Well, you remember, He's talking to Jews and, when He refers to His Father, He's referring to the One whom they call "Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" who they claim to worship. And He is saying, "Concerning Yahweh, My message and Yahweh's message are one and the same," okay?

Well, that was a very important statement to make for the Jews, but I want to close by addressing this issue of Jesus speaking by the authority of the Father. What does that mean exactly when Jesus says, "I don't speak on My own authority, I speak by the authority of My Father?"

It is a very common mistake of people to make to read something like that and assume that this, somehow, is not in keeping with our belief in the deity of Jesus Christ. In other words, that Jesus is equal to the Father. And again, people will ask on a fairly regular basis about this, "Why didn't He speak on his own authority?" And what they failed to understand is that Jesus chose to come to earth willingly submitting Himself to His Father. But you see, even when I use the word, "submit," that messes with people's minds, they'll say, "Jesus submitted to the Father? Well, He must not be God then." And what they do is they make an error in believing that, somehow, submission is equal to inferiority.

Women make this mistake all the time when they go through Ephesians chapter 5, and they read that women or wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. And particularly unbelieving women, and even men, look at that verse in the Bible and they say, "Well, that is just ridiculous. That just simply underscores that ancient belief that women were inferior to men." And it says nothing of the sort.

Jesus submitted Himself to His Father, even though He was, as Paul said, and is "*in very nature God.*" Remember that in Philippians chapter 2? "*being in very nature God.*" He humbled himself taking the nature of a servant, the form of a servant, being made in human likeness. He submitted Himself. He subordinated Himself to the Father. Does that mean Jesus isn't equal to the Father? No, heavens no! Any more than it says, "A woman, a wife isn't equal to her husband." A wife is entirely equal to her husband in every way! And yet, she is called to walk in an attitude of submission toward her husband.

“Well, if submission isn't an act of inferiority, what is it an act of?” Humility, humility. And Jesus humbly submitted Himself to His Father. Jesus said, “I am humble in heart.” (Matthew 11:29) And that's why He was able to do that, and why He was able to say, “I speak not on My authority. I speak on the authority of My Father who sent Me.” Doesn't mean He's not God, just means He's submitted and humble. But yet the Bible clearly tells us He is also equal to the Father. Amen? Amen. Let's stand together.

If you need prayer, we'd love to have you come up so we could pray with you. Father, we thank You so much for Your Word today. Thank You for the light that you shine into our hearts through Your Word. And You bring clarity, and, Lord, You light the path in front of us so that we don't stumble. You keep us safe. You go before us. You protect us. And, Father, as we go through this life, help us, we pray. Give us the boldness, the courage, and the strength to walk out who we are in Christ, and to shine that light that You have shown in us. Help us, Lord, to speak the truth in love to a lost and dying world that is not only walking in darkness but is celebrating darkness every day.

Father, give us love, give us wisdom, give us discernment, and help us to convey our hope that is only found in Jesus Christ. We thank You and praise You, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. And all God's people said together, amen. Amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your day.