

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

December 11, 2016

SPEAKER

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SERIES

Fully Alive

PART

34

TITLE

While You Have The Light...Believe!

SCRIPTURE

John 12:27-50



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It's great to see you Providence. And it is such a blessing, is it not? For us to have so many children at Providence and for us to be blessed in that way. A lot of effort goes into that. It's pretty interesting that the text that we looked at last week on the Palm Sunday, when Christ came into Jerusalem in John chapter 12. If you read that same story from Matthew's lens in Matthew chapter 21, it actually says that the children were praising the Lord that time and the Pharisees came up and they said, "You need to stop them." And God says, "But it's from the mouths of infants and babes that God has ordained praise." And so when we see, it's just a really sweet thing.

So we're in John chapter 12 if you're a guest here with us, welcome. If you're in this room at home or in the amphitheater, welcome. We're thrilled that you have joined us today. We're in a series through John it's called, Fully Alive and where we found that those words are from John himself at the end of his book in John chapter 20. He actually tells us why he wrote this 50 years after Jesus rose from the dead. And he says at that point he goes, "These things have been written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God and then believing that you would have life, full life in his name."

And so we've been walking through John rough John chapter 12 and it's sort of interesting that there's sort of like three different big chapters. I know there's more than three chapters, but it's almost like John chapter 1 to John chapter 12 is one chapter and then John Chapter 13 to John chapter 18 is a second chapter and then John chapter 18 verse 12 through the end of the book is the third chapter. And what those chapters are, in the first 12 chapters of John, it's really the three years that Jesus was on the Earth, teaching, miracles. He was with the people, he's preaching. In the second chapter, chapter 13 to chapter 18 is the time when he's just spending in private the week before he died. In fact, the night before he dies with his own followers. And so it's a very close-knit group. And then of course, chapter 18 verse 12 all the way to the end of the chapter is when we see the greatest sacrifice in all of history.

And so what we find here in our text is really important because it's the closing of one chapter so we can start the next. This 12 chapter, it ends with a very last public encounter where Jesus is going to preach, he's going to say something important and he's going to invite people to believe in him so they can be made fully alive. And sadly what we read is they do not believe, but that doesn't have to be the case for us. And if God would work in our hearts, it won't be the case. And so let's pause and let's pray, okay?

Father in heaven, as we open up your word, I pray that you would speak through weakness and you would speak through perhaps even tired minds and tired ears and that you would reach each one of us where we're at. God, would you give us clarity Lord to be able to Lord to see what it is that you have done in this chapter and to see how pertinent it is for our life even this next week. God, I pray that you would bless us with the miracle of belief and God that you would help us to have courage in our life to be able to put this into practice. So we admire you, we acknowledge you and we confess to you Lord that we are in need of you being our teacher now. We pray in Christ name, amen.

Well, there's a verse in our text. It's in verse 35 and verse 36. And what it says is, "While you have the light, believe." And it sort of makes me think of almost a word picture. And so if you can, just think in your mind that you're a kid and you scale a fence and the fence has a big sign on it that says, "No trespassing." And the reason there's a fence around it and the sign is on there is because there's a cave that's been forbidden, that's dangerous to people and so they've marked it off saying, "Don't go in there." And yet you and I, we scaled the fence and we go and we enjoy the cave. We're in there when all of a sudden the shaft breaks and we're trapped inside. We have to kind of find our bearings and so we sit down as the dust settles and eventually we remember that we have a flashlight. We've already learned from our screaming and yelling for help that there's nobody who's there to help and the reason there's nobody there to help because nobody knows that were there.

With our flashlight in hand, we start looking around this cave perhaps a little bit more, hoping for some way and all of a sudden we see a path. But the path is difficult, it's hard, it's narrow, it's exclusive. And we look at that and that causes fear within us and so we sit down comforted by the light that we have and minutes turned into hours and eventually hours, we started looking around and we think, "You know what? My flashlight is beginning to dim." And at that moment we recognize that time is of the essence and while we have light, we need to act. And that's what John chapter 12 is all about.

He says that you and I that we've all scale the fence that said "no trespassing" in order to go into a cave that's been forbidden, places that God said, "This is sin and this is righteousness." And we said, "We want to go anyway." We get in there and we're trapped and it's dark and it's perilous and it's very destructive not only to us but to the people around us, our sin. And so God and his love, he sent Christ as the light of the world to come. And he says, "There is a path. The path is hard, it's exclusive and it's narrow but it will lead you home." What he's saying here is this, "While you have the light, while you have opportunity to believe, while you have opportunity to trust Christ, do so because the time will not always be there."

So let's read what he says. Of course, if you remember from last week, he's just come into Jerusalem. Jews and Greeks are there, they all want to see him and he says to them, at the end of our texts last week he says, "Listen just as a seed goes into the ground and die, so the son of man is going to need to do the same thing." So he's already said that he's going to die and this is the next thing that we read, verse 27. He says, "Now is my soul troubled? And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, but for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it and I will glorify it again." But the crowd that stood there and heard it said that it was thunder. Various others said, an angel has spoken to him.

And Jesus answered, "The voice has come from your sake, not mine. Now, is the judgment of this world. Now, will the ruler of this world be cast out and I, when I am lifted up from the Earth will draw all people to myself." He said this to show what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the son of man must be lifted up?"

Who is the son of man?” So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he’s going. While you have the light, believe in the light that you may become sons of light.” When Jesus had said these things he departed and hid himself from them, though he had done many such signs in front of them, they still did not believe in him.

So that the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled, “Lord who has believed what he heard from us and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed therefore, they could not believe.” For again Isaiah said, “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn and I would heal them.” Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him but for fear of the Pharisees, they did not confess it so that they would not be put out of the synagogue. For they love the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me, and whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If 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. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge. The word that I have spoken will judge him on that last day, for I have not spoken on my own authority but the father who sent me has given me words to speak and I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say therefore, I say as the father has told me.”

Now, I recognize that’s a lot of verses. And if you notice even in your Bible, there’s three subheadings. And so there’s three different sections that I just read. And what I want you to see though, in the text, is here at the end of Jesus public ministry. From verse 27 to verse 36 is the story. That’s the event that’s actually happening because at the end of that event, it actually says that Jesus at that moment he hid himself and he went away. But then what you notice though is there’s two other sections there. The second section and the third section which I’ll show you in the third point, but in that second section, what he’s actually doing there is John 50 years after the fact is trying to explain why did the people not believe in Jesus. And then the third section is really really fascinating. And it says that Jesus is the one who’s speaking this. And so it’s as if John is listening to Jesus and it says, “And Jesus cried out and said to them.” But what’s interesting is he’s already hid himself and nobody knows who he’s talking to, nobody knows when he’s saying this or why he’s saying this.

And so there’s a lot of people that kind of look at that and think, “What’s really going on there?” And there’s really uncertainty as to when sort of that context. What a lot of people believe, myself included, is that John is actually using the words that he has heard from Jesus over these three years to form a thesis of the first 12 chapters of his book. Because what you find in there is all of the themes of light and the word and the one who sent and believe and darkness. All of the things that I’ve been teaching you for the whole year through John chapter 1 to John chapter 12.

And so what I want to do though is show you one big idea that's really found in that first section. And then we're going to use all the rest to support it.

So the big idea this morning is this, is that Jesus entered the depths of our darkness to glorify his father and rescue those who believe. This is what he's done. Now, I want to do that in three different smaller chunks.

The first is this, is that Jesus entered the depths of our darkness. My mind sort of buckles under the pressure when I think of the words, what you see here when it says, "Now, is my soul troubled?" I don't know if you've ever been to the gym or perhaps watch weight lifting on some screen, but it's sort of interesting is as you lift weights the more tired that you get, the more muscle fatigue you have, the more awkward you look on your last set. And so if you're doing 12 sets of a certain amount of weight, your first one and two, you're really going and all of a sudden you start slowing down and by the time you get to the very end, everything is in fatigue. And so you see people's face get real red and if they have one arm that's stronger, that it starts to go up once side like this and they're straining. And this is what happens to my imagination when I hear that the Prince of Peace says that my soul is troubled.

Think about that for a second, that Jesus is under such stress that all of a sudden without any warning he just blurts out, "Now, is my soul troubled?" Now, I've understand the idea of feeling trouble. I feel troubled, at least a measure of it every day. And you probably do in some aspect as well. While I'm driving out in the road and I see traffic in front of me, I feel a measure of trouble. When I'm late for a meeting, I feel a measure trouble. When I fail, I feel a measure of trouble within my heart. When I'm trying to pick out a shirt, I feel a measure of trouble. It doesn't take much for me to feel a measure. Maybe just a small amount of feeling troubled. But my whole imagination simply locks up when I think of Jesus. And the reason is because this is the Son of God, the Prince of Peace who created all things by the power of his spoken word.

Job tells us if Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, he says that, "This is the man that stores up wind and sends it on its way." We've seen multiple times through John, people being troubled. In John Chapter 2, Jesus mother Mary is trouble. She's at a wedding and they run out of wine and she doesn't know what to do. She's frantic. She feels a measure of trouble. Jesus doesn't feel trouble, instead he just takes water and he makes it into wine.

In John chapter 6, a lot of people are hungry and his disciples are troubled that all these people have been listening to Jesus speak all day, that they're hungry and there's a long way from where they can find food. And they're all troubled and they're anxious about things and he's not trouble. He says, "What do you have with you?" And he goes, "Well, we got this little bit of bread, a little bit of fish." And all of a sudden Jesus takes that and he multiplies it and feeds 5,000 families in one afternoon.

We saw in John chapter 11, some of his friends Mary and Martha, they're really troubled because of their brother. First he's sick and then he dies. And that's the first instance that we see in John where Jesus actually wept, that he expressed trouble in his heart. And now here what we find, is this one who has all authority over everything, he's sovereign over everything that there is. He has a human heart that he's taking on in the incarnation, when we celebrate Christmas. And this heart is feeling troubled. His soul is troubled.

You see, he's just told us in the last chapter or in the last section that he's like a seed that's going to go into the ground, he's going to die, that his hour had come. And what he knows is that within just a few days that Jesus is literally going to carry on his shoulders every sin from every person who has ever lived all of the shame, all of the guilt, all of the regret, all of the moral bankruptcy is going to be put upon him and he's going to go to a cross or he's going to die after feeling the weight of all of that shame. And there's so much shame and so much regret that literally God, his Holy Father is going to ... There's a separation that's going to take place where Jesus is actually going to say for the first time in history, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me? Why am I distanced from you?" And all of this causes Jesus soul to feel troubled. But isn't it good news Providence, that the weight of all of this was not too much for Jesus' courage? Even though it was sufficient to shake his peace and trouble his heart.

A lot of us, we love Christmas. We love the light of Christmas. We even talk about our Christmas. What are we going to do our Christmas. And I just want you to know something, we have our Christmas because he felt our trouble. Those little words at the beginning of this section, they're not insignificant, their the Son of God would say, "I feel troubled" after he has said, "I'm going to die for the sins of the world." So by way of application, I just want to encourage you, let's draw near to Christ since he drew near to us. Why do I say this? Why is this the application for these little bitty words, these five words at the beginning? You think, "Brian, you have wasted a whole point on the first ... You got all these verses you got to get through and you're stalling on, now is my soul troubled?" That's exactly what I did.

I need you to feel the weight that Jesus felt so that you will run to him. You see, when I see an emotional Jesus, a troubled Jesus, I'm reminded that he's not an ideology, he's not a religious movement, he is a person who took on flesh to feel our trouble, to get into our dark pit and say, "I am your light." I want you to think about this for a second. Don't shout it out. But what's the greatest regret in your life as it relates to your personal sin? Do you think about your life, think about your history and you think, "Okay. If I ..." If there's one thing, like if you could have it one [inaudible 00:18:46] again in life about a particular sin of not committing that, which one would you not do? What I want you to know about that is this, is the Jesus, you can draw near to Jesus even in that and the reason is because he understands.

You see, 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that, "For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin." What that means is this, a lot of pronouns there's this, for our sake, that's us, he, God the Father, made him, God the son to be sin even though he had never sinned. And what that means is this, you can draw near to Jesus because not only is he sympathetic but he's already felt the shame of your worst sin. You say, "We'll this is my worst." It was immorality or it was unfaithfulness or it was idolatry or it was abortion or it was whatever it is. Whatever your sin is, lying, your greatest weight within your heart that maybe no one else knows but God himself. I want you to know so you not only does he know about it and is willing to forgive you for it but Jesus has already felt all the weight that you feel. And so he can sympathize with you.

And that's why Hebrews tells us that, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet, was without sin." So what do we do because we have this high priest? He says, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we might receive mercy and find Grace to help in time of need." You see, this is the hope that you have. And I just want to encourage you as individuals and us, as a church body, make Christ a part of your day. Make him part of your Christmas. We get our Christmas because Jesus felt our trouble.

The second thing I want you to see is why did he do this? So he entered the depths of our darkness. The second thing is, "Jesus entered our darkness to glorify his father." To glorify his father. I love how Jesus models throughout his life everything he instructs us to do in the rest of the New Testament. There's a little verse, it's in Philippians chapter 4 and it talks about what do you do when you feel troubled. He says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but with everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving present your requests to God." And then he says this, "And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

In other words, when you feel troubled, you need to pray. The antidote to anxiety is prayer. It's getting into the presence of God. And so what is the next thing Jesus does. Who does he talk to next? He doesn't talk to Peter or anyone else, he talks to his father. He starts praying and he says, "Father, what should I pray? Save me from this hour? Well, I can't pray that because it's for this purpose that I've come to the Earth. This is the point of the hour." And so this is his petition he says, "Father, glorify your name." It's interesting in the Bible, in the New Testament, there's a few times when God actually answers back audibly from heaven. One was at his baptism, Jesus is baptized and all of a sudden it says that there's a voice boomed out of heaven and it said, "This is my son with whom I am well pleased."

There's another time when he takes three of his buddies, Peter, James, John, they go up on a mountain and all of a sudden he's transfigured. He starts glowing, all of his Earth suit has sort of pulled back and we see the full display of his glory that will be seen in heaven. It says that, "His clothes lit up like the sun."

His face was like as bright as the sun.” And then all of a sudden it says, the two superheroes from the Old Testament showed up, Moses and Elijah, the law-giver and the greatest of prophets. And Peter in this moment, he feels like he needs to talk. I don’t know why but that’s what Peter did. He felt like he had to talk to at the worst times. It was that guy at Christmas dinner. And so here he is, he goes, “You know what? This is a great experience. I’ll tell you what we should do, we should stay here for a long time. So let me build three tents. There’s three of you and there’s three of us and we’ll just kind of tent with you. It will be really cool.” And all of a sudden there’s a voice boomed out of heaven and it said, this is my paraphrase, “Peter, shh.” He says, “Listen to my son.”

And now here’s the third time. Right before he’s about ... This is just a few days now before he’s going to go to the cross and he says, “Father, glorify your name.” And all of a sudden there’s a voice from heaven and it says, “I have glorified it and I will glorify it again.” Well, the people are confused. They think they hear some things ... Well, it was probably thunder because it couldn’t be a voice and other people said, “No, I heard words. There’s like words. I heard syllables and all of that.” And they said, “It must have been an angel speaking to him.” And Jesus comes on and he goes, “Look guys.” He says, “The voice ...” Meaning, let’s not make this any way you know hard or confusing for you to understand. This is not a noise, this is a voice. A voice is connected at one time to a mouth. A mouth is connected to a person, that’s God. God spoke, you just heard God speak. And he says, “The voice does not come from my sake, it’s for your sake.”

Now, think about this for a second. This is important. Jesus says, “God, Father, would you see to it that your name is glorified?” He speaks back and he says, “I have glorified it and I will glorify it again.” And Jesus says that all of this was not for his sake but for our sake. His glory equals our sake. Sometimes we think when we glorify someone else, it’s for their sake. Jesus says, “No, it’s really for your sake.” It’s for our sake, Providence. It’s a beautiful thing when you think about this. I would encourage you don’t let God’s passion for his glory escape you, for his glory brings you grace and truth.

If you remember John chapter 1 verse 14, where we spent a lot of time. It says, “The word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth.” I love illustrations and I try to find one to help you understand what I’m trying to think about, but sometimes it makes me nervous because you can take an illustration the wrong way in particular when you’re thinking about God. And you can make it say things about God that really aren’t true about God. But I’m going to walk out on a plank and hope this will help. How does God’s glory and us, receiving grace and truth help?

Think like a campfire. You have fuel you have wood and there’s a fire and every time you add what you have to the fire, what happens is it gets brighter and warmer. Now, it’s brightness and its warmth, it’s not for its goodness but for ours. It benefits us. So when we spend our lives living for the glory of God, what we find is we actually experience more warmth and more light, more truth and more grace. And this is what Jesus is caring so deeply about.

So you got to ask a question, how would Jesus' death glorify God the Father? Well, the Bible tells us that when we sin against God that God the Father made a promise to send a rescuer to do three specific things. It was really more than that, but our text talks about three answers to three of them. So I'm just going to give you the three.

One of them from Isaiah 32, it actually says that, "The coming Messiah would bring justice and righteousness to the Earth." The second one is that, this one who would come, this savior of the world, this rescuer that he would "crush the head of evil." And the third one that were told is that, "He would build a redeemed people who would be a people of faith, believing in God. It will be a holy people, set apart people." And why is that all important? Well, notice what Jesus says next. Jesus says, "Now is the judgment of the world." What's he talking about there? Justice and righteousness. And now, will the ruler of this world be cast out? Who's he talking about there? He's talking about the presence of evil, that now, this is going to happen. I'm about to go to the cross and when I go to the cross, the head of evil is going to be crushed. And then he says, "And I, when I'm lifted up from the Earth, will draw all people to myself." What is he saying there? He's building a faith community. He's building a family. And this is exactly what we see here.

This is why this glorifies the Father is because Jesus is fulfilling his Father's promises to the world, to do exactly what he said that he would do. When he says, "Now is the judgment of the world." This is amazing because each one of these things, it's for the glory of God but we receive grace and truth because he's willing to actually endure our trouble. So what do these mean? When he says, "Now is the judgment of the world." You have to understand it, when Jesus took on our sin and he took it to the cross that the full display of God's justice was met upon him because he was carrying all of our sin. And that forever changed the final judgment for all of us because now final judgment for all of us, when you stand before God, it's not going to be a measure of scales of righteousness, it's going to be with Jesus, without Jesus. That's it.

If you're with Jesus, you're righteous. If you're without Jesus, you're not. So that's why he says, "Now, the judgment has come." What's about to take place right now will be, it will be the pivot point for the soul of every single person who's ever lived for all eternity. Now is the judgment. And then he says this, "Now, the ruler of this world will be cast out." What does he mean there? If you remember, in fact, we're going to read this very very shortly, next chapter, in chapter 13. That Satan tries to enter into Judas in order to disrupt Jesus and to try to spoil his plans, in essence. It's interesting, the Bible tells us that he failed.

You see, when Jesus took all of our sins to the cross what happened is, Jesus took away the only weapon that Satan has against you and me. And that's a valid accusation about our sin. So you think about a courtroom and Satan, he's bringing accusations against each one of us. That's why the Bible calls him, the accuser. When Jesus took our sins to the cross and we believe in Jesus what that means is this, is that his briefcase as it relates to you is now empty. There's no evidence left because it's all been perfectly and justly taken care of by the death of Jesus Christ.

And the third thing, it says that Jesus is building this community of faith, that when he rises from the dead that people will come and draw near to him. The people from every tribe and tongue and nation will look to Jesus and all of this will honor the word of the Father. Now, this is true of Jesus. It's also true of us. And so by way if application, I want to encourage you, let's worship God and give him all the glory.

When we talk about worshiping the Lord, we did a whole summer series, worship is our joyful response to the work and the worth of Jesus Christ in everything that we do. And it's interesting that the more consistently that we direct our day towards him, when we invest our morning to try to allow him to inform the rest of our day, the more grace and truth we receive from Him, the great fire. And so I just want to encourage you, spend your life, invest your life, invest your Christmas worshiping Jesus.

The last thing is Jesus entered our darkness to rescue those who would believe. You see, here at the end of his public ministry Jesus makes things real simple and he says, "Guys, the light is with you for just a little while longer. While you have the light, believe in the light so that you might become sons of the light." In other words, what he's saying is, "I realize you don't know everything, you still have questions, but you do have enough information of what you must know to believe and be saved so believe." And it says that once he said these things he departed. Now, it's interesting, as you look at Jesus' thesis of his ministry from verse 44 to verse 50, what you see there is he keeps saying, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but Him who sent me." And what's so sad is that the people chose still not to believe.

We read that in verse 37 he says, "Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him." And John wants us to know why they were not believing so his readers would not make the same error. And so he adds the second section from verses 37 to 43 to tell us why they didn't believe. We read it but you noticed there that there was three reasons. Three reasons why they didn't believe, why the caution tape was so wrapped around the human heart that it just kept people, even though they're in darkness, and Jesus is the light, they just can't get there. They can't believe. And some of you may be right there. Why is it?

Well, first if you notice in verse 38, John quotes Isaiah 53:1. You can go in your Bible at some point in time, you can look up Isaiah 53:1 and you'll see the exact same words that you see there in verse 38. What's interesting is Isaiah 53 is the chapter about the messiah who would come and suffer. And the very next to verses say this, it says that, "He had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men." In other words, for people who are expecting a celebrity, powerful messiah, who would build a kingdom on Earth through Jews and who would reestablish the temple and who would remain forever. A suffering, lowly, humble messiah was one that they just couldn't swallow. They just couldn't believe in. And some people today, they looked at Jesus and because he's not a conquering hero from history. He died on the cross. He was humble. They say, "Well, that's not the kind of savior that I need to get out of my darkness."

The second reason you see in verse 40. He quotes again from Isaiah chapter 6 verse 40. And he says that, "He's blinded the eyes and the hearts." And the eyes and hearts and he goes, "Otherwise, I would heal them." Now what's happening in Isaiah chapter 6, when Isaiah chapter 6 is when Isaiah, he goes into the temple and he sees God and his angels. Like he has a vision of God himself and angels are flying around saying, "Holy holy holy is the Lord Almighty. The whole earth is full of his glory." And all of a sudden, he looks at the wholeness of God and he remembers that he's there and he's like, "I'm not holy." So he says, "Woe is me. I'm undone for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among the people of unclean lips." And so God sends an angel to take one of the coals in order to come and touch his lips in order to atone, to purify, symbolically, the sin of his lips and all of a sudden now he's purified and God says, "Now, who's going to go forward with this message of my holiness?"

And Isaiah goes, "Well, I'll go. Send me." And God responds to Isaiah and he says, "You're going to go and you're going to spend the next 60 years of your life telling the message of my holiness. And I want you to know something Isaiah, people are not going to believe you."

And this is what John quotes for us. Right here is the second reason. Some people look at Jesus and they see a lowly messiah and they think, "I can't worship that." Some people see a Holy Messiah and rightly concluded that Holy Messiah is going to cause them to repent of sin that they love and they say, "I can't follow that either." Then there's a third. We're told in verse 42 that some of the authorities believe but they wouldn't do anything with their belief for fear that they would be thrown out of the synagogue and then he tells us the motive he says, "For they love the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God." so some people reject Christ because he's lowly. Some people reject Christ because he's holy. And some people reject Christ because he's an interruption to their self love. And I would just beg you this Christmas by way application, let's trust Christ with the truth that we do have.

Some of you maybe have not yet trusted Christ and you look at this and you think, "Well, I still have questions." We want to help you answer those questions but let me tell you something there is a real possibility that your time here on Earth will be exhausted before all your questions are answered. And there is a time when light is here and you have a moment in time to trust Christ and I would just plead with you, maybe not act and what you don't know, but act and what you do. Believe in Jesus Christ. This morning we get the privilege of hearing a story in baptism. God saved a woman named Heidi. And she's believed in Jesus Christ and we have the opportunity now to see and witness the baptism of someone who's believe in Jesus with what she knows. So [David 00:37:24]?

Dave Owen: Good morning to you Providence. Brian said, it is such a joy when people believe this gospel. God opens their eyes and they're able to see their sin for what it's worth and for Jesus, for what he's worth. And this morning we've got the great joy to meet Heidi [inaudible 00:37:47].

Heidi, Kevin, Taylor became our neighbors about three years ago. They moved into our neighborhood and had the opportunity to invite them over to our Fall Festival and just hung out for a little bit and then they're from Wisconsin, which it feels it's Wisconsin. We're in Wisconsin outside right now, but from up there, in the cold land and has been down here for some time. They've had the opportunity to really get engaged with Starting Point. That's a life group that we have here, that help many. Maybe some of you where you are, asked questions, good questions about the reality of God and who he is and how to trust him and through that and through a class that ... A group that follows that called Follow, she came to a point of just surrendering.

I really appreciate it, Heidi, the way you said it. There's a lot of times when things are going well that we follow God and or maybe we think it's going so well that we don't draw near to him and then when it gets really bad we run to God. And Heidi, I was really encourage just how God opened your eyes to that truth in your own life, that when things are going good, you actually are running to him some. And then when it went bad, you wanted to control that and take take that and kind of try to fix it yourself. And as study the scriptures and saw how Christ actually wants all of it, it was just a sweet joy to see God do that in your heart.

So this morning, it's our joy to celebrate and your life group's back there at the back. They're waving at you. And it's our joy to be able to ... It's my joy, not only as your neighbor but also as your brother in Christ to baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All praise to God. Let's pray together. Father, we give you thanks today for your kindness to us, to your goodness to us. Thank you that we know this water has no saving power, it's the blood of Jesus to save us. And this is what Heidi's trusted in. And so God I pray that you would encourage her. Isaiah saw vision of you that sustained him for many years, that you would continue to sustain and endure her faith and to grow her deeper and love for you and for your church, for the family. And thank you for Kevin and for Taylor and their family, being a part of this family.

Father, I pray that this Christmas season, as she has, in a sense, expressed what you've done in her heart publicly, God, this Christmas could be just a sweeter one than in the past, to be able to really contemplate all that you've done in saving her. And God, we pray for those that are here today, that if any there are any of them that were pondering, maybe wondering of what would be said, if they were standing here, that you would stir their hearts to believe. God, we pray by your spirit as we've heard from your word, that you would open eyes to see the greatness of Christ and we pray in his name, amen.



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