

During the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia, who lived about 550 years before Christ, there was a tribal chief named Cagular who constantly harassed the Persian army. Exasperated by the havoc Cagular was creating, Cyrus dispatched his forces to capture this notorious rebel so he could eliminate the problem. Not only would he kill Cagular, but his family as well. The rebel leader was soon captured and he and his family were brought before the king. Then the king addressed Cagular in a way he never expected, *“Cagular, if I were to change my mind and spare your life, what would you do?”* Cagular replied, *“King, if you chose not to kill me, I would serve you the rest of my days.”* King Cyrus pondered on this response and then asked, *“What would you do if I spared the life of your wife and children?”* Cagular declared, *“Your Majesty, if you spared my family, I would die for you.”* This moved Cyrus so much that he decided to pardon the condemned rebel and put him in charge of his troops along the southern border. As Cagular walked home with his family he talked about the beauty of the palace – the marble floors and the golden statues. He asked his wife, *“Did you see all that?”* She softly responded, *“No, I haven’t noticed any of that. All I have noticed was the face of a man who was willing to die for his family.”*

About 580 years later there was a Man Who died on the cross not just for family, but for the whole world; He even died for His enemies. We can think that when He, His Father and the Holy Spirit had a conference in heaven about the lost state of the world, He said, *“Father, I would lay down my life for them.”* That came into reality on the Good Friday. Jesus never tried to preserve His life; He gave it up willingly. Do we truly comprehend the meaning of what He said, ***“I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”***? He was hoping that the people He addressed would comprehend the essence of those words. What was it Jesus wanted them to know? *“There will come a fruitful harvest from the cross after the Son of Man laid down His life. His body will go into the ground, but be brought back to bring life in abundance.”*

There are 2 thoughts from John 12: 19-33 this morning. The first is – **1 Our World Needs Salvation; Not Miracles.** In **verse 19** the Pharisees made the observation: ***“Look how the whole world has gone after Him!”*** Why was the whole world going after Jesus? Note that the Pharisees spoke those words when the crowds flocked to Jesus after He raised Lazarus from the dead. Because He gave them what they thought were the essential things in life, they followed Him – food, healing, physical life. He spoke the word and things happened – demons departed, dead bodies came back to life, leprosy disappeared before the eyes of people. And don’t forget the bread and fish He could turn into abundance. With the Miracle Man no one could ever go wrong. And then some Greeks showed up and they wanted to match up the knowledge they carried around with them. Some people told them about this Jesus and they wanted to see Him for themselves. They were willing to learn from Jesus to enhance their knowledge. From **verses 21** and **22** we hear, ***“They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “We would like to see Jesus.” Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.”*** The response Jesus gave wasn’t like what we see and hear in our world. People get carried away with a trend or movement. They can’t get enough of what the world is willing to

give for the here and now. But Jesus' movement wasn't about miracles for the moment. It wasn't to draw more people, because of what He could do – to bring lifeless bodies back to life, bringing forth food for thousands from a few loaves of bread. No, His movement was about salvation. Instead of Him going and tell those Greeks, *"I'm going to show you some miracles so that you can believe"* He said, ***"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."*** **John 12: 23** Up to this point when Jesus had spoken of *"His hour"* it has always been in the future tense. In **chapter 2:4** he told Mary, ***"My hour has not yet come."*** But now His hour was here – Jesus was fully aware that the predestined time came for His glorification through death. He had to be glorified on the cross in order for those Greeks to be saved. But then my friends, long after those Greeks there are still thousands of people around the world who seek the wrong Jesus? They seek the super natural Jesus to pull off those miracles that can change their lives. And when it doesn't happen they say, *"Jesus couldn't make a difference for me; don't get deceived by what others say about Him."* But our Lord's voice rings out as far as the world reaches, *"The kernel of wheat had already gone into the ground; it had already died to bring life once and for all – life that will last!"* The cross of Calvary tells us again as we journey through Lent – the death of One, brought life for many. The harvest of the cross brought you and me a new beginning. We can write the words of **Romans 8 verses 1 and 2** over our lives, ***"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."*** Can you truly say, *"Those words apply to me personally"?*

There is a second thought from John 12: 19-33 – **2 You Will Reap The Fruits Of Your Labour.** We read in **verse 26**, ***"Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me."*** It's a part of our human nature to ask, *"What's in it for me? Why am I even committing myself to the cause of Jesus?"* And then the rock solid answer comes. It's the same answer He gave His disciples, ***"Great is your reward in heaven."*** There is something we have to appreciate – we do not gather accolades as we go along in God's service; there is no self gain on the path we follow Jesus on. But my friends, for us is in store the crown of righteousness St. Paul rejoiced about – the crown of righteousness He was going to receive after his earthly life came to an end. And then he added, ***"...and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."*** A young girl visited her mother in hospital who was dying from a disease doctors didn't have a cure for. The girl said with tears in her eyes, *"You have done only good in your life, but never had anything to show for it."* Her mother replied, *"Soon in the presence of God, I will be rewarded. That's enough for me."* Is it enough for you and me to hear Jesus say, ***"...and where I am, my servant also will be?"*** But then God says, *"There is more I will reward you with."* What is this reward? To look back and see the fruit on our work in His service. Peter, John, James and the others looked back and saw the expansion of the church after the day of the Pentecost; missionaries who started small outreaches, looked back years later and couldn't believe the growth God made possible. Every single person here and at home this morning has something to look back upon and see the reward. From Jesus our Lord, it started and it will continue till the time He will return. Be a part of His harvest – live for the harvest of the cross. Amen.

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