

“An Invitation to Fruitful Dying”

Palm Sunday 2024

March 24, 2024

INTRO ...Thoughts from Kanye West on his Jesus

“The 46-year-old turned heads in 2019 when he announced that he had committed his life to Jesus. He told Adam Tyson, ‘I’ve been radically saved. I believe [the gospel] message and I want to get that message out to the world.’ ...When the 24-time Grammy Award winner was asked if he still considered himself a man of God in spite of his return to the style of his pre-Christian days, he said, ‘I have my issues with Jesus.’ ‘There’s a lot of stuff I went through that I prayed [about] and I didn’t see Jesus show up,’ **Jesse Jackson**, ‘*I Have My Issues with Jesus—Kanye West Calls Out God for Not Answering Prayers* Churchleaders.com, March 20, 2024

John 12:12-18 *The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” ¹⁴ And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,*

*¹⁵ “Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey's colt!”*

¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. ¹⁷ The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. ¹⁸ The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.

...v. 18 *“The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.”*

? — **What Reason did You Have to “Check Out Jesus”?**

TAKE NOTE: The “Reasons” that Drove You to Consider Jesus Might Be the “Force” Behind Your Following Him—RATHER THAN Who He is and What He Has to Offer!

The Problem with “Seekers”

- **“CROWDS” have thoughts, hopes, expectations...**

v. 13 ... *“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”* ...Some kind of thoughts, hopes, expectations

v. 18 ... *“The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.”*

...They Were Looking for a “Sign” Related to the KIND of SAVIOR they had Manufactured!! (out of the Little Territory of Their Life Experiences)

John 2:18-19 *So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”*

Matthew 12:38-40 *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” ³⁹ But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

1 Corinthians 1:22-24 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

...I could be looking for a "Savior" that answers to my list of "Signs" or my little collection of "Wisdom" ...But THE CHRIST is a Savior who travels through DEATH ...and He Invites us to Follow Him!

John 12:31-34 Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³ He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. ³⁴ 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 this Son of Man?"

...This is what Peter seems to think as well ...

Matthew 16:21-23 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third ²² day be raised. ²³ And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Crowds ...have "something they have heard" ...Crowds know something of "A CHRIST"—a Savior Type Figure! —& Something from Which to be SAVED!

- **"DISCIPLES" have thoughts, hopes, expectations...**

Matthew 20:17-21 And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, ¹⁸ "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death ¹⁹ and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day."

²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. ²¹ And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom."

...What kind of Savior were they looking for?

Acts 1:6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

...Crowds and Even Some Disciples Can Show Up at Holy Week ...with their Own Hopes, Expectations, & Thoughts!

"There is no doubt that Evangelicalism today is in a state of perplexity and unsettlement. In such matters as the practice of evangelism, the teaching of holiness, the building up of local church life, the pastor's dealing with souls and the exercise of discipline, there is evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with things as they are and of equally widespread uncertainty as to the road ahead. This is a complex phenomenon, to which many factors have contributed; but, if we go to the root of the matter, we shall find that these perplexities are all ultimately due to our having lost our grip on the biblical gospel. Without realising it, we have during the past century bartered that gospel for a substitute product which, though it looks similar enough in points of detail, is as a whole a decidedly different thing. Hence our troubles; for the substitute product does not answer the ends for which the authentic gospel has in past days proved itself so mighty. The new gospel conspicuously fails to produce deep reverence, deep repentance, deep humility, a spirit of worship, a concern for the church. Why? We would suggest that the reason lies in its own character and content. It fails to make men God-centred in their thoughts and God-fearing in their hearts because this is not primarily what it is trying to do.

One way of stating the difference between it and the old gospel is to say that it is too exclusively concerned to be "helpful" to man— to bring peace, comfort, happiness, satisfaction— and too little concerned to glorify God. The old gospel was "helpful," too— more so, indeed, than is the new— but (so to speak) incidentally, for its first concern was always to give glory to God. It was always and essentially a proclamation of Divine sovereignty in mercy and judgment, a summons to bow down and worship the mighty Lord on whom man depends for all good, both in nature and in grace. Its centre of reference was unambiguously God. But in the new gospel the centre of reference is man. ...Whereas the chief aim of the old was to teach men to worship God, the concern of the new seems limited to making them feel better. The subject of the old gospel was God and His ways with men; the subject of the new is man and the help God gives him. There is a world of difference. The whole perspective and emphasis of gospel preaching has changed. From this change of interest has sprung a change of content, for the new gospel has in effect reformulated the biblical message in the supposed interests of "helpfulness." **J.I. Packer** (from the introductory Essay to John Owen's *The Death of Christ*)

The Invitation of the Savior

How Does Jesus Invite Followers? ...He Issues an Invitation to Fruitful Dying

John 12:20-26 *Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹ So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*

...More "seekers" of Jesus—They too are coming with "Thoughts, Hopes, & Expectations"!! ...What Do They Learn about This Jesus? ...That there is some "Ultimate Hour" that Uniquely Reveals Who He Is!!

John 12:27-28 *"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name."*

Jesus proclaims that the Most Valuable Thing in All of His Life is to GLORIFY God by Fulfilling His Purpose!

...THEN—He Transfers THAT Mindset to Us!!

John 12:23-26 *And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*

"That is the truth about Jesus that he reveals to the Greeks. But now it also becomes a truth about them—and about us. Jesus' self-revelation is always a confrontation. He says in verses 25 and 26: my dying for your salvation is also my design for your imitation. If you want to see me, be prepared to become like me. This is what happens. Do you mean it: "We wish to see Jesus"? Do we mean it this morning? Jesus says, If you mean it—if you want to see me—prepare to become like me. Prepare to follow me on the road I am going." **John Piper**, "Dying as a Means of Loving"

Luke 9:23-24 *And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.*

Philippians 2:5-9 *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,*

It's Holy Week! ...the Orbital Center of Our Solar System of Life! ...At the Center of the Human Drama is a SAVIOR!
—and Holy Week is the Great Moment We've All Been Waiting for!!

...BUT... Don't Just See the "Events" of Holy Week—See Their "Treasured-at-all-Cost" Value!!

"We were made to know and treasure the glory of God above all things; and when we trade that treasure for images, everything is disordered. The sun of God's glory was made to shine at the center of the solar system of our soul. And when it does, all the planets of our life are held in their proper orbit. But when the sun is displaced, everything flies apart. The healing of the soul begins by restoring the glory of God to its flaming, all-attracting place at the center." **John Piper**, "Seeing and Savoring Christ", p. 15

...This is the call to being a disciple!