

The Lord's Death

(A Study of the Gospel of John; Message #45)

(John 11:45-54)

A. Jesus saw people enslaved by their fear of an insidious power...

B. John underscores the significance of Jesus' death - even before His death

THE ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

A. Note the first breakthrough

Then many of the Judeans, who had come with Mary and saw what Jesus did, believed into him." (11:45)

1. The conclusion - that "many" believed - is encouraging
2. This should encourage people to come to Jesus (as Mary did in Bethany)

B. Note the first message

"Some of them went back to the serious and told them what Jesus had done" (11:46)

1. This report could be considered malicious; (or) it could also be evangelical
2. The amazing news of a resurrection is neither minor nor necessarily hostile

C. Note the first reaction

"So the senior pastors and the serious gathered in council and were saying, 'What are we doing just sitting here? Look, this man is clearly doing a lot of signs'" (11:47)

1. The Council admits that all these signs Jesus is doing are impressive
2. Since when does voting or the majority determine Truth?
3. Notice how close the Council is to faith and to truth

D. Note the first rationalization

"If we just leave him alone, everybody's going to start believing in him, and then the Romans are going to come in and wipe out our own place and our nation as well." (11:48)

1. The conclusion here doesn't necessary follow the premise
2. Their argument is more justification for their malice than analysis of the facts
3. Vested interests (usually) affect one's perception of the Truth
4. People often believe things that are simply not true

CAIAPHAS' PROPHECY

A. Caiaphas' [accidental] prophecy is a great statement of Christian doctrine

Hasn't it entered your heads that the best thing that could ever happen to you is for one man to die in the place of the people, instead of the whole nation being destroyed?' (11:49-52)

1. Caiaphas defines the doctrine of "substitutionary atonement" - Jesus' sacrificial death where he dies in our place...

2. We express it when we celebrate the Lord's Supper: "broken for you"

B. Caiaphas's "common sense" and its consequence - Christ's execution - is divinely used to for provide the salvation of the world

1. John notes Caiaphas' [unintentional] prophecy was actually from God

2. Christ's cross will be both blotter and magnet, both to wipe out and to attract

C. John wants this doctrine of atonement in front of his passion chapters to put Jesus' cross in proper perspective

"For the son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

"This is my body, broken for you; this is my blood, shed for you and for many..." (John 6:52-59)

THE LEADER'S PLOT

"So from that day forward they were making plans to execute him." (John 11:53)

A. Ironically, the religious leaders begin to plot the death of the person, who in Lazarus's resurrection, has just shown to have power over death

1. They had the data; they knew the Scriptures; they witnessed the miracles...
2. They still made the wrong decision

B. The purpose of Jesus' coming is now at hand; but first, a respite

"So Jesus no longer walked around openly among the Judeans but left there for rural country near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and he stayed there with the disciples." (11:54)

1. He went to Ephraim because God's timing must be right...
2. If we're not regularly reflecting on our walk with God; we don't know him

C. The miracle of Lazarus' resurrection wasn't enough...

1. Jesus submitted to death - even death on a cross - and came out on the other side of triumphant and victorious...
2. It is a victory worth celebrating