

JOHN 12:44-50
THE LAST CALL!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 12 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

As we have seen in our study here in John chapter 12, we are only a few days away from Jesus going to the cross of Calvary.

His whole life was focused on this work that He was to do, to be the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world!

And for the Jews, this was a foreign concept to them. Not because the Scriptures didn't teach them, but they were so focused on fulfilling the Law and the Law could never take away your sins and neither could the sacrifices of bulls and goats!

Only Jesus could do that and in the Old Testament, what the Bible tells us regarding what God has done with our sin, is amazing.

Let me show you what I mean.

We are told in Psalm 103:12 we are told, "**As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.**"

That is an amazing statement, like I have said. If David would have said that God has removed our transgressions as far as the north is from the south, that would not be good!

You see, the distance between the north pole and the south pole is 12,436.12 miles. In other words, the north and south do meet. And when you travel from the south pole up to the north pole, as soon as you get to the top and you start heading down, you are now traveling south.

But that is not what David said. He said that God casts our transgressions as far as the east is from the west.

Guess what? The east and west never meet!

Think about it. You are traveling east around the world, and you will continue to go east no matter how far you go, no matter how many times you go around the earth. The east and the west don't meet!

What does that mean to us?

Listen to what we are told in Isaiah 43:25, "**I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.**"

Praise God for that!

Now if that is not good enough for you, listen to how Micah puts this. He wrote in Micah 7:19, "**He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.**"

In other words, God has cast all our sins into the depth of the sea with the idea that we are not to go fishing for them. They were all paid in full by Jesus on the cross of Calvary!

And yes, Jesus paid for all the sins of the world, but if you don't receive that gift of life that is found in Jesus, if you do not repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life, you are on the wrong train and you are headed for destruction.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

The doubleheader train was bucking a heavy snowstorm as its engines pulled it west.

A woman with a baby wanted to leave the train at one of the little stations along the route. She repeatedly called, "***Don't forget me!***" to the brakeman responsible to call out the stations they approached.

And at this stop her husband was to meet her.

The brakeman assured the woman that he would let her know when she was to get off and it was the next stop.

A short time later the train slowed to a stop, and a fellow traveler said, "***Here's your station.***" She hopped from the train into the storm. The train moved on again.

Then, some forty-five minutes later, the brakeman came in and said, "***Where's the woman?***"

"She got off at the last stop," the traveler said

"Then she got off to her death," the brakeman responded, "***We stopped only because there was something wrong with the engine.***"

They called for volunteers to go back and search for the woman and child.

When they found her, she was covered with ice and snow. The little boy was protected on her breast. She had followed the man's directions, but they were wrong-dead wrong.

Paul declares Christ is the one Mediator between man and God.

Peter emphasizes there is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved.

The Lord Jesus is our only Authority. His blood has made atonement for our sin.

Only He can tell us how to reach our final destination!

Depend on the one who has experienced death and provided redemption for you, the One who will walk with you through the valley of the shadow of death.

- Source Unknown

What a tragic story and yet, how many people do that today with their faith. They listen to this person and that person and when the time comes for them to get off the train, it is at the wrong station, and they are doomed for eternity because they have not listened to the Conductor, they have not listened to Jesus Christ and what He has said, “**. . . ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’**” John 14:6.

Now, in our study this morning, we are going to see Jesus teaching the people one last time before going to the cross of Calvary.

Yes, He will continue to teach His men, but His public ministry has come to an end and thus, I have called this study – ***THE LAST CALL!***

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into three main points. They are,

A CALL TO COME – JOHN 12:44-46

CONSEQUENCES OF NOT COMING – JOHN 12:47-48

A CALL TO OBEDIENCE – JOHN 12:49-50

So with that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in John chapter 12, beginning in verse 44 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and we look at this topic – ***THE LAST CALL!***

JOHN 12**VERSES 44-46**

Remember what we read last time in John 12:42-43 as Jesus condemned the nation for rejecting Him. We are told, **“Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”**

Men like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were men who feared to proclaim their love for Jesus, they were secret agent Christians you might say. That is until after the death of Jesus and then they came out of the closet you might say, and everyone knew the love they had for Jesus!

But for many, they are kept out of the Kingdom of God because they don't want to lose friends, they don't want to lose their position at work, they don't want to because of all kinds of reasons and in the end, they will be getting off on the wrong stop and headed for hell!

Keep in mind that what we see here is the last public address of Jesus. His focus now will be his men as we are only days away from the cross of Calvary, as I have said!

And it is interesting because John tells us that **“... Jesus cried out and said ...”** John 12:44.

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, **“But Jesus loudly declared ...”**

And The Living Bible says, **“Jesus shouted to the crowds ...”**

Why did Jesus cry out or shout loudly at this time? We really don't see this during His earthly ministry, except here. So why now?

Because of the importance of the message and the urgency of the message! You see, judgment was coming and if they continued to reject Jesus, they sealed their fate, they were getting off the train at the wrong stop and they were heading for destruction.

Now some may say that I am exaggerating here, but I am not. This is not an overstatement on my part.

Look at what took place. Within thirty-eight years of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the rejection of Jesus by the nation of Israel, judgment came down upon them and it came down hard.

In 70 A. D. Titus and the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem, they destroyed the Temple, and millions of Jews were murdered by the Romans!

Let me give you this description of what took place. We are told,

On August 10, 70 A.D. (the 9th of the Jewish month of Av), according to Jewish chronology, the very day when the King of Babylon burned Solomon's Temple in 586 B.C., the newly renovated Temple of Herod was burned by the Roman general.

Titus, following a Jewish revolt that began a few years earlier, in 66. After months of siege about the city, Titus took the city on this date and put it to the torch, burning the Temple, leaving not one stone upon another.

With the destruction of Jerusalem, the prophecy of Jesus that one stone would not be left upon another was fulfilled. The gold of the Temple melted when the Temple itself was burned and flowed into the cracks between stone pavers. Soldiers tore the stones apart to retrieve the gold, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy. The Menorah and other vessels of the Temple were taken to Rome and the treasury robbed.

You see, it wasn't that they didn't know these things. It wasn't that Jesus never spoke of who He is and the coming judgment because of their rejection of Him. They knew and yet they did not do anything about it!

Remember what I have called these verses – ***A CALL TO COME!***

And the first thing Jesus wants them to understand is the unity that He has with God the Father.

But it almost sounds like we are not to believe on Jesus and just believe in God the Father. Is that true?

No, it is not!

Let me give you just a few verses that show Jesus saying we must believe in Him and also, we will look at what Paul had to say about Jesus in regard to our salvation.

The first one, and I am sure we all know it, is John 3:16, where Jesus said, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whoever believes in Him* should not perish but have everlasting life.”**

Then, in John 14:1 Jesus said, **“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, *believe also in Me.*”**

And in Acts 16:31 Paul said to the Philippian jailer in regard to what he must do to be saved, **“... ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’”**

If that is true, and it is, then what is Jesus saying here in John 12:44, **“... ‘He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.’”**

What is the point?

I think the point that Jesus is making is this.

He and God the Father are one. And Jesus came to do the will of the Father. So if you believe what God the Father is saying, as He is speaking of Jesus being the Savior, then you are also believing in Jesus!

We see God the Father testify of Jesus and the work that He is to do. We see God the Father testify that Jesus is God. So, again, if you believe what God the Father is saying then you will believe in Jesus.

Now you may be wondering where God the Father speaks of Jesus like that. Let me give you a few examples.

First of all, in John 5:37-38 we are told by Jesus, **“And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.”**

Do you see how believing what God the Father has said is linked to believing in Jesus! They go hand in hand!

Also, in Matthew 3:16-17 we are told, **“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”**

Here we see God the Father acknowledge that Jesus is Almighty God, and that God the Father is well pleased with Him. So, to agree with God the Father is to believe in Jesus!

And on the Mount of Transfiguration, we once again see God the Father speak. We are told in Matthew 17:5, **“While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’”**

I think that is very clear, unless you don’t want to believe in Jesus like the Jewish religious leaders. They had all the evidence, they just refused to believe, and many do that today!

And in John 12:45 Jesus said, **“And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.”**

Again, stressing the unity that they had together.

In John 14:8 listen to the question that Phillip asks Jesus, **“Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’”**

And Jesus’ response went like this, **“Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.”** John 14:9-11.

Jesus tells Philip, **“... He who has seen Me has seen the Father ...”**

In other words, if you want to know what the Father is all about, look to Jesus, He is the perfect representation of the Father! To know Jesus is to know God the Father!

In fact, in Revelation 1:5 we are told that Jesus is **“the faithful witness”** of the Father.

Also, in Hebrews 1:1-3 Paul tells us, **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the *express image of His person*, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”**

Paul tells us here in Hebrews that He is **“the express image of His person”** or that He is an exact likeness to God the Father. In other words, Jesus is God!

As clear as that is I think the Greek makes it even clearer to us.

First of all, the Greek word for **“express image”** is CHARAKTER, (khar-ak-tare’) and this word is used *“of an engraver, one who mints coins, a graving tool, a die, a stamp, a branding iron, a mark engraved, an impress, a stamp on coins and seals.”*

In other words, Jesus Christ is the exact imprint or image of God the Father in His essence or core, His attributes and His character. The idea is of an exact likeness as made by a stamp. Jesus exactly represents God to us because Jesus is God!

Paul put it like this in Colossians 2:9, **“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”**

If you want to know what the Godhead is all about, not just God the Father, then look to Jesus!

And please understand, we are not talking about three Gods, but One God manifested in three distinct persons!

And lastly, Jesus tells us in John 12:46, **“I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.”**

Think about that for a minute. The world was in darkness until Jesus pierced that darkness with His light. But they did not like the light because the light exposed their darkness and thus, they tried to put out the light, extinguish the light!

Look at our nation and look at our world today. It is a very dark place and yet, Jesus said that we are the light of the world in Matthew 5:14.

How can that be if Jesus is the light of the world?

Because, as Christians, we have the light of God indwelling us and it is His light that shines upon our hearts and then from our lives outward to expel the darkness!

It is easy to complain about the darkness, but what are we doing about it? Are we shining for Jesus? Are we turning on the light you might say? Or are we like the world complaining about this and complaining about that?

You get the idea.

How did Jesus live? He had compassion on people. He ministered to them. He told them what they needed to hear but not always what they liked. He loved people so much that He was willing to die for them!

How about you? When people look at your life do they see the love of Christ flowing from it? They should because we are the light of the world!

And yet, many times we hide our light, or our light is dim. We don't want to take the time to just shine for Jesus in this dark world!

Let me show you that we have no excuse not to shine. We are told,

There is a story of an Atlantic passenger lying in his bunk in a storm. He was deathly sick-seasick.

Then he heard a cry of, "***Man overboard!***"

As he lay in his bed seasick, the passenger thought, ***“God help the poor fellow. There is nothing I can do.”***

Then he thought at least he could put his lantern in the porthole, which he did.

And believe it or not, the man was rescued

Recounting this story the next day, he said, ***“I was going down in the darkness for the last time when someone put a light in a porthole It shone on my hand, and a sailor in a lifeboat grabbed my hand and pulled me in.”***

Make no mistake about it, weakness is no excuse for our not putting forth all the little strength we have, and who can tell how God will use it?

- Source Unknown

People today do not have to abide in darkness. They can come to the light of Christ but like a lighthouse, we must let our light shine so they can see Jesus!

Look at what we have seen here as we looked at - ***A CALL TO COME!***

We have seen that Jesus and God the Father are one in nature. Thus, to believe in God the Father you will believe in Jesus Christ because that is who God the Father is testifying of.

We have seen that if you have seen Jesus, you have seen God the Father!

And now, we have seen that Jesus is the light of the world and if you are walking in darkness, not knowing where you are going, you don't have to be in darkness any longer. You can come to the light of Christ and walk in His light.

And for those who have come to Jesus, you are the light of the world now, shining the light of Christ in this dark world.

That is what John told us back in John 1:9, “**That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.**”

The Amplified Bible puts John 1:9 like this, “**There it was - the true Light [was then] coming into the world [the genuine, perfect, steadfast Light] that illumines every person. [Isa 49:6.]**”

The Living Bible puts John 1:9 like this, “**Later on, the one who is the true Light arrived to shine on everyone coming into the world.**”

Let me say this. The light of God was always there, it was just covered by the darkness of sinful man, they couldn't see God and they did not want to see God.

But now, in the Person of Jesus Christ, the glory of God was shining in this dark world and that light was to touch every person on this planet. That does not mean every person is saved, but they have the ability to be saved, it is a choice on their part if they want to harden their hearts to God or receive Him into their lives!

Also, Paul reminds us in Colossians 1:13-14 what God has done in our lives. He wrote, “**He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**”

This word “**delivered**” speaks of being “*rescued from danger.*”

That is perfect and that is what God has done. The danger of Satan destroying our lives He has rescued us from!

And then he speaks that he has “**translated us**” or the idea here is the deportation of a population from one country to another!

He has taken us out of the power of darkness and has moved us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love! We went from the Kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light!

How did He do this?

He tells us that God has redeemed us and the Greek word that Paul uses here, *APOLUTROSIS*, speaks of a man going into the agora to purchase a slave for the purpose of setting him free totally and completely never to be a slave again!

Think about that! He has purchased us out of slavery never to be a slave to Satan, to sin, the world ever again. Praise God for that!

And because God dwells in us, it is His light that shines through us!

The invitation is there for all to come to Him, to come to the light so that you do not walk in darkness any longer!

As we read on, we are going to see the – *CONSEQUENCES OF NOT COMING!*

VERSES 47-48

Why did Jesus come into this world?

Jesus came into this world to save us from the consequences of sin by paying in full the penalty for our sin.

But if we reject Him, the ultimate outcome will be judgment.

You see, God's Word is clear and understandable, so much so that a child can understand it.

So if you reject the Word of God, you reject Jesus and all that He has said and done! His Word will put you to silence in judgment, you won't have anything to say!

You see, the Word of God can bring forth life or it can bring forth death. It all depends on how you receive it, if you receive it into your life.

Why is that?

Because the Word of God testifies of Jesus and if you don't receive His gift of life, salvation, then you will be judged according to your sins!

Peter said in I Peter 1:23-25, **“having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because ‘All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever.’ Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”**

Also, as Paul said in Hebrews 1:1-3, **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”**

Thus, listen to the voice of Jesus, believe in Him and you shall be saved!

Again, Jesus is speaking to the Jewish people, and the Jewish religious leaders.

And remember what John said of them back in John 12:40 as he quotes out of Isaiah, **“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.”**

They rejected the light. They refused to come to the light. Their hearts were so hard-hearted, their ears were dull of hearing that what Jesus spoke to them, they could not comprehend.

I guess I should say that it wasn't that they could not understand, they choose not to understand, and God gave them what they wanted. What a sad state to be in!

Now this is interesting here in John 12:47, as Jesus says that **“... I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.”**

And yet, in John 5:22 Jesus said, **“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.”**

So which is it?

Did Jesus come to judge the world or to save the world?

I think you know the answer to that. He came to do both.

The first time He came to save the world and we see that in John 3:16-17, as Jesus said, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

As I have said, at His first coming Jesus did not come to judge the world and send people to Hell.

You might say that He was on a search and rescue mission to save man who was already condemned by his sin.

That is what Jesus is saying here in John chapter 3. He did not come to condemn us because we did not need more condemnation, but we needed a Savior!

In Luke 19:10 we are told, **“for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”**

Now I am sure you have heard this before and maybe you have even said it before you were saved. What I am talking about is that sinful man thinks he is good. And when they die, they believe that they will talk with God and explain to God all the good that they have done.

Yes, not perfect, but not bad enough to go to Hell!

When you die it is not a court date where you explain your case before the Judge of the whole earth. It is a sentencing date where you will be sentenced to Hell at the Great White Throne Judgment. And, until that time, you are going to wait for this day in Hades.

But like Jesus said, we are already condemned and if you are already condemned, how can you rectify that problem. In a sense, how to you become un-condemned?

You can't!

One writer put it like this. He wrote, ***"Why will sinners not come into the 'light of life'? Because they love the darkness! They want to persist in their evil deeds, and this keeps them from coming to the light; for the closer the sinner gets to the light, the more his sins are exposed."***

That is what Jesus said in John 3:19-20, **"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."**

That is the problem. They love the darkness, they love the sin that they are in and thus, they refuse the light of God in their lives!

And Jesus is coming again to judge the world that has rejected Him!

Another writer put it like this as he wrote, *“Jesus was the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. He died for the sins of all the world. But do men love Him for this? No - they resent Him. They prefer their sins to having Jesus as Savior, and so they reject Him. Just as some creeping things scurry away from the light, so wicked men flee from the presence of Christ. Those who love sin hate the light, because the light exposes their sinfulness. When Jesus was here in the world, sinful men were made uncomfortable by His presence because He revealed their awful condition by His own holiness. The best way to reveal the crookedness of one stick is to place a straight stick beside it. Coming into the world as a Perfect Man, the Lord Jesus revealed the crookedness of all other men, by comparison.”*

I think you can see why people hate Christians so much. As we are with them, as we shine, it shows their crookedness, and they don't like it. Now, granted, we are not perfect, but even with that, we stand for righteousness, and they don't like the light and they will try to put it out!

Keep in mind that we are still in the day of grace where God is offering eternal life in heaven to all who will believe in Jesus and receive Him as their Lord and Savior.

But, for these Jewish people, they were totally oblivious to the fact that judgment was coming.

The tragedy was that Jesus came to save them from the coming judgment, yes, the judgment that was coming from the Romans but ultimately the final judgment.

Thus, He is pleading with them to come to Him and receive Him as their Savior so that He could save them from what was coming!

Let me share this with you and you will see how deceptive sin is and it may look good but, in the end, it will destroy you.

We are told,

A fellow decided to rob a convenience store clerk.

The robber had a neat plan to give the clerk a \$10 bill, get her to open her cash drawer to make change, and then grab all the money.

The plan worked! He got everything in her cash drawer. The total amount of money that was in the draw was only \$4.34!

Keep in mind that he left the clerk with his \$10 bill.

That meant that he robbed the place and in doing so he went in the hole to the tune of \$5.66!

The undeniable truth is that sin never gives what it promises. It always returns less than the sinner invests in self-esteem, integrity, and spiritual security.

Want proof?

- Adam and Eve were promised freedom, wisdom and life by Satan, only to be led to commit spiritual suicide.
- Sensuous Samson fell in love with a woman who did not love God, and he paid with his eyesight, freedom and life.
- Ananias and Sapphira were going to get credit for being generous and wound up being buried for being liars.

In each of these cases, sin promised something it could never deliver.

The same thing is still happening in our world today.

- Adolescents are led to see God, their parents, and their teachers as enemies and wind up in rebellion's deep pit.

- People date and marry without taking into account that the spiritual element is the critical part of a relationship.
- Some church members hide behind masks and fool themselves and their friends, but not God.

Sin costs too much. You have to sell your soul to have whatever pretty trinkets it offers you for the moment.

Then you have to face a time of bitter reckoning. You have to ***“pay the piper.”***

Yet whatever had been promised to you as a reward has already gone up in a puff of smoke or has slipped through your fingers!

And Judgment Day is coming! The basic lure of sin is the promise of quick gain, without regard to long-term consequences.

Truth and holiness work differently.

With total honesty about the difficult demands at hand, the God who cannot lie promises to reward you down the line.

Obedience, purity, integrity, repentance, denial - these are hard words and demanding deeds. But what lies at the end is invaluable!

Sin never delivers, Christ never fails!

So don't get robbed while trying to pull a fast one on God.

- Source Unknown

There are – ***CONSEQUENCES OF NOT COMING TO CHRIST!***

But there are blessings for those who do.

And that will bring us to our last point, and we saw that in the story we just read – A

CALL TO OBEDIENCE!

VERSES 49-50

What I want you to see here is that Jesus is stressing His own submission to God the Father. His authority was connected to His submission to God the Father.

Think of what Jesus is saying here like this, ***“I’m here as God’s representative. I’m here to teach you the truth about God. I’m here to show you God’s love and God’s mercy and God’s grace. I’m here to show you God’s forgiveness. I’m not here to judge you, I’m here to save you. I’m saying the things that the Father gave Me to say. I’m not speaking of My own self. These are God’s words to you, and they are life everlasting.”***

Now let’s apply this to the people Jesus was speaking to. You see, the Jewish people were to represent God and yet they had become so distorted in their views of God.

Instead of a love relationship with God it had become a legalistic relationship with God!

Ancil Jenkins shares this illustration for us regarding the Law and love. He wrote,

“Fasten your seat belt,” I said to my wife, Elaine, the other day.

“It is the law, you know.”

As she fastened her seat belt, I thought, ***“Dummy, that is not the reason you want her buckled up. You want her protected from the harm of any accident you might drive her into.”***

How shallow would be my concern if I was more in fear of paying a fine than in her being seriously hurt!

How much this can describe our approach to our obedience to God!

Almost all we do is from mixed motives. Yet which motive is overriding? Do we obey because we fear God’s wrath and judgment? Do we feel He will break our leg or burn down our house if we disobey? Do we feel that Christianity is just a set of rules to be obeyed and our satisfaction comes from doing a good job of keeping rules?

The result of such an attitude will only breed fear and guilt.

Fear comes from any failure to obey, and there will be such failure.

Guilt comes from many sources, such as finding there was a law you had been failing to obey.

Any failure at perfect obedience can lead to regarding some laws as more important than others.

All this can lead to a disregard of others who do not keep laws as well as we do. (Luke 18:1)

It can lead us to giving more attention to the minute details and neglecting the major virtues God desires us to have. (Matthew 23:23)

We become ridiculous gnat strainers and camel swallowers. (Matthew 23:24)

We should obey God because we love Him.

We obey because He has done so much for us, and we have done so little for Him.

We obey because love is never content to accept but must always give.

Jesus said, *“If you love Me, you will do what I command.”* (John 14:15)

We then come to realize that our disobedience not only breaks the laws of God, it also breaks the heart of God.

How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness and grieved Him in the desert!
(Psalm 78:40)

Such obedience is far fuller, richer, and freer than can ever come from a legal motivation.

Imagine a woman who is a nurse and a mother. She may work at a hospital all day caring for the sick. When she has worked eight hours, she goes home. Upon arriving home, she finds her child is seriously ill. She will then give her child the same care she gives the hospital patients.

However, when she has cared for her child for eight hours, she will not quit. She gives care no one can buy.

The difference is the motivation.

What is your major motivation?

Seek to know God better, and you will find yourself obeying out of love. It will become *“richer, fuller, deeper”* and will become *“sweeter as the years go by.”*

- Source Unknown

Yes, Jesus came to set us free from the bondage of sin that we were in but that is not all that He did.

You see, sin separated man from God and the reality of all this is that Jesus came to restore that relationship with God the Father once again. A relationship that was destroyed in the Garden of Eden when Adam sinned!

And that relationship has been restored in Christ!

Remember what Peter said in I Peter 3:18, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

How many times did Jesus suffer for our sins?

Only once as He hung on the cross of Calvary and bore the sins of the world and the wrath of God was poured out upon Him, the wrath of God that was for you and me!

Why did He do this?

To bring us to God, to restore that relationship that was broken by sin.

The word “**bring**” was used “*of admission to an audience with the Great King.*”

(Blum).

I love that! Jesus, through His atoning work on the cross of Calvary, paying in full the penalty for our sins, can bring us to the Father if we ask Him to be our Savior, to forgive us of our sins!

That is what Jesus has done for us and thus, when we refuse to have fellowship with God, we are trashing the work that Jesus has done for us.

You see, I couldn't save myself because I am a sinner, but Jesus was the perfect sacrifice and He paid in full the penalty for my sins, your sins in order that we can come before God and have fellowship with Him!

The just God, perfect, without sin suffered for us to bring us to the Father, that is love!

And it is out of love that we should obey Him because that is the kind of relationship God wants to have with us!

Let me show you what I mean that our love for God is seen in our obedience to Him and the best example, of course, and like we have seen, is Jesus and His obedience to God the Father! He did not come to do His own thing but submitted Himself to God the Father.

In Isaiah 1:19-20 we are told, “**If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword'; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.**”

Yes, this is for Israel but there is a spiritual application for us as well. You see, if we are obedient to the Lord there are blessings. And if we are disobedient there are consequences to our disobedience and that is not a good thing.

Jesus said in John 14:15, **“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”**

How do we show our love for Jesus? By being obedient to Him, by obeying His Word to us!

In I John 5:3 John wrote, **“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”**

Here’s the thing. We are not only to love God, but we are to keep His commandments as well!

Why is that so important?

Because our love for God is seen in our obedience to Him!

Again, what did Jesus say in John 14:15, **“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”**

You see, you can’t say you love God and do your own thing, disobey what God has said. Your actions show you don’t love God!

Remember what John said back in I John 2:3-6, **“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”**

Now for some, this is too much. It is a heavy burden for them to do these things.

Look at the rules and the regulations that some religions make you do – even having to wear holy underwear!

Jesus said of the religious leaders of His day, **“For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”** Matthew 23:4.

I truly believe that Jesus was speaking of the Law being a heavy burden to the Jewish people.

You see, the Law of God given to Moses contained 613 commandments. And for most of the Jews, they could not even remember all of them let alone keep them!

And then the rabbis added more and more to it. Pages and pages of regulations and rules related to keeping those 613 main laws.

Now you may be thinking I am going overboard here. Not at all. Think about this. For the Sabbath day alone, that had 24 chapters in the Talmud that was devoted to what the Sabbath rest was all about. You would get tired just reading it!

And thus, it was a heavy burden upon them. A day set aside to worship God was no day of rest for them.

And here we see Jesus tell them in Matthew 11:28-30, **“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

I think the yoke that Jesus is speaking of is the yoke of grace. You see, it is no longer what I have to do to be saved, it is what Jesus has done for me and I have to receive that free gift by faith. No longer a burden to obey the Lord, we obey Him out of love. It is not about our salvation that we obey Him, not at all!

Paul put it like this in Romans 3:21-26, **“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”**

Thus, the commandments of God are not a burden to us, not at all. We don't keep them for salvation, as I have said, but we now have a new nature, we are a redeemed people, and we love the commandments of God!

So Jesus came and He shows us the love, the grace, the mercy, the compassion, the forgiveness of God towards us that is all nicely wrapped in the person of Jesus Christ, if you would only believe!

And let me say this because so many today are doing the exact opposite of what Jesus said here.

He spoke on the authority of the Father and so must we. We don't speak on our own authority, but what is written in God's Word!

What I said about what Jesus did, so must we. In other words, ***“I am a representative of God, and I am here to teach you the truth of God found in the Word of God. I am to point you to Jesus, the giver and sustainer of life! I am to show you the grace, the mercy, the love, the compassion, the forgiveness of God. I am not here to judge you but to see you saved.”***

If Jesus spoke on the authority of the Father, who are we to say we are not? That is foolishness!

We have seen this morning - *A CALL TO COME TO JESUS!*

It is an invitation to each of us.

The sad thing is, many won't and thus, there are – *CONSEQUENCES OF NOT COMING!*

The judgment of God will come upon their lives because they are already condemned, and they have rejected the forgiveness of their sins that is only found in Jesus!

But for those that have come to Christ, there is – *A CALL TO OBEDIENCE!*

This call is one that is done out of love, it identifies us with Christ as we follow our Good Shepherd!

As I close this morning, let me share these words with you. Paul in Colossians 3:15-17 said, **“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”**

In other words, since you have come to Christ, put on the new man. You have been transformed into a new creation in Christ, so live it, walk according to the high calling by which you have been called in Christ Jesus!

The word **“believe”** here in John 12:37-50 is the focus of these verses and it is used some eight times!

Thus, may you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved!

Remember what I have called this study – ***THE LAST CALL!***

I don't know where you are at this morning, those here and those listening on the radio and the Internet, but today is the day of salvation, don't pass it up!

We see – ***THE LAST CALL*** in the Bible in Revelation 22:17, which says, “**And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.**”

The light was going to go out to the nation of Israel for a time, don't let it go out on you because it is ***THE LAST CALL***, and the judgment of God is coming!