

He Loved Me...

He Loves Me Lots

The Gospel of John

Text

John 12:27-50

Topic

Jesus was lifted up on the Cross
to draw all men to Himself

Title

"Your Love is Lifting Me Higher & Higher"

I'm OK, right up until the technician asks, "Have you ever had metal shavings in your eyes?"

Metal shavings can get in your eyes *without you knowing it*. As a teen, I worked summers with my Dad & brothers at the auto shop. Safety equipment, like eye protection, was not provided by management. What management did supply was plenty of ridicule if you wanted to stay safe.

My Dad's attitude towards safety measures in general was encapsulated in this bit of wisdom, "Seat belts kill more people than they save."

You are asked about metal shavings prior to a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). One technician explains, "The risk with metal in the MRI is that it can heat up and cause burns or it can migrate or move around. Depending on where it is, we don't want it to migrate and affect an important structure."

It is dangerous to be near an MRI machine. In 2001, a 6-year-old boy died at a New York-area hospital when the machine's powerful magnetic field jerked a metal oxygen tank across the room, hitting him.

MRI's are also a huge problem if you are hosting an alien symbiote. Eddie Brock found that out the hard way in *Venom*.

The Cross of Jesus Christ is the world's most powerful 'magnet.'

Jesus would be "lifted up," crucified, on the Cross at Golgotha, the Place of the Skull. "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, [I] will **draw** all *peoples* to Myself" (v32).

Augustine said, "All those who belong to Jesus Christ are fastened with Him to the Cross."

Are you "fastened with [Jesus] to the Cross?" "All" are drawn by its power. Those who believe Him are fastened there with Him, saved forever.

I'll organize my comments around two prayers: **#1 "Jesus, Draw Me Closer,"** and **#2 "Jesus, Draw Me Bolder."**

#1 - "Jesus, Draw Me Closer" (v27-36)

Some voices are instantly recognized. Christopher Walken, James Earl Jones, Morgan Freeman, Leonard Nimoy, Anthony Hopkins, William Shatner, Samuel L. Jackson, Sam Elliot, Chris Rock.

Maggie Smith, Joan Cusak, Betty White, Fran Drescher, Holly Hunter, Cher, Julie Andrews, Candace Bergen.

A voice from Heaven is heard as Jesus makes His final public statements.

Joh 12:27 "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

Joh 12:28 Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, "I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again."

Joh 12:29 Therefore the people who stood by and heard *it* said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."

Joh 12:30 Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake.

This is the second time Jesus prayed aloud to God the Father for the sake of the crowd. The first time was outside the tomb of Lazarus, just before Jesus recalled him from Hades.

The Lord gave the people a peek into the unseen realm. It would inspire confidence that God was orchestrating the events that would shortly be unfolding - namely, Jesus' crucifixion.

Of course the Lord's "soul" was "troubled." Crucifixion was awful, and His would be worse than any, ever:

- His human body would be so stressed leading to the crucifixion that He would sweat blood.
- No one would stay up to pray with Him.
- Prior to His crucifixion, He would undergo illegal treatment by those who claimed to be keeping His Laws.
- One disciple would betray Him. Another would deny Him.
- He would be severely beaten before being crucified.
- The people for whom He was dying, for whom He would forever remain the God-man, mocked Him.
- On the Cross Jesus would be surrounded by fierce supernatural foes in the unseen realm.

"What shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour."

Thirty years of obscurity. Three and one-half years of Messiah Ministry. It was *carpe hora*. Jesus would "seize the hour," fulfilling the task He had been born to accomplish.

There's a cute scene in *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*. Scotty talks to a computer, then to its mouse.

He forgot that they were in the past.

It is critical to our spiritual well-being we realize the hour in which we live as servants of the Lord. We don't want to behave as if we lived in some past or future era. A proper respect for Christian history is essential.

This is the Church Age. It is characterized by suffering for the sake of Jesus. We are to consider it joy when trials come. In the world, when we will have tribulation (with a little 't'), we are to be of good cheer. We most gladly boast in our infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us. We take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in

needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when we are weak, then we are strong.

A.W. Pink wrote, "Though poor in this world's goods, though grieving the loss of loved ones, though suffering pain of body, though harassed by sin and Satan, though hated and persecuted by worldlings, whatever be the case and lot of the Christian, it is both his privilege and duty to rejoice in the Lord."

We are equipped for the purpose of showing how a Christian glorifies the Lord in suffering.

We are to speak as the oracles of God. Our speech is to be seasoned with grace. We are to cultivate a relationship with Jesus so that the Holy Spirit can bring forth His fruit rather than our flesh. We are to love our enemies, and do good to those who mistreat us. We are to be fools for Christ's sake, so that the foolishness of God is shown to be greater than the wisdom of man.

These are not Old Testament times. Nor are we in the Great Tribulation, or the Kingdom. We are the church, in our very own age, with its unique parameters.

Joh 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

The devil became the ruler of this world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. We see the programs of his malevolent administration in every corner of the globe.

It comes as a shock to realize Satan still has access to Heaven. We see and hear him in the Book of Job, practicing his despicable talent as the accuser of the brethren.

Jesus defeated him on the Cross, but Satan has not been "cast out." We read in the Revelation, "Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, **has been cast down'** " (12:10).

Joh 12:32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself."

Joh 12:33 This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

The best commentary on Jesus "lifted up from Earth" is found in the apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians. It captures both the physical and the spiritual. "And being found in appearance as a man, [Jesus] humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name" (2:8-9). Jesus was "lifted up" on the Cross, then "lifted up" to His exalted position.

Jesus promised to "draw all... to [Himself].

- It means "all" people without distinction between Jews and Gentiles.
- It means people from "all" walks of life, status, and stature.

No one is excluded. Where Christians disagree is whether "all" means everyone or a smaller, predestined and selected number of people.

It means everyone - "whosoever will believe."

To say Jesus draws everyone is not to say everyone will be saved. It is to say that the Cross and Jesus' subsequent exaltation exert a spiritual effect on every person, not just a few. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. When it is presented, it is accompanied by a drawing power. A decision to receive or reject can be made. Since this is the free will God gave us, it cannot contradict or in any way minimize His sovereignty.

Limiting the power of the Cross to draw only a few is a theological construct, not a biblical one.

Why do some believe while others do not believe? "God only knows." That's not a cop-out. It doesn't ignore what the Bible teaches. The Bible is consistent in saying that we are to believe and be saved. It involves a measure of free will on our part.

Joh 12:34 The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how *can* You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?' "

- "Christ" means *anointed*. It is a title of the conquering Messiah.
- "The Son of Man" is a title for the Messiah from Daniel 7:13-14. It emphasizes the *humanity* and *humility* of the Messiah.

Today, with the completed Bible in our hands, and innumerable study helps, we are still confused about certain aspects of Bible prophecy. Let's cut these guys some slack.

Joh 12:35 Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.

Joh 12:36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

Three and one-half years prior, Jesus had come into the darkness of this world as its light. God the Father spoke from Heaven validating Him. Jesus' ministry was coming to an end. As if to say the Lord's work had come full circle, the Father again spoke, and Jesus reminded them He was the light of the world.

The Jews had a decision to make. Messiah, or No Messiah?

Jesus drew you to the Cross. You received Him. You were fastened to the Cross with Him. That's a one-time experience.

As Chicago sang, however, it is *only the beginning, only just the start*. You keep on drawing closer to Him as you cooperate with His work in you.

If you've stalled, and are not making much progress in your walk, "Jesus, draw me closer" ought to be your next prayer.

#2 - "Jesus, Draw Me Bolder" (v37-50)

Can you be a believer if you do not openly confess Jesus for fear of man? Hold off on answering, because it is coming in a few verses.

Joh 12:37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,

"Signs" are great. But they don't always lead to a positive, spiritual result. As often as not, signs harden hearts against the Lord. I don't suggest that because we are against the continuation of signs and wonders. We are not cessationists. It just happens to be true that signs can have an effect you're not expecting. It isn't for lack of miracles that folks remain unbelievers.

Joh 12:38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:
"LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?"

Joh 12:39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

Joh 12:40 "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."

Joh 12:41 These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

They *would not* believe; they *could not* believe; and they *should not* believe. At first reading, it sounds as though God was the cause of their unbelief. He wasn't.

The Jews could see; they could believe. There was plenty of evidence Jesus was their Messiah. Only after they refused to believe did God blind them.

There are many reasons a person will not believe. Belief in Jesus is costly.

Not so much in dollars or bitcoin, but in relationships, career, activities. Can you say, "rich young ruler?"

Those who will not believe eventually cannot believe. God "blinds" their eyes, and "hardens" their hearts. He confirms their own choice.

There is what we might call end-stage unbelief. A man may so harden himself as to render his condition irremediable.

I'm quick to point out that we cannot know who is in end stage unbelief. We want to deal with the 'won't believers' as having the capacity to respond to the draw of the Cross.

Joh 12:42 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;
Joh 12:43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Many of them did believe.

Commentators mostly rip into these guys, declaring them unbelievers. Better to see them as a fearful remnant. Sure, they could have been bolder. Some would be, e.g. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

Being put out of the synagogue was more than you no longer attending meetings. You were cut-from from everything you had known all your life.

I'm not saying we justify silence on account of fear. But there have always been difficult situations for Christians. We need to extend grace as far as we can.

The last set of verses function as a summary statement, a conclusion, to Jesus' thirty-three and one-half year mission to *Humbly "Go" where the God-man had never gone before.*

Joh 12:44 Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.

Joh 12:45 And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.

God the Father... God the Son... God the Holy Spirit. One God, not three, consisting of three Persons.

No one can see God the Father; He is a Spirit being. We can see Jesus Christ His Son. Jesus Christ is such a perfect reflection of God the Father in all of His glory and wisdom and holiness, to look upon Jesus Christ is as if you were looking at God the Father.

Joh 12:46 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

Pick up a paving stone and umpteen bugs scurry. Have they been there undisturbed for decades? People "abide" in the darkness of this world until belief in Jesus turns the light on. We can do a lot of good in other forums, e.g. politics, but the permanent solution to darkness is the light of the glory of God in Jesus. Our priority must be the Gospel.

Joh 12:47 And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

Joh 12:48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him - the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

Jesus will judge the world:

- At the end of the Great Tribulation, when He returns in His Second Coming, we read about Jesus separating the sheep and the goats. These are believers and

- unbelievers, respectively, who survive the seven-years. His judgment sends the goats away to Hades while inviting the sheep into the Kingdom of God on Earth.
- It is Jesus Who is the judge at the Great White Throne. It's described in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation. All the wicked dead from all time are judged to fall short of the glory of God. They cannot enter Heaven. Jesus passes judgment on them and they are confined to eternal, conscious punishment in the Lake of Fire.

Remember - this is the Church Age, and so long as we are here there is hope for unbelievers.

Jesus has judged and defeated sin, Satan, and death so that all who are drawn to Him, who believe, will be saved.

Joh 12:49 For I have not spoken on My own *authority*; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

We happen to have a President who frequently misspeaks. The other day, he said he had cancer. The White House had to issue a correction.

No corrections from Heaven regarding the words and works of Jesus.

I like this verse as a Bible teacher. In a devotional sense, a Bible teacher doesn't speak on his own authority. We believe in the authority of the inerrant, inspired, Word of God.

We say and speak the Word by going through it verse-by-verse. We say more than that, but nothing more important than the Word itself.

Joh 12:50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

There is a lot of so-called inspirational literature. Readers claim their favorite inspirational book changed their lives.

Maybe. *It did not offer them eternal life.*

Jonathan Edwards wrote, "True boldness for Christ transcends all; it is indifferent to the displeasure of either friends or foes. Boldness enables Christians to forsake all rather than Christ, and to prefer to offend all rather than to offend Him."

Jesus draw me bolder. Bolder to listen to God the Holy Spirit, follow His leading, and represent.