

Four years of classes, countless hours of studying, and endless final exams all led to one moment. Every bit of work I put into my architecture design projects and making presentations were all just preliminary for this moment. Sitting through an hour long speech and other dignitaries all brought me to that moment. Standing in line next to the stage I waited for it. My moment. The cheer would go up from my relatives. My name would be called. I would walk across and get my diploma. That moment had to be big because so much led up to it. Walking down the steps on the other side all I could wonder was that it? Four years, tests, exams, projects, presentations, all for less than fifteen seconds on stage to receive my college diploma? Surely the moment had to be more than that.

The letdown hit me because I had built the moment up to be something bigger than it could ever be. That's the problem with moments on earth. Sometimes that's all they are, moments. Quick and not as memorable as we would like them to be. They don't mean what we thought or impact us the way we thought they would. They come and go without any real meaning. Even when they seem important, and there's a ton of buildup, and people tell us they should mean something, they don't always live up to the hype.

As we look into the gospel this Sunday, just two weeks before Easter, the moment seems different. We can feel it because of the time of year. Something big is getting closer. It's exciting, we look forward to it, and we anticipate it. We remember what happened to our Savior.

**Christ's hour has come
To endure passion for glory
To draw all people to himself**

After three years traveling all over Israel Jesus and his disciples were back where it all began. Jesus had traveled to spread his message to many people outside of just the capitol city. The effectiveness of that spread was now evident. **"Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the feast. They came to Philip...with a request. We would like to see Jesus."** Somewhere they heard about Jesus and what was being said about him. They knew Jesus was a Jew. Knew he came to the Jews. But maybe he was more. Maybe he would be for them too. An interview would tell them. So they wanted to see Jesus.

Upon hearing the Greeks wanted to see him, Jesus never answered their question nor do we hear they actually met with him. Instead Jesus is absorbed in something else. His time in Jerusalem isn't a pleasure stop. This isn't a break before getting back on the road. **"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."** "Great", the disciples may have thought. Finally some glory. That's what they'd been waiting to see and experience. All the resistance and hatred at Jesus preaching and teaching had built up to this moment. Now a little glory would be good. They totally misunderstand what Jesus meant by glory.

If you're a farmer who wants acres of wheat to grow in western Oklahoma you can't get too attached to the seeds. If you let them sit in bags or bring them into your house nothing will happen. To grow they need die in a matter of speaking in the ground. But what you'll get is more than the seed. Jesus used that picture to explain what would happen to him. He was the seed. Alone he could remain a single seed forever. But if he wanted more seeds, more people with him, he had to die. He would have to endure passion for glory, death for life.

That's a tough pill to swallow, for him, for the disciples, and for us. Christ's hour should be more happiness. The buildup is to a moment, a glorious moment. But the glory is in the passion, the suffering. It's glory in difficulty and death. We face those same things. But who wants to face difficulty and death? When I face difficulty I tend to rely on myself or my previous experience. We can get mad at others who we perceive to be causing us hurt. We hold it against them. We take that stress back into our relationships and we don't listen or show compassion. We long for the hour when things on earth get easier. But when it doesn't happen we get mad at God. What we wouldn't give for just an hour without suffering, difficulty, or the threat of death? At times we give up God to get it too.

Jesus endured his passion without any of that sin. He wasn't a seed having his life ripped from him. He was going willingly. **"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?"** It wouldn't surprise us if he had said that. That's a very human response to suffering. Get me out of this. Rescue me. But that wasn't Jesus' response at all. At all. **"No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!"** Jesus was on earth, in Jerusalem, always going toward the cross, towards the suffering. He knew he had to. He wanted to. Christ's hour came, and he endured passion for glory. Jesus came to that hour with every intention of giving his life to glorify God's name. So when you hear God's name you remember it was Jesus Christ who sacrificed himself for you. It was Jesus who showed God's love as part of that name. Jesus Christ faced the passion in order to gain the glory so that you would be glorified in him.

Because Greeks wanted to see Jesus it was clear Jesus was for all people. He was not just a Jew for the Jews. He would die a Jew but he would be a Savior for all people. The Greeks had heard and were moved to seek out this Savior for all people. It was the disciples who were having trouble. Jesus was clearly for them. But they questioned whether he was for all people. What would happen over the next couple of days would form the basis for their conviction from God that Jesus was in fact a Savior for all people.

Jesus described what would happen. **“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”** The hour had come. God would no longer hold back judgment for the sins of the world. Every sin from Adam to the people of Jesus’ day and on to today, every sin committed or to be committed was kept for one moment, an hour when everything would be right to pay for the sins so many millions of people had committed. People sinned. We sinned. But we don’t experience judgment immediately. We aren’t killed the first sin we commit and sent to hell for eternity. We aren’t struck down by lightning when we sin or hear the voice of God condemn us each time we do something wrong. Judgment was withheld. Till the hour came. Jesus was at that hour.

The disciples didn’t know it but in a few short days Jesus would be hanging from a cross. They could have known it though. He told them numerous times about that hour. The day Jesus’ passion would turn into Jesus’ crucifixion was rapidly approaching. He would be lifted up from the earth. There Jesus would hang, between heaven and earth. The instrument of his crucifixion would look like the ultimate in torture and death. Jesus would cry out his pain, bow his head, and die a horrible death. It would look terrible and it would be. Satan would look like he won. Jesus would be dead. But by that one act Jesus would draw all people to himself.

Did you ever question why so many people wear a symbol of that instrument of torture and death around their necks? Ever question why we have this huge representation of it hanging on the front wall? I mean it’s a cross. We know what happened to people on crosses. We have an accurate description of Jesus on the cross. Yet that cross has such attracting power. It is compelling power of God’s grace. You were not forced into Christianity under threat of death. You weren’t coerced into believing by some manipulation by parents or friends. Don’t confuse those with the power and grace of the cross. God showed you his love. God opened up promises and extended them to you through the cross. Announced your sins forgiven. Proclaimed death a non-factor. Let you know Satan would be forever shackled. You were given amazing insight into the loving and caring mind of God when Jesus died. This is how far God would go for you. This is what God was willing to give up for you. Jesus died on the cross drawing you to him. And not only you, but all people.

When hours come that we’ve been waiting for they can have different effects on us. We can appreciate them, be worried about them, miss them because we’re focused somewhere else. The hour can come and go just like that. For Jesus, he wouldn’t miss his moment. He wasn’t going to zoom past the hour he came for. It was his reason for being on earth. Christ’s hour had come. Jesus faced his passion and was glorified for you. Jesus faced the cross and was lifted up to draw all people, including you, to him. He leads you by grace to his love. He shows you his compassion. He draws you by the very death he died. It was his hour. It had come. Christ’s hour to save you.