

The Story (25): When I Am Lifted Up

(John 12:27-33)

I. Introduction

- A. One of my favorite authors released a new book this past Tuesday
 - 1. N.T. Wright? Francis Chan? No, Michael Connelly (*Harry Bosch*)
 - 2. **Factoid:** It takes year for author to write and get book published
 - a. That's more time than for making a movie (*books are better*)
 - b. But it takes 2-3 days to finish reading (or listening to) a book
 - 1) Problem with whodunit is you want to find out whodunit
 - 2) So, you rush through to the end and it's over... for a year
 - 3. Roger listens to books as he runs; if I did that, it'd take a year!
- B. We continue in *The Story*, and we're racing toward the ending
 - 1. It's NO whodunit; writers let us in on the secret from beginning
 - a. Remember how Mark began his telling of *The Story* (**1:1**)
 - 1) We know from the beginning that Jesus is Christ/Messiah
 - 2) The people around Jesus must slowly discover that on own
 - b. When people see Jesus, he often tells them to be quiet (**1:43**)
 - c. **Irony:** Jesus tells them not to tell anyone; they tell everyone...
 - 2. There have been amazing things in *The Story* up to this point—
 - a. Jesus did amazing things (*healed, fed 5000, walk on water*)
 - b. Taught amazing things (*Sermon on Mt, parables, gold rule*)
 - c. Turned religion upside-down (*first to be last, last to be first*)
 - 3. But the real reason Jesus came to earth was to be our Savior
 - a. In reality, Jesus lived his entire life in the shadow of the cross
 - b. Story is racing toward conclusion, and Jesus feels the pressure
 - 1) The time for him to be glorified is rapidly drawing near
 - 2) Jesus can only fulfill mission by being planted in ground
 - 3) In order for Jesus to be who he was, he had to die
 - c. But that is also true of all those who follow (**John 12:25-26**)
 - 4. Turning point in John is what's next (**Reading: John 12:27-32**)

II. When I Am Lifted Up

- A. Tom Olbricht calls this text the “*thematic seam*” of John’s gospel
1. Jesus said earlier it was time for him to be “*glorified*” (**12:23**)
 - a. And now Jesus asks God, “*Father, glorify your name*” (**28**)
 - b. God the Father answers, “*I have glorified it and will again*”
 2. “*Glorify*” is *doxazo*, meaning “*to render or esteem glorious*”
 - a. It is what people do when they see our good deeds (**Mt 5:16**)
 - b. It’s what the shepherds did after Jesus was born (**Luke 2:20**)
 - c. It’s what the Centurion did after Jesus died (**Luke 23:47**)
 3. Jesus point here that that he and God are glorified at the cross
 - a. In that act, Jesus will literally be lifted up for all to see
 - b. His soul is troubled; Jesus is “*greatly distressed*” (NET)
 - c. Have you ever been “*greatly distressed?*” Jesus knows!
 - 1) He’s determined to do thru ordeal because glorifies God
 - 2) Sometimes we do hard, painful things for the same reason
 - 3) When we glorify God in our lives, God will glorify us
 - d. Jesus said that this was the very reason that he had come!
- B. How will Jesus glorify God? “*When I am lifted up...*” (**John 12:32**)
1. There are really three different ways that Jesus was lifted up
 - a. Here he’s talking about his coming death on the cross (**12:33**)
 - b. Jesus was also raised or lifted up from the grave (**Acts 2:32**)
 - c. Jesus was lifted up (exalted) to the right hand of God (**2:33**)
 2. And when Jesus is lifted up, he will draw all people to himself
 - a. The cross, an instrument of death, becomes the means to life
 - b. This is the center of this story we’ve been surveying all year
 3. Jesus says two things would happen when he was lifted up—
 - a. It’s time of judgement and the driving out of Satan (**12:31**)
 - b. It’s also time when Jesus would draw all to himself (**12:32**)
 4. Jesus was lifted up so that we can be lifted up with Him (**video**)

C. Sometimes being lifted up has a whole different kind of meaning

1. **Negative Lift:** Some would be lifted... DOWN (**Luke 10:15**)

a. Some weren't open to mercy (Bethsaida and Capernaum)

1) If Tyre, Sidon and even Sodom had seen same miracles...

2) So Bethsaida and Capernaum would be lifted down

b. Joseph and butler/baker—same word here (**Gen 40:13,19**)

c. Have you been blessed with God's goodness and grace?

1) Act like it! No, we don't have to be **perfect**, but **grateful**

2) When we don't live as blessed people— we're lifted down

d. Hebrew writer gives us a chilling warning (**Heb 6:4-6**)

2. **Ironic Lift:** God lifts those who humble themselves (**Jam 4:10**)

a. What do we do if "*deeply distressed?*" Try to lift ourselves!

1) Old saying, "*When going gets tough, tough go shopping*"

2) We fill life with things, experiences, relationships, status

b. It's when we acknowledge our neediness that God lifts us up

c. **Proverbs 6** says there are 6 things God hates; the first is pride

1) Pride that caused Adam and Eve to fall; it causes us to fall

2) Pride lets us compare ourselves to others... and seem holy

3) Pride causes us to think we our just fine without God

d. God can't lift up one who thinks they're just fine on their own

e. It is only when we fall on our knees that God can lift us up

3. **Ultimate Lift:** We've been lifted up to be with Christ (**Eph 2:6**)

a. All through Ephesians, Paul refers to this "*heavenly realm*"

1) This is where the spiritual forces of evil exist (**6:12**)

2) This is also where Christ has been raised up to (**1:20**)

b. So Jesus and the forces we fight are in the heavenly realm

1) *We are too!* We have to be there to fight those forces

2) We don't fight so much as we stand with Christ (**6:13**)

c. We need to understand that God has lifted us up with Christ

d. That changes where we put our focus & attention (**Col 3:1-2**)

III. Conclusion

- A. We must remember that it is God who lifts up... and down
 - 1. Daniel makes this point when talking about kings
 - a. It is God who lifts up people to the throne (**Dan 2:20-21**)
 - b. In case we missed it, Daniel repeats it later (**Dan 4:17**)
 - 2. **Factoid:** Both are dream sequences and about the same king
 - a. **First**, God lifts up Nebuchadnezzar as the head of gold
 - b. **Second**, God takes him down because of his pride
 - c. God does lift up rulers of the earth... and lifts them down
- B. The same is true of each of us—God lifts us up and lifts us down
 - 1. Jesus was lifted up so that we can be lifted up with Him
 - a. Why was he lifted up on the cross and from the grave?
 - b. So that he can draw all people unto himself—you and me
 - 2. But we must decide. We have a choice to make, you and I
 - a. By his mercy and grace, we are lifted up with him
 - b. If we refuse his mercy and grace, then we are lifted down
 - 3. We must lift his name on high—with our words and our lives
 - a. From heaven to earth, to show the way. *Do we believe that?*
 - b. From the earth to cross, my debt to pay. *Do we accept it?*
 - c. From the cross to grave, from grave to sky. *Are we living it?*
- C. Jesus was lifted up for you... will you lift his name on high?