

**Sermon Series: “Good News for Life”**  
**“The Glory of the Gospel”**  
**Pastor Norwood N. “Woody” Hingle III, Ph.D.**  
**Sunday, June 27, 2021**

Some dates on the calendar are heavily anticipated, and sometimes something big happens, and other times not so much. E.g., we can think of next Sunday, which is July 4th! We can also think of other dates. E.g., the turn of the millennium in the year 2000 was a date that sent shivers down the spine of many people. In 1982 the singer Prince did a song called “1999” where it talks of a judgment day when 2000 comes but he was going to party on anyway—the words are repeated, “Cuz they say/2000 zero zero party over oops out of time/so tonight I’m going to party like it’s 1999”. I recall someone who prepared for months by stashing food and drink in a closet in case there was a shortage for some reason. I recall people saying that our computers could possibly shut down because they weren’t prepared for the significant date change. When the hour came to transition to 2000, though, even though many people held their breath, nothing happened—we just got on with our lives. It is true that sometimes some dates on the calendar are anticipated with nothing really happening, and other times there is something big that happens. E.g., June 6, 1944— D Day, which is also known as Operation Overlord, which was put off because of the weather, but when it happened it helped turn the tide of the war in Europe. In today’s text there is a date coming, an hour coming, when something is anticipated—and the result of this date has changed the course of human history.

READ John 17:1-5 (p. 111)

**CONTEXT:** Jesus has just become un-Lone Ranger-like. In large part the mystery of who He is is made clear. He is not alone, but the Father is with Him always. And His victory is not a temporary victory, but a victory over the world for all time.

READ v 1a. “Significantly, Jesus recognized that His hour/time had come which was long anticipated, so He prayed in consecration of this event in a priest-like fashion. Cf. John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23,27; 13:1; Hebrews 7:23-25.” Jesus has talked about His hour coming on several occasions in John’s gospel. We recall when Jesus was being asked by His Mother to help out with the situation at the wedding at Cana when they ran out of wine, and he said, ““Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come”” (2:4). In 8:20 we read, “He [Jesus] spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.” In 12:23 Jesus stated, ““The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”” We can think about dates in the future that you know something is going to happen, where there will be a reckoning. E.g., on Sunday, October 31st at 3:25 the New Orleans Saints will play a home Tom Brady and Tampa Bay Buccaneers— a date the Saints players know will be a day of reckoning, they will face there nemesis in the NFC South Division. Maybe you can think of a date when you have something due, a test you will have to take, a decision you will have to make. In Jesus’ ministry He recognizes there is a big date looming, and now in our passage His hour, His time, has come. In our passage this is often referred to as “The High Priestly Prayer” because Jesus speaks like a priest consecrating, making holy and right, the sacrifice that will soon happen before God. READ vv 18-19. Jesus consecrated Himself and His followers. This reminds of Hebrews 7:23-25, “Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he [Jesus] holds his priesthood

permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”

READ vv 1b-2,4-5. “God is glorified in the Son through the cross. How can *this* involve glory? Because through it is the offer of eternal life. Cf. John 3:16-17.” Now this is obviously good news— hence this sermon series’ title, “Good News for Life”. Everyone wants to live forever, especially in good health. I am reminded about how rock n’rollers often live wild and crazy lives, with drugs and drinking, on the edge of death it seems, and then later in life pull back because they realize they don’t want to die. E.g., Ronnie Wood, in his mid-70s, of the Rolling Stones had a health scare with cancer recently, and he is trying not to smoke cigarettes anymore after being a self-confessed heavy smoker for most of his life— he said he smoked 25-30 cigarettes a day for about 50 years. E.g., I heard from a friend, who is not a believer, that he was told by a Christian that he would go to hell unless he received Jesus as his Lord and Savior, and he wanted to know from me whether this was true. I told him that we, in our natural state of rebellion against God, are under condemnation, but that God wants to save us. READ John 3:16-17. The Gospel of Matthew opens in the first chapter with the angel telling Joseph that his child will be named Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins (1:21). The cross, the glory of the cross, where Jesus takes the penalty of our rebellion against God, secures this for you and me if we accept this free gift.

READ v 3. “God is also glorified through the fact that eternal life means knowing God as He actually is: the True One and the One who was sent. Cf. John 14:21.” At the core of Christianity is a special, loving relationship. When we love Jesus we are loved by the Father, just as Jesus is loved by the Father. In John 14:21 we read, “They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them

and reveal myself to them.” Now, what does this relationship mean? E.g., I recall when I was in college with about 30 other college students in Aspen, CO on an evangelism project for the summer with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. We began the first week with training in evangelism, and we discussed what are the difficult things to unpack for the non-believer about the Christian message, and one of those things was a personal relationship with God. So, what do we mean by this? We understand personal relationships with each others—we talk, we have fellowship, we help each other when in need, we spend time together, etc. In a similar way, we have a relationship with God. We don’t hear His voice, but through His Holy Spirit and the Bible we get to know the mind of God. As we spend time with Him in prayer and in His Word, we understand Him and His love for us, and what He would have us do, and He meets our needs. There are at least two ways we can experience a relationship with God. First, we see a relationship with God when we need to make decisions. E.g., I recall when Elena and I were trying to decide where Norwood should go to college—a place not too far, not too expensive, a good influence on him, etc. We prayed a lot about this. And then one night at our Wednesday Bible Study the Holy Spirit hit me with a thought I needed for clarity—I am not finished raising my son! Even though he is of college age, there are still things I need to teach him and share with him, even though he would still be having a higher level of independence. Thus LSU was the right place for him, and I had a peace about that. And I shared that with Elena and she too had a peace about it. And this worked out well for Emily and Nathan. Second, we also see a relationship with God when we realize we need a Savior, forgiveness for our pride and rebellion, our sins. We in the church often take this for granted, until we compare what other world religions say about the problem of sin. E.g, in his book *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity*, Nabeel Qureshi shared about a conversation he had with his Christian friend David when Nabeel was a Muslim. They were talking about sin

and how to deal with it. Nabeel writes, “I knew I was a sinner and that I had rebelled against God’s commands at times and chosen my own path over His dictates. But since Muslims believe that salvation is a matter of doing more good deeds than bad, I never really felt anguish over my sins because I believed myself to be on the positive side of the scales. To me, sin was bad, but not that bad. But if it was true that all sins are so devastating that they lead to hell, what chance did I have? Of course, Allah could show mercy, but the Quran says Allah does not love sinners. What reason would he have to forgive me? . . . [David went on to say] ‘Christianity teaches that sin is so destructive it shatters souls and destroys worlds. It’s like a cancer that slowly consumes everything. That’s why this world went from perfection in the garden of Eden to being the sick and depressing place it is today. Do you think God would allow any of that stuff in heaven? Of course He wouldn’t. If heaven is going to be a perfect place, by definition there can be no sinners in it. None at all.’ His last words hung in the air, their gravity slowing sinking in. After few heavy moments, I spoke. ‘Then what hope is there for us, David?’ David smiled reassuringly, ‘Only the grace of God.’ ‘But why would He give me His grace?’ ‘Because He loves you.’ ‘Why would He love me, a sinner?’ ‘Because He’s your Father.’ David’s words hit me powerfully. I had heard Christians call God ‘Father,’ but it never clicked. Only when trying to figure out why God would give me mercy and grace when I deserved none did the gears start turning. I couldn’t speak. It was all connecting” (pp. 201-202). When we understand that Jesus died for our sins to give us forgiveness and eternal life, we cannot help but respond in awe and love for Him.

“Is the glory of the gospel reflected in our lives?” The awe of the hour Jesus faced, the glory— and horror— of the cross, and the wonder of the relationship into which He calls us into eternal life?