

Jesus is the Christ (from John's gospel) # 44 (Matters of Life & Death # 10)

# John 12<sup>44-50</sup>

## When we need it in a nutshell

Jesus' public ministry in a paragraph



(Pistachios & Macadamias)

The **gospel in a nutshell**:

Where do you find it?

- we read it before;
- **John 3(16)** For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
- I'm going to call that the **pistachio version** of gospel in a nutshell;
  - here's pistachio nuts – soft shell – easy to open;
  - quite small;
- gospel in a pistachio nutshell = the **gospel in a sentence**.

But what if you're looking for something not quite so brief / pithy?

- something a little bit bigger / harder;
- maybe something like this;
  - or this;
- gives us idea of the **macadamia version** of gospel in a nutshell;
  - the **gospel in a paragraph**; [X]

Where do we find it in the Bible?

- you could take the whole paragraph from John 3(16-21) – as we read before;
- but you could also take our text for today – **John 12(44-50)**
  - actually ∃ quite some similarity / overlap between them.

Our focus today is on **John 12(44-50)**;

- calling it the **gospel in a nutshell** – **macadamia** version;
- here's some macadamia nuts – children take up for morning tea – to remind you.

If you were here w us last week: you might remember:

- ∃ something rather **unique** about this section of John's gospel;
  - Jesus has spent 3 years mixing w the people;
    - teaching them publicly;
    - declaring : **Kingdom of God is at hand** – Kingdom of God has come;
    - declaring : **Light of world has come into world**.

- (35) “**The light** is among you for a little while longer.  
Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you.  
 The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going.  
 (36) While you have the light, believe in the light,  
 that you may become sons of light.”

Then **When Jesus had said these things, He departed & hid Himself from them.**

- that was **end** of Jesus’ 3 yrs of public ministry;
- He has only a few days left before He will lay down His life;
  - letting His enemies nail Him to cross – execute Him;
  - a few days in private;
  - then 1 last night w His team of 12 disciples – **ch 13** onwards;
  - then the end / new beginning.

But **ch 12** did not end at (36) when Jesus **departed / hid** - ∃ 14 more verses;

- last week we realised :

- these were **John’s reflective summary** of those 3 yrs Jesus’ public ministry;
- 2 parts of 7 verses each:
  - (1) rejected by His own people – hardened hearts against Him  
 (37-43) – looked at last week;
  - (2) received by many – by whoever believes in Him;  
 (44-50) – our focus today.

Begins with words:

(44) **And Jesus cried out and said ...**

- word **cried out** – is more than cried – but **cried out / cried out loud**;
- something significant / important / urgent;
- so you may well be thinking: Hang on a minute Geoff;  
 - *this is Jesus talking / crying out – not John’s reflective summary;*
- well – yes & no;
- it is Jesus talking – but it is John’s reflective summary of what Jesus said;
- it is Jesus talking – but not chronologically at this point in time;
  - we just been told : at this point in time  
 - **Jesus departed and hid Himself from them (36)**
- so this is John’s summary of what Jesus had been saying all along;
- Jesus probably said this summary of His message many times;
- in many places – to many people;
- John records it here at end to sum up Jesus’ public ministry.

So you see why it is the **gospel in a nutshell** – **macadamia size** nutshell;

- not one sentence - pistachio size;
- but one paragraph - macadamia size nutshell.

So let’s get into it:

(44) **And Jesus cried out and said,**

“Whoever believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.

(45) **And whoever sees Me sees Him who sent Me.**

- this is Jesus’ summary proclamation / declaration of **who He is** - His identity

## (Jesus' identity)

(44) "Whoever believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.

(45) And whoever sees Me sees Him who sent Me.

- Jesus is declaring : belief in Him = **synonymous** w belief in the **One who sent Him**;  
seeing Him = synonymous w seeing the **One who sent Him**;
- **One who sent Him** later on (49) identified as **the Father**;
- this is Jesus' claim to be ...

## (He is) one with the Father

**Not an agent** of the Father / not ambassador / not representative;

- but one with / identified with Father – this is Jesus' identity.

## He is God

**Not a lesser god** / not another God / not a God alongside the Father;

- but one with / identified with Father;
- and yet not the Father – He is the Son of the Father.

Obviously ∃ something v deep / **profound** being declared here:

How can the Son & the Father be declared to be one  
and yet obviously distinct?

- in one sense – you see one w/o the other;
- but in another sense – when you see one you do see the other.

This is a revealed truth which Christians have been **seeking to express** concisely ever since;

- the Father & the Son are one;
- the Father is not the Son – the Son is not the Father;
- the Father & Son are one.
- word we use for this is Trinity – includes Father / Son / Holy Spirit;  
- all God – all distinct – but all one;
- when we speaking of the oneness – we use word essence – all essentially one God;
- when we speaking of distinctness – we use word person / personal consciousness.
- this is Jesus' identity.

For Jesus – this is where we must begin in any summary of His ministry:

- His identity absolutely crucial / **foundational** for everything else /everything He does.

Perhaps way church today most often gets this wrong:

- whoever believes in Me – believes in Me – only Me;
- **Jesus only**;
- probably not deny Trinity in principle;
- but in practice it is all about Jesus;
- read words of Jesus / pray to Jesus / praise Jesus / sing to Jesus;
- Jesus who points us to / reveals / identifies w Father – not emphasised;
- praying to Father – through Jesus as Mediator is not norm;
- stick / stop w Jesus;
- NOT how Jesus reveals Himself here - or anywhere in Bible.

- (46) I have **come** into the world as light,  
 so that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness.  
 - I have come into the world = ...

## Jesus' 1<sup>st</sup> coming

He did **not** somehow come into existence **out of nothing** – or just appear out of nowhere;  
 - He **came into the world** from somewhere else.

### He existed before He came

**Normal human birth** does not fully describe His coming;

- as one coming out of womb into this world;
- He did come out of darkness of mother Mary's womb into this world;  
 - but He **came into the world as Light** – The Light of the world  
 - Light which had come from somewhere – another world / spiritual world.

He is the **pre-existent Light** – spiritual light;  
 - entered world of spiritual darkness;

- (46) I have **come** into the world as light,  
 so that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness.

### (Jesus) came to enlighten those in darkness

To **dispel** darkness / **deliver** from darkness;

- to show the way out of darkness / be the way out of darkness;
- but also to destroy the darkness;  
 - that's what light does:  
 - flick light switch in dark room – darkness destroyed.

One of problems of darkness – mentioned just a few verses back:

- (35) The one who walks in the darkness does **not know where he is going**.

I've done a fair bit of **orienteering** in my time:

- running around the bush w map / compass navigating off landmarks;  
 - follow this ridge – drop down into that gully – pass knoll on LHS;  
 - just below the rocky outcrop – ah - there's the control point;
- but orienteering in dark is totally different – done that too;  
 - can't see landmarks – far more reliant on compass;  
 - but can't get long distance sight on what you running towards;  
 - far harder to keep on bearing in dark;

**Life in dark** – v hard to keep on course – even if know where want to go;  
 - but many don't even know where want to go in life – esp beyond this life;  
 - no one has way of getting where they should want to go.

One of things John recorded Jesus as saying:

- John 8(51) “Truly, truly, I say to you,  
 if anyone **keeps My word**, he will never see death.”

- now come to next verse of our text in John 12

(47) If anyone hears My words and does **not keep them** ...

- might **expect** Jesus to say : *He will see death / He will die;*  
*He will face the judgment;*  
*He will bear the consequences of His actions / rebellion*  
*He will be condemned.*

- but No - this is what Jesus says:

(47) If anyone hears My words and does not keep them, **I do not judge him;**  
 for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

- I think we are meant to be astounded by this;
- I think Jesus wants us to be amazed at His grace;
- I think He wants us to grasp that salvation is completely to be unexpected;  
 - totally undeserved / incredibly loving / deeply generous.

(47) could also be **translated**:

If anyone hears My words and does not keep them, I do not **condemn** him;  
 for I did not come to **condemn** the world but to save the world.

- in fact Greek word translated judge here appears in that other gospel nutshell text:  
 3(17) God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,  
 but in order that the world might be saved through Him.
- for us to be judged is to face condemnation - ∃ no way can face judgement w/o it.

(Jesus) came not to condemn

This is **hallmark of Jesus' 1<sup>st</sup> coming**;

- all about coming to die;
- all about explaining who He was who was going to die;
- all about enlightening minds about meaning of dying;
- all about dying in order to rise from the dead;
- all about dying in order to bring life to the spiritually dead;
- all about saving sinners.

(Jesus) came to save sinners

When He says He came to **save the world**;

- it is not an innocent world / neutral world – but a world of sinners;
- a world of people who have not kept His word
- a world in desperate need of being saved from itself;
- a world in desperate need of being rescued from its plight / doom;
- a world deserving judgement / condemnation.

This is at the **heart of the gospel in a nutshell**:

- we have disregarded / dishonoured / rejected / renounced God's word;
- we have thought we knew better – could do better - be better by ourselves;
- we have dishonoured God Himself;
- we deserve His judgment;
- but wonder of all wonders  
 – whole of time / all of His revelation  
 has been His preparing way for rescue mission to set us free / save us.

(48) The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words **has a judge;**  
the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

- the **last day** is the last day of that era of salvation;  
- the era of no judgement / no condemnation;
- the last day comes when Jesus comes again ...

## Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> coming

**People presume** : because they not being judged by Jesus now ⇒ never be judged;

- *what I can get away with today* – I can get away w tomorrow – next day – every day;
- if I can redefine good / evil today – I can redefine it forever;
- if I can do what other people judgementally / hatefully call sin w no consequences now  
– there will be no consequences forever.

Last day not yet come - purely because God is **patient / longsuffering** / forbearing;

- urging people to turn to Him / repent – come embrace salvation feely offered;
- holding out banner of His love – day in / day out;
- patient - because no delight in death of wicked  
- but wicked turn from wicked way and live - Ezek 33(11)

But Jesus says ∃ a day coming – last day – **His day**;

- prophets of old called it the Day of the Lord.

## (Jesus) is coming back

This is **His world** / His creation / His responsibility;

- He will fulfil His assigned mission;
- He came once to save – only makes sense if coming again for judgement;  
- grace only makes sense if ∃ justice;  
- If ∃ no justice – no just desserts – what is grace?
- grace = undeserved favour - favour when earned disfavour – deserve judgment;
- if no judgment – grace is meaningless / salvation is meaningless;
- Jesus is coming back.

## He is coming to end this world

Last day is **day He defines** / determines / does;

- not defined by climate catastrophe / nuclear holocaust;
- last day defined by Jesus' coming;  
- Jesus declaring : Day of grace is fulfilled – all His people been gathered in;  
- now end must come.

(48) The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words **has a judge;**  
the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

## (Jesus) is coming to judge everyone

**His word** will be **their judge**;

- same word that has been proclaimed since foundation of world;
- everyone should know – no one has excuse for not knowing;

- even if not read Bible:
  - God created us in His image – stamped on our being a **conscience**;
  - deep down we know right from wrong;
  - we twisted / contorted / confused / suppressed our conscience;
  - but it could not be destroyed – not gone away;
  - sufficient remains for everyone to know : they have no excuse.

(49) For I have **not spoken on My own authority**,  
 but the Father who sent Me has Himself given Me a commandment  
 - what to say and what to speak.

- Jesus has declared His **identity**;  
 His **mission** – 1<sup>st</sup> coming to save – 2<sup>nd</sup> coming to judge;
- now concludes w declaring His **authority**;  
 His authority to say what He has just said;  
 His authority to wrap this up once and for all.

## (Jesus' authority)

I have not spoken on My own authority,  
 but the Father has given Me a commandment - what to say and what to speak.

## (Jesus) speaks with the authority of the Father

- Jesus **has spoken with authority** – but it is not an authority that resides wholly w/i Him;
- authority of the Father;
  - could say it is authority of Father / Son / HS altogether – in concert / communion;
    - Son is one sent into world as eternal Word of God made flesh;
    - Son is one sent into world as Light dispelling darkness;
    - Son is one sent into world on the rescue mission;
    - Son is one sent into world to judge world by His own Word – by His being;
    - Son is sent by Godhead – Father conveys the commandment.

Authority w which He speaks is nothing less than **full authority of God**;

- He is God manifest in the flesh.

(50) And I know that His commandment is **eternal life**.

- this commandment of the Father:
  - seems to be the **over-arching commandment** covers everything;
  - every other commandment serves this commandment;

**This commandment is eternal life**

He has authority to bestow eternal life

### What is eternal life?

- life that is perfect fulfilment of what life was ever meant to be / is / will be;
  - in terms of quality – it is perfect;
  - in term do quantity – it is never-ending / everlasting;
- it is life which takes us out of realm of finite – into fellowship Him who in infinite;
- it is life which entails totally new dimensions we never even dreamed of;
- it is life in fellowship / harmony / communion w God;
- it is life which celebrates our partaking of His life.

Now **who** are the **partakers** of this incredible eternal life?

∃ **one key word** in what Jesus cried out : we hardly even mentioned so far ...

He cries out to “whoever”

(44) Whoever believes in Me

(45) Whoever sees Me

(46) Whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness;

- he / she enters realm of light – ultimately realm of eternal life.

This is what **balances** what we saw **last week** in immediately preceding verses:

- blindness / hardness of heart of those who harden themselves against God;
- refuse / resent / resist the Light / suppress light / seek to exterminate light
- judged w hardening from Him – in state they chosen for themselves.

Counterpart this week : **indiscriminate free offer** of gospel to anyone / everyone;

- whoever will receive it ⇒ will receive it;
- whoever will be saved ⇒ will be saved;
- this is God’s guarantee:
  - no one will sit there saying:
    - I wanted to be saved – but God wouldn’t save Me;*
  - whoever desired to be saved ⇒ will be saved;
  - if you come to Jesus – as He is – His identity as one w Father;
    - His authority to judge;
    - His mission to save;
- ⇒ if you want that salvation ⇒ you will be saved.

Does anyone here want to be saved today? – Jesus will do it – even now;

- if want that - but need help to understand – come / see me afterwards.

As we saw w **archway** illustration:

- on outside offer is:
  - Come to Me
  - Whoever comes to me, I will never cast out John 6(37)
- only when come to inside do you look back / understand:
  - It was Father who was drawing me;
  - Son who was calling me;
  - Holy Spirit who was enabling me.
  - No one can come to Me unless the Father draws Him;
  - All that the Father gives Me will come to me – John 6(37) – again.

(Conclusion - Sons & daughters of light)

So let us **take this to heart** – very personally / particularly;

- let me put it to you as Jesus did in ...

(36) While you have the light, believe in the Light, that you may become sons of light;

- sons of light / daughters of light:

What does that look like in life to come?

What does that feel like in life to come? – I don’t know;

- but this is the promise of God - eternal life – that will blow your mind!

## Pray

(Sing Where else have we to go ...)

**Sing** Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine [TH 693]

**Benediction** John 20(31)

Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples,  
which are not written in this book;

but these are written

so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,  
and that by believing you may have life in His name.