



THE MAIN THING

JOHN 12:31-33

The Main Thing

- Stephen Covey, the author of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, coined the phrase “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing”
 - Its message is timeless – keeping your focus and efforts on the most important goals will help you accomplish them
 - Sometimes organizations fail because they focus on good things and not the best thing or the main thing
 - Circuit City was an American multinational consumer electronics retail company founded in 1949 and was one of the pioneers in the 1970s in marketing televisions, stereos, and boom boxes
- There are many good things a church/congregation can focus on, but what must be its main thing?

Scripture

- **John 12:31-33 NIV**, 31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33 He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

The Main Thing

- Operating a car while texting is distracted driving
 - It has the potential to result in serious consequences—a fine, loss of license, an accident and even the loss of life
 - A distracted driver, simply put, is a dangerous driver
- Phil Gunther, “A church distracted also reaps serious consequences—lost gospel opportunities, missional drift, inward focus, and even the loss of God’s blessing.”
 - A church distracted is soon a church without fruit and will wither away in time

The Main Thing

- **Revelation 2:1-4 NIV**, 1 To the church in Ephesus write: 2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.
 - **Verse 4**, Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first

The Main Thing

- There are many good things a church can and should be involved in
 - Politics, Social Issues, False Religious Teachers, Internal Squabbles
 - All good and needed and depending on how they are carried out can be a part of the main thing
- I believe the main objective of a Christian church/congregation is this -
 - To “Lift up Jesus Christ”
 - Why?

Jesus is the one who has reclaimed creation for His Heavenly Father

- **Vs. 31**, “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.”
- All of creation was cursed because of man’s sinful rebellion giving Satan not ownership but domination
 - **Genesis 3:17-19 NIV**, “17 Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

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- All of creation was cursed because of man’s sinful rebellion giving Satan not ownership but domination
 - **Romans 8:22 NIV**, We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.
 - **Ephesians 2:1-2 NIV**, As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

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- Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah/King and is rejected
 - **John 12:9-11 NIV**, 9 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.
 - **John 12:12-13 NIV**, 12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna! (Save)” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the king of Israel!”

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- Jesus presents Himself as the Messiah/King and is rejected by His people
 - **Luke 19:39-40 NIV**, 39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” 40 “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”
 - **John 12:20-21 NIV**, 20 Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. 21 They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.”

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- After all that Jesus did proving Himself to be the Promised Messiah of Israel, Israel rejected Him
 - **Luke 23:18-23 NIV**, 18 But the whole crowd shouted, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!” 19 (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.) 20 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. 21 But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”
 - 22 For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.” 23 But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed.

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- **Vs. 31**, “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.”
 - The rebellious world has been declared guilty of rejecting God’s Son and God’s judgment has come upon it
 - You see this in our world today, hatred of anything Christian
 - But listen, the principal force of this rebellion has been driven out
 - He has been driven out of the throne room of God
 - He has been driven out of the hearts of those who accept the salvation offered by God through the death of His Son Jesus
 - And one day he will be permanently driven out into a place call Hell never to surface again

Jesus reclaimed God's very good through His cross at Calvary

- **Vs. 32a**, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth”
 - It wasn't just our sins Jesus died for on the cross
 - It wasn't just about us
 - Christ's death is the beginning of the redemption and renewal of every part of fallen creation, as he powerfully directs all things for his own glory and creation's good
 - **Colossians 1:19-20 NIV**, 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Jesus reclaimed God's very good through His cross at Calvary

- **Vs. 32a**, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth”
 - Lifted up = to carry, bear, take away, forgive
 - **Numbers 21:8-9 NIV**, 8 The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up (*lift it up*) on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.”
9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

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- **Vs. 32a**, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth”
 - Lifted up = to carry, bear, take away, forgive
 - **Leviticus 16:20-22 NIV**, 20 “When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. 21 He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. 22 The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness.

Jesus reclaimed God's very good through His cross at Calvary

- Vs. 32a, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth”
- Lifted up = to carry, bear, take away, forgive
 - Jesus carried your sins to the cross as he took our beating, carried the cross beam on His shoulders
 - Jesus bore you sins while nailed to the cross
 - Jesus carried your sins away allowing for forgiveness to flow to you
- Judgement was carried out on the body of God's only Son, Jesus, so redemption could flow from the throne of God with the stamp, “**Paid in full**”

Jesus does the calling while His people do the pointing

- **Vs. 32b**, “And I will draw all people to myself”
 - Creation knows who its Master is and longs for the day of newness
 - Mankind was created with the ability to choose
 - **Joshua 24:14**, “Choose you this day whom you will serve..”
 - **Deuteronomy 30:11-20**, “Choose life or death...”
 - **John 3:16 NIV**, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Jesus does the calling while His people do the pointing

- Vs. 32b, “And I will draw all people to myself”
 - In and of ourselves we would never choose to follow Jesus
 - John 6:44 NIV, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.”
 - Jesus promises to, “draw all people to myself”
 - Jesus promises to draw all people and all kinds of people to himself
 - Not just Jews but every color and stripe of person

Jesus does the calling while His people do the pointing

- Jesus promises to, “draw all people to myself”
 - Not just the respectable, learned, wise, noble but every sinner no matter the depth of sinfulness
 - **1st Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV**, “9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you.”

Jesus does the calling while His people do the pointing

- Jesus promises to, “draw all people to myself”
 - Not just the respectable, learned, wise, noble but every sinner no matter the depth of sinfulness
 - The murderer, rapist, terrorist, alien, adulterer, drug addict, sexually confused, mental anguished, everyone without exception
 - No one is outside of the forgiveness of Jesus Christ except the person who says “No” and rejects Christ
 - “All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved!”, (Rom. 10:13)

The Main Thing

- Well Randy, if Jesus does all of this what is the purpose of His Church or what do I do?
 - Lift up also carries the idea of honoring, elevating in our eyes, respecting, glorifying, obeying
 - There is a beautiful string of verses illustrating this in
 - **Isaiah 2:11-17**, everything that is lifted up which does not glorify the Lord will be brought low.
 - **Isaiah 6:1-3**, there is a glorified King lifted up and sitting on the throne of God, worshiped by angels, crying “holy, holy, holy.”
 - **Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12**, the servant of the Lord is high and lifted up in the midst of suffering and pain.

The Main Thing

- Well Randy, if Jesus does all of this what is the purpose of His Church or what do I do?
 - See, Jesus does the drawing
 - We do the declaring - the Gospel of Jesus Christ
 - We do the declaring - by honoring Jesus with our worship and service to Him and in His name
 - We do the declaring - by loving our brothers and sisters in Christ in the same way He has loved us
 - We do the declaring – by living a life that honors God and obeys His commands

The Main Thing

- Well Randy, if Jesus does all of this what is the purpose of His Church?
 - When this is witnessed it makes the drawing of Jesus more forceful
 - So, what is the main purpose, voice of our church/congregation?
 - Who is the church/congregation?
 - To lift up, honor, declare, point to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ
 - In Him alone is redemption, salvation, newness of life



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