

“Letting Go of You!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Intro: Bart Starr**, former quarterback of the Green Bay Packers, was describing to a group of businessmen how his coach, **Vince Lombardi**, held absolute power. He stated that, as you entered Vince’s office, you noticed a huge mahogany desk with an impressive organization chart behind it on the wall. The chart had a **small block** at the top in which was printed: “Vince Lombardi, Head Coach and General Manager.” A line came down from it to a **very large block** in which was printed: “Everybody Else!”
1. **Title: Letting Go of You!**
- B. 12:1-11(6 days before) 12:12-19(5 days before) 12:20-50(4 days before) 13-17(the night b4).
1. Ch.12 was the beginning of Christ’ **last week** on earth.
 2. John devotes ch.12-17 to the final preparation of Jesus’ **disciples**.
 3. This **underscores** the **importance** of what Jesus **said & did** during this time.
- C. John now transports us from the **sleepy village** of **Bethany** to the **bustling metropolis** of **Jerusalem**.
1. With **Passover** only **5 days** away, the city is bursting w/people who have come to celebrate.
 2. Most of them had either **witnessed** Jesus bringing Lazarus out of the tomb or had **at least heard** about it. **Now this miracle worker is coming to their city!**

II. **TRIUMPHAL ENTRY! (12-19)**

- A. **HOSANNA!** (12-15)
- B. This moment was perhaps the high mark of Jesus’ popularity & influence.
1. **Yet**, in only a few days however, these **Hosannas** would turn to **Crucify Him!**
- C. (12) Jesus takes advantage of the large Passover crowd to present Himself as **King**.
1. Jesus had **avoided** situations that would **hasten** His death.
But now He was forcing the Jewish leaders to **act**, for it was the Father’s will that Jesus die on Passover. **Now, the hour** had come!
- D. (13) The **palm branch** was a symbol of **triumph** and **victory** in pre-Christian times. **The Romans** rewarded champions of the games **and** celebrated military successes with palm branches. **Early Christians** used the palm branch to symbolize the victory of the faithful over enemies of the soul, as in this Palm Sunday festival celebrating the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. **In Judaism**, the palm represents peace and plenty, **and** is one of the 4 Species for the Feast of Booths.

1. Why do you think that in the space of 1 short week Jesus could go from being **the most popular person on the planet to public enemy #1?**
 - a) It's easier to shout in a parade than stand at a cross! (www)
2. But actually, the statement that "*the crowd that cried 'Hosanna!' on Palm Sunday ended up crying 'Crucify Him!' on Good Friday*" is not true!
 - a) It was primarily *the Jerusalem Jews*, influenced by the priests, who asked for His blood (Matt. 27:20).
 - b) **This multitude** of enthusiastic lovers of Christ were principally from Galilee.

E. **Hosanna** - "Save" or "Save Now". *An expression of Praise!*

F. The gospel of John emphasizes the **royalty** of Jesus. (Mt.21; Mrk.11; Lk.19)

1. John is the only gospel that records that the people also shouted, "**Blessed is the King of Israel!**"

G. **3 GROUPS!** (16-19)

H. (16) The disciples didn't understand this was fulfilling prophecy, until after His death.

I. (19) The **Pharisees** can't hardly believe their eyes. More & more people, hearing about the miracle of Lazarus, kept putting their faith in this Jesus, this local man who was causing so much trouble for them.

J. **Religious jealousy is deplorable.** It leads to murder, *if not by cross, by the lips!*

1. It embitters the heart; separates & divides those who ought to love.

III. **GRAIN OF WHEAT!** (20-26)

A. **ITS GREEK TO ME!** (20-22)

B. **Certain Greeks/Gentiles** - *God-fearing Gentiles* who were probably **not yet proselytes** but still admired much of what they saw in Judaism & came regularly to the feasts.

C. **At His birth, Gentiles came from the East; now at His death, Gentiles come once again.**

1. These men came to **Philip**, probably because of his Greek name. (Andrew also)

D. (21) I believe the coming/inquiring of these Greeks, put **a smile** on Jesus' face.

1. **Why?** Because their coming introduces the consummation of Jesus work.
2. These Greeks were **a token of the world of people beyond Israel** who would be saved through Jesus' atoning death & resurrection.
3. And what had **just taken place**, on this very day(Lk.19:41), was that the King had been **rejected by Israel**. And Jesus **wept** over them, **because they had not known the time of their visitation.**

a) The Jews said, "**We want to see a sign!**" The Gentiles said, "**We want to see Jesus!**"

- E. (21,22) Unsure what to do Philip goes to Andrew together they bring the request to Jesus.
1. **Interesting**..Andrew is only mentioned **3 times** in the bible, & **each time** he is bringing **someone to Jesus!** *What a soul-winner!*
- F. **LETTING GO OF YOU!** (23-26)
- G. (23) **Glorified** - i.e. In His death & Res.
1. There was no other way **to** the glory, than Calvary & the grave!
 2. If His love for men was to **bear much fruit**, He must fall into the ground & die.
 - a) **Death** is the only way to Savior-ship! **Death** is the necessary price of fruitfulness!¹
- H. (24) Jesus sees Himself as a seed that would **die & produce fruit**.
1. Jesus so masterful at using *observations from nature* to illustrate spiritual realities.
 2. Earlier, he used the illustration of the *sower sowing seeds*.
Now, He talks about the seed itself. **It must die first. It must lose its own identity.** That the new plant may spring up.
 - a) Thus, **death** is a condition of *life at its fullest!*
 - b) Jesus understood that **His death** would bring **life to many people**.
- I. **Small Potatoes** - A pastor/farmer was digging up a mess of potatoes in his garden. But he accidentally dug up a sermon as well. On the **1st hill** of potatoes there was 7 beautiful, large potatoes. But when he plunged his fork under **the next plant** there was only 3 scrawny ones, as small as marbles. He saw the reason. For some reason or another the original *seed potato* had **failed to die!** It looked almost as it did 4 months earlier. It didn't die & there was no fruit. *3 sermons came from these 3 small potatoes:*
1. A lesson about **Jesus** - **unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground & dies, it produces much grain.** Jesus the grain of wheat that died, only to be resurrected in us as believers as His fruit.
 2. A lesson for **Sinners** - Until the sinner **dies to his own works & to his own efforts, merit, & righteousness**, he cannot know life & be saved.
 3. A lesson for **Believers** - We too have been "planted in the likeness of His death"(Rom.6:5). This established our position & salvation. But, to become fruitful we must **die to self**. We must **put to death the works of the flesh**(our old nature)

¹ ibid

- J. (25) He who **loves** his old life/old nature/old ways (w/o Jesus) **will lose it** for/in eternity!
He who **hates** his old life in this world, **will keep it** for eternal life!
1. It's **not saying**, you can't enjoy your stay here on planet earth!
 - a) Solomon said, **that every man should eat & drink & enjoy the good of all his labor - it is the gift of God!** (Eccl.3:13)
 - b) Look what Jesus just said in **John 10:10b**.
 2. Examples of **loving your life**: my life when Brian was #1; my selfish life; my self-focused life; my life when I was in charge; **it's the art of keeping it all for me!**
 3. Examples of **hating your life**: death to the old Brian; not my will but His will be done; **it's the art of giving my all for others!**
- K. The Christian life is a paradox: **to keep**, we must **give**; **to be great**, we must **serve**; **to live**, we must **die**.
1. **And not until we die** will we realize the real **joy of giving**, or the **emptiness of keeping**.
- L. **But, how do I know if this is speaking to me? Here's a test:**
1. If your favorite subject is **yourself**, then it might be you! :-)
 2. If a glazed look that comes over your eyes when the conversation wanders away from you.
 3. **God sends no one away empty, except those who are full of themselves.** DL Moody
 4. The trouble with some **self-made men** is that they worship **their creator**.
- M. **Discipleship means crucifying the ego & putting Christ & others first.** H.G.Bosch
1. **We've got a lot of people running around with seriously inflated egos who come crashing to earth all the time.**
 2. **Ego** is a person's sense of self-esteem or self-importance. [**Ego**, Greek for "I"]
 3. The **smallest package** in the world is **a person wrapped up in himself**.
 4. I'll say up front, I don't think this is a very **politically correct** statement, but it's a direct quote from an **American Indian convert**, who in broken English said, "Indian lay down **blanket** - Indian lay down **pipe** - Indian lay down **tomahawk** - Indian lay down **Indian!**" [That's it!]
 5. When I got saved, I laid down my **sense of humor**, because it was pretty crude, **but** He let me keep my sense of humor, just a cleaned up version. I laid down my **rights**, I was no longer my own, because **He had bought me for a price; and now I'm to glorify Jesus in my body & spirit.** (1Cor. 6:19,20) I laid down my **future**, because it was better trusting my future to One who sees the end from the beginning!
 - a) The more we **die** to self, the more we **live** unto God!

N. (26) **Service** - All through life we must be prepared to **erect altars** on which to *sacrifice all that hinders* our highest service to others.

1. A **businessman** well known for his ruthlessness once announced to writer **Mark Twain**, "Before I die I mean to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will climb Mount Sinai and **read** the 10 Commandments aloud at the top." "I have a better idea," replied **Twain**. "You could stay in Boston and **keep them**."
2. The soul that dares to live in this way finds **streams** flowing from every smitten rock, and **honey** in the carcass of every slain lion. **Day** out of night, **spring** out of winter, **flowers** out of frost, **joy** out of sorrow, **fruitfulness** out of pruning, **Olivet** out of Gethsemane, life out of death. F.B.Meyer

O. I would sum up this section with 4 statements:

1. Look the world has **gone after Him** (19) - **Have you?**
2. Sir, we wish to **see Jesus** (21) - **Do you?**
3. Do you **hate your old life?** (25) - **Or, still love it?**
4. If anyone **serves Me**, let him **follow Me** (26)- **Are you serving Him or self?**
 - a) When **Mother Teresa** was passing through a crowd in Detroit a woman remarked, *Her secret is that she is free to be nothing. Therefore God can use her for anything.*

P. **Q:** What is your condition at this moment? Maybe you are a **believer** yet are still struggling with *bearing fruit* in your life. *Basically you're still small potatoes!*

1. Ask the Lord, **what you need to "lay down" this morning; what you need to "give up"; what you need to "crucify"!**

Q. Maybe you've **never** made a profession for Christ. Maybe you're like the *little potato seed*, covered up by life's dirt, with arms folded, saying, *"I'm not gonna die!"*

1. I invite you to **come & die** this morning! That you might bust forth with **a life** full of **fruit**, **a life** filled with **abundance**, **a life worth living**, **a life** that **isn't selfish**, **a life** that **matters**, a life that seeks to **make a difference** in this world, **a life committed** to Jesus Christ!