

# John 11:45-47 “The Tyranny of the Convenient and the Gift of Grace” Preached @ Harambee Church by Pastor Michael Gunn on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007

*“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.”*

**Acts 2:22-23**

*“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”*

**Genesis 50:20**

## Intro

As I said last week, chapters eleven until the end of the book deal with the last week before the crucifixion of Jesus, His resurrection and His short post resurrection ministry with His disciples. Though the raising of Lazarus was truly a real event, and a miracle, it also was a grand reminder that Christ is the one who would soon conquer death by rising from the dead permanently so that He could bring with Him those that believe in His ability to conquer death. There were two reactions to the reality of Christ before them. The reaction is no different than the reaction we see today. Some believed (Verse 45), and some, simply worried about their position on earth, rejected Him (Verse 46ff).

But what's important is its placement so close to the Lazarus story, and how it relates to us. It shows us two things that are important to know in our walk with God.

## From the Head...

### We often make decisions out of convenience

Here the religious establishment saw a man raised from the dead, and still had hearts that looked to their own convenience, and places of power. *“The Romans will come and take away our **place** (Their religion) and our **nation**”* (Their Ethnic Identity). They failed to realize that in Christ, He is “The” temple (Place) that would be destroyed and raised up in three days, and that He is the Good Shepherd of the people. These things had become things to control with petty doctrine, and not life to be lived. It is pretty easy to get caught up in our own agenda's and miss God's! Our hearts often turn toward religion and away from God. Let's not miss God for the sake of our own apotheosis.

Caiaphas was the High Priest that year, and he was a Sadducee (Who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead). The council that came together is the Sanhedrin (Made up of both Pharisees and Sadducees<sup>1</sup>). John presented this information to remind us of the importance of that year, not the amount of time that Caiaphas would be in power.<sup>2</sup>

### While God makes decisions wrought in purpose

The irony is that in God's grace, he was using Caiaphas' words in an uncanny prophetic twist. What Caiaphas meant pragmatically, God was working out in reality for the good of many nations. One man truly had to die for the sake of the many (Romans 5), but not for political reasons only, but because this plan was the only plan that could save humanity from their death sentence, and bring glory to God in the mean time. What Caiaphas and his men meant for political convenience, and self centered gain, God meant for good.

## ...to the Heart

This story is here to remind us of the reality once again that it is God who is sovereignly working behind the scenes to use evil for His own good. He is working to center self-centered people on the only center worth living for, Himself. How often to we reject God for our own convenient reasons, and then justify them would solid reasoning? God I know that this is what I am supposed to do, but...

**For Further Reading:** *“The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John”* William Barclay; *“The Gospel of John,”* F.F. Bruce; *“The New Testament Commentary: The Gospel of John,”* William Hendriksen; *“Preaching the Word; John: That You May Believe,”* R. Kent Hughes; *“The NIV Application Commentary: John,”* Gary M. Burge; *“The Pillar NT Commentary: The Gospel According to John,”* D.A. Carson

**Next Weeks Verses: John 12:1-8**

To dialogue with the sermon go to [www.sermonrant.wordpress.com](http://www.sermonrant.wordpress.com) and express your thoughts

<sup>1</sup> The Pharisees and Sadducees didn't necessarily get along. The Pharisees were the more religious bunch, while the Sadducees were the more wealthy, aristocratic and political group. As long as they could retain their wealth and comfort they were very content to collaborate with Rome. All the priests were Sadducees.

<sup>2</sup> This has been assumed by some commentators, reflecting poorly on John or Jesus' understanding of Jewish culture, since the high priest would be one for life.