

**Text: John 12:20-33**

<sup>20</sup> Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. <sup>21</sup> They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup> Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup> I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. <sup>25</sup> The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

<sup>27</sup> "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." <sup>29</sup> The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

<sup>30</sup> Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. <sup>31</sup> Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup> But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." <sup>33</sup> He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

**Prayer of the Day:**

Eternal God and Father, help us to remember Jesus, who obeyed your will and bore the cross for our salvation that through his anguish, pain, and death we may receive forgiveness of sins and inherit eternal life; through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Verse of the Day:**

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45)

**Sermon Text:**

Our lesson today actually jumps past the events of next Sunday. Palm Sunday is recorded in verse 12-19 in the Gospel of John. Now after the events of Jesus Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, a group of Greek converts, we assume they were converts to Judaism because they have come to celebrate the Passover like so many other God-fearing Jews, they ask if they can see Jesus. Maybe they know Philip, maybe they don't but the point is Jesus is famous, even the Greeks are asking for Him wanting to see Him. Think fans at a concert who want to try and meet the band.

Comically enough, Philip doesn't know what to do, so he runs to Andrew who then figures the both of them should go and ask Jesus. You kinda want to shake them a bit and say, "Hey guys, if someone wants to see Jesus, you take them to see Jesus. It's called evangelism!" Of course, 8<sup>th</sup> commandment and all perhaps they are thinking of those times Jesus had said "not yet" when it came to Gentiles.

Perhaps stranger still is Jesus' answer. He doesn't gobble up the attention. In fact, we don't hear of the Gentile Jesus seekers again. Instead, He pulls the disciples aside and reminds them what these coming days are about. That seems to be a recurring theme as well when one goes to Jesus with a question, you always tend to find more than you bargained for. And so today, we find ourselves amidst the crowd listening to what Jesus would say. Yes, **WE WOULD SEE JESUS!** Turns out, **IN CHRIST'S CROSS, WE SEE WHY HE HAS COME. IN CHRIST'S CROSS, WE SEE EVERY REASON TO FOLLOW.**

Our Savior Jesus certainly has a strange way of defining glory. After all that is what He says the coming passion history is in our lesson right? *The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.* <sup>24</sup> I

*tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.* <sup>25</sup> *The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.* He will be glorified in death!?! One wonders what the disciples thought as they jumped between two polar opposites. Apparently, Jesus had become popular enough that the Greeks were seeking Him out even as the Passover celebration week was kicking off, that seems like glory. But then when they bring this to Jesus' attention, instead of capitalizing of the fame we are talking about death again.

Of course, Jesus isn't going crazy, far from it! Instead, He knows better than any that these next few days are the very culmination of why He has come into this world of ours. Soon will come the Passover, the sign of things yet to come as blood once marked the doors of the Jews in Egypt and will once again flow freely on a hill outside the sacred city. Soon, Judas in the Garden and the kiss, the feigned show of friendship which is the sign of betrayal and only the beginning of the brutality which will be suffered that night. Soon the blood curdling cry not of "Hosanna to the coming King" but "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" And so it will be. Pilate washes his hands but has no problem handing him over the guards to be scourged, whipped, mocked and beaten before He is forced to carry that cross to the hill, the altar of God where His Son is to be slain for your sins and mine. Glory? Ah, but then it is for if this kernel dies many more will live. For this, this is how the prince of this world, Satan himself, is driven out. This is how sin is paid for in full. This is how You and I are saved.

Of course, Jesus isn't looking forward to torment and torture. He is no masochist. *"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!"* It has so often been said nails didn't fix Jesus to that cross, love did! And thus, the great mystery of Lent for while we look at it, it seems to be all about Him, all about Christ. But when Jesus looks at it, it's all about us, to save us and win us back to the glory of the Father.

Oh, and as He does dear friends, as He makes His way to that cross for you, as you watch it anew in the coming weeks and over the course of our services, make no mistake about it, He claims you as His own and gives you every reason to follow after Him. He says as much, *But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.*

And so the impossible happens all over again. <sup>25</sup> *The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.* <sup>26</sup> *Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.*

This sounds as strange as the glory Jesus sought previously. Someone who hates their life is looney, deranged. We may even need to have them committed should they seek to follow through in despair as Judas does later. Ah, but this is not what Jesus is talking about. In fact, such a person is really consumed with self. It's all about them and because it is, when life isn't as they wish, well despair sets in.

Jesus is talking about something different. Life is not focused on self but on Him and because it is selfishness is as sinless as self-hate. I am not the most important person in my world. Jesus is! And because he draws us to himself, because He considered us more important than His own life, well we will begin to see others as more important than self. The needs of your spouse, far more important than your own (consider Ephesians 5). The spiritual security of your children more important than the earthly accolades which can all too often drown out time with Christ (think Proverbs 22:6). Our connection to Christ and His Word, more urgent than gratifying the flesh with it's wants and desires (see Ephesians 2). This is service to Christ and life lived as a Christian, a follow of Jesus as we follow after Him and His Holy Word.

I told you, we always get more than we bargained for when Jesus is around. My has he been present: In Word and in Sacrament the opportunities have been all over the place lately, and there are even more to come. Dear friends like those Greeks at the beginning of our lesson, may we be bold in grasping for time with our Savior. May it mark us in the world around us. Yes, **WE WOULD SEE JESUS!** As Lent bleeds into holy week, **IN CHRIST'S CROSS, WE SEE WHY HE HAS COME. IN CHRIST'S CROSS, WE SEE EVERY REASON TO FOLLOW.** Amen!