

## ***We Would See Jesus***

**John 12:20-33**

**FOCUS:** Jesus makes the Father known to the world by his obedience

**FUNCTION:** Encourage believers to make God known (“glorify”) in their lives.

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### **Prayer for Illumination**

#### **John 12:20-33**

Now there were **some Greeks** among those who went up to worship at **the Feast**. They came to **Philip**, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request.

**"Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus."**

*Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.*

Jesus replied, **"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."**

*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.***

*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.***

*Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.*

**"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!"*

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

*Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. **Now is the time for judgment** on this world;  
now the prince of this world will be driven out.*

*But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.*

## Sermon

*Last week, Ginger's sister, Trisha, and her boyfriend came to visit us in Virginia on their spring break.*

While we were hanging-out, Evan, the boyfriend said, "you guys, **there is this comedian you've got to hear!**"

Trisha nodded emphatically in agreement.

So he **played a recording** of this stand-up **routine** which was, indeed, absolutely hysterical, particularly as he **joked about food and hot pockets**.

Part way through, the comedian began **talking about religion**.

He said, "**Doesn't it make you feel awkward when people want to talk religion?** Someone comes up and says, "Hey there, I'd like to talk to you about Jesus..."

The crowd laughed.

"**Even when you know the person is religious**, it is still makes you feel uncomfortable.

"You **walk up to the pope** and tell him you want to talk about Jesus and even he says, "Hey buddy, I keep work at work, ok?""

Needless to say, I was laughing hysterically.

Because **the best comedy is the one that is based on the truth**.

**And as funny as his routine was, he was dead right.**

## *Don't you agree?*

Doesn't the idea of talking about Jesus **make you squirm a little? Or maybe a lot?**

We've been brought up to think that someone's beliefs are a **private matter**.

Just like you don't **ask someone how much money** they make, you don't talk about religious beliefs.

It's uncomfortable; a **taboo** subject.

Even here at church, where it's suppose to be safe, isn't it **awkward to say the name, "Jesus"?**

**And yet, we know all too well that we're called to share the Good news.**

Over and over, the Bible says **we have to be disciples**, that we must share the gospel.

**And not because God wants to keep us busy or make us uncomfortable.**

But **because the world needs hear about the love of God so badly.**

Faith in Jesus is not a matter of taste or opinion.

It is quite seriously a matter of life or death.

*Jesus illuminates the nature of this through his entire life.*

**Making God known:** that's the business he is about.

You might say, **"Sure, that may be easy for him, being God in the flesh and all..."**

Nevertheless, **Jesus models what it means to make God known in terms and ways that we can understand.**

*First, let's set up the scene:*

**At this point in the Gospel, we are merely days away from Jesus' crucifixion.**

**This means Jesus and his disciples are in Jerusalem.**

This is after the Triumphal Entry.

And it's not just a normal busy day but **in the middle of** the paramount holy season of the Jewish faith, **Passover**.

**Believers from all over the known world** were required to come to Jerusalem (i.e., where the Temple was, the centerpiece of the Jewish faith) and make sacrifices.

Apparently Jesus and the disciples are walking through the **festival crowds, like walking through the Salem Fair.**

**It says out of the crowds, "some Greeks" came up.**

These are probably not Gentile Greeks, but **Jewish Greeks:**

That is to say, **monotheistic foreigners** who believe as the Israelites do.

They're **far away from home**, here to observe the proper rituals their faith requires.

*"Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus."*

Maybe they saw Jesus' kingly procession or heard the news at the local inn about the messiah being in town.

Either way, **their curiosity draws them to Jesus.**

*They approach Philip.*

Being from Bethsaida in Galilee,

which is, closer to the outside world,

perhaps he had a familiar look they trusted.

Maybe they had heard his distinctly Greek name.

Regardless, Philip is the one. He goes to Andrew and the two of them approach Jesus about gaining an audience.

**Jesus does something quite interesting however.**

He doesn't turn and say, "How may I help you?"

He **dives directly into an explanation** about what is about to happen and is happening even now.

***"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."***

This **phrase is full of John's code words:**

"The hour" is the crucifixion.

"Glorified" is synonymous with "revealed".

In other words, Jesus says, **"It is time to reveal who God is."**

The time has come **to fulfill what he came to** earth to do.

Jesus' entire earthly ministry simply pointed to this point.

Now the time was at hand.

**Next, Jesus jumps to an illustration about what his death will do.**

A parable about wheat.

*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.*

Unless it dies, it cannot become more than what it is.

**There is a profoundly beautiful mystery wrapped up in this very simple illustration.**

**Trees cannot grow bigger and stronger until it sheds its leaves, lay dormant during the winter.**

**Children cannot grow up unless the parents let the child go to become who they are.**

**An old way dies. It is both sad and good.**

Things must die in order to make room for life.

Otherwise it is alone, a “single seed” that can do nothing.

But in its death springs life, abundant life even, infinitely more than the single seed could ever be alone.

**Jesus then moves the dynamic into the human realm:**

***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.***

Using the strong language of love and hate, Jesus shows how the parable of the wheat is just as true for us:

If we live for ourselves, when we die, it is the end.

If we die to ourselves, that is, reject the old way and live for Jesus, then Jesus trades our dead life for eternal life.

You can't lose your life for the sake of gaining it. But you can give your life to Jesus, and he exchanges it for eternity.

**Next, we are given our first glimpse of the Garden of Gethsemane.**

That is to say, we **get a peek into Jesus' heart.**

He's **not standing there, overflowing with joy** about what is about to happen to him.

Rather, Jesus **reveals that his heart is heavy.**

*"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'?"*

We know that in a day or two, he will ask this very thing:

*"Father, takes this cup from me..."*

We see that Jesus has a resolve despite the burden of responsibility he carries.

*No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour*

**Jesus has come to reveal God to the world, and he's going to have to become like the seed of wheat and die in order to make it happen.**

But he does it nonetheless.

*Perhaps a powerful demonstration of his resolve is in this impromptu prayer that he cries out.*

He **doesn't pray for help for himself.**

He prays that the Father would indeed be revealed:

*Father, glorify your name!*

**And beyond belief, the Father responds!**

Some here it as thunder... others as an angel. However it happened, the people heard:

*"I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."*

**We're given a glimpse of God's master plan for humanity:**

**He wants to be known.**

Through Jesus, the Father has already become more revealed.

And with the cross right around the corner,  
he will be fully revealed.

**Jesus informs the audience,**

The Greeks, the disciples and anyone else who has certainly crowded in to hear his words,

**That this voice was for them, not him.**

And then returns to the theme from the beginning of his speech:

That :

*Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.*

The "judgment" is humanity's judgment;

The guilty verdict of all the people of the world.

And on Satan's power.

**The unfair thing is that that punishment will be poured out on Jesus.**

The time of judgment is, in fact, **the cross.**

It is the **turning point in all of human history,**

where **God himself pronounces judgment on the world**

**but gives the penalty to his own Son.**

But because **Jesus, like the spotless Passover lamb** that thousands would sacrifice in Jerusalem that week, **will pay for the sins of the world. Unlike the lambs, it will last longer than a year but a lifetime.**

*"...when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.*

Lifted up for all the world to see...

...to see God...

***Glorifying God... making God known... that is what Jesus does best.***

...and that is what we are also called to do.

**We are pressed in by crowds of people in our lives**

most just going through the rituals of everyday life

some maybe even nominal believers.

But all **missing the God who is walking right in their midst.**

People who need to hear about God  
and they **need us to say something.**

**Jesus struggled** with what was at stake to glorify/reveal the  
Father

So he can identify with us in our own trepidation.

And we are **called to overcome our discomfort** and usher  
people into the presence of Jesus; the one who reveals the kind  
of God we worship.

**And we cannot take for granted that something in us must die.**

We have to be like the seed and lose ourselves.

Lose the sense of self-preservation that keeps us from  
taking risks; from getting serious about

Jesus faced the harder death so that we might have the  
courage from him to die to ourselves and instead live our lives  
for him.