

John 12:20–29

20Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast.

21Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

22Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

23But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

25He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

26If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

27"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

28Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

29Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."

"We Would See Jesus"

John 12:20-26

INTRO:

Several years ago, while I was reading the Baptist Bulletin, I came across a picture of Dr. David Otis Fuller standing in the pulpit that he had occupied for some forty years, the pulpit of the Old Wealthy Street Baptist Church. On the pulpit facing the preacher where only Doc Fuller could see was a little plaque that read, "We would see Jesus." I thought what a wonderful reminder that the job of the preacher is to help the people see Jesus.

I mention this quote because it is taken from the text we will explore today. These words are not the words of Jewish followers of Jesus. Nor are they the voice of the Scriptural scholars of Jesus' day. They aren't even the words of His disciples. These words are found on the lips of some Gentiles who approach Philip and ask to see Jesus. As we consider this text, our exploration will fall into two parts.

I. The Request (v. 20-22)

II. The Answer (v. 23-26)

I. The Request (v. 20-22)

"Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus."

A. Who were these Greeks? The original language of the passage indicates that these are not just Greek speaking Jews, but actual Gentiles. Calvin, for example, thinks that these Greeks were from Greece itself. More probably, they were from the area near Galilee called Decapolis, a Gentile area. This is why they were drawn to Philip who was from Bethsaida -- a city in that vicinity.

B. Their request was an interesting one (v. 21). ***"Sir, we wish to see Jesus."*** The question is: Did they just want to catch a glimpse of Him from afar or did they really want to see Him as He is? Most commentators think the former.

C. This request presented a real problem to Philip, (which presupposes that they wanted to do more than just look at Him!). So, he went and found Andrew, who is also from Bethsaida. Andrew and he go together to find Jesus. Therefore, the table is set, let us get to the meat of our spiritual meal.

II. The Answer (v. 23-26)

"But Jesus answered them, saying, 'The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.'"

A. Notice how **verse 23** begins. It says, ***"And Jesus answered them, saying. . ."*** This is a key phrase. Our whole understanding of this text turns on these words. Who is Jesus answering? Granted, in the foreground Andrew and Philip are standing there. But whose question is Jesus answering? This is in one sense the answer to the request brought by the Gentiles. But it also answers the unspoken need of the two disciples. ***"How can we really know you, Lord?"***

B. Our Lord's answer is intriguing. ***"And Jesus answered them, saying, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified'"*** (v. 23). If you want to see Me and really know Me, then you must understand what God the Father is doing through Me. You must understand that the hour for which Jesus came into the world has arrived. You need to understand a little bit of God's eternal plan if you are to really know Him. He spoke about the cross. If you and I are to really know Him, the way is always through the cross.

1. Remember up until this time we have read how His hour had not yet come. But now everything had changed. The hour was no longer future. It was present.

2. What hour was this? The hour was when He would show the world the nature of God Himself. Listen to what He said in **John 17:1** ***"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You."*** He would fulfill the purpose for which He came into the world. How would He glorify the Father?

(1) He was glorified in that at Calvary His LOVE for us was seen as never before displayed.

(2) His HOLINESS was demonstrated in that the supreme punishment for sin was meted out upon Him.

(3) His MERCY and GRACE were shown in that this payment was applied to me and you, if you know Him as your Savior. All which made Him God was displayed once and for all to a world clothed in darkness.

C. ***"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" verse 24.*** Second, Jesus said, you must understand what my death will accomplish. It is like a seed planted and until it dies it abides alone. But when it is planted it bears much fruit! Jesus died alone to save many. One died in order that many might live. ***(1 Corinthians 15:22) "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."***

D. ***"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal."*** (verse 25) Third, if you really want to know me, you must be willing to die to this present world. This is where it gets tough. Following Jesus was never designed to be comfortable and fun. Jesus talked about two responses to Him.

1. Perhaps I should first point out what He is not saying. He is not saying we need to go through life as miserable people. Some people think this is what He is talking about and they do all kinds of crazy things. Some like the Amish eschew power tools, automobiles, and other such things to show that they are not loving this present world too much. Some see in this a call to a monastic life style. That is not what He is saying.

2. He talked about people who love this present world too much. These people who will not leave the comforts of this present life to serve Him. Let me give you one illustration from the Apostle Paul's life. In ***2 Timothy 4:10*** we read of one of Paul's colleagues. ***"Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica."*** We are not told what it was exactly that Demas loved, but whatever it was, it took him away from serving the Lord.

3. Now He turned the coin over to those who compared to their depth of love for the Lord hate their lives in this present world. They will gain life eternal. They will find what life is all about. If you really want to know Christ, you must be like John the Baptist was, committed to the Lord's increasing in your life and you decreasing.

4. He continues this thought into the beginning of ***verse 26. "If anyone is going to serve me, let him follow me."*** Really knowing Jesus involves serving Him and following Him. This means going where He wants us to go and doing what He wants us to do. This is not easy.

E. ***"Where I am, there My servant will be also."*** (John 12:26) Oh yes! I can get into this thought. He is in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father. I someday will be in heaven with Him since I know Him as my Savior. True, but that is not what He said. He said, ***"Where I am."*** Where was He right then? He was standing in the shadow of a cross. Being a servant and a follower of Jesus means being willing to give everything for Him.

D. At this point we might be tempted to say, "Lord, this is all so difficult and painful. Is it worth it to do this?" This is where the fourth reality about really knowing Jesus comes into focus. If you really want to know me, you need to know that there is a tremendous blessing at the end of this that makes all the pain and suffering worth it

1. Here is the great blessing in **verse 26**. ***"If anyone serves me, Him will my Father honor."*** What does this mean? I don't know. I am not sure anyone knows.

2. But Spurgeon took a stab at it in a message that He preached on this text. He wrote: "Can we not hear it? I think I hear the King's voice. 'Stand back, ye angels! Make room, ye seraphim! Make way! For here comes the man, here comes the woman, who was with my Son. He was only a poor sinful man. He was born in an ungodly time in the midst of an ungodly people. He did not know much. But He was with my Son. He was like Him. He stood by Him. Now I will honor him. Come up here. Here, take this crown, and sit there with my Son on His throne and reign with Him. For you shall indeed be with my Son in His Glory even as you were with Him in His shame.'"

Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 2:11-12** ***"This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him."***

The question is: Do we really want to know Him? If we want to really see Jesus, this is how it is done.

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