

We Want to See Jesus

Over the last few weeks we have been looking at Luke 9 and seeing what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. And here is the truth we have learned: What it means for us to be a disciple of Jesus is really all wrapped up in what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah. Remember that Jesus had asked His disciples who they thought He was. Peter had answered correctly, "You are the Christ of God." Then Jesus had explained clearly what it meant for Him to be the Messiah, the Christ of God. It meant rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection. "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day," (Luke 9:22).

Today people look at Jesus in many different ways. Some see him as a Good Teacher, a misunderstood figure of history, a great leader of men, a deceiver, a Myth, some see him as God.

I think the whole confusion rests in His death. Until the crucifixion, He was a miracle worker, a teacher of truth, a comfort to the afflicted, a guide to the lost, friend to the friendless, health to the sick - even as some pointed out – he was Godlike. On the Sunday prior to His death crowds gathered to see him ride into Jerusalem. The people shouted for joy. They expected great things from this miracle worker from Nazareth. Some said He was the King.

Then He died. And not only did he die, but he died a humiliating and shameful death. He died as a condemned criminal with other criminals. What does this death mean?

What are we to make of Jesus' death? I think a good place to look for the meaning of his death is to look to the one who went through it. Jesus had a lot to say about his death. In fact Jesus had told his followers over and over again that he was going to Jerusalem to die.

Today I want you to look with me at an interesting passage of scripture in John 12. Because here Jesus explains His death and what it means for you and me.

The story begins in verse 20 with some Greeks "**who came up to worship at the feast.**" They came to Philip, one of the twelve, and asked to see Jesus.

So did they get to see him -- these Greeks? Most likely they did. But the way Jesus handled the request is probably not what they expected. They said "**Sir, we wish to see Jesus,**" (John 12:21) So Philip and Andrew came and told Jesus (v. 22). Does He show Himself to them? Yes He does. The same way He shows Himself to us - - with truth about Himself that becomes a truth about us. This is the way Jesus appears in power: He gives truth about Himself that becomes truth about us.

Listen to Jesus' answer: (John 12:23-28)

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

24 "Most assuredly, 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.

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

26 "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.

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.

28 "Father, glorify Your name."

So Jesus begins with truth about himself -- the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified and this will happen by the grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying. Then he makes the truth about himself a truth about his followers. Will we hate our lives in this world? Will we follow him on the path to Calvary? Will we serve the Son in this way? Will we let the truth about the Son of Man become truth about us?

Here are some truths about Jesus that must become truths about us:

1. Life Comes Through Death.

Jesus' death was planned by God. It was the path to His glory. Jesus said, "**The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.**" Jesus speaks about being glorified and in the same breath He speaks about death, His death. The cross was always on God's agenda. It was always God's plan.

Jesus' death was for others, not Himself. "**Most assuredly, 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,**" (John 12:24).

Jesus uses an agricultural illustration. It's a picture we can all grasp. If we want to raise a garden we know that it must start by putting seeds in the ground. We must bury the seeds. We can't dig the seeds up every day to check on them . . . we must bury them and leave them there. The seed is abandoned (as it were) to death. Only then can the seed make the harvest possible.

Jesus died to produce fruit, fruit of men that would be drawn to Him. A few verses later Jesus says, "**And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself,**" (John 12:32). And in verse 33 John says, "**This He said, signifying by what death He would die.**"

Jesus died for YOU. Listen to these verses:

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

(Luke 22:19 NIV) And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

(Luke 22:20 NIV) In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

(John 10:11 NIV) "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Do you get the idea that Jesus died for you? For you in what way? – To bring you life.

Jesus said his death was to bring life.

(John 3:16 NIV) "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

(John 3:17 NIV) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

So for Jesus, death becomes life. And it must be for us as well. To be a follower of Jesus means to die.

2. To Lose in This Life is to Gain in Eternal Life.

Jesus gave up His life unto death, even the death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him the Name the is above all names. Jesus gave up a temporary kingdom and gained an eternal kingdom. And Jesus says we must do the same.

"He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life," (John 12:25).

This is the same teaching as that verse we studied in Luke 9:24, **"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."**

The truth is that we lose everything that we associate with this life at some point; it just a matter of time. We cannot hold on to our youth no matter how hard we may try, we cannot hold on our athletic ability (of course some of never had it to begin with) we cannot hold on to our mental capacity we cannot even hold on to our loved ones. It's just a matter of time. Jesus tells to start now. Don't focus on grabbing and keeping what you have. Corrie ten Boom said, "I have learned to hold all things loosely, so God will not have to pry them out of my hands."

3. Honor Comes Through Service.

"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," (John 12:26).

Jesus came as a servant, willing to do whatever was necessary in order to move men, and bring them to the saving knowledge of Himself. In the very next chapter John tells the story of the last supper. Jesus got up, took a basin of water, and knelt down and washed their feet. He served.

This is the way we see Jesus and the way we show Jesus. He reveals Himself to us as a Person who goes to glory and bears much fruit by dying -- by hating His life in this world. That's what we see. And then He says, Follow me. Die with me. Hate your life in this world with me. Serve me. And if we do, we show Christ to the world. And the way he means for it to happen is by our becoming like Him in His dying so that others may see Him in us (2 Cor. 4:10).

WHEN I MET THE MASTER

I had walked life's path with an easy tread,
Had followed where comforts and pleasures led,
Until one day in a quiet place
I met the Master face to face.

With station and rank and wealth for my goal,
Much thought for my body, and none for my soul,
I had entered to win in life's mad race
When I met the Master face to face.

Met Him and knew Him, and blushed to see
That His eyes, full of sorrow, were fixed on me,
And I faltered and fell at His feet that day,
As my castles melted and vanished away.

Melted and vanished, and in their place
Naught else could I see but the Master's face;
And I cried, "Oh Lord, please make me meet
To follow the steps of Thy wounded feet."

My thought is now for the souls of men,
I have lost my life to find it again,
E'er since one day in a quiet place,
I met the Master face to face.

Jesus says that if you want to see Me, be prepared to become like Me. This is what happens. Do you mean it: "We wish to see Jesus"? Do we mean it this morning? Jesus says, If you mean it -- if you want to see Me -- prepare to become like Me. Prepare to follow Me on the road I am going. Prepare to die. Then you will find life. Prepare to lose in this world, that you might gain eternal life. Prepare to serve and you will be honored.

So as we prepare to celebrate the Lord's Supper, we prepare to die because Jesus died. As we remember His death and resurrection this morning, we want to make it real by dying with Him, and letting Him live through us.

What I am asking myself and you to think about as we come to the table is this:

*Is there something God is calling me to die to that I might experience more fully my position in Christ; that I might see Christ more clearly and show him more compellingly?

*Am I striving against my very nature as a Christian by trying to keep alive something God sentenced to death when I became a Christian?

*Are my weaknesses as a father or a husband or a witness owing to something that needs to die in me -- some old habit, some secret sin, some root of pride, some fear of looking silly, some desperate need for approval, some desire for wealth?