

Some Greeks Seek Jesus

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again to the chapter we read, John's Gospel, chapter 12, verse 20.

And again, this is a passage we've looked at before, but again, just to refresh our minds. It's a while back, but we have looked at this.

Now, among those who went up to verse 20 of chapter 12 to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida and Galilee, and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus, and so on.

Last week, just very briefly, we had been looking at Mary anointing Jesus in Bethany, and then we saw the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and the vast crowds that were celebrating his arrival into the city.

And the religious leaders were almost beside themselves with frustration and despair, because, as we know, they were working full out to try to destroy Jesus.

[1 : 09] And they'd been working behind the scenes, and they had their network of people trying to trap him and get him, and they were having their secret meetings and such like.

And the more they met, and the more they worked, and the more they tried to get him, the worse things seemed to become. And we find that note of despair in their voice in verse 19.

So the Pharisees said one to another, You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him. As they looked out, and they saw what was happening, just this huge surge of people to Jesus and for Jesus, it left them just another despair.

In fact, in Luke's account of Jesus coming into Jerusalem, we find that some of the Pharisees actually went and they approached Jesus, and they said to Jesus, Rebuke your disciples.

Remember what Jesus said to them, If these people were silent, the very stones would cry out. Anyway, we find, that's one of the great things when we go through the Gospels, that one Gospel writer seems to supplement, and to give a different slant, or fill in the gaps.

[2 : 27] And we know that there was, after Jesus came into Jerusalem, there was a second cleansing of the temple. And then Jesus was teaching, in the temple.

And as he was cleansing, it was in the court of the Gentiles, the outer court. And it could have been as a response, to his teaching, and the authoritative way, that he cleansed the temple, that these Greeks came desiring to see Jesus.

Although it says Greeks, it no doubt involved Gentiles, involved more than the actual, the Greek nationals. I'm sure it included quite a number of other nationalities.

But these were people, who were struck, by the Jewish religion, and the Jewish faith. If they were Greeks, they were used to, many gods.

And I'm sure there was something about, the monotheistic worship of Israel, where they were worshipping just the one God, that appealed. Because many of the Greek gods, as they believed in, had, many of them had very, had questionable behavior.

[3 : 41] And as they looked at Jesus, they saw here, this man of integrity, and honesty. A man of sincerity, and truth. There was something about Jesus.

He was a compelling figure. And anybody could see that, we use the expression, the real deal, when you talk about somebody, somebody who is real.

Well, Jesus, there was something about him, that spoke to people. There was a self-testifying truth about him, that impressed people.

The only people that couldn't be impressed, were those who were so prejudiced, those who had their own agenda, those who had closed their eyes to the truth, like the Jewish religious leaders.

And the reason why they hated him above all, was because he was a threat to them. To their, and as the Bible tells us, it was for envy, that they delivered him up.

[4 : 36] But anyway, here come these Greeks, and they come to, they don't come directly to Jesus, they come to Philip, first of all, and they said, sir, we wish to see Jesus.

And then Philip went, and told Andrew, and Philip and Andrew went, to tell Jesus. And when these Greeks say, we wish to see Jesus, we know fine, that it wasn't simply a matter of, we want to see what he looks like, because he could see that.

It wasn't a matter of, sort of, just saying, we'd like to know a little more about him, you know, his background and such like. This was a desire, that was really saying, is it possible, that we could have time with Jesus?

That's really what they're asking. We want to see Jesus. We want to spend time with him. We want to, to meet with him. These were people, who had come to realize, this Jesus, was a person, that they had to meet.

This Jesus, was they had, they had seen him in action. They had seen his works. And they were, it wasn't just that they were impressed. They realized, I'm sure for them, there might have been a dawning realization, just as for the woman of Samaria, was saying, is this a Christ?

[5 : 49] Anyway, there's this, this is a great desire. And I hope tonight, that everybody in here, has that desire as well, to see Jesus. Because, to see Jesus, in the real way, is to see him, by faith.

In fact, we know in this world, it's the only way, that we can see him. We cannot see him, any other way. There will come a time, if you see Jesus, by faith, there will come a time, when you will see him, by sight.

Because, we will see him, with our eyes, there will come, in the resurrection. And, the Bible makes that, very clear. But, right now, in this world, it is by faith, we see him.

And, I am sure, that every person, tonight, who is seeing Jesus, by faith, is saying, I wish, oh, I wish, I could see him, more clearly. So often, the vision, you have of Jesus, the sight you have of Jesus, is dimmed.

As it says, we see, but through a glass, darkly. Just, we see, we see enough, and there are times, we're given, a great sight, of our Lord, but other times, we struggle, but we know, it's by faith, it's by faith, we go.

[7 : 02] May I say to anybody, in here tonight, who doesn't have that desire, to see Jesus, I pray, that you will have that desire, and that you, yourself, will pray, that you have the desire.

And I would like to think, the very fact, that you're here, indicates, at one level, or another, that there is, some, form of desire. It might be deep down, it might, not be at a very high level, it might not be, at the very top, of your list of priorities, but it's there, and you hope one day, before you die, that you will see Jesus.

But don't, don't work on it like that. I pray that your desire, will be that tonight, that you will, that you will see Jesus. Might have, right now, you might have lots, of other desires, of places you want to go, and people you want to see, and things you want to do, and all these things.

But this is the most important thing, because, it changes your life. There's a lot of people tonight, who can't see it that way. If the whole town is stored, we could see it that way, all our churches would be full.

Cram packed full, with people desiring, to see more of Jesus. Tonight, many people, look on Jesus, as an irrelevancy. There are many people, who think that, to become a Christian, would kind of interrupt their life.

[8 : 26] It would be something, that would, it would spoil their life. There are many people, who think that. Many people, who think that, Christianity is, it's no big deal, it's just a, it's, just as I said, it's an irrelevancy.

But there is nothing, of more importance, in the whole wide world, than, than we would come, to know Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior. Because our future, our well-being, our destiny, our everything, depends on it.

And that's why I say, if you do not have the desire, to see Jesus, Jesus tonight, will you pray for that desire? Lord, give me, the desire. Because, by yourself, in a sense, you can't have that desire.

You know what it would say, in Isaiah chapter 53, that they saw, no beauty, in Jesus, that they would desire him. That's how it was.

That's, and that's how it is, for so many people. They see no beauty, no, nothing attractive, nothing drawing, nothing that, appeals to them. And so, as we say, Jesus, isn't somebody, that they're, that they're looking for.

[9 : 36] I pray that, you will have, that desire. And it's God, who puts the desire, within your heart. Now, of course, grace works, in many different ways. There is only one way, when a person, is born again, what we may term, regeneration.

Where, God's spirit, touches a person's life. Where we, where the seed of God, is planted, within the heart of man. There is only, one way.

But, from our point of view, the outworking of that, is so varied. Some people, it's gradual. Some people, it's sudden. Some people, when they're young, some when they're middle-aged, and some even, when they're old.

It is so different. We've, often enough, highlighted that before, but you go to, Acts chapter 16, and you have Lydia, whose heart, the Lord opened.

It was so gentle. She didn't have, the experience, of Saul of Tarsus. He had a rude awakening, as he thundered, down to Damascus. Lydia, didn't have, the dramatic, the dramatic, intervention, like the, Philippian jailer.

[10 : 43] What must I do, to be saved, as he was in suicidal mood? So you see, the experiences, are all different. But the outworking, all is, producing, the same end, which is, faith in Jesus Christ.

And when God, gives a desire, in your heart, it's in order, to fulfill that desire. God doesn't play games, with us. God doesn't, we must never think that.

God will never, put a desire, in our heart, for his son, Jesus Christ. And then, not deliver. God satisfies, a hungry soul.

And he, because he is true, and he's honest, and he's right, and he's righteous. When the Lord, creates that desire, within us, it is in order, to fulfill that desire, by giving us, his son, Jesus Christ.

And so, it is up to us, to seek Jesus. And so, in response, to the question, that the Greeks ask, in order that they will see Jesus, and as he speaks to Andrew, and Philip, and as Jesus addresses them all, he says, the hour has come, for the son of man, to be glorified.

[11 : 59] Now, as we know, this is the hour, that was set in heaven. It is the hour, that everything, has been moving towards. You remember, how often in the Bible, it would say, they tried to take him, but they couldn't, because his hour, had not yet come.

Well, it has now. There's nothing around Jesus, or about Jesus, to indicate it. Nobody else, could see, or understand, at that moment, what Jesus is talking about.

because he has just, very shortly before, received the adulation, of the crowd. As far as, the people in Jerusalem, is concerned, he is the number one.

And yet, Jesus knows, that it's all, going to change, in a moment, that the hour, has come. And he says here, that the hour, has come, the hour, has come, for the Son of Man, to be glorified.

And God's glory, is seen, in the manifestation, of his majesty. This glory, the glory of God, is seen, in the face of Jesus Christ.

[13 : 09] As Jesus, lived, the life he lived, the glory of God, was displayed in it. In the integrity, in the purity, in the righteousness, in the goodness, in all these, different ways, that the life of Jesus, was portrayed.

The glory of God, was seen in it. There was this, constant display. And there's also, the glory of God, is seen, in the obedience, of Jesus, unto death.

Every step, Jesus took, was in obedience. And that is, bringing glory to God. And we've got to remember that, that's what brings glory to God, is when we live, in obedience to him.

And we also see, that the father, is glorifying the son. Now people often think, that it's the resurrection, where we see the glory, of Jesus. But you cannot separate, the resurrection, from the cross.

It's all, the one work. It's all, tied together. together. And we cannot just say, there's glory in the cross, but there's no glory, in the, no, there's glory in the resurrection, but there's no glory, in the cross.

[14 : 23] There is, the apostle Paul, said that, that he wasn't going, to glory in anything, but in the cross, of Jesus Christ. And of course, when we talk about the cross, we talk about, all that happened, on the cross.

this, was the greatest display, that this world, has ever seen. That weekend, was pivotal, to everything, that this world, is about. If we want to see, one particular moment, in the whole history, of the world, from dawn to dusk, from start to finish, it is that weekend.

Everything, is focused, in, this particular weekend, in the death, and in the resurrection, of the Lord, Jesus Christ. and in that, particular weekend, the glory of God, is manifest, in a way, and in a manner, that transcends, anything that this world, has ever seen.

The glory of God, is seen in the creation, and it is wonderful. And on a beautiful day, when we look out, and we see, see the heavens, declaring the glory of God, and we see, the manifestation, of God's power, and work, and bringing everything, into being.

It is wonderful. But it doesn't come near, that weekend, where, Jesus died, and rose from the dead.

[15 : 43] The Father takes glory, the Son takes glory, the Son is glorifying the Father, the Father is glorifying the Son. And so, Jesus is saying, this, you want to see, you want to see, sir, we want to see Jesus, and this is where, Jesus is pointing them, pointing them, to this particular hour.

And Jesus says, 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. And of course, what Jesus is, showing very simply there, is that, if he didn't die, well, what it's saying here, is, if you have a grain of wheat, one grain of wheat, and you put it on a shelf, and leave it on the shelf, that's what it is, that's what it will remain.

It will never be anything, other than a grain of wheat. But if you take the grain of wheat, and you put it into the ground, and you plant it, then it becomes something else, it grows. And if you take lots of grains of wheat, and you plant them into the ground, then eventually, you will have a harvest.

And this is what Jesus is pointing to. And he says, unless, if I don't die, then I remain alone. Now that doesn't mean, that he would be alone, because Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, enjoyed one another, throughout eternity, in the fullness, of their glory.

But with regard to, the redemption of the church, with regard to the purchasing, of his people, Jesus had to die. This is where the harvest, was going to come. And every believer, from the beginning, of the Old Testament, to the end of the New Testament, is saved, because of what Jesus did.

[17 : 28] The Old Testament, we've said it often enough, the Old Testament believers, were saved, by believing, and trusting, in the promised Messiah. They believed, in the Jesus, who was to come.

And who was, his work, was typified, and symbolized, and set out, in the whole, sacrificial system. Everything that happened, in the structure, and the layout, of the tabernacle, was all pointing, to Jesus.

And, the Old Testament church, they were saved, by believing, in, the promised one, that the Father, had promised, that was shown, by what, what Jesus did.

And there's many, examples, for instance, Abraham. It says of Abraham, he's, Jesus said that, Abraham saw my day. Abraham believed.

It was accounted, to him, for righteousness. So the Old Testament, believers, were seeing, by faith, the provision, that was to be made.

[18 : 33] And the New Testament, believers, where we are, we are saved, by trusting, and believing, in the Savior, who has come. But there is, no other way.

And that's what Jesus, is saying. In order, for this great harvest, in order, for this, this seed, to bring forth harvest, the seed, has first, to die.

And that's what Jesus, is saying. And really, he's saying to, these Greeks, that are present. This is, in order to see Jesus, you've got to see, what he's doing.

You've got to see, what he's about. Because if we don't see that, we've missed the mark. You know, that's one of the sad things, for some people, within the Christian church. They look, at Jesus, simply, with regard to his life.

And they say, right, to be a Christian, we have to strive, to live as Jesus, lived in this world. And that's as far, as they see it. Now, of course, we, we mustn't minimize, the example of Jesus.

[19 : 37] We have to follow Jesus. He is an example for us. But if that's as far, as we go, we're missing, the main purpose, it was to die. We have to see his death.

We have to see the blood. It's not a bloodless Savior we have, but a Savior whose blood has been shed. Because without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. So, this is what Jesus is saying here.

And so he says to them, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat fall to the ground, into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

And then Jesus says, whoever loves this life, loses it. And whoever hates this life in this world, will keep it for eternal life. Jesus gives a very challenging statement there.

[20 : 37] And he's saying to people, if you want to live your life for yourself, and you want life to be all about yourself, and as you live your life in this world, and you want to cling to life as you know it, and to have it just for yourself, you know what?

You're going to lose it. The way to lose your life is to live your life just for yourself. But he says, the way to get life is to lose it.

In other words, to lose ourselves in him. And that's really what Jesus is saying here. Faith in Jesus Christ involves dying to the applause and the approval and even the ways of the world.

That doesn't mean that we go out to provoke the world. It doesn't mean that we're not involved in the world. Of course we are. And in many of its favors and many of its blessings. Because let's remember, they're God-given.

We're not to think that as we live out our days in the world, that we're not to involve ourselves or that we're to withdraw from everybody and everything. We're not called to that type of life.

[21 : 49] But we're called to a spiritual life. We're called to a life that does involve self-denial and following the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, we've got to understand these distinctions.

And Jesus, it's a very strong language Jesus uses. He says, whoever loves his life loses it. And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Now, when Jesus says, who hates, the word carries a kind of a comparative force. Jesus isn't saying, you've got to hate, in order to be a Christian, you've got to hate your life. What Jesus is saying is, nobody, not even yourself, must come above me.

And in order to be a Christian, we must be prepared for that. That Jesus Christ is number one in our life. That's it.

And that is where a lot of people stall. Maybe there are some in here tonight and you're stalling at this very point. And you say, I'd like to be a Christian, but, I don't know if I'm ready just for that.

[23 : 01] Does that mean that Jesus has to be first above everything? Yes. That's exactly what it says. And so Jesus is, sometimes he's very, very blunt in what he says.

We have to hand everything over to Christ. Christ. And we are to serve him. And you notice that serving and following go together. If you find somebody saying, oh, I'm following the Lord Jesus Christ and doesn't serve him, that doesn't make sense.

Service and following go together. That's what it says. If anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there will my servant be also. And if anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

And then Jesus says, now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. Now when Jesus says, now is my soul troubled, the actual verb that is used there carries with it the idea of agitation, distress, even revulsion.

And this is like a little, it's like the beginning of Gethsemane. It's like a Gethsemane moment. The whole distress of what the cross is to be for Jesus is beginning to break out in the very depth of his being.

[24 : 27] And I don't think any of us can even begin to imagine the distress that Jesus is under at this moment. Remember, this is, in our nature, the second passion of the Godhead.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are involved in the creation of this world. Involved in the creation of the human race. And remember, when the human race was created, it was created in holiness, in righteousness, and in life.

There was no death. We were created originally to live forever. And the second passion of the Godhead was involved in that creation. but sin entered in and now there is this, it's as if death has usurped life.

It's as if death has invaded into the life that was originally created to be forever. And this is, this is this awful moment where the Son is having to put himself under this enemy that has invaded in.

That was not part of the creation of God. And so you can understand a little of the distress of Jesus at this moment.

[25 : 46] Of course there is involved also the whole what he has to what he has to go through in order to be the sacrifice for sin because you see death has to be judged.

The wages of sin is death. And God judges sin. And God is going to judge the Son because he's going to be carrying our sins.

And so it's little wonder but that Jesus is at this moment troubled. And that is why it's such a sin to dismiss Jesus and to dismiss the cross and to think it's an irrelevance.

If we could just put our minds back, if we could be transported back 2000 years and see what is happening at that moment. And Jesus says, after, save me, isn't this like Gethsemane, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

And that's what he's saying here, Father, save me from this hour, let this cup pass from me. But, he says, not my will, but thine be done. And here he says, but, for this purpose, I have come to this hour.

[26 : 59] Father, glorify your name. You know, in a sense, at that moment, it's like the beginning of the Lord's prayer. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. All of that is taking place at this moment in the life of Jesus Christ. He's asking, glorify.

This is what he's wanting. Father, in heaven, may your name be hallowed. May your name be glorified. Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, and this is how the kingdom is to come, is through what Jesus is doing.

And Jesus is giving perfect obedience to the will of heaven here on earth. What is our reaction to all this?

Because while all this is historical, it is also 100% relevant to where we are tonight. Do we accept? Do we reject?

[28 : 07] Because Jesus tonight is offering this work, all that he did, he did for us. Are you to walk away from it?

Or are you going to accept what Jesus has done by accepting him as your Lord? Let us pray. Most gracious God, we pray that none of us will walk away from this great offer of salvation, but that we will see and understand more and more of just what it was and what it is that Jesus has done.

Lord, come into our hearts, soften our hard hearts, may your grace lead us in the right way and take away all our sins from us.

Take us to our home safely, we pray. Do us good every day. Prosper us temporarily and spiritually for giving us our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. Our concluding psalm is Psalm 63 from the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 63 from the Scottish Psalter, and we're going to sing verses 1 to 5. You'll find that on page 295.

[29 : 29] Lord, thee my God, I rarely seek, my soul to thirst for thee, my flesh longs in a dry parched land, wherein no waters be, that I thy power may behold and brightness of thy face, as I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place.

Since better is thy love than life, my lips thee praise shall give. I in thy name will lift my hands and bless thee while I live. Even as with marrow and with fat, my soul shall fill it be, then shall my mouth with joyful lips sing praises, and to thee, Lord because j foot thai do lor do.

glad h o'er God, do you let me see my soul not thirst for it be?

My flesh won't send, not dry, our sun will no longer be, that I thy power may be, all and bright as all thy face, that lay a sin be here to fall within thy holy place.

Since bad thou live, I love the life, my lips thee praise shall give.

[31 : 36] I am, I am, well live, I am, and bless thee while I live.

Give not with marrow and with fire, my soul shall fill it in.

Then shall I love with joy, who lives in graces unto thee.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.