

INI - SDG  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent  
February 28, 2010  
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church  
Hecla, SD

**Text: John 12:20-26** *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. But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. 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. 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."*

Theme: "WE WISH TO SEE JESUS!"

- What we see
- When will we see Him

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ Jesus,

Do you ever wish you could go back in time? What would you go back to see or do? Some of us wish we could go back and do something over. Maybe we wish we could be a teenager again and try to be more sociable. Maybe we said something hurtful to someone we loved and wished we could go back and take back what we said. Or maybe there is some historical event you wish you could go back to see. Airplane enthusiasts might enjoy going back and seeing the Wright brothers fly their plane for the first time. American history enthusiasts might enjoy going back and meeting Abraham Lincoln or the founding fathers of our nation.

As we read through the Scriptures there are certain events we wish we could go back and see. Think of how amazing it would have been to see God creating the heavens and the earth. Or seeing the Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea and the armies of Pharaoh drowning behind them. What about seeing David taking on Goliath? That would be neat to see. Or maybe seeing the completion of Solomon's temple, when the glory of the LORD filled the Temple. And we could go on and on.

In the portion of God's Word that we want to focus on today we hear of some Greeks who wanted to see something. They were in Jerusalem during Holy Week to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread and the Passover. Though they were not Jews, they had come to know and believe in the God of the Old Testament and were there to worship Him. By one way or another, they had come to hear about Jesus and wanted to learn more about Him. They approached one of His disciples, Philip, and said, "***Sir, we wish to see Jesus.***" By this they meant more than simply laying eyes on Jesus, for they could do that from a distance. They wanted to have an audience with Jesus. Let us take the words of these Greeks and apply them to ourselves for we too wish to see Jesus! May the Holy Spirit strengthen our inner man working through His Word! Amen.

#### WHAT WE SEE

Politicians have an amazing "gift" for saying many words without really saying anything. They have the ability to dodge questions and to "spin" events for their own benefit. Watching

one news program the other day I heard a reporter ask her guest a simple yes or no question three times, and the politician managed to give three different replies but never answered the yes or no question. The reason politicians talk in such a way is that they are constantly going after votes. They are afraid to say what they really think for fear that they might offend a voter and lose their vote in the next election.

When we read through the Gospels there are times when it seems like Jesus gives strange replies to the situation at hand. Like He's not even answering the question being asked. However Jesus is not bartering for votes. The reason He replies the way He does is because He is trying to teach a higher, heavenly truth. We find Jesus doing just that in our text.

When those Greeks asked to see Jesus, what was it do you think they were expecting? Maybe as Greeks they enjoyed intellectual conversations and philosophical debates. We know that today, glamorous celebrities draw a crowd and people in Jesus' day weren't much different. Herod was eager to see Jesus because he had heard about all the miracles Jesus had done and was hoping Jesus would entertain him with a sort of magic show. Maybe those Greeks were expecting some sort of glamorous celebrity.

Again we don't know what exactly these Greeks were hoping for when they asked to see Jesus, but it probably was not the response they received. Consider the curious reply Jesus has when Andrew and Philip come to tell Him about the Greeks wishing to see Him. "***Jesus answered them, saying, 'The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.'***" Stopping at this point, it might seem that those Greeks were going to get a show! Jesus was going to be glorified!

But Jesus continues, "***The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. 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.***" This seems a most curious response to the Greeks desire to see Jesus. But if these Greeks wanted to see Jesus, this is what they were going to see. Not a magician or the next Aristotle, but a grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying. Jesus was going to be glorified, but He was going to be glorified through His suffering and death.

We understand the picture language Jesus is using. Just like one seed of corn planted in the ground produces a corn stalk with 1000 times as many seeds of corn, so too Jesus death would produce a bumper crop. The fruit of His suffering and death would spread throughout all the world. Through His death Jesus would die for the sins of the whole world. Every last man, woman, and child would have every last sin paid for by Jesus' death on the cross. And because of this the message of His death and resurrection is to be proclaimed throughout all the world. God wants every last man, woman, and child to hear about what Jesus did for them. The bumper crop of Jesus' saving work has grain even here in the Dakotas as evidence by your faith. You too wish to see Jesus. When those Greeks asked to see Jesus, this probably was not what they expected to see and hear from Him, but this is Jesus Christ, the LORD's suffering Servant. This is the Jesus we long to see - our Savior from sin.

But what else do we see with Jesus? Don't we see something about ourselves too? In verse 25, Jesus says something that is rejected in today's society. He says, "***He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.***" Today we are told by psychologists how important it is to love ourselves just the way we are. We are told to accept sinful behavior simply as an "alternative" way of living. We are told that having a good self-esteem - that is feeling good about who you are and all that you do - is the key to having a happy and healthy life. We are told to love ourselves just the way we are.

But how can we feel that way when we see Jesus, especially in this season of Lent? How can we love our lives when we see all the sufferings Jesus endured to save us from what we had

done? How can we love ourselves just the way we are when it was our “alternative lifestyles” (alternative to what God commanded) that caused God the Father to abandon His beloved Son on the cross? Loving our lives means we want to hold onto, cling to, and are unwilling to part with our lives in this world. Jesus says that those who love their lives will lose it. Those who are not willing to separate themselves from their lives in this world will lose their lives, for there is nothing in this world which can save us. This world can only offer death and damnation. It is no wonder that the Apostle Paul said, **“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”** (Rom 7:14)

**“He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life,”** Jesus says. Hating our life in this world does not mean we walk around like puritans with an ashen look on our face. Nor does it mean living like Benedictine monks, torturing our bodies because we hate ourselves so much. After all the Holy Spirit led Solomon to write in Ecclesiastes 5, **“It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage.”** (Ecc 5:18)

To hate our lives in this world means that we would cheerfully give up, turn away, or separate from. That which we hate we do not firmly hang onto. Jesus came to rescue us from this present evil age. He came to give us the life that really is life. When the Apostle Paul was considering his life in this world and the Life that Jesus has secured for him in heaven, he was led by the Spirit to this conclusion, **“For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.”** (Phil 1:23)

What we see with Jesus is a loving Savior dying to rescue us from this dying world of sin.

## WHEN WE WILL SEE JESUS

It would be great to go back in time and see Jesus face to face. To look on Him and hear His voice. To have Him take our children in His arms and bless them. Oh, how we wish to see Jesus! The believer knows that he will see Him after he dies or on Judgment Day, whichever comes first. And what a glorious day that will be, to be able to look right into the eyes of our loving Savior and see Him as He is (1 Jn 3:2). For those who serve and follow Him, Jesus promises, **“where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.”** When we hear that we will be with Jesus and the Father will honor us it makes us all the more eager to let go of this empty and shallow life.

But we don't have to wait that long to see Jesus. Nor do we need a time-machine to see Him. Those Greeks did not merely want to lay their eyes on Jesus, they wanted to spend time with and become acquainted with Him. Every time we hear the Word, the Holy Spirit sharpens our eyes of faith. We gather together in His house to see Jesus - to see Him with our eyes of faith. Every time we open the Scriptures for our home devotions, we get to see Jesus. Every time we gather our children together for family devotions, our children are able to see Jesus and be blessed by Him. Every time we gather together in His name, He promises that He is here with us. Every time we celebrate Lord's Supper, as we will next week, we receive His very body and blood. We need neither a time machine nor to wait for Judgment Day to see our Savior. He has given us His Word and His Spirit whereby we get to see Jesus.

We wish to see Jesus! Jesus whom we worship as our Savior. Jesus who is glorified by His suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus who shows us the life that truly is life - with Him eternally in heaven. So may the Holy Spirit help us that we never turn our eyes away from Jesus. Let us gladly hear and learn His Word that we may see Jesus! We wish to always see Jesus! Amen.