

John Ch 12:20-26

“Seeing Jesus”

As we progress through the gospel of John one of the major themes that quickly emerges is the fact that Jesus is more than simply the Redeemer or *Israel*, but that He’s the Savior of the *world*. In the very 1st Ch J.B. quickly placed the emphasis upon the universal quality of redemption in Jesus when he said, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” John 1:29

You remember when Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus there in Ch 3 of God’s love for mankind we read where Jesus said after saying that God so loved the world there in vs 16, “*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*” John 3:17 As He was ministering to the Samaritans in Ch 4, they said, “...we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.” John 4:42 In Ch 6 Jesus said, “*For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*” John 6:33 and Again in Ch 8, “*I am the light of the world.*” John 8:12

So the Holy Spirit through the apostle John has made no secret of the global mission of Jesus Christ Yes, He came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but He also made it real clear that there was a big picture with *global* appeal to His mission, you remember He said, “*And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*” John 10:16 So while on the earth *physically* He would minister primarily to the nation of Israel, but *spiritually* He was sent to minister to the need of mankind globally, which is the forgiveness of sin and the rebuilding of that bridge whereby sinful man can have a relationship with a holy and righteous God. and Of course that bridge would be built by means of the cross, the shedding of His blood for the sins of the world.

Well, all this to say that when we left off last time it was with the frustration of the Pharisees in what’s become commonly known as the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem as they say there in vs 19, “Look, the world has gone after Him.” Now of course they were saying that in light of the fact that there were just throngs of people in general who were singing His praises and magnifying His person, regardless of whether or not their motives were right (the Pharisees had no way of knowing that) all they knew was what they seen. and What they seen was multitudes of people magnifying Jesus, but I love the way the Holy Spirit moved upon the apostle John to make this segue here, this transition to the next happening of ch 12, let’s look at vs 20-26 and I’ll see if I can’t piece it together for you a little better but I’m sure you’ll see it.

Vs20-26

So the Pharisees make the comment, “The world is going after Him.” and So what does the Holy Spirit inspire John to do, paint the picture that verifies that very reality in the coming of these Greeks to seek after Jesus. You see there are Jews, and there are Gentiles, and anyone who’s not a Jew is a Gentile, (people who are in the world). and So though they didn’t really understand what was happening here, (and of course there were a few other things that took place physically between vs 19 and vs 20 that you can pick up on the in other gospels), the fact remains that the picture we have here in these vs is in fact a ratification of the statement they made in vs 19, “Look, the world is going after Him.” and In vs 21 these people (who represent the world, those who aren’t Jewish) come to Philip and have a question for him, look at vs 21.

Vs21

Now if you underscore, or emphasize the word “we” (which obviously they didn’t) but in the light of the Pharisees wanting Jesus out of their sight, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus” the Pharisees may not, but *we do*.

So this serves as a pivotal point, or a transitional contrast where see the Jews *rejecting* Jesus (as represented by the Pharisees) and the Gentiles *accepting* Jesus as seen in these Greeks. The nation of Israel (as represented in their religious leaders) is *refusing* Jesus as King, but simultaneously the Gentiles are *receiving* Him, that’s the picture that we have here.

It’s interesting to note that when Jesus was born some Gentiles from the *east* came to visit Him, and pay homage to Him, and now as He’s preparing for His death, Gentiles show up from the *west* with a like desire to see Him and spend time *with* Him. and Again that in and of itself is a picture of the global appeal and redemptive quality of the Lord’s ministry, regardless of the race, culture, which hemisphere you find yourself on, we all come together and find our center, and our fulfillment in Jesus Christ If they had come from the North and the South then perhaps boundaries could be established as to the appeal of the cross of Jesus Christ and who it was for and to whom it could apply. But the distance between the east to the west as you know is immeasurable, you can go west forever and never head east, and vice versa, but there’s definite boundaries from the North to the South, and so even in the fact that the East sent visitors to His cradle, and the West sent visitors to His cross, there’s sort of a sublime undercurrent of the “whosoever will may come” promise that the bible holds forth.

They come to Philip, more than likely because he had a Greek name, and there’s just an element of comfort for them in that. When you’re in a foreign country and feeling completely estranged, or at least incredibly awkward in your surroundings, there’s a certain appeal to meeting someone who carries a name that’s indigenous to your homeland. and So they come to Philip, and where it says they, “asked” him, or in you KJV, “desired” him, what that’s saying is that they kept asking him. It was like they weren’t letting up on this issue, “We really want to see Him can you arrange a meeting for us?”

Now why didn't they just approach the Lord themselves? They couldn't, being Gentiles they were prohibited to enter the temple beyond the court of the Gentiles, and obviously Jesus had entered beyond that point, however soon enough Jesus would break down that middle wall of separation as by the work of the cross as Paul pointed out in his letter to the Ephesians.

As to where now (in the text) there's a distinction being made between Jew in Gentile, the repeated theme of the NT is oneness in Christ through the cross of Jesus Christ To the Galatians Paul wrote, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" Gal 3:28 and Again, "*...there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.*" Col 3:11 But as for this point in the text, since Jesus hasn't yet been to the cross, these Greeks are limited in their approach to God as it relates to temple worship, and so they're hammering on Philip to try and arrange a meeting for them with Jesus.

Now Philip didn't exactly know what to do with this, because throughout the years, though the overtone of Jesus' ministry has been pointing to a work that went well beyond the nation of Israel, He's also been very clear regarding the physical nature of His ministry. and Philip has heard Jesus say things like we pointed out earlier, "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" Matt 15:24 and When Jesus sent out the 12 He told them very pointedly, "*Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans .But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" Matt 10:5-6

So now Philip is torn, here these guys are passionately pursuing the Lord, yet I know that He's been clear about His immediate mission, but yet I also know He's said, "*...the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*" John 6:37 and So, "What am I supposed to do with this? I know, I'll tell Andy!" and So in vs 22 he consults with Andrew, and Andrew true to form takes the news to Jesus.

Vs22

You can't not love Andrew, whenever you find him in the scriptures he's either bringing people to Jesus, or doing everything he can to make a way for them to hook up with Him if there's any way possible. and God bless you if you're an Andrew kind of a guy, or kind of a gal, just always talking to people *about* Jesus, making a way for them to *meet* Jesus practically, or leading them *to* Jesus personally, great will be your reward. If they need a ride to get to church, "No problem I just want you to hook up with Jesus," just practically making a way for them to be with Jesus. and If they don't know Jesus you're able to introduce them to Him personally upon their request

Really what we see these 2 guys doing here on the behalf of these Gentiles, (these people in the world) is interceding before the Lord on their behalf. As those who know the Lord,

they're standing in the gap on the behalf of these guys who *don't* know the Lord, that they might *come* to know the Lord. and It's a real picture of our part in a practical way as it pertains to people coming to know the Lord. You who *know* the Lord are to be going before the Lord on the behalf of those whom you know who don't know the Lord, that the Lord might make Himself real to them and introduce Himself to them in a personal way as opposed to them perhaps knowing about Him principally, or in principle, but not knowing Him in a way that's personal. and This is just sort of a prelude for them as to what's coming down the tracks and how the message of Jesus Christ will be introduced to the Gentile world by these His disciples on the other side of the cross as the nation of Israel rejects Jesus Christ and the Gentile nation receives Him.

Vs 23

Now the question comes up, did Jesus ever meet with these guys or was this just the message that He sent back to them? and The answer is, no one knows for sure. The "Them" in this vs could refer to Philip, Andrew, and the Greeks who were perhaps right behind them if Jesus had come out into the court of the Gentiles. Or this could simply be the message that He's sending to them via His disciples, either way the message that He gives is a powerfully profound yet practical answer that serves to give insight to anyone who would desire to see Jesus. That is, see Him in truth, for who He really is, more than this miracle man, or controversial character, and profound prophet otherwise known as Jesus of Nazareth.

But Jesus upon hearing of this request of the Greeks, initially responds by saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified." Now we've noted as we've journeyed through John's gospel the seemingly ambiguous mention of this His, "Hour" that Jesus repeatedly refers to. and We've seen that since up until this time His "Hour" had not yet come, He was kept from harms way. In Ch 7 as Jesus taught in the Temple, as usual His teaching offended them (in this case) because of His claim of deity saying that He came forth from the Father and was sent by the Father. and We read there, "*Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.*" John 7:30 and Again teaching in the treasury in Ch 8 we read, "*...no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.*" John 8:20 and Of course we have other times that Jesus personally referred to the "Hour" or, His "Hour" and up until this moment there's been a definite distinctive in this gospel to make clear the fact that this hour was yet to come. Well, here we have the 1st mention of the fact that it's here, the hour has finally arrived whereby the Son of Man (A.K.A. Jesus Christ) is to be glorified, that's what the mention of this "hour" has been in reference to all along, the glorification of Jesus Christ But in a very specific way, not so much in the eyes of man (at least yet), but in the eyes of His Father.

But it's like the voiced interest of these Greeks was the confirming cue, He hears of the desire of the Gentiles to receive Him in the light of the nation of Israel's refusal of Him, and He

says, "It's time." Ironside makes the comment, "He recognized in this request of these Gentiles a kind of first fruits of the great harvest from among the nations. He was about to be rejected by His own people, but the Scripture had said that if Israel rejected Him, He should become a light to lighten the Gentiles. So here is the first evidence of it in these Greeks with their request, 'We would see Jesus.'" H.A. Ironside. It's time that the Son of Man should be glorified, you would almost expect Jesus to say, "The time has come that the Son of Man should be *crucified*." Because that's the means of which He'll make access to Himself and to the Father for both Jew and Gentile alike, but what the world would see as gross humiliation, the Lord looked upon as the instrument of His glorification. and We talked Wednesday evening about the principle of glorification coming through the means of humiliation, remember this vs? "*The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.*" Prov 15:33 It's another theme that's woven throughout the Word of God, there can be no glory apart from suffering, and Jesus knew that the cross was to precede, and be the instrument *of* His glory.

To amplify His point He shares this illustration as to how this His humiliation in the death of the cross would make for His glorification in His resurrection, and I like the fact that Jesus was always sensitive to whom it was that He was ministering. He didn't start talking to them about the Law and the Prophets, principle's and precepts of the Word, because these Greeks didn't know the Word, and so Jesus meets them where they're at in they're philosophical minds and begins to illustrate this principle of how they can truly see Him and meet with Him, on a level that they'll be able to grasp.

Vs24

So this is His illustration to them as to what needs to happen if they're *truly* to meet, and have intimate and personal fellowship with Jesus. "You want to see Me," Jesus is saying, "You want to get to know Me for who I truly am?" "Then something needs to take place 1st, because right now I'm like a grain of wheat, and if that grain of wheat doesn't fall into the ground and die it remains alone. No one can really enter in to the fullness of what it's really all about and it doesn't do anyone any good the way it presently is." Now think about that, that's a heavy statement Jesus is making. and The crux is that no one can truly know Him, or see Him, or enter into the fullness of who He is and what He's about apart from Him 1st of all dying, and them coming to know Him through the means of the access created by the cross. Because the doorway of salvation, and knowing Him was never created through His life, in His life He's like a grain of wheat abiding alone, there's no one like Him, nothing that can be truly apart of Him, or know Him in His fullness, because of the sin barrier.

At the risk of being misunderstood here the *life* of Jesus apart from the *death* of Jesus only adds to our condemnation, but through the death of Jesus, the life of Jesus makes for our sanctification as He now lives *His* life *in* me, and as the bible says it's no longer I who live but

Christ who lives in me. But apart from His death upon the cross, and Him being as it were “planted” in the ground, His life simply serves to show us how truly sinful we are, but through His mortification, comes His multiplication in the lives of those who trust in Him. In the book of Romans Paul talks about the *reconciliation* with God that we’re granted through His death, and the *preservation* that we’re granted through His life. Once we’ve been reconciled by His death, how much more (then) will we be saved (that is kept) by His life?

But the point that Jesus is making here is that none of those things can happen, be it reconciliation, sanctification, knowing Him, and/or seeing Him for who He is in truth. That wall of separation can’t be torn down apart from His death, but through His death the fruit of these things will be made manifest in the multiplied millions of people who would come to know Him and make Him known by the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. You remember there in Genesis when God was in the creation process and He said, “*Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth*”; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” Gen 1:11-12 and The point there is that the potential of the seed lies in it’s being planted, and when it’s planted it ultimately produces according to it’s own kind in a manifold and multiplied manner. and Jesus is saying, “It’s the same way with Me, once I’m planted I’ll ‘shoot’ back up, I won’t stay in the ground, but through that process, the result will be manifold, and multiplied millions of people throughout the ages like Me, after My own kind. Not in deity, but in personality, and conviction, and the power of the Holy Spirit coursing through their lives that many might come to know Me, and have fellowship with Me, and see Me for who I am in truth.”

I dredged this up on the internet somewhere, I’ll read it to you, “There comes a point when the real vitality of the seed, the real power encased in its small shell can only be realized when the seed is planted in the ground to die. Soon its beauty will be marred, its shape destroyed - what was once a beautiful seed will soon become unrecognizable. Only when its life as a seed ceases will it fulfill its destiny and produce an abundant supply of its own kind. What a great picture of Jesus, His crucifixion and burial! Isaiah had foretold that the Messiah would be disfigured almost beyond recognition (Isaiah 53:2). Upon His death, His body was buried in the ground like a seed planted in the field. - His death and resurrection would be like the seed which dies and gives life to many seeds.” Now does the death of the seed in the ground add so much as a single property of fruitfulness to the seed that wasn’t already intrinsically with in it? No, it simply liberates the ultimate intentions that were already there with in it, gives them room to break into manifestation.

The process of death and resurrection is seen in the natural world all over the place, even as we pulled there from Genesis, be it in plant life, or vegetation, fruit trees or whatever. Paul speaks of it in 1st Cor ch 15, and so Jesus is using this small practical illustration to communicate a much larger spiritual truth. and That is that the only way anyone can truly know

Him, and see Him for who He is, is by the means of the cross, outside of the cross we can't truly know Him, enter into the fullness of who He is or have a viable relationship with Him. He remains like a seed that abides alone, that is apart from you or me entering into the intimacy of who He really is.

So it goes beyond His controversial character, or His profound preaching, we have to see Him through the work of cross, if we truly want to see Him for who He is. and That's what stumbles so many people, they think that they see Jesus, that they know what He's all about, but they've never come to the cross. and So though they may know Him historically, they don't know Him personally, and until you see Jesus in the light of the cross, realizing His love *for* you, the fact that He died in place *of* you, and wants to multiply His life *in* you, then you've never truly seen Jesus. He goes on here.

Vs25

Translation: If your priorities are the things of this *temporal* life, then your forfeit *eternal* life. How important it is to maintain that eternal perspective, it's so easy to get swallowed up in the things of this world. Paul said it like this, "...*seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*" Col 3:1-2 Jesus said, "*For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*" Mark 8:36

You see you can serve self, or die to self, you can remain alone, or have fellowship with God, the secret of life is found in death, death to self, that Christ might multiply His life in you, because Jesus *is* life, there is no true life apart from Christ, only death. Try and hang on to your life, you'll lose it, but if you lose it in Christ, you'll gain life that's eternal. You might understand it like this, if your focus and your priority is in and on perishable things, then you'll perish with those things, the secret is found in keeping that eternal perspective, prioritizing Jesus Christ in your heart and in your life, and you'll keep your life for eternal life, and finally.

Vs26

and So the overflow of knowing Christ is serving Christ, and Jesus says the way to serve Him is to follow Him, that to walk in His steps or to emulate His life, walk in the established pattern that He's set, *follow* after Him, or *be like Him* in other words. and with out being able to go into it, obviously to follow after Him is to wind up at the cross, the instrument of death to self, and the self will, but with death to self comes the power of the resurrection, and the promise of where Jesus is there you will be also. and Jesus says if we humble ourselves and follow after Him, God's going to honor your life, both in this life, and the life to come, He's going to take care *of* you, and look out *for* you, and lead you in the way that's ultimately for your eternal best interest.

Seeing Jesus, to see Him, is to serve Him, out of love *for* Him. But the only way to see Him is through the cross, if you want to know Him, come to the cross, if you've perhaps lost sight of Him, come back to the cross, the answer lies at the foot of the cross.

If the Lord's knocking on the door of your heart, and you really want to see Jesus, you've never come to know Him in a personal way, perhaps you've known about Him in a historical way, are familiar with a few facts, but you've never truly seen Him for who He is. The Lord He has for you, how He died in place *of* you, wants to be real *to* you, and live His life *through* you. Listen, the only way to truly see Him, to truly know Him is through the finished work of the cross where He shed His blood for the forgiveness of your sin, and your sin can be forgiven today, and you can have true, personal and intimate fellowship with Jesus, by just meeting Him in that place. Seeing Him through the work of the cross, allowing Him to make Himself real to *you*, as you give your heart to *Him*, understanding that there's nothing you can do to make yourself right with God, but humbly receiving the right standing that He offers to you in Him, before the Father, that's where it's at, just losing your life, letting go of it, and giving it to Jesus Christ That's where you'll truly find life. So as I often plead, if today is the day of salvation for you and Jesus is tugging on the strings of your heart, don't harden your heart, open your heart, and give your life to Jesus Christ