



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

The Gospel lesson this morning is quite an interesting one. There is quite a bit to unpack in this story about not only the Greeks but also the gathering for Passover and the voice that came from heaven. This morning however, I would like to talk about the request of the Greeks to Philip; "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

Our story is set in the days before the festival of Passover. Jesus had already had his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which we celebrate next week on Palm Sunday. Tens of thousands of faithful pilgrims are traveling to the temple for their annual pilgrimage. People come from all over the Mediterranean, even as far away as Rome, Egypt and Greece. We talked about this a bit two weeks ago when Jesus went to the temple to do some spring housecleaning, scattering the vendors and turning over the tables of the money changers in His father's house.

And now there are some Greeks, present for Passover to make their sacrifices to God and pay their temple tax. They approach Philip and ask him if they can see Jesus. We don't exactly know why they seek out Philip, possibly because he has a Greek name. But they ask him if they can see Jesus.

By now, as you know, Jesus has become very popular. In fact the Pharisees say, in the verse right before our reading today, "Look, the world has gone after him." These Greeks might just be looking for an introduction, as they were outsiders looking for a powerful man.

Philip then tells Andrew and then they go to tell Jesus of the request. Jesus does not go to the Greeks. In fact, we never hear of them again. Jesus has something else in mind. He needs to tell the whole world who He is and what is about to happen. The whole world needs to see Jesus.

And that is true, wouldn't we like to see Jesus. In one-way or another, wouldn't you like to see Jesus? Just one first hand glimpse to see for ourselves? To hear His voice, watch Him move? To be up close and personal? Wouldn't we all like to see Jesus?

But my question to you is why? Curiosity? You know that they say that curiosity kills the cat. You can certainly get in trouble getting too curious and sticking your nose in where it does not belong. I do think that our Greek's in this story are more than a bit curious. They have heard about Jesus and they wanted to meet Him face to face. After all that is where the rubber can meet the road. My boss during my real estate career, Rick, always told his agents that where they should be to have a good connection with a buyer or a seller was face to face, belly to belly, and toe to toe. That is where you can gain the greatest respect of someone and in real estate that would mean they would want to work with you.

For our Greeks in this passage, they wanted to see Jesus, probably not to tell him anything but rather to find out who this man that calmed the storms, walked on water and turned water into wine, healed the sick and raised a man from the dead was. They wanted to see this man, Jesus who was turning the laws of their sacred Torah up side down. They were curious.

And don't get me wrong, curiosity is great. Curious people made most of the great discoveries of the world. Curious people solve most mysteries. We are a better humanity today because of curious people. Think about our church family. How many of you came to Christ the Servant for the first time being curious? Curious what kind of worship we had, what we offered for fellowship and Bible study, how we were involved in the community, and who that crazy lady pastor was, etc.

Some of you might have come because you too wanted to see Jesus. To find out what He was like and why people have faith in him. Some days as I am working on our order of worship for upcoming Sundays, I wonder if we need to make things easier for those who visit, those who are seeking, those who want to see Jesus. I wonder if our rudiments of worship, like reciting our

creed or other pieces of our liturgy are not very friendly. Maybe we need to have a Lutheran 101 service for new folks. I have actually heard of churches offering special “seeker services” for those that are new. I would love to do that someday. As I think there are many people even in Park Falls that are seeking, that just want to see Jesus, but don’t know it yet.

I think the other reason that people want to see Jesus is because He is bigger than life. We have to admit that Jesus was different. He was breaking all the rules, laws of the Jewish way of life. He was quit the rebel. He treated everyone the same from leper to Pharisee, from Jew to Gentile. He did not keep the Jewish kosher laws. And isn’t there something about people who get away with that sort of thing today. We are drawn to finding ourselves role models that are outside of the norm. And boy I cannot think of a better role model than Jesus! Can you?

I think that Jesus is the person that we would like to be most like. He always knew what to do. He had a great relationship with His father. He never said anything stupid. He was not worried about what to wear. He did not obsess over what and where to eat. He had his priorities in line. He did not care about the riches of this world.

Too many people choose the wrong role models today. Super rich athletes fall short of deserving our admiration. Politicians are even more disappointing at times. Both men and women of wealth, beauty and fame have let us down. Scandals seem to destroy our role models over and over again. Truth is that there is no better role model for us than Jesus. He was the only perfect person to walk the earth. Anyone else we would center our admiration on will always fail us, as they are human, just like us. Or as my dad would have said, they put on their pants just like I do, one leg at a time.

And so going back to our story with the Greeks. What they get then from Jesus is neither their curiosity satisfied nor is their longing to be near someone so powerful quenched. Jesus instead goes on to talk about how His time had come and He will be glorified. He will die like a grain of wheat, yet He will bear fruit. And what on earth are the Greeks to make of that answer to their simple asking to see Jesus? This is the divine paradox. A seed must die to bear fruit. Jesus must die on the cross for the salvation of the world. That is the fruit He will bear.

To see Jesus as an object of curiosity or as a hero is not what God planned when He sent His only son to earth. He sent him as the Savior of the World, to

be the one lifted up on a cross for all to see and to make salvation available for all. Jesus was not sent here to be seen, to be a hero or be admired. His Father sent him to be crucified for the sins of the world in order to offer salvation to all who would call upon His mighty name. He is the promised one from God that delivers us from sin and death and calls us into a life of faithfulness and obedience to God. Our salvation is not all take and no give. Yes we are the beneficiaries of Christ's passion, but we have a place in His mission.

So yes, we too want to see Jesus. So as the old song goes:

*Open our eyes, Lord  
We want to see Jesus,  
To reach out and touch him,  
And say that we love him.  
Open our ears, Lord  
And teach us to listen,  
Open our eyes, Lord,  
We want to see Jesus.*

To see Jesus is to know who sent Him.

And God's love to us is our legacy and our reason for being. So may the love of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. **AMEN**