

## SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED

**JOHN 12:20-33**  
**WE WISH TO SEE JESUS**

*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."*

[He continued,] *"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. Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." This He said, signifying by what death He would die.*

Would you like to see Jesus? I hope all of you say, Yes. --- But what does it really mean, to say, I wish to see Jesus? Does it mean to "see" a photo of Him,, or to catch a glimpse of him? I hope you mean more than that. Does it mean to see Him like going to "see" the doctor? To have him do something for you? I hope you mean more than that. Does it mean to "know well" and to understand what Jesus is about? When a scammer comes with some old ploy, you may say, "No Thank You. I've 'seen' this before; I understand this game." Or when you have a request from someone and you say, "Let me 'see' about that." Ah, yes, to study, to get to know Him better, that is the best sense of "seeing" Jesus. How? Ponder from His Word what He has done for you. Ponder why He has done it. Especially during this Lenten season. Ponder what His plan is for your long-term future. Get to "see" Jesus.

The events of our text take place shortly after Palm Sunday, when the crowds had welcomed Him with palm branches and *Hosannas*--"Come, save us!" However, the leaders and the enemies became very irritated. In the verse before our text, they said to each other, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing! Look, the whole world has gone after Him!" So it was that even some Greeks wanted to see Him. Were these Gentile Greeks who had become believers in the Old Testament Lord? Or were they Jewish people who had moved to Greece. like Germans from Russia? Either way, He was Good News for all!

These Greeks wanted to "see" Jesus. . . . Were they seeking to catch a glimpse of Him? Did have a few quick requests of Him? Or did they want to spend some time with Jesus getting to know Him better, to hear His teachings, to understand His role as the promised Anointed One? John never does tell us the end result of this request. Did they get to see Him, or not? Perhaps Jesus refused their request because their idea of "seeing" Jesus was catching a glimpse of Him—"I saw the President." Or, perhaps John tells us what happened without telling us what happened. Perhaps they stood right there and heard Jesus' very full answer telling them what He was about.

Jesus' answer is actually a very complete and thought-provoking answer. In a few days, He would be crucified, dead, buried, and then on the third day risen again. He says, *"The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.* Jesus would reach His glory, He would fulfill the mission which He had come to do. He was very frank. The road would not be glitzy. The crowd had welcomed Him with highest joy and praise "Hosanna!" Yet He would face "ugly" Death. *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.* It is a little parable. It's easy to understand and is very true. Jesus introduces it saying, *Most assuredly, I say to you.* "Truly I tell you." In the Old King James Version, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you."* Literally "Amen, Amen, I say to you." Amen—"Truth, Truly, With Certainty!" The parable uses the picture of a seed. As far as reaping a harvest goes, the only way it happens is to take that perfectly good seed, throw it into the ground, and let it go to ruin and "die." The ruined, dead kernel sends up a new plant which produces another 40, 60, 80 seeds. It's contrary to good sense to throw good grain into the ground to die, but without doing so there's just one kernel of wheat alone, that's it! But by putting it in the ground, many kernels are produced!

The same thing is true of Jesus. For Him to complete His mission, for Him to do His work, He would be cast into the ground to ruin. He would be crucified, dead, and buried. It was a harsh road. He would pray in Gethsemane, “Father if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from Me; but not My will, Your will be done.” Here He says, “*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. Father, glorify Your name.*” Jesus knew He would be punished for the world’s sins. Unpleasant. But that is why He came. To bring many souls to life. To bring you to spiritual life right now. Ephesians 2:1 says, “You were dead in trespasses and sins. You He has made alive.” Through Christ you are alive spiritually before God right now. Your sins forgiven! Can you imagine that? Consider if you had bashed someone’s triple paned-argon-filled-filament-coated oversized picture window—very expensive! Big trouble. You cannot fix it, you cannot pay for a replacement. You did wrong. You seek the owner’s mercy. Without placing conditions on you, He forgives you. He pays the cost of the window Himself. That is God’s grace! You are saved because Christ—God Himself—paid for you. Christ was put in the ground dead for your life. You now live and will live forever. All glory to God who sent His Son for you!

Expect the same in your journey through life. *He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.* If you love your life so much that you think this world revolves around you and your existence—sometimes you might think that way at home—this household revolves around ME—if you think your life is “it” and will not step down for another, you are so wrong and will lose the life you have been given before God. Your life is only of value because of Jesus, not because of YOU. Jesus comes first, even ahead of your own life. You’re going to die someday, maybe soon! “Lord Jesus I am nothing, please forgive me and help me.” *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.* The Savior’s place in your heart and life is Number 1. How many things get ahead of Him? Serve Jesus who went to “ruin” and rose in victory, for you. Be willing to part even with your own life, rather than part with Him. “See” Jesus? This is Jesus. With His mission accomplished, He receives the glory of God. In Jesus you also receive God’s glory.

*Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”* At that moment the Father from heaven spoke. He says, Jesus had been, was doing, and would do all things well. In His Son God’s name is ever glorified. The people tried to come up with some other explanation for this voice. Thunder? Angel? They missed the obvious answer—God!. Sometimes in our lives too, the obvious answer is one we don’t want to hear. Maybe because it involves God? Examples: “I walked away unharmed when I totaled my car, when the jack slipped under the pick-up, when the chain behind the tractor snapped and came singing past my head. It must have been luck, it must have been physics.” It was God!

This voice was not for Jesus’ sake. He knew His Father was behind Him 100%. “I and the Father are one” He had previously told His enemies (John 10:30), The voice was for the listeners. Did they want to “see” Jesus? He is seen in His fulfillment of His Father’s will, saving sinners. Do not by-pass Jesus. You are saved because of God’s grace in Christ. Don’t settle for anything else.

How does it all end? Jesus knew He would be lifted up on the cross, as the Brass Serpent was lifted up on the pole in the wilderness. All who looked to that brass serpent were healed because God had so promised. Jesus went to that cross “to draw all people to Himself.” All who look to Him for forgiveness and life, will live, because God has promised. *And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” This He said, signifying by what death He would die.* The cross is where you see Jesus accomplishing His great mission.

And Satan is now out. *Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.* The death and resurrection of Jesus brought the devil’s game to an end. In Christ, Satan cannot touch you. Earlier when the 70 disciples of Jesus had returned from preaching, they told Him they had driven out demons in His name! Jesus said, “*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven*” (Luke 10:18). Revelation 20 tells us, Satan is now “bound” for the full New Testament era. He is severely limited. Thus Jesus, lifted up on the cross to die, cast like a seed into the ground, springing up anew from the tomb with forgiveness and life for many souls, knocks Satan off his pedestal, to the Father’s glory! This is Jesus. “See” Jesus. Be willing to part with everything else.

So be it! Amen.

Pastor Kanzenbach---