

## The Hour Has Come

March 18, 2018

### John 20:19-23

20 Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some **Greeks**. 21 They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." 22 Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23 Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 5 Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

Today's Scripture is a powerful revelation from Jesus. He goes into Jerusalem triumphant. The crowd is excited! There is a counter plot that has developed within the Gospel of John. A large crowd witnessed the miracle of Jesus bringing Lazarus back to life. What happened with Lazarus is big news. So then, a crowd of people want to see Lazarus. They want to see it for themselves. We do not have the privilege of descriptive details. We don't know how many people visited the family in the four days that he was in tomb. We don't know how many people paid their respects and knew for sure that he was dead. What we do know is that there were a lot of witnesses to the resurrection of Lazarus. We can hypothesize that a lot of witnesses went out and talked about this, and as others heard about it, the interest grew and the crowd that wanted to see Lazarus grew into a big crowd. Because this is big news. There was no mistaken that Lazarus was truly dead, for four days, and now he is truly alive. People are thinking "man, I have to see this!"

There is already a plot to kill Jesus. Has been for some time - **Matthew 12:14** but the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him. Now there is a counter plot. The chief priests plan to kill Lazarus too. Because even more people are deserting their sphere of influence and following Jesus. The crowd continues to testify "Lazarus lives, Jesus did it, Jesus is our hero!" The news grows bigger, and bigger, and bigger as it impresses more, and more people. The religious leaders are now even more afraid of what the influence of Jesus will do their power and control. They are afraid of losing their influence over the people. Verse 19 shows their fear and frustration. The Pharisees said to one another "You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!"

Today's Scripture is after Jesus goes into Jerusalem. The fear of the religious leaders is the potential action of the Romans. The relationship between the Jews and Rome is one of tension. Their fear is that if a problem arises then Rome will react by sending in the military. Then the people will lose their ability to maintain religious customs and traditions. So, the plot to kill Jesus is designed to insure that they are able to maintain their position with Rome.

What happens next is in verse 20. Some Greeks approach a disciple and request to see Jesus. The Greeks are Gentiles; these are people that are not Jews. Last week I mentioned something significant. Nicodemus had one positive characteristic - he was seeking out Jesus. This is the first step toward discipleship. Now in the Scripture we see people that are not Jews that are seeking Jesus. So, Jesus has people from the outside seeking discipleship. "See, you can't do anything, the world has gone after him!" Verse 19 is true. There is nothing they can do.

Now, in the Scripture, we see something extremely significant. So important that it touches our lives today. Gentiles seeking Jesus means that the word has reached outside of Judah and into the world. Jesus brings God, the God of the Jews, to the people of the world. The God of

Abraham, Jacob, David is the God of the Jews. The Jews are God's chosen people. God is their God. But, as one that is one with God, Jesus knows God is for everyone.

Jesus says "the hour has come." The time has come for Jesus to be crucified. I will point out, as a side note, the unusual flow of the conversation. A contemporary example could be you are at home and someone comes to see you. A family member calls for you and says "someone is here to see you." Your response is "who is it? ... what does he want? ... is it a salesman? ... tell him I'm busy ... is this something you can handle?" Notice, this is not at all the way that Jesus responds. Jesus says in Verse 24 "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." The minor details of the conversation are insignificant. The background information and all of its details are not written out in the Bible. The Scripture skips over those casual conversation pieces and goes directly into the lesson that Jesus teaches because the lesson is what is significant.

Jesus teaches about the meaning of his death. The lesson is one of seed imagery - the multiplication factor of life. One fruit produces several seeds and each seed can produce several fruit. Each fruit produces more seeds and the multiplication factor is limitless. However, for this to happen the host must first die. As the Greeks seek Jesus, he knows it is time for his seed to grow into this limitless dimension. Jesus response is Verses 25 and 26 "Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor." My advice is do not take this literally. I think it means loyalty to Jesus takes priority. It is not about taking on another good cause and adding it to your list of obligations. It is the giving of yourself for the Lord. What Jesus claims is something that only the deity can claim. Jesus calls his disciples - us - to love as he loves, to serve as he serves.

Jesus calls us to follow him completely. We must serve as Jesus served which is with love and compassion. In so doing we will be honored by God. In his adversity is his prosperity. He has to die on the cross. He must be lifted up in order to offer salvation to the world.