

WE WOULD SEE JESUS

Pastor Paul Penno

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Christ calls His 144,000. We are concerned about getting ready for the second coming of Christ. We are distinguishing between getting ready to die, which is a wonderful thing, which is a thing Christian people have been doing for the past 2,000 years. And for people within the advent movement ever since 1844 people have been getting ready to die. But we're concerned about getting ready to be translated without seeing death. What does it mean to be one of the 144,000 to follow the Lamb everywhere He goes?

Our Father in heaven, we ask, please, grant us the leading of the Holy Spirit as we study, what does it mean to follow the Lamb wherever He goes? We ask in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Our text is found in John 12 where we find a most interesting story from the life of the Lord Jesus. It's reported only in John. It's not reported in Matthew, Mark or Luke. They were having a Passover in Jerusalem and some Gentile converts to Judaism came to this great feast. Some Greeks, among them, evidently from Athens in Greece came, a great world center of that time. They came to Philip, one of Christ's disciples asking for an interview with Jesus.

"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast; the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus." John 12:20.

The desire of these Greeks was certainly a very natural one. They had come up to Jerusalem to worship, and had found the name of Jesus upon everybody's lips. From the highest to the lowest, from the proud and courted Pharisee to the outcast leper, from the high priest and the chief priests, supposed to be the purest in the nation, to the abandoned sinner,—all, all were talking about Jesus. Of course, all were not praising Him; all were not glorifying Him; the chief priests and the Pharisees were most bitterly opposed to Him, and were only waiting impatiently for an opportunity to kill Him, while the common people were anxious to make Him a king. But whether it was to praise or to condemn, whether it was to kill or to make a king, the sole subject of it all was Jesus, and it was the most natural thing in the world that these Greeks should want to see the Person about whom so much was said.

From that day to this the name that has been used most in this world is the name of Jesus. The one Person about whom more has been said, and of whom more has been made, than of any other person this world ever saw, is the Man Christ Jesus. True, as at the first, some have praised Him, and some have cursed Him; some have worshiped Him, while others have sought to kill Him, and often He has been wounded in the house of His friends; still the name more than all others that is used in the wide world to-day is the name of Jesus. And with those Greeks of old we now say, "We would see Jesus;" not, however, as they, simply because much is said of Him, either for or against Him; not because there are even now those who would kill at least His name out of the earth; nor yet because there are those, as the religio-political reformers, who would take Him by force and make Him king of earthly governments. Not because of any of these things would we see Him. But we would see Him as He is.

For even as saith the Scripture, having not seen Him, we love Him (1 Peter 1:8); and, because we love Him, we would see Him. Having not seen Him, we love Him, because He first loved us. We love Him because He loved us and gave Himself for us. We love Him for His gentle pity for sinners such as we are. We love Him for His cheerful mercy to men so fearfully undeserving as are we. We love Him because, in "the great love wherewith He loved us," He "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." We love Him for His lofty humanity. We love Him for His "profound reverence for infinite goodness and truth." We love Him for the moral force and the benign influence of His mighty character. We love Him for His perfect goodness. For this cause would we see Him. We would see Him because of

the character He bears,
And all the forms of love He wears."

We would not now see His visage so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men. We would not now see Him a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We would not now see Him oppressed and afflicted. We would not now see Him taken as a lamb to the slaughter. We would not now see Him in His travail of soul. We would not now see Him in His dreadful agony on the cruel tree.

No; we would see Him as He is. We would see Him "that liveth," though once dead, yet now "alive forevermore, Amen," and who has

“the keys of hell and of death.” We would see Him as the disciples saw Him,—“His face did shine as the sun,” “and His raiment became shining,” “white as the light,” “exceeding white as snow, so that no fuller on earth can white them.” We would see Him as Stephen saw Him,—“in glory, standing on the right hand of God.” We would see Him as Paul saw Him,—shining in light “above the brightness of the sun.” We would see Him as John saw Him;—“His head and His hairs white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters;” “and His countenance as the sun shineth in his strength.” We would see Him as Isaiah saw Him,—“sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up,” and the train of His glory filling the heavenly temple, about Him standing the bright seraphim shading their glorious faces from His ineffable glory, and crying one unto another, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.” Isa. 6:1-4 with John 12:41.

We would see Him coming in the clouds in heaven with power and great glory, and would hear His mighty voice saying to His angels, “Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.” And then and there, in the midst of the church, would we see Him and hear His glorious voice singing that song of promised praise to the Father. Heb. 2:12. Oh, ’tis thus that “we would see Jesus”!

And we thank God, not only for the hope that we shall see Him as He is, but also that the signs are abundant all about us that soon this “blessed hope” shall be fulfilled.

And We Shall Be Like Him. And the blessed promise is that we shall not only “see Him as He is,” but “we shall be like Him.” “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” We would see Jesus. In this hope we live. For its fruition we wait. But, while so living and waiting, we would never for a moment forget that he “that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” 1 John 3:2, 3.

Well, Philip, apparently didn’t know just what to do so he comes and he tells Andrew. And so Andrew and Philip together go to Jesus and tell Him, Lord there are some Greeks here who want to have an interview with you. And Jesus answered in a strange way that we need to study carefully. “And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.” John 12:23. The

very fact that these were Gentiles coming on their own to ask to talk with Jesus reminded Him that His mission was not to the Jews only, but to the world.

And then Jesus proceeded to explain a very key concept of what it means to follow Him and how He looked upon His approaching cross experience.

Jesus said: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth *much fruit*."

Perhaps some of you are studying botany,—plant life. Here, then, is the very first lesson that you need to learn about the plants. The seed must *die* before it can be *multiplied*. It can give birth and life to other plants only by giving up itself, by the sacrifice of its own life.

The new plant that is to spring from the seed is in most seeds only a tiny part of the whole seed. All the rest is for the nourishment of the young plant when it shall awake and spring up. But the seed must die and change before the new plant can spring up and feed upon it.

So you see that the seed really gives up its own life in order to give life. But is it lost? Oh, no: it is *multiplied*. Many plants, bearing many seeds exactly like it, come from it. If it should not die, but keep its life all to itself, it would, as Jesus said, "Abide alone," and at last perish and be lost indeed. But by giving its life, it saves and keeps it.

And now, what is the Gospel message that our Heavenly Father has written for us in all this? Do you remember that the very first Gospel promise ever heard by men say something about *seed*?

When He first promised to give His only begotten Son to save men from the power of Satan, God called Him, the *Seed*. And many times, when this promise was repeated, Jesus was called by the same name. He is, "the Seed of the woman;" "the Seed of Abraham;" "the Seed of David." But except the seed "fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

If you had the seed of a very rare and choice plant, would you think it too great a treasure to be sown in the ground? No, the more you valued it, the more anxious you would be to sow it, so that it might not "abide alone," but that you might get many more like it.

And so God did not keep back "His only begotten Son," but gave Him freely, so that He should not "abide alone," but that He might "bring *many sons* unto glory."

In the place of the one seed that is put in the ground, we get many seeds exactly like it. In the place of the one Son whom he gave, God the Father will at last, when the harvest shall come and all the seed

shall be gathered, get many sons, many children, all in His exact image.

The seed dies that it may give life. Jesus died that He might give life to you that you might feed upon His life, and grow into His image, and so be one of the *many* children that through His sacrifice He will bring to glory. He died so that He might not “abide alone,” but that you might abide with Him for ever.

He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” John 12:24. So He is telling us, we individually, we have a life to live. We are the corn of wheat. If we live our life selfishly seeking our own will following the world trying to make money, trying to get pleasure, we end up with nothing. We just lie on a shelf and stay there until we rot.

But if, like a grain of wheat or corn, we fall into the ground and we apparently to all appearances we die, then we germinate and spring up and we produce a plant that bears wonderful fruit. And multiplies itself enormously.

What Jesus is talking about is dying to self. Being crucified with Christ, as Paul says in Gal. 2:20. Paul got the idea. He said, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” The result is marvelous fruit-bearing.

So Jesus goes onto explain in vs. 25, “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” Death is the path to life. “If any man serve me, let him follow me.” John 12:26. And that is exactly what the 144,000 are going to do as they get ready for the second coming of Christ. It’s simply the same idea. They follow the Lamb whosoever He goes. “And where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.” John 12:25. Ah, yes, there is the new covenant being fulfilled right before your eyes. If anybody will serve the Lord by dying to self, taking up his cross to follow Jesus, the Father is going to honor that person.

And that reminds us of these wonderful promises that the Lord made to Abraham and He makes the same promises to you and me as followers of Abraham. He says, “I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that

curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Gen. 12:2, 3. All that is the result of following the Lamb of God, the crucified Christ, wherever He goes.

Now coming back to this story in John 12, Jesus said, “Now is my soul troubled.” John 12:27. He caught a glimpse of His coming crucifixion and He says, What shall I say. Shall I pray a prayer, Father, save me from this hour. Don’t make me go to the cross. Don’t let me be crucified. Then He stops and says, No. “And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven [people heard the sound but they didn’t understand the words], saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.” John 12:29-33.

In other words, He was telling us, if He is lifted up on the cross He will draw many, many people. He will draw everybody to Himself. Not everybody will respond and come, but He will draw everybody. And that’s what is going to happen when the latter rain is poured out and the loud cry goes to all the world.

According to Revelation 18:1-4, when the loud cry lightens the earth with glory, God is going to speak to every human being on earth through His remnant church and He will draw all people unto Him, but not all people are going to respond, not all will come. Some will resist this drawing and they will rebel against the Lord. And they will institute and enforce the mark of the beast. But thank God, some are going to respond to this drawing of all men. And there’s going to be a marvelous gathering of souls to Christ. We’re going to be surprised how many people respond.

As I have read Revelation 15:1, 2 some even, who have gained the victory over the beast, some have gained the victory over his image which is apostate Protestantism, some will gain the victory over his mark at the very time when the mark of the beast is enforced. “And them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark.” Rev. 15:2. Some are going to be evangelized and gain the victory over the mark of the beast. Let’s not think of the mark of the beast as a terrible, tragic event. It’s going to be a marvelous

evangelistic opportunity. And then some will even gain the victory “over the number of his name.” Yes, 666, the very foundation of the papacy, some are going to gain the victory over that. Some people very high up in the Roman Catholic curia are going to respond to this marvelous loud cry that lightens the whole earth with glory. There’s nothing before us but good news. May the Lord help us to receive it. May we respond by taking up our cross to follow Jesus.

Now one of the most marvelous passages in the New Testament is found in Philippians 2. And those who understand and have studied deeply, have the idea that this passage is a hymn that was sung back in the days of the Apostle Paul. But we need to study this passage to realize that those who follow the Lamb everywhere He goes are not going to do it out of force or out of an old covenant motivation of seeking a reward for themselves. They don’t do it as a work that has to be performed. They do it because they have come to understand this passage in Phil. 2:5-8.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 2:5. And there we have a great lesson which we could spend a whole hour on. In other words, what Paul is saying is, this wonderful mind of Jesus will be in us if we don’t hinder what the Holy Spirit wants to do for us. So let this mind be in you. The Holy Spirit is working seven days a week, 24-hours a day, constantly seeking to let this mind come into us and be our mind. Let us say yes, every time He appeals to us.

“Who, being in the form of God.” Phil. 2:6. That’s the very highest place possible in the universe. “Thought [counted] it not robbery to be equal with God.” He gave up His high position.

There are seven steps here that Jesus took in condescension. This is the first one. He did not want to hang onto His high position in heaven.

Step number two: “But made Himself of no reputation.” He gave up His reputation. Now a man or a woman will fight to the death to preserve their reputation. Jesus was willing to give up His reputation and to be thought of as a bad person. Now we don’t want to be thought of as bad people, do we? We want to be thought of as good people. Jesus gave that up.

Step number three: “And took upon him the form of a servant.” The word “servant” in the KJV really means a slave. Nobody wants to get down on his hands and knees and scrub the floor like a slave has to do. But Jesus was willing to do that.

And then we read step number four: “And was made in the likeness of men.” That’s that famous expression *en tou homoiousmati* which means in the exact likeness. It’s not in the unlikeness. He was made in the likeness of men. It’s a heresy to say that Jesus did not become a true human being. He did. He had flesh and blood like we have. He took upon Himself our nature. And the Bible clearly teaches in Romans 8:3, 4, He took upon Himself our fallen “sinful flesh” nature, that He might be tempted in all points like as we are.

Step number five: “And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself.”

Step number six: “And became obedient unto death.” The only human being who has ever become obedient unto death. You may say, well, don’t forget, there have been many suicides. Are they not obedient unto death? No. No suicide is obedient unto death. A suicide is wanting to evade the responsibilities of life. He is not obedient unto death because this is the second death Paul is speaking of. Jesus chose to be obedient to that death even from His infancy.

Step number seven. He yielded Himself to “even the death of the cross.” Now you can never understand what is the death of the cross unless you understand Gal. 3:13. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Now that is a quotation taken from Deut. 21:23 where Moses is instructing the judges in Israel. If you find the accused is guilty of a crime that requires him to die for his crime, he shall be strung up on a tree. But don’t leave his body there overnight. Because Moses said, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree. And that is what Paul is quoting in Galatians 3:13. The death of Christ involved the curse of God. That’s the death that Jesus voluntarily submitted Himself to.

Now, says Paul, “let this mind be in you” also. In other words, let the Holy Spirit deliver us from our infancy of understanding where we are seeking a reward for ourselves, and let us learn to appreciate the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ. Let it motivate us that it may move us to be willing and happy to take up our cross to follow Jesus.