

March 18, 2018
5th Sunday of Lent
John 12:20-33

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Background:

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With the arrival of the Greeks, Jesus says that his hour has also arrived. It is both the hour that he dreads and the hour of his glory. They are one and the same. Jesus uses the image of a grain of wheat to illustrate his point. It is only by the seed's destruction that it can become a plant that can then provide nourishment. The reality that the seed must surrender its life as a seed in order to become a plant is also Jesus' reality, as well as the reality of those who desire to be his followers. The use of the words "love and hate" emphasizes the contrast. A choice is involved here, a decision has to be made. The prayer that begins in verse 28 indicates a sense of the real struggle Jesus experiences in making his choice. With Jesus' decision to be faithful, the events that will lead to his hour of dread and glory have been set in motion. God's affirmation, the voice from heaven, is heard by those present, but not understood. The hour of judgment has come. The rulers of the world, those who do not accept his teaching, will be defeated. In the text, the Greeks have come to Jerusalem for the Passover and to find their

way to Jesus. At the end of the text, Jesus says that when he is raised up he will draw everyone to himself. We gather to hear this gospel and we are challenged to accept “our hour.”

Reflection Questions:

1. Have you ever encountered people who are looking to find or discover Jesus?
2. Has there been a time in your own life when you were looking in some way to find Jesus?
3. Is this Lent in some way an expression of your desire to see or know Jesus more completely?
4. How is the approach of the Greeks seeking to find Jesus a fitting introduction to Jesus’ instruction about his own approaching death?
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Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense. Thoroughly wash me from my guilt and of my sin cleanse me. A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me. Cast me not out from your presence, and your Holy Spirit take not from me.

*Give me back the joy of your salvation, and a willing spirit sustain in me.
I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall return to you.*

In the days when Christ Jesus was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus."
Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.
Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
Amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.
Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.
Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be.
The Father will honor whoever serves me.
"I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'?
But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name."
Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again."
The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, "An angel has spoken to him."
Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come for my sake but for yours.
Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out.
And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself."
He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

Excerpts from Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:3-4, 12-15; Hebrews 5:7-9; and John 12:20-33

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