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**The Desire of the Righteous**

Sermon preached by MR H. DAWSON at "Bethel" Chapel,  
Rye, on Tuesday evening, 12th April 1955

Text: John xii. 21

**"We would see Jesus"**

If you are gathered together desiring to worship God aright—and I hope you are, and *if* you are, these words will sum up what you feel within, what you desire, "*We would see Jesus*".

"Nought will content our hearts  
But fellowship with Him."

All who are taught of God, especially as they journey farther on in life's way, go deeper down into that truth,

"None but Jesus, *none* but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good."

Everything hinges upon this. Oh, to see Jesus as He is to be seen by faith, e'en though it be as a grain of mustard seed, and see Jesus as all our salvation and all our desire! "*We would see Jesus*."

I want, as the Lord shall help me, to look at this subject from three or four viewpoints. I would look first of all at the setting of the subject. The context tells us, "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." The setting of the subject, as I judge, is very interesting and suggestive. I have no doubt that Philip had some searchings of heart when these Greeks came and put into words what was their desire, "*We would see Jesus*". It may be that Philip felt a measure of surprise; and I add this, no preacher, I feel, will venture to say what was really going on in the breast of these Greeks that made them desire to see Jesus. It might have been a curious desire, it might have been a real desire because the Holy Spirit was working in their hearts and they felt their need of Jesus; but the word of God is silent about it, and therefore preachers must not speculate on it. I would have you think on this as grace is given, if *you* would see Jesus, oh, you do know why you have such a desire welling up within. You will say, "I would see Jesus because I know, and I feel it more and more as I journey on,

"Jesus is the one thing needful;  
I without Him perish must."

I said that Philip had some searchings of heart when these Greeks desired, "*We would see Jesus*". Remember this, when Philip had his commission given him to preach it had a limitation. I would like you to follow this along. "Go ye to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". And now Philip has before him Greeks, and their concern is, "*We would see Jesus*".

"Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus." "Dear Lord," said Philip and Andrew, "there are some Greeks who have been to us, and their concern is to see *you*. What

shall we answer these Greeks, O Lord?"

"And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 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." Then the dear Saviour goes on to tell of that death that was awaiting Him to die, and which He was willing to die: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all* men unto Me;" *not* Israelites alone, but Greeks, people of every kindred, tribe, and tongue. "This He said, signifying by what death He should die;" and therein was the answer given to these Greeks in their concern, "We would see Jesus;" and it was made plain to Philip and Andrew alike that it was possible for *Greeks* to see Jesus and find in Him all their salvation and all their desire. When the Lord rose from the dead and His disciples were re-commissioned, what did He say? "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to *every* creature." Yes! And all preachers sent with divine authority have got that warrant to do it.

Now that is the setting of the subject. How matters worked out regarding the Greeks the word of God does not tell us, and it is not essential that you and I should know whether they did see Jesus, and see Him like Thomas did later on, and feel, "My Lord, and my God". The great concern is that you and I should see Jesus, and feel concerning Him as the sinners' Friend that He is, in our souls' esteem, "*My Lord, my God.*" And, oh, to feel,

"Compared with Christ, in all beside  
No comeliness I see;  
The one thing needful, dearest Lord,  
Is to be one with Thee."

"We would see Jesus."

Now the next thought that bubbles up is this, that when Jesus Christ went about this poor, sin-cursed earth—and He *did* go about it—as verily Man, verily God, think of what that means if you can—God incarnate; but there were hundreds, thousands that did see Jesus and they only saw a man—man spelt with a little "m", not a capital "M" as it ever must be. "We will not have this man to reign over us Who is He? Is not this Joseph's son? Is not this the carpenter?" Oh, they did not see Jesus as sinners taught of God see Jesus to be, Immanuel, God with us. It is sometimes a very solemn reflection to me that when the judgement shall be set and the word of God fulfilled, "Every eye shall see Him," there will be these hundreds, thousands, that did see Jesus as He dwelt on earth, going about doing poor sinners good, but they did not see Jesus with eyes to see who He was—a heart to appreciate and love Him for who He was and what He is and what He has done—like the Holy Spirit does give poor sinners to know and feel when He leads them into the truth. You might think on that word. I wish you well. I am not here to frighten you or to flatter you, but as God shall help me to say something that shall be a help to you and encourage you to hope in God; but I am bound to tell you this, you *will* see Jesus sooner or later. I have quoted, "Every eye shall see Him." Aye, but the people taught of God will see Him with joy unspeakable and full

of glory; and those who said, "Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways," will see Him, too. And who can describe what they will feel as misery that is eternal in its nature takes hold upon them, and down they go into the deeps of it, where no alleviation of their lot will never, never be known? A very solemn consideration it is! Much might be said along that line of thought.

Let us go back to the starting point; "We would see Jesus." I would make this plain, as the Lord shall help me, if you and I do see Jesus, then Jesus must be revealed to us; and ere you and I can see Jesus something must be done in us, and God alone can do it; and it must be this, "The eyes of the blind shall be opened." Have you noticed—it gets you down to the bedrock of truth in the consideration of it—have you noticed, I say, that when Jesus Christ rose from the dead and He went about, it was given to quite a few, many more people than you and I would have thought possible, to see Him. Jesus Christ was seen at one time of above five hundred brethren at once. But it was only those who were taught of God that *did* see Jesus after He rose from the dead on that Easter-morn long ago. The world never caught a glimpse of Him, but to His own people the word went forth, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Yes! No others caught sight of Jesus as He stayed on earth a little while after He rose from the dead, none but those in whom there was the light of life. Now that confirms that scripture, "No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost."

"We would see Jesus." Now I want to look at this subject from this viewpoint: ere you and I can see Jesus, I have said, there must be something done. God alone can do it. There are what might be termed preparatory sights that a sinner must see ere he can see Jesus; and first of all a sinner who would see Jesus is made to see somewhat of what he is by nature, his undone state, his hell-deserving, his utter helplessness in things divine; and he is made to see somewhat of where he is through the Adam fall, and that there is in him no will to good whatever. It is a wonderful mercy, and the older I grow the more I see what a mercy it is, to be

"Stripped of all our fancied meetness  
To approach the dread I AM."

"When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall convince the world of sin." Do ask the Lord to give you a gracious, heartfelt conviction of sin, for it is the greatest necessity nowadays amongst us in our denominational life. It would be a wondrous mercy, and preparatory to a gracious reviving in our midst, if God would pour out, I say, a gracious, heartfelt conviction of sin, bringing down sinners to say, "I will be sorry for my sins."

"Sinner, if thou art taught to see  
How great thy guilt and misery,  
In every thought and act impure,  
The blood of Christ thy soul can cure."

Not only so, a sinner who desires aright to see Jesus is made to see somewhat of what the law of God is, what is the nature of it. Such a one may not be able to define what preachers term a law work, and go down into the deep things of God, terrible things in

righteousness, thereby; but "by the law is the knowledge of sin," and every sinner who would see Jesus is made to see this, and to feel it,

"Not the labour of my hands  
Can fulfil Thy law's demands."

It is a very solemn experience when a sinner does see that by the doings of the great "I", by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh living be justified; and when he does see that truth and feels the solemn reality of it, then he knows, and he knows it aright, that "salvation is of the Lord". "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast."

"We would see Jesus." This same sinner whose character I am seeking to describe is made to see also somewhat of what the world is. I mean, what the nature of the world is, and that to one who is born again, a heaven-bound pilgrim, the world is as a wilderness wherein nothing can be found to solace our souls, nothing whatever to ease a guilty conscience or relieve a troubled breast, or to procure a blessing indeed.

"I cannot here contented live,  
With all the dainties earth can give."

Yes, the world is to be seen for what it really is, a wilderness; and the sinner that would see Jesus, while he is in the want of that blessed sight, finds in his breast an aching void which the world cannot fill.

Then I add this, "We would see Jesus"; and a sinner taught of God is made to see and to estimate time at a proper valuation; and that is to feel,

"Time is but a bubble floating  
On eternity's vast sea;"

and that, in journeying through life, our life only hangs on the next breath that you and I may draw; and that is a solemn consideration.

These are some sights which are preparatory, I say, ere the sinner taught of God can find his soul's desire fulfilled, "We would see Jesus."

In the second viewpoint of this subject I would look at some of those places where Jesus is to be seen. The Word says, "In all places where I record My Name, there will I come and bless thee," but I would like to begin by saying that Jesus is to be seen, as it were, in the eternal counsels. The word of God tells us somewhat about it. The Father chose a number, ordained them to life eternal, "a number which no man can number," and in those eternal counsels wherein the Father was choosing, Jesus Christ is seen set up as the Mediator of the new covenant, that in the fulness of time He would come down into the world, not yet built, and come down to save the sinners God the Father had ordained to life eternal. "We would see Jesus."

And now, in the word of God itself, "We would see Jesus." It is not enough to read chapters. It is good to read the word of God, but you may read chapter after chapter and not see Jesus. You may read the word of God, and you may even be somewhat inclined to broadcast that you have read the word of God through so many times. Everything hinges on this, "We would see Jesus." There is a

petition I like to use:

"Divine Instructor, gracious Lord,  
O be for ever near!  
Help me to read Thy sacred word,  
And find my Saviour there."

What did the Saviour say? "In the volume of the book it is written of *Me*." Yes. And I say this with great reverence and solemnity, that unless you do see Jesus as you read the Holy Bible, Book divine, it will not profit you in the reading. I have thought many times in my ministerial life upon the two disciples journeying along the Emmaus road. You will remember the details. Those disciples were sad-hearted. The word of God tells us, "Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them." I have wished many, many times there could have been left on record what the dear Saviour said to those two sad-hearted disciples as He "opened to them the scriptures". Remember the reading of it, what the word of God says, as they journeyed on together; "and beginning at Moses"—remember that means the first five books of the word of God, the Pentateuch; "and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning *Himself*." Remember that! Religion that is of God can be expressed in a creed, and it must needs be. We term them Articles of Faith in our denominational life. But you can be lettered up in a creed and Articles of Faith, and not see Jesus. It is not enough to accept a creed, nor to sign your name to Articles of Faith. It must be as you see Jesus, and realize this, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with *His Son Jesus Christ*." And these dear disciples on the Emmaus road, what did they say? "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?" Unless you see Jesus as you search the scriptures it will be meaningless to you, and unprofitable; and will do you no good. "We would see Jesus," when we do look into this Holy Bible of His.

"We would see Jesus" in the "exceeding great and precious promises", and find to our souls' peace they are indeed "yea and amen" *in Him*. Aye, do listen! "We would see Jesus" in the exceeding great and precious precepts the word of God sets forth, as to what it is to live the life of the righteous. We would have our concern to be, every day, all day, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." We would have this to be known and felt, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." "We would see Jesus."

"We would see Jesus" at the throne of grace. Wonderful it is to think of what the word of God declares, "I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat"; and wonderful have been the dealings of Jesus with poor sinners in their approaches unto the throne of grace whereon He reigns to do them good. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help *in time of need*."

"A little talk with Jesus,  
How it smooths life's rugged road!  
How it cheers and helps me onward  
When I faint beneath my load!"

When you and I try to pray it must ever be on this basis, "We would see Jesus"; and feel a welcome and sit down at His feet, and receive of His words. And if you would see Jesus like that, then you will feel like that woman in the gospel at times, "If I may but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be made whole." She pressed through the crowd; and God will help you to do that, and you will get no good until you get contact with the sinners' Friend. Then by living faith, as it were, virtue is drawn out of Him, and your soul receives it. Yes! "We would see Jesus."

Now Jesus is to be seen in His earthly courts. I would like to feel that some of you dear people have found at times in this "Bethel" that it has been to you the house of God, and you have felt in coming, "What is the house to me, unless the Master I can see?" When you do see Jesus, oh how sweet it is! "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Then you can sing praises with understanding, and make melody in your heart. And when you hear the gospel preached, whoever the preacher is, when you bow your heads ere the service begins to beg a blessing, do ask for this, "We would see Jesus; let the preacher preach Christ crucified, that it may be our souls' joy to see Jesus." And when all is said and done, the gospel is ordained of God that poor sinners, in listening to the proclamation of it, should see Jesus therein, and, seeing Jesus, be encouraged to hope in God concerning their souls' eternal welfare. It is a sweet experience, "The watchmen that go about the city found me." Whenever the gospel reaches you and is known as the power of God in your soul's experience, you will see Jesus, and you will go on your way with that concern, "More like Jesus I would be, rooted in humility."

"We would see Jesus." I would say a word about this, "we would see Jesus" in His people. There is a scripture that does search me and sometimes, I must tell you, it condemns me. Maybe preacher and people alike will have to plead guilty here: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

It does you good when you can see Jesus in His dear people, and see His people realizing His goodness, His mercy, and evidencing in their lips and lives a right spirit. Look at Job, and see in him Jesus and His Spirit: "The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends." Sometimes you can see Jesus in His dear people when they do what they do not very often do—I am not fitting caps on—when they confess their faults one to another. Yes, and it is good to hear. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." "We would see Jesus" in His people like that.

It is good, and the apostle Paul stresses it much in his epistles, to be of one mind and one spirit in the gospel of Christ. When you can see Jesus in His people, how is Jesus to be seen? You get that illustrated in the epistle to the Philippians, when the apostle Paul highly commended the Church at Philippi, but he had to turn aside and drop one or two words of caution, admonition. Listen: "I beseech Euodias and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind

in the Lord." You see, it might have been, had a pastor dealt with that, that he, not being altogether in a gracious mind, might have gone to Euodias and said, "You must go and apologize to Syntyche." No, no, here it is, "that they be of the same mind in the Lord." That is what I mean by the Spirit of Christ. "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be," and the nearer to Him the people can gather together, the nearer the people will be to each other, and that is how it ought to be.

"Thus may we abide in union  
With each other and the Lord,  
And possess in sweet communion  
Joys which earth can not afford."

"We would see Jesus." I add this, Jesus is to be seen in His own ordinances. Mark the wording, His *own* ordinances. These people of His sometimes go through the baptismal waters with that feeling uppermost, "We would see Jesus"; and tread in His steps, even where the Saviour trod.

"Jesus says to each believer,  
'Be baptized in My Name';  
He Himself beneath the river  
Was immersed in Jordan's stream."

This is the way to enter into the church of Christ militant. When you go through the baptismal waters, "we would see Jesus," and part with all, and follow Him. I add this,

"View the rite with understanding;  
Jesus' grave before you lies.  
Be interred at His commanding,  
After His example rise."

And when, in a church state, poor sinners who hope in God gather around what is designated aright "the Lord's table", and eat the bread and drink the wine, "we would see Jesus" then. Yes, and see Him as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and realize, as we think of Calvary's cross and what was done thereon,

"How it was done we can't discuss,  
But this we know, 'twas done for us."

I must come along to the Amen. "We would see Jesus." Now God has ordained that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God; and nothing will do you good when "trouble like a gloomy cloud gathers thick and thunders loud," but to see Jesus; and, as you see Jesus, to remember, in this trouble which has come upon you or yours, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Lord." And to remember that scripture, "Hereunto were ye called. Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps." "We would see Jesus"; and when the cross weighs on us, and our spirits are affected and sore troubled, "we would see Jesus," and say,

"His way was much rougher and darker than mine;  
Did Christ, my Lord suffer, and shall I repine?"

"We would see Jesus"; and the word of God says, "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

I do wish I could preach better, but I want you to weigh up this

word I have said a little upon, "We would see Jesus," and, oh, that grace might be given unto us to be more in earnest and more urgent to see Jesus, and to feel,

"To know my Jesus crucified  
By far excels all things beside."

In journeying on through life, this is how you will know happiness worth the name, happiness which will be for time and eternity, too, as this great mercy is bestowed that you so see Jesus and get a glimpse of Him by living faith, and find Him enthroned in your soul's esteem and affection, and say,

"Reign o'er me as King, accomplish Thy will,  
And powerfully bring me forth from all ill,  
Till, falling before Thee, I laud Thy loved Name,  
Ascribing the glory to God and the Lamb."

And I add this, if you and I do see Jesus, in some of these ways which I have just touched upon, you will see more and more of what you are, you will understand some scriptures that, in the early dealings of God with you, you may have thought looked strange to read. "Turn again, son of man, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these." "Which shall know every man the plague of his own heart." Yes, as it is given to you to see Jesus, you will see more and more of what you are as a sinner, what the Adam fall has done, and you, alas, the subject of it! But out of that solemn, painful knowledge (and it is indeed solemn and painful to feel it) you will get a paradox wrought in your soul's experience, "I am black, but comely", and as you draw near to God, desiring to tell Him all the truth of what a sinner you are, black, bad, base beyond words to describe, saying,

"No sinner needed mercy more  
That ever sought Thy face,"

you will have this wondrous privilege to see Jesus—

"Since My Saviour stands between  
In garments dyed in blood,  
'Tis He instead of me is seen  
When I approach to God."

"We would see Jesus." At whatever cost it is, let all else go, but let this mercy be ours, "We would see Jesus;" and when we get to the end of life's journey, and our eyes are closing in death, as they will do, and we step down into Jordan's swelling, then, then "we would see Jesus", and feel Him to our soul's joy to be what the dear hymn writer says,

"Death of deaths, and hell's destruction,  
Land me safe on Canaan's side;  
Songs of praises  
I will ever give to Thee."

This will be heaven to us. We shall see Jesus, and we shall never grow weary of seeing Jesus, for who He is as the sinners' Friend, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the blessed Trinity, "God over all, blessed for evermore." *Amen.*

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