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Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, by
Mr J.K. Popham on Sunday Morning
4th September 1932

Text John 12 verses 20 & 21

"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."

As the Lord may help me, I will speak a little to you concerning the last part of the twenty first verse. "The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus". These Greeks would be proselytes, who would be annually coming to the feast held at Jerusalem. The passover was the one feast, more than others that the Jews observed, and it would seem that these Greeks sincerely desired to see the Person, of whom so much was being said. Never in the history of the whole world, was any man, or any person so discussed as Christ. About whom were so many differences of opinion, and these Greeks, not knowing what to believe, but hearing so many things concerning Jesus Christ, went to Philip, one of Christ's disciples, and said this to him "Sir we would see Jesus."

These Greeks are lost sight of immediately, nothing more is said concerning them, but the teaching of Christ is that which swallows up every other thing, and if we may look at this. The teaching which Christ commenced, was that which would astonish the Greeks, and all who heard what was said, they would perhaps, in common with the Jews, expect to see a person of great consequence, who would have a great following. In respect to which Jesus said "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." (verse 23) But in what way? not the way we should expect. "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." (verse 24) This is the doctrine of the gospel, this is the doctrine of Christ's death, and what would necessarily follow. The corn of wheat if not sown, abides alone. The merchant, the seed merchant, has his samples in his bag, and if they remain there always, there is no increase. They do not multiply, they simply remain as they were when put in the sample bag. But a corn of wheat sown undergoes a change, which is called dying, and then it brings forth fruit, much fruit. One corn will bear, many, many corns. So Christ dying, will have, and does bear, many, many corns.

Taking this view of Christ's answer, as we may take it to be, to the request of these Greeks. What shall we say? They might, if they were the people of God, be lead greatly to rejoice that this Person, of whom so many disputes were being carried on, much murmuring about Him, this person dying would bring forth a living church. Let us look then at this, can we say, viewing Christ dying, that we would see Him. Viewing Him dying, His death was singular, and ever will remain singular, and different from all the deaths that have occurred since Adam himself died. The death of Christ was not the death of a private person, He never was a private person. Always before God, in the purpose of God a public Person. A representative Person, representing elected persons. The whole church of the Living God, represented by Jesus Christ.

So as in His life , He was never alone, but had His people with Him. So in His death, He was not alone. Now can we say honestly, understanding a little of what is in this word, we would see Jesus? Would you see a dead Christ and believe that His death, was not an ordinary death? Would you see one taken by wicked hands and crucified, slain, buried, and say there is my God, there is my redeemer, there hangs He who by dying purged away the sin of the whole church? And as I hope, I believe my sins? This in my view, is a very searching, solemn question, which I judge, every child of God would be able, by grace more or less distinctly, believably, reverently, lovingly, answer - we would see Him.

To see Christ dying, is to see God hanging on the accursed tree. To see the scripture, which speaks of one hanging on a tree fulfilled in Christ. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"(Galations 3 verse 13). And that has an infinitude of grace, mercy, love, and salvation. "Sir we would see Jesus." Would you see Him miraculously raised from the dead? He saw no corruption, and before He died, He had manifested to Him, by His Father, a path of life, the path of life, and saw a river of pleasures at God's right hand for ever more. And rising from the dead, He entered, after showing Himself alive to His disciples "by many infallible proofs," (Acts 1 verse 3) into that joy, a view of which He had, before He gave up the ghost.

The world had many wonderful sights, for those who are in it, but there is nothing in the world to a child of God, so attractive, so wonderful, so glorious, as the sight of Christ rising from the dead. A real Saviour, the very Person crucified, the very same Man who said to His disciples, to prove them, as He appeared in their midst, the door being shut. "Behold (See me) my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24 verse 39).

Would you see this Man, and believe that He is the God-man, Almighty God who "died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God."(Romans 6 verse 10). "After the power of an endless life" Hebrews 7 verse 16). This is Jesus, who the Greeks desired to see. He rose from the dead, and in that resurrection, the whole church participated, had a share in the blessings of it through Eternity. He entered heaven with His own blood (Hebrews 9 verse 12) and sitteth "on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Hebrews 1 verse 3) "on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3 verse 1). You can follow Him if you have faith, and the Holy Ghost comes, and takes your heart and mine. You can follow Him, and you will see Him seated there, and that in your own interest. "Seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7 verse 25) for all who come unto God by Him.

Think of it. Nay if you have faith, and the Holy Ghost has taken that faith, so to speak, and guided it, as you guide your eye to a desired object, then you will say, I have seen Him. He is not of this world, His Person is not of this world, His Kingdom is not of this world, and He intercedes for people who are not of this world, though in it. Christ said in the gospels of His people "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."(John 17 verse 16). He prayed to His Father "that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil"(verse 15) of it. So interceding He ever lives that He may bring His people to heaven. Now poor distracted, distressed people, burdened with sin and afflicted in many ways, desire to see this Man at the right hand of God. There are two things to be said concerning Christ's reign in heaven, the first is that which I have just named, and the second is, that God has committed all authority and judgement to Him. And at the day appointed by God, Christ will judge the quick and the dead. He will judge the living family, He has redeemed and brought to heaven. He presents them to His Father as His bride, and He will judge the wicked, who never desired to see Him. Never prayed to see Him, who would say, if they spoke honestly, we only wanted the world, and the pleasures of it which came within our reach. These as we gained them, for the time satisfied us, and although they leave an aching void, there is something in the world we see would fill that void. But there is no thought of the Son of God. Now what will He say to such, any of you who must in your consciences, say that I have spoken the truth about you. What will He say to you, if you die as you are now living? He will bid you to depart from Him, He will call you accursed. Ah it is a solemn thing to live. It will be a very solemn thing to die, and after death the judgement, that must come, there is no avoiding it. O that God would look on you, and give you the Holy Ghost to quicken you, that you might come to say one day to some friend or minister "Sir we would see Jesus.

We need a Saviour, we need a Redeemer, we need an intercessor. We would see Him. It is a great thing to be wanting this Lord Jesus. You were just singing a beautiful hymn, a favourite with some of us

A Fulness resides in Jesus our Head, (Gadsbys 184)

Now that suites empty people, and when by faith they see this Lord Jesus, full of grace and truth, they say. May we be supplied out of that fulness. When they do not see Him, they are unhappy, and they say, O that we could get a sight of Him, a sight of His grace, which is sufficient for all trouble, to overcome all sin and beat down all devils. That we could get a sight of that fulness, that is sufficient for our present troubles, difficulties, temptations and weaknesses. A sight of this Lord Jesus is sufficient to make every soul happy, that wants to see Him. The Apostle Paul in the Hebrews said "But we see Jesus,"(Hebrews 2 verse 9). That was a great favour, and it is today a great favour, if you get a sight of Him you will say, He has got my heart, He has my affections, my desires are toward Him. Liberty from death, from sin, and from the curse, is by Him and by Him alone. We would see that fulness, and there is another sight that occasionally is given to all who desire it, namely a sight of His understanding. He understands all the cases, He has to deal with. All the perplexing cases, all the difficulties, all the solemn providences we cannot understand. The crooked things which we cannot straighten, He knows the end from the beginning, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15 verse 18).

Now to see this Jesus, with a perfect understanding of all things, that omniscience, that full understanding, of which He himself speaks in the Proverbs (8 verse 14) "I am understanding," is a great privilege to faith. It enables faith to take, and lay matters before Him, things that you cannot speak of to your nearest and dearest. Exercises that perplex you, devils that aim to destroy you, sins that threaten your ruin. These things by faith, looking unto Christ, encourage you to go to Him and lay all matters before Him. "Sir we would see Jesus," in the scriptures. He is in them, He is the one special Person, treated of in the Holy scriptures. On the eve of the fall, He was prophesied and promised as the seed of the Woman, Jesus Christ. (Genesis 3 verse 15). He was preached to Noah, and Noah preached Him. Enoch walked with Him, and onward to the close of the scriptures. Christ is the Person, the Doctrine the object of faith, hope, love and worship. How do we read the word of God? I assume that the major part of this congregation does read the scripture. How do we read it? Do we follow Hart's advice,

Join prayer with each inspection; (Gadsby's 814 verse 6)

Do you read it carelessly? It is a great thing to find Christ in the scripture. I believe if we had more gracious understanding, and more hunger and thirst, we should come across, so to put it, the Lord Jesus in many places. In the prophets and in the histories of the word of God, where we may not hitherto have thought Him to be. A sight of Christ, in any scripture that the Holy Ghost may give you, and open to you, will make you wonder at the condescension of God, in showing you such a Man, such a God, such a Saviour. He is in every promise, every gospel promise has somewhat of the Lord Jesus in it. You could not get from heaven into your heart, one gospel word, and not have in that word, somewhat of Jesus Christ. Faith might not see Him very distinctly at the moment, but as opened, it will see Christ in every word, that God is pleased to speak.

"We would see Jesus" in providence, His rule, His universal "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."(Matthew 28 verse 18) Some of you do not believe this, or are not concerned about Him. If He comes in some trouble, He is not seen by you, and you have no desire to see Him, but it is not so with the people of God. They would see Him in their troubles, and submit to His holy will. They would see Him when their tables are spread, and thank Him for His liberality and kindness. They would see Him in such and such things, as would bring peace to their souls, even though trouble be the means. What a mercy it is to have faith enough to desire Him, and to see in these things that I have named, this glorious King, King of saints.

"Sir we would see Jesus" on a dying bed, we must come to a dying bed, some of us may soon be there. We must come "as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement:"(Hebrews 9 verse 27). O careless sinner, you must come to this place, and what then? Your carelessness will flee away, your earthly efforts will not avail to comfort you. You will be soon drawing your last breath, the last pulsations of your heart will soon come, and what is your prospect? What is your prospect? You cannot get a discharge from that war that awaits you. You cannot avoid the last enemy, as to this life, what about the world to come? If you believe in the Being of God, in the justice of God, if you believe in a heaven, that some people are destined to inherit. If you believe in hell, that sinners will be consigned to, a dark and dismal abyss of punishment, and then later, that should stare you in the face, when you have to stare death in the face, what will you do? Now the saints can say, we would see Him when we come to a dying bed. He makes a dying bed soft as downy pillows are. He makes the prospect bright. He enables His dear people to believe.

And to feel that scripture to be true "O death , I will be thy plagues; O grave I will be thy destruction:"(Hosea 13 verse 14). It is a prospect God has set before some of us, and I have thought this morning, in the weakness, that made it almost impossible for me to be with you. How soon it will come to me, when preaching will stop, when hearing godly people speak will end, and when I shall have to stare death in the face, and death will be very near to me. What then? O the prospect is this, Jesus in this chapter said "Where I am, there shall also my servant be:" (John 12 verse 26). That was once like a sun shining in my heart. No terror then. If you are redeemed, purged from your sin by the precious blood of Christ, if you have the witness of the Spirit, with your spirit that you belong to Him, then, come life, come death, come ease, come pain, whatever may come - this is it. When we die we shall "be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5 verse 8).

Perhaps some of you would rather not hear about death, but then you must die, whether you care to hear about it or not. You must die and meet God, your creator and judge. And some can say, we would not put away the thought of death on any consideration of a natural kind. Why should we avert our gaze from it, why should we turn away from the thought of dying. Naturally a good many reasons might be found, but spiritually no reason at all. Death's sting is taken away, by the gospel applied. The Lord grant that we may be saying "Sir we would see Jesus."

Now I must leave it. May the hand of the Lord be with us. I could not expect, according to present feelings, to be with you this evening. May His presence be with us.

Amen