

We Would See Jesus

by J. Henry Brown

The sermon emphasizes the importance of self-denial and the cross in experiencing the glory of Jesus and bearing spiritual fruit.

Duration: 35:42

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 12:19-27

Topics: "The Cross", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the words 'Sir, we would see Jesus' spoken by certain Greeks who came to worship. Jesus acknowledges that the time has come for him to be glorified and talks about the significance of his death and resurrection. The speaker emphasizes that Jesus saw both the glory of the future gathering of believers and the suffering he would endure on the cross. The sermon concludes with the idea that God wants to bring believers to a place of death, where they can be transformed and have Christ formed in them.

Transcript

But you don't seem to have got rid of me yet. I think you're taking a liking to me. I'm beginning to feel older.

Shall we turn to the Gospel of John, and read a little in chapter 12. John chapter 12. We remind ourselves that this is following the raising up of Lazarus that we have in chapter 11, and then Jesus in Bethany with Lazarus, Martha, Mary.

And then we follow it through, and we find that the Lord sat upon the earth, and he was riding into Jerusalem. They cried, Behold thy King cometh sitting on earth his court. Now, when we get down to verse 19 in chapter 12, we find that the Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how you prevail nothing.

Behold the world is gone after him. This is how they summed it up. They said, perceive ye how you prevail nothing.

Behold the world is gone after him. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast. The same came therefore to Philip, which was a Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

Philip cometh and telleth Andrew, and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.

But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that taketh his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my servant be.

If any man serve me, him will my father honor. Now is my soul troubled. Now what shall I say? Father saved me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour.

Father glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven 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 sake. 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. Now with this portion of scripture before us, we remind ourselves that evidently, because of these miracles that Jesus had been doing, and more so with regard to this raising up of Lazarus from the dead, that people everywhere were talking about this Jesus of Nazareth.

The Pharisees were beginning to realize that the position was somewhat hopeless as far as they were concerned. They said the whole world's gone after him. Everyone seemed to be occupied talking about Jesus of Nazareth.

What a wonderful person he was. What a tremendous work he was doing. The miracles that he was performing.

Jesus of Nazareth. And so they came up to the feast, and among those that were there at the feast, we find there were certain Greeks. And I like to picture this for myself.

I like to get the setting of these things. I sit and I find pictures in my mind what to say. And so I can see these crowds, people moving around, greeting one another.

They'd come up to the feast, and among them these Greeks. And as these people are moving about, it seemed to these Greeks that the name of Jesus of Nazareth was upon every lip. They were all talking about him.

This marvelous thing, raising this man that had been dead for a day, raising him from the dead. Tremendous thing. And so, on every lip, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus of Nazareth.

So, there was kindled in the hearts of these Greeks a desire to see him, to see this Jesus of Nazareth. I rather think that they would make inquiries. Where was he? Well, he was somewhere in the city.

He'd come up there to the city, come from Bethany, and he was there somewhere. Well, where was he? Had anybody seen him? Well, yes. Last we saw him, he was in such-and-such a place.

And I think these Greeks made their way to this place. And when they got there, they didn't see Jesus, but they saw some of his disciples. And I don't think these Greeks were very sure of themselves.

They were Greeks, and they knew it, and they were not so sure of themselves. So, I suppose they stood there for a little while, looking at the disciples, and then suddenly they heard one of them call thy name, and his name was Philip. And when these Greeks heard somebody call out to one of the disciples, say, Philip, they said to themselves, well he's evidently a Jew, but he's got a Greek name.

Philip is a Greek name. So, they said, well, we're Greeks, and he's got a Greek name. Let's go to him, and let's tell him we want to see Jesus.

So, these Greeks went along to Philip, and they said, sir, we would see Jesus. What memorable words these are! They've been echoed and re-echoed all through the years. Sir, we would see Jesus.

Well, I don't think Philip was very sure of himself either, because you notice that he went and told Andrews. It may be that Philip remembered a time when a Greek, a Gentile woman, she followed the Lord, and she cried out, thou son of David, have mercy upon me, because my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon. And he answered not a word, and she continued to follow, and to call out unto him, Lord, have mercy upon me, my daughter's grievously vexed with a demon.

Not a word, and at last he came right up to where he was, and he said to her, you know, is it right to give the children's meat to dogs? Maybe Philip was remembering something of it. These were evidently Greeks. They wanted to see Jesus.

How would he treat them? Would he say to these, I'm sent not, but they're a lost sheep of the house of Israel. As he said to this woman, would he say to these men? So Philip wasn't very sure of himself, and he probably said, well I'm going over and tell Andrew about it. So he said, Andrew, yes? He said, there are some Greeks out here, and they're expressing this desire.

They're saying, sir, we would see Jesus. What do you think we should do about it? And I'm pretty sure that Andrew said, well let's come and see Jesus, because you may have noticed that it says Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. So Andrew evidently took the lead.

So they went along to Jesus, and they said to him, there are some Greeks out there, and they're expressing this desire. They're saying, sir, we would see Jesus. Now when Jesus heard these words, he said something very remarkable.

He said, the hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Now I've read this over and over again, and never questioned it. I dare say you have also read it over and over again, and you never questioned it either.

But a little while ago I did question it. I said to myself, now just why did he say that? You've got the picture before you. Certain Greeks standing there, and they wanted to see him.

Philip, not sure of himself, tells Andrew. Andrew and Philip go to Jesus, and they say to him, there are some Greeks outside there, expressing this desire, sir, we would see Jesus. And he answered, the hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

Now had I been one of those disciples, I would have looked at him for a moment, and then I would have said, Lord, I don't think you heard what we said. We were saying that there are some Greeks outside expressing this desire, sir, we would see Jesus. He would say, yes, I heard what you said, and I say, the hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

And I would still be somewhat mystified. I would look at him, and I say, well, I don't see any connection. There are Greeks out there saying, sir, we would see Jesus.

You say, the hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Now what has that got to do with this? The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. What has that got to do with these Greeks standing out there, and expressing the desire, sir, we would see Jesus? Where is the connection? We've read it many times, and never thought about it.

Now we face up and say, well, yes, it is remarkable. Why did he say those words? Well, I believe that when our Lord Jesus heard those words, he was stirred in the depths of his prophetic soul. He was moved by those words.

Remember, they were Greeks, Gentiles, and this is the desire, sir, we would see Jesus. Those words moved him, coming from the lips of these Greeks, these Gentiles. Now, these are really memorable words.

I remember going up onto a platform to speak, and I saw in the corner of the desk a little chart, and being curious, I looked at it, and I looked at it, and I read these words, sir, we would see Jesus. So, I thought, well evidently they don't want to see me. They don't mind me being here, but they don't want to see me.

They want to see Jesus. These words have been echoed, and re-echoed all through the years. And they moved our Lord Jesus Christ in such a way that he looked on, and he saw his glory.

Greeks saying, sir, we would see Jesus. He looked on, and there he was. He could see his glory.

He could see that in a few days they would take him, and they would nail him to the tree. He would suffer, he would die. He would be forsaken of man.

He would be forsaken of his disciples. He would be forsaken of God. He saw that he would be taken down from that cross, and buried in the tomb, but the third day he would rise again from among the dead.

He would stay with his disciples, encouraging them for 40 days, and then he would be received up. He would be there in the very presence of God, and on the day of Pentecost, when they were all gathered together, he would come in the power of the Spirit. He himself, in the power of the Spirit, would come, and they who were gathered together, they would be baptized into one body.

They would be formed into his body. Not his personal body, but his body, the church, which is his body. They, on the day of Pentecost, would be baptized into one body, and he himself would come, and he would take up his abode in that body, the church, which is his body.

And then he saw that they would go out to preach the gospel, and as they went out to preach the gospel, they would preach it not only to the Jews. They might preach it to the Jews first, but they would also preach it to the Greeks, to the Gentiles. And he saw that, as a result of their going forth to preach that gospel in the power of the Spirit, that he would be with them.

Lord, I am with you always, even until the end of the age. He would be with them, and he would be working through them to reach men and women, Jew and Gentile, to convict them of sin and righteousness and judgment, and to lead them to repentance and to faith in himself. And so, there would be a great gathering in.

There would be a great harvest, not only out from the Jews, but out from the Gentiles. He could see, as they went out to preach the gospel, men and women would be brought in. And not only so, he could see that, as they went out to preach the gospel into these various localities, that many will be saved and baptized and brought together, and they will be scattered all over the world in due course.

These little companies of followers of him, Christians, and he could also realize this, that whenever they came together they would have the same desire. They would be saying, just as these Greeks said, they would be saying, sir, we would see Jesus. And, whenever we gather together, this is our heart's desire.

When we come together on the first day of the week to remember our Lord Jesus Christ, these are the words, sir, we would see Jesus. And, our Lord Jesus, he looked on, and he could see all this taking place, and he said, the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. These are just the beginnings, sir, we would see Jesus.

In a little while, then the gospel is going out into all the world, and there will be a great gathering in, there'll be a great harvest. He could look even beyond that, and he could see himself as the very center of an innumerable multitude gathered around him, singing unto him and praising him, because he had redeemed them by his precious blood. The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

There was going to be a great gathering in, there was going to be a great harvest, but you know, whilst he was standing there, and because of those words, stirred within his prophetic soul, he was looking on, and he can see that glory, that great gathering in, that harvest. He saw something else. Rising up between him and that great gathering in, between him and that harvest, he saw something else.

He saw the cross, and all that that cross would be, and did you notice? Having said, the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified, he saw it, the great gathering in, the great harvest, he saw it, and between him and that great harvest there comes the cross, because immediately he said, verily, verily, I say unto you, except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. Oh yes, he could see the harvest, but there could be no harvest, unless he were willing and ready to fall into the ground and die, unless he were willing or ready to go to that cross to suffer and die. There could never be a great gathering in, there could never be a harvest, there could never be the preaching of the gospel.

That was it. The hour is come, the Son of Man should be glorified, but there will be no glory, no harvest, unless the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die. You know, this is a very remarkable thing, that according to what we see in the word of God, the condition for the bringing forth of the harvest is death.

Have you ever thought of that? That death is the condition of fruit-bearing. That in every country throughout the world, there are millions, billions of tons of seed put into the ground every year, but unless it die, it will abide alone. If it die, it will bring forth much fruit.

There's a principle that God himself has kept to all the way through the ages, that death is the condition of the harvest. Death is the condition of fruit-bearing. Let your minds go back to the book of Genesis, back to

when God made man of the dust of the ground, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul.

Remember the words in Psalm 8? What is man? That thou art mindful of him as a son of man that thou visitest him. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, crowned with him with glory and honor. They set him above the works of thy hand.

They placed all things in subjection to him, that nothing was left that was not subject to him. What is man? So, God brought in the man, and made all things subject to him, and the very first lesson that this man had to learn was the lesson of death. You say he had to learn to die and be buried? No.

He had to learn the lesson of death, the death of self, the denial of self. What is this man? That thou art mindful of him. God placed all things in subjection to him.

Nothing left that was not subject to him, and then God waited. What did he wait for? He waited for this man to take all this that he had subjected to him, to survey it all, and then to say, I only hold it for the giver. Not to take it for himself, but to say, I hold it for thee.

Not to express himself in this that God has brought in, but to deny himself. And if this man learns this lesson of death, the death of self, if he denies himself in these circumstances, and what is subjected to him is only held for God, then God's going to get a harvest. But, if he doesn't learn the lesson of death, then God is going to lose the harvest, and we know that the man did not deny himself.

He asserted himself. He took it all for himself, and all through the ages he's still got it for himself. He is still asserting himself.

He does not deny himself, and so God has lost the harvest that he sought to have. That was the first man. When we look at the second man, the Lord Jesus Christ, we follow him through the life that he lived down here, and we do not find in any place where he asserted himself, but all the way through we find where he denied himself.

There was nothing else from himself. He did always those things that pleased the father, and the father said, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. So, the second man, he did not assert himself.

He denied himself, and God got a harvest. He got fruit out of the life of his beloved son. So, this principle, you see, applies to the first man.

It applies to the second man. But, did you notice that it applies to you and me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, except that corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, divide us alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it.

He that asserts himself in this life shall lose it. He that hateth his life, he that denieth, he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. See, the principle applies to you, it applies to me, and unless we learn that lesson of death, there can be no harvest in your life or mine.

There can be no fruit in your life or mine until we learn the lesson of death. Now remember, he says that except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. You can take a corn of wheat, and you can preserve it for as long as you like.

You can preserve that corn of wheat for thousands of years, but so long as you preserve it, it will abide alone. They found, when they unwound some of these mummified bodies that they discovered in Egypt, bodies that had been mummified 2,000 years or more, they found in the palms of the hands a few grains of wheat. Why were these placed in the palms of the hands when they were mummified? Well, we don't really know.

Some reason, but they were very anxious to find out. Now, these grains of wheat have been there for a thousand years, two thousand years, and all that time they abode alone. No fruit.

And some of that wheat, we're getting to understand, when it was put into the ground, it died, but it gave forth fruit after thousands of years. So, you can preserve a corn of wheat for as long as you like, but so long as you preserve it, there's no fruit. The Lord Jesus could have preserved his life, but so long as he preserved it, there could be no fruit.

You and I can preserve our lives for as long as we like, but so long as we preserve it, there'll be no fruit. Only death, the death of self, will yield fruit. This is a remarkable thing, isn't it? And yet, as we look into the truth of Christianity, it is there, but how slow we are to learn the lesson of death.

We look back, and we think about Cain and Abel, and we see that Abel, he brought the firstling of the flock, and of the plant thereof, he brought a sin offering. He was identified with that sin offering, and it revealed the condition of his soul. And there you can see that he is bringing out the truth that the sin offering was his substitute, and it was accepted by God as such, so that the sin offering died for him.

And I think it's very remarkable that that was not enough, but that Abel had to die himself, and he died at the hand of his brother. Many of us have learned this, and we've learned it well, that the Lord Jesus Christ died for us on that cross, but many of us have not yet learned that we died there on that cross. We've not got to this yet.

We've got the one side of it. He died for us, but we hadn't died with him. There has not yet been that real denial of self.

We're still living to ourselves. Said the apostle Paul, I'm crucified with Christ dead. Reckon yourselves indeed dead, but don't leave it at that.

That's negative. Reckon yourselves indeed alive unto God. But, you see, you can only come to that position of life where you bear fruit as you're identified with that death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our trouble is, of course, that self hides itself so well. It's very difficult indeed to deal with self. We're up against it all the time.

I sometimes hear people say, oh well, so-and-so, you know, yeah, just full of self, just full of self. Yeah, and sometimes I say, well why don't you go and tell them? Oh brother, you couldn't do that. Why not? Oh well, they would be terribly upset.

Well I guess they would, but I'll tell you this, you ought to go and tell them. Why? Because I'm sure of this, that they haven't the faintest idea that they're full of self. You say they are.

You can see that they are. They haven't the faintest idea, and if you told them they would be shocked. That self is hiding itself so well, full of self, yet you don't realize it.

And you know, there's even a faith with self. A self that exalts itself in denying itself. I don't know what you're going to do with self.

Yes, I do. You've got to put it there where it should be. I am crucified with Christ.

That self, he that loves his life, he that keeps his life, shall lose it. May not be good. He that takes up his life in this world, put it where it should be on that cross, shall keep it unto life itself.

But, what a lesson to learn. The death of self. And yet, this is the very heart of Christianity.

And until we learn the lesson, then God is not going to get much fruit out of our lives, only as we are ready and willing to put ourselves there where we should be. Do you remember that when the Apostle Paul was writing his epistle to the Ephesians, that he spoke of some people as being the enemies of the cross of Christ? Not necessarily enemies of Christ, but enemies of the cross of Christ. You know why? Because these people were trying to produce something in the flesh, in the natural man.

They were trying to produce something. And he said, I've told you about these people, I've told you often, I tell you even now weeping, they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. But, because in self they're trying to produce something for God.

What they ought to do is to put self where it should be on that cross. I'm crucified with Christ, that's me, that's myself, that's the end of me. And when I come to that, I find it's the beginning.

It's the beginning of Christ in me. Sometimes I think about Abraham and Isaac, and in thinking about them, I try to picture this, you know, I can see this, I can see this young fellow, I can see Isaac, and I can see Abraham taking Isaac, and he binds into that altar that he built, and Isaac doesn't understand what's going on, but he's bound to the altar. And I see he's watching his father, and he looks at his father, and he sees in his father's face a look of determination.

He doesn't understand that. And then he saw his father pick up that glittering blade, and he came across to him, and he's lying there, and he's looking up. He looks into his father's face.

He looks at that knife. You know what he says? He says, this is the end of me. I'm finished.

There it is. Any moment it'll be plunged into my heart. I'm finished.

It's the end of me. Was it? Well, it was as far as he was concerned. He had the sentence in himself.

That was the end, but he wasn't. Isn't it wonderful? It says, Abraham received him back from the dead. Well, he'd been in the place of the dead, all right.

He received him back from that, in a figure, from the dead. I can see there what God wants to do with you and me. He wants to bring us right there to that place of death.

Well, we say, I'm finished. This is the end of me. I'm crucified with Christ.

Yes, nevertheless, I live yet no longer. It's Christ living in me. My little children, for whom I travel in birth, until Christ is formed in you.

Christ in you. That's it. The worst self must be there.

So, you must keep it there, and come down again and again, put it back. Only if you keep self there, will you find the big forces of the gospel. So, Lord bless these thoughts to us, and enable us to lay hold of him now for a short time in prayer.

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