

## Palm Sunday 2024

The appointed text for Palm and Passion Sunday this year is from John 12. Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. 21 So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” 22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”

Beautiful and cryptic teaching from our Lord. But I must ask: what did that have to do with the gentiles seeing Jesus? I expected more of a “yes or no” or “lets set up an appointment,” kind of thing.

And it isn't like they caught him while he was saying something else to someone else. No the text says when they went and told him about the gentiles who wanted to see him, the text says, “he ANSWERED them...” This is his *answer* to that inquiry about the greeks.

And it isn't exactly a simple yes or no.

Even more odd is that in verse 36 as Jesus is talking about his mission, to be lifted up on a cross. And he is getting some questions, and some are wanting to see a miracle, we read that Jesus “departed and hid himself from the crowds.”

So I guess it’s a “no” then? The gentiles don’t get to see him?

It sure seems like it. At least initially.

But lets look at it again. When someone asks to see him he begins speaking (admittedly cryptically) about his glory and his being lifted up. It’s only when the conversation shifts towards the “skin deep” blessings, that Jesus withdraws.

So what does this all mean? It means that Jesus will no longer be seen as the One who gives some healthcare to those “lucky” enough to be around at the time, and who will get sick later and die. He will no longer be seen as the “bread king” who gives free meals now and again.

He will be seen, and wants the greeks, and the world, and you, to see him lifted up, lifted up on a cross. He wants to be seen as a beam of God’s love shining bright, drawing the nations to himself, jews, greeks, you and I. That, the One on the cross, is the Son who glorifies the Father by fulfilling and accomplishing the plan of salvation for the world for all time. The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified there. And the Glory of God will be seen, in faith, not just by those “luck” enough to be around in his ministry and get their leprosy healed, but He will be

seen in glory around the world, throughout time, and praised by a countless host who receive eternal healing and life!

“Tell them that,” Philip and Andrew, “Tell them they will see me lifted up for them, tell them my suffering, agony, pain and death is my glory for that is where I will lose my life and will keep it forevermore. Tell them there is an appointment for them to see me, not here with miracles and food and populous crowds, but there when the crowds cry “crucify,” where I am stripped and beaten, and killed, that is where you may see me as I truly am, for there is where I show my love for you, and them.”

That is his response. His answer. Yes, it is cryptic but most of his teaching in Holy Week is. He has taught these pharisees plainly for years and now they want the same answers, and more miracles. No more! Even in our readings from the cantata coming out of Mark’s Gospel, we have the fig tree. Did he wake up on the wrong side of the bed that morning? Or is he teaching that if a tree out of season better bear fruit, what does that mean for us who are in the season for bearing the fruits of repentance and faith? That’s a stern teaching for we of little faith.

And as we fall short of that, may it remind us again of our need for someone to go to that cross. For our faith is small, our sins are great. Who can save us!?

Welcome to Holy Week. See the King, the Savior come to save. And see him, as  
the greeks will, lifted up to do just that for you!