

## The Gospel of John - #46 - 12/05/2021 - "Seeing Jesus in Me!" John 12: 20-26

**Introduction: IL-** A few years ago a group of salesmen went to a regional sales convention in Chicago. They had assured their wives that they would be home in plenty of time for Friday night's dinner. In their rush one of these salesmen accidentally kicked over a table which held a display of apples. Apples flew everywhere. Without stopping or looking back, they all managed to reach the plane in time for their nearly missed boarding. *All But One!*

He paused, took a deep breath, got in touch with his feelings, and experienced a twinge of compassion for the girl whose apple stand had been overturned. He told his buddies to go on without him, waved good-bye, told one of them to call his wife when they arrived home and explain he was taking a later flight. Then he returned to the terminal where the apples were all over the terminal floor. *He was glad he did.* \*The 16 year old girl was totally blind! She was softly crying, tears running down her cheeks in frustration, and at the same time helplessly groping for her spilled produce as the crowd swirled about her, no one stopping and no one to care for her plight. The salesman knelt on the floor with her, gathered up the apples, put them back on the table and helped organize her display. As he did this, he noticed that many apples had become battered and bruised; these he set aside in another basket. When he had finished, he pulled out his wallet and said to the girl, "*Here, please take this \$40 for the damage we did. Are you okay?*" She nodded through her tears. As the salesman started to walk away, the bewildered blind girl called out to him, "*Mister...*" He paused and turned to look back into those blind eyes. She continued... "*Are you Jesus?*"

This text helps me experience three ways to help unbelievers "see" Jesus in ME:

**By having an eternal focus like Jesus-** verses 23 and 24 "*The hour has come!*" The backdrop to these verses is in verses 20-22. "Some Greeks." These people were most likely considering the Jewish faith, waiting to become proselytes to Judaism, but one description of them here is that they went up "to worship" and wanted to "see" Jesus! Unlike so many Jews who were attracted to Jesus and His disciples because they heard Jesus could do miraculous things, these Greeks wanted to have a conversation with Him- an interview to get to know Him better. They could only have been in the courtyard of the Gentiles and Jesus must have been in that area of the Temple grounds as well. Why come to Philip? Because his name was a Greek name and he was a resident of Bethsaida of Galilee, a city of many Gentiles. And Philip may have spoken Greek. The men were polite, calling Philip "sir" but it is exciting to see that they didn't want to see the Messiah of the Jews, they wanted to see Jesus, the Savior of the world! The visitors didn't know it, but this would be Jesus' last public appearance before He went to the Cross. He had to die, be buried and rise again the third day to be the Author of life for Jew and Greek! These men were symbolic of the "other sheep" Jesus referred to in John 10 that Jesus said He "must" bring. Ephesians 2: 12-13- "Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you, who once were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ!" Philip felt the need to ask Andrew to accompany him as he went to Jesus to tell Him of the request of the Greeks. We see Andrew three times in the Gospels and always as an "introducer"! In John 1: 44 he brings his own brother, Peter, to Jesus!

As far as the text indicates Jesus may have only spoken to Philip and Andrew but it is possible that the Greeks were standing there too and heard His powerful words. In verse 23 Jesus said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." In at least two other places in John's record (2: 4 and 8: 20) Jesus made it clear that His hour had not come. But now it has come and Jesus is ready to go to the Cross and be put in the tomb for three days and be raised again to be glorified by the Father. IL- Major Ian Thomas, Torchbearers International- "He had to be what He was in order to do what He did!" In John 10: 18 Jesus made it very clear that no one was going to take His life away but that He would lay it down of His own accord! So this was a pivotal point in His ministry- the crucial moment has come and He is ready and willing to die! He uses analogy of death that precedes life through the seed of grain so common around that part of Israel. I learned something about seeds of wheat- it takes only two to three days for those seeds to sprout and then in a whole field it takes about seven months to grow to the point that they will be harvested. Two to three days- just like Jesus- dead in that tomb for three days! What does that analogy have to do with you and me? It means that if I want others to see Christ in me I need a clear focus on things that are eternal and spiritual, not on things that are temporary and earthy or worldly. Like my Savior I need to know, without any doubt, that God is in control of events in my life and in control of my future, all the way to Heaven! When I have conversations with neighbors or friends and the conversation swirls around events in the news that are disturbing to them and so many others, I can be a powerful witness of the truth that, as a believer, there is nothing to worry about, that God is sovereign. And just as Jesus "time" was right on time Biblically and prophetically, so my life is in His hands! We can share a text like John 10: 28-29- "I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who gave them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand." An eternal focus also means that I know that today is the day of salvation for those around me. In a loving way I need to assure my friends and neighbors of that fact so that they can believe on Jesus for their eternal salvation and make sure that their eternal destiny is settled!

**By dying to self and living all out for Jesus-** verse 25 *"Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."* The people God is using mightily are people who have chosen the path of the humble disciple. Romans 8: 10- "But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness!" As I study Scripture I see some incredible paradoxes: if one wants to be great he must be a servant- if you want to really live you must die to yourself. Dying to self means no longer satisfying my every whim and wish. It means giving of my time (really HIS time), my talent (that HE gave me) and my treasure (over which I am only a steward- GOD owns it all!) Dying to self demonstrates that I am not clinging to this earthly life with a passion- that when I die the coroner won't have to pry my checkbook and deposit slips out of my hand! Dying to self and losing my life doesn't equate to suicide but rather to usefulness for Jesus' sake! IL- D. L. Moody- "God sends no one away empty handed except those who are full of themselves!" People around us, it is clear, can't see Jesus in His human form, but they can see Him in us- IF I am committed to living all out for Jesus and not to please myself alone! There is no other life like the one Jesus gives to the person who comes humbly bowing before Him, owning up to their sin and selfish ways, and saying "Yes!" to the full life He alone

can offer. Jesus told us, in John 10: 10- "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly!" That promise follows on the heels of the sad realization that "the thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy!" Those around us who are victims of Satan's attacks and guilty of their own rejection and rebellion in the pursuit of life that is only physical, need to see that we are given over to life as God intended. Jesus, living IN us, provides that life. Colossians 3: 1-3- "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things which are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God!" That means that, with Christ living in me, I have the power to turn off the things that look like the world and turn on the things that honor and glorify God. I can choose to painfully deal with the frustrations of selfishness **or** powerfully demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (Galatians 5: 22-23) What do I mean by the painful stuff? I mean that if I am going to have others see Christ in me, I **MUST** confess any sin in my life- sin that always seems to line up with worldly philosophies and practices, and instead go after what pleases God. If I have broken relationships in my family or my church family, I need to go to that person and make it right. "Oh how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133: 1) Jesus wouldn't let such things go on in His Body- the Church. If I have been using my tongue to speak harshly to others, especially my brothers and sisters in the Lord, then I need to ask their forgiveness and search my vocabulary for words that should not be in my mouth. "The tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life and is set on fire by hell." (James 3: 6,7) Jesus wouldn't talk like that to His loved ones! If I have been using the internet for things that tantalize the flesh, like pornography, I need to confess it to the Lord and maybe go to the drastic step of putting that computer in the dumpster. Jesus wouldn't condone that sensual lust! "Do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would as father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all purity." (1 Timothy 5: 1) I know you can see my point. Others around us need to see our godly character and need to know how compassionate we are to those who fail to live up to God's standards! Jesus came, not to condemn but to transform us through His shed blood!

**By serving where Jesus is-** verse 26 *"If anyone serves Me he must follow Me."* Jesus is compassion in perfection! While on earth He went out of His way to go to and minister to the down and out, the less fortunate, the sinners who recognized their sin. Remember the account of the self-righteous Pharisee in the Temple courtyard, and the sinner on his knees who felt so devastated by his sin that all he could say was, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!?" Jesus showed him mercy! Remember the prodigal son whose father ran to him to welcome him back home after his selfish pursuits left him empty? That father represents Jesus running after sinners like you and me still today! Don't forget the woman at the well, married five times and living with yet another man but Jesus "had to go through Samaria" to meet her and offer her new life! Millions of people, now believers, have been bought by the blood of Christ, but many of them have never served the people around them out of hearts of compassion like Jesus' heart. Those who do will one day be honored with a crown from the King of kings who rightly

wears His crown! We all need to learn that the right sequence of character shaping is: obedience, dying to self, life abundant lived for Him! Look for God-appointed opportunities to share your faith. Ask for the right attitude and approach to that person. Pray for the seed of the Gospel to grow in them. Help them grow by spending time with them in God's Word. If you haven't been a verbal witness of Jesus, just know that only Christ in you can bring about a change in your life that will glorify the Lord Jesus and develop you in your sharing of your faith so that others may come to know the Lord! It will be as if Jesus is right there in you working through you!

**Conclusion: IL-** J. Vernon McGee, who pastored the Church of the Open Door in Los Angeles, gives an account of his early days in ministry in Midway, Georgia. He was a student pastor and one Sunday a young man came up to him following his message, with tears in his eyes, and told Vernon- "I never knew Jesus was so wonderful." Dr. McGee made a commitment that day to always seek to preach so that others could say, "I never knew Jesus was so wonderful!"

May you and I live in such a way that those around will say that same thing!

**Closing Song:** "Christ In Me"