



The Methodist Church

Ripon and Lower Dales Circuit

Worship at Home Sunday August 21st 2022

Welcome

What have you always wanted to see? I have always wanted to see the Northern Lights - the Aurora Borealis. you have to go somewhere like Norway of Iceland or even Greenland to see, and even then you are not guaranteed unless you spend a long time there.

Today we will look at some people who wanted so much to See Jesus that they travelled from Greece to Palestine to see him and we may discover a little of what we can learn from wanting to see Jesus so much.

Prayer

Lord as we take this moment and set is aside for you, help us to be ready for you. As we listen to your wisdom, and as we reflect on these words today, allow us to see you, so that we may know you and your love more closely than ever before.

Hymn StF - 556 - Just as I am without one plea

https://youtu.be/8rmCN-w_Gk

1 Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

2 Just as I am, and waiting not
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3 Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come

4 Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Author - Charlotte Elliot

Prayer

Father God, thank you for bringing us in safety and health to this time of fellowship. We are thankful that for a while we can surrender our lives to you in our worship. As we gather together wherever we are we hold you up just as if we were together in one place. Thankful that you are not bound to a building or place or a time, that even though we are spread far and wide you are with each of us right in our homes

You are the Alpha and the Omega, oh Lord. You are the creator of all, and we glorify your name. We cannot do anything except through your blessings. May we be filled with your spirit and your holy power. Father, even though it is limited, accept our worship as we sing your praises in our hearts and minds. Let everything that we do at this time, and every day be divinely guided by your power. May the evidence of your will be present always in our lives. Open the door to heaven and bring us your blessings. And may your joy overflow within us today and for every day of our lives.

A moment to reflect on how we have met the challenges of this week. If we have forgotten that we are followers of Jesus and have not met the challenges let us acknowledge that now and ask Jesus to forgive us and His Spirit to renew us.

Take a moment of quite to reflect on those areas we could have walked closer to Gods will

Lord we come to you as our Saviour and King. Thanking you for your sacrifice that we might be made clean.

Amen.

Reading John 12, 20 - 32

Now some Greeks were among those who went up to worship at the festival. So they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and requested of him, "Sir, we want to see Jesus."

Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus replied to them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

" I assure you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces a large crop. The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep

it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me. Where I am, there My servant also will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honour him.

"Now My soul is troubled. What should I say – Father, save Me from this hour? But that is why I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again!" The crowd standing there heard it and said it was thunder. Others said that an angel had spoken to Him.

Jesus responded, "This voice came, not for Me, but for you. Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out. As for Me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to Myself."

Before we think about this request to see Jesus let's sing again.

Lord I come to you, let my heart be changed, renewed.

<https://youtu.be/7g7YMip1Mhc>

1 Lord I come to You

Let my heart be changed, renewed

Flowing from the grace

That I've found in You

Lord I've come to know

The weaknesses I see in me

Will be stripped away

By the power of Your love

Hold me close

Let Your love surround me

Bring me near

Draw me to Your side

And as I wait

I'll rise up like the eagle

And I will soar with You

Your spirit leads me on

By the power of Your love

2 Lord unveil my eyes

Let me see You face to face

The knowledge of Your love

As You live in me

Lord renew my mind

As Your will unfolds in my life

In living every day

By the power of Your love

Hold me close

Let Your love surround me

Bring me near

Draw me to Your side

And as I wait

I'll rise up like the eagle

And I will soar with You

Your spirit leads me on

By the power of Your love

Hold me close

Let Your love surround me

Bring me near

Draw me to Your side

And as I wait

I'll rise up like the eagle

And I will soar with You

Your spirit leads me on

By the power of Your love

Author Geoff Bullock

Reflection

Just recently I have been blessed with a new observatory for my telescope. I have been considering building one for many years, and earlier this year one came up for sale. It needed taking apart and reassembling, but finally I have a place to put my telescope in a way that allows me to use it even more to look into God's creation and see what He has made. I know much of what I will see from the books I read and the documentaries that I watch, but there is nothing that makes me so excited as actually seeing Saturn with its rings, or Jupiter and its moons hanging there, really there in the dark night sky.

In our reading today I'd like to think that the Greeks felt the same as the found Jesus. They would have heard about him from travellers and others. Perhaps even read about him from eyewitnesses that write back from Jerusalem to home.

And now they were asking to actually see him, this great prophet, miracle working perhaps even King.

And I love to think that is how these Greek people were feeling too. They had been on a journey, and quite a long one too, which most

likely involved a boat trip. And so they came to Philip first, probably because Philip is a Greek name which they recognised, and they ask to see Jesus.

I wonder what made the Greek people come all this way. Perhaps they were just visitors and had heard the fuss, or perhaps they had heard about Jesus and his miracles or his wonderful teaching by a messenger who had travelled to Greece, or maybe they had seen lives changed by others that had met with Jesus.

It is worth pausing just here for a while, what an awesome thing for any believer to hear from a not believer - 'We want to see Jesus'. As I think about this I am challenged. Have I been living my life close enough to Jesus that others see something in me they want too, so much that they are prompted to say 'We want to see Jesus'. How lovely that would be when someone sees in me something they know that only Jesus can give them.

So, the Greeks come to Philip, Philip finds Andrew and together they go to Jesus to let him know.

Now Jesus' reply to this request seems very odd. Jesus says, "now is the hour come". What was Jesus speaking about here? Do you remember the wedding at Cana in Galilee. When Mary asks Jesus to perform a miracle Jesus tells her 'My hour has not yet come.' But now by chapter 12 the 'hour' has come. Jesus takes this moment to reinforce His purpose, remind the people of what it means to follow him once again and then to explain how things will work out.

All of the Good news is just a few sentences here. Amazing.

Jesus uses the ideas of a Grain of wheat to explain what will come to His life. That He will be discarded, thrown away and left to die, only then can He come into new life, the life that defeats death.

Earlier in His teaching Jesus used the seed to represent the **Word** of God (Parable of the Sower). At the very beginning of his gospel John recognised that Jesus **IS** the word of God.

He is the seed which must die so that new life might come though His resurrection. Jesus says that the seed must die, be buried in the ground

so that new life, abundant fruit might come forth. He says that the seed must lose its own identity, must lose its own life, in order for the plant to grow and bear fruit. This is Jesus telling the people, including any who would See Jesus what will happen to Him.

And Jesus shows how He is willing and needs to give up everything for mankind. He says

Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—"Father, save me from this hour"? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.

Jesus is about to knowingly give Himself to be our Saviour. Jesus is fully aware of this Fathers will, and submits to his fully. And to reinforce this God speaks.

'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.'

Jesus says this is for OUR sake not His.

God is announcing that He IS in control of this and that He will be the one who is glorified by Jesus' sacrifice. A clear message to the people through time that no matter what God is in control, and He will be the victor over all.

Now is the judgement of the world, Now is the time the ruler of this world, Satan, will be driven out, says Jesus. This is the hour for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Satan can have no power over it any longer, and for this to happen Jesus will need to be lifted up, and people would know exactly what that meant, just like the symbol of the snake in Moses' time, that gave healing to anyone who would look to that, so Jesus when lifted on that cross would also draw people to Him.

And anyone who is drawn to Jesus will be saved.

And this is just round the corner for those who would See Jesus and believe. For any who would seek Him will find Him, all we need to do is truly seek Him, not just know about him but to seek Him and discover Him, earnestly, desiring to be close to Him, not just occasionally, but at all time.

And I love that this is all done as a response to a few citizens from Greece that ask to See Jesus. This shows that Jew and Gentile are all able to be part of this promise.

Oh, this is exciting. This the exact time that all people can be saved by Jesus. It is the beginning of the new promise God made to all, long ago by the Prophet Jeremiah

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the LORD', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their wrongs, and remember their sin no more.

So, I wonder what the Greeks made of this too. I would love to think that they saw Jesus, heard his words and said Yes to following Him, just like you and I have done, and became some of those early followers, spreading the word of Jesus' sacrifice for mankind, drawing others closer to Him so they can also know His saving power.

So, here is my challenge for this week. Are you willing to search for Jesus, really find him? Being ready to say "I want to See Jesus", and knowing what this means?

Prayer for ourselves

Jesus, like the Greeks we also would want to see you. To know you more closely that we can follow your ways. Lord, allow us to see you and know your sacrifice and love for ourselves.

Amen

Prayers of intercession

Lord we thank you for the fellowship we share with your people throughout the world as we remember all the Jesus has done for us. Let your church follow his example of love and service so that his message of salvation might reach those around us.

Lord we pray for all those who today, like your people in Egypt long ago, are oppressed and treated unjustly by those in power who abuse their authority. We pray that arrogance and cruelty may give way to humility and a kindness that seeks not to crush but to serve and nurture the weak and vulnerable.

Lord we pray for all who are suffering today and carrying the burdens of sickness, grief,

anxiety or guilt. We pray that you will guide them towards freedom, wholeness and faith in you as a loving God who seeks to serve us and save us if only we will let you.

We pray for those that are still fearful because of the Virus, those who are waiting to have the inoculation, those that are unsure if it is right for them, those in countries that are unprepared. Lord if there is a time when the whole world needs to know you and your healing, then now must be one of those times.

And we pray for those caught up in wars in our world, especially we remember those in Ukraine, those who have fled to other countries for safety, and for those who need to make the right decisions and end conflict and bring peace.

Amen

Hymn StF 557 Let Him to whom we now belong

<https://youtu.be/RqQ1soGMdGs>

Let him to whom we now belong
His sovereign right assert,
And take up every thankful song,
And every loving heart.

He justly claims us for his own,
Who bought us with a price:
The Christian lives to Christ alone,
To Christ alone he dies.

Jesus, thine own at last receive,
Fulfil our hearts' desire;
And let us to thy glory live,
And in thy cause expire.

Our souls and bodies we resign;
With joy we render thee
Our all, no longer ours, but thine,
To all eternity.

Charles Wesley

Blessing

Lord, we want to see Jesus, as we go about our daily lives, may we all see Jesus more clearly than ever before, and know his love more closely.