

## “Sir, we want to see Jesus!”

✠ **The glory of a single dead seed** (vv.20-26)

✠ **Walking in the light of the Lord** (vv.27-36)

In the Name of Jesus, God’s Son, our Light, dear fellow sons of light:

Long ago in the days before email, text messaging and social networks, a pastor found a note in his pulpit. It simply said, “**Sir, we want to see Jesus!**” Someone was tired of all the other stories about everything else that had been crowding his sermons. Nowadays there are plenty of media outlets to spend the rest of your life watching YouTube. None of these can help your immortal soul unless you “...see **Jesus!**” Inspiring stories that just make you feel good are like bragging about flying first class in a plane crash. This sermon text is unique because only John of all the four Gospel accounts was inspired by God the Holy Spirit to record it. Who made the request, when it happened and how Jesus answered are worth more than all the world’s smart phones and techy toys and everything on them. Consider...

✠ **The glory of a single dead seed** (vv.20-26)

This was a high Jewish festival, but these were not Jews. John reports, “*Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival.*” It was the Passover because Jesus had just ridden into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Jewish men were required to come, but not Gentile / Greek believers. These came to worship the God of the Jews instead of watching *Meet the Press* or taking the lives of innocent fish in the lake. Seriously, do you see how their example puts us to shame? Why should our parents have to make us go to church? Or our minds wander from worship? Why can’t we all listen to the Elders calling us back to worship? We shame our God by our attitude toward worship as if Christian freedom is a license to immorality. Break one commandment and you’ve broken them all.

Don’t forget the Third Commandment: “**Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy,**” literally *guarding it as holy*. In today’s First Lesson (Exodus 19:2-8) the LORD God reminds the Israelites just before He gave Moses the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai: “**You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.**” (19:4 NIV84) Jesus fulfilled all the God’s law in our place, not to make us immoral murderers, adulterers or idolaters who worship and serve created things more than the Creator. But to set us free from the curse and coercion of the law, so that we can gladly comply with His holy will. God wants to bless us. He wants our hearts pleased to please God.

How wretched we are not to worship eagerly. God promised the Good News to the Gentiles. But while Jesus walked this earth, He kept telling His disciples as in today’s Gospel: “**Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.**” (Matthew 10:5f NIV84)

Church membership is not an insurance policy. There’s only one way it can help you. Without this it can harden your heart in unbelief. “**Sir, we want to see Jesus!**” New Life Elders are trained, and we ask all of you to listen carefully for the clear message of Law and Gospel, sin and grace that begins and ends with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Loving your life in this world means losing eternal life. But following Jesus by dying to this world, means gaining eternal life in Christ alone. As Paul put it: “**I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**” (Galatians 2:20 NIV84)

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from draft translations for the Wartburg Project – Matthew, John.

Our worship attitudes alone are enough to condemn us before God – pastor and people, members with wandering minds and sheep who refuse to come back. But here's **The glory of a single seed**. Jesus' blood spattered the ground when He died. By His death He brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. His death and resurrection have produced a world full of souls which are ripe for harvest....

### ✠ Walking in the light of the Lord (vv.27-36)

Jesus is honest: *“Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ But that is why I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!” A voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard it and said it thundered. Others said an angel talked to him. Jesus answered, “This voice was not for me but for you.”*

This is why we gladly praise God in today's Psalm 100. God's Name is His reputation as the Savior-God. *“The LORD is good”* – so awesome and wonderful in His essence that He deserves our thanks and praise every waking hour and in our dreams as well. *“His love [CHESSED] endures forever.”* He promised to send a Savior. When the time came, Jesus paid on that promise with His own suffering, His own shed blood on the cross. *“His faithfulness continues through all generations.”* So we can be fully confident of His love not just for our grandparents, but for us and for our children.

Not by thunder or an angel, God's own Son came from heaven to make this crystal clear. Judgment has come on this world. If people are good enough, why did God's Son have to die? If my sins are not so bad, why did it take the blood of God's Son to wash them away? If all of us can choose our own way to heaven, why does Jesus warn that *“the ruler of this world will be thrown out”*? Satan says you can save yourself by your own effort, your own feelings, your own brand of spirituality. God says, *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:12 NIV84) **“Sir, we want to see Jesus!”** We need to see Jesus.

Many are looking for guidance out there – decisions to make, what to do with their lives. As Jesus promised to be *“lifted up”* on the cross, He also *told them, “The light will be with you just a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness does not overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become sons of light.”* When the Holy Spirit opens the window of your heart, don't walk away. Let Him shine His *light* in Word and sacraments. God wants us to enjoy full rights as *“sons of the light.”*

It's another way of saying as in our Gospel to the Twelve on their first mission trip: *“The kingdom of heaven is near....Freely you have received, freely give.”* My dear friends, what have we received so freely? Paul calls it, *“Reconciliation.”* This was not by our decision because we were dead in our transgressions and sins. (Ephesian 2:1) Corpses cannot desire or decide anything. *“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly....God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* Just before He gave up His spirit, Jesus called out from the cross, *“It is finished.”* It's a fact. *“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”* (Romans 5:6–11 NIV84)

God's love in Christ cleanses our attitudes and gives us joy in His service. As I confessed my sins and weaknesses for reaching out with the Gospel, God forgave me again and gave me courage. This week He also gave me three little helpers to invite kids to VBS. For my brother and sisters God's own Son substituted Himself in life and in death. Covered with Christ in our Baptism, God sees us to be as good as Jesus. In His light and power, we live! Some ask and all need this: **“Sir, we want to see Jesus!”** Amen.