

5 Lent, Celtic Reflection John 12:20-33
Christ and Grace March 18, 2018
Robin Teasley

Sir, we wish to see Jesus. That's what they said. That's what they thought they wanted, those Greeks who came to Phillip asking him to show them the Jesus about whom they had heard so much. They had traveled far to be in Jerusalem for the festival of Passover, hoping to catch a glimpse of Jesus.

Something was changing. A new and different group had arrived and they were seeking something. They had heard about Jesus and wanted to see him for themselves. When Philip and Andrew told Jesus, he took their request as evidence that news of him had gotten out in the world, like a viral you tube video, confirming for him that the hour had come for him to be lifted up. And then Jesus explains who he is and what his work must be.

Jesus says he is a grain of wheat that will fall to the ground and die, but this single grain will be raised up to bear much fruit. And then Jesus invites them, and us, to follow him. We are called to follow Jesus to see what he sees, to do what he does, and to go where he goes. Because that is how we see Jesus. We follow him and become fruit that reveals Jesus to others.

To become fruit means that we too must be willing to die. Are we willing to die to our selfishness, to die to our need to always be right or in control, to die to the use of violence to solve the problem of violence? Are we willing to lay down whatever it is that keeps us from bearing good fruit? Will we allow those dark parts of ourselves to die so that we can live in the light?

It's not always easy to see Jesus. Have you seen Jesus lately?

Something is changing. A new and different group has arrived and they are seeking something. They have heard about Jesus but they are not sure they see him in the world today, in the institution we call church, or in the lives of people professing to be Christians.

If we, like the Greeks, want to see Jesus, the place to look is wherever we see the people Jesus sees, the people Jesus helps, and then to follow Jesus as we teach good news, heal the sick, feed the hungry, show compassion to the weary, and bring justice to those living on the margins of society.

There is no lack of opportunity outside of our doors to look for Jesus. We are already bearing fruit that is bringing life to those in need. Our work as disciples is to continue looking for new ways, even as we continue to let go of those parts of ourselves that are not bearing fruit.

As Jesus told the Greeks over two thousand years ago, he is the one who draws and gathers all people to himself. He is the one who allows himself to be lifted up, so that we might all have new life. Jesus is here. Do we see him? Amen.