

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I.Macleod

[0 : 00] Let's turn for a little to the chapter we read in John's Gospel, John chapter 12. And reading from verse 20.

John chapter 12, reading from verse 20. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida, of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

Philip cometh and telleth Andrew, and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered him, saying, The hour has come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.

But if it die, it bringeth forth much hate. Now the Lord Jesus was, I'm sure we could say, was the master of using everyday events and everyday situations to explain deep, profound spiritual truths. And that's what we have here, where Jesus is talking about the corn of wheat which falls into the ground. But just prior to him telling about this corn of wheat which falls into the ground, we have these Greeks that came with a desire to see Jesus.

[1 : 28] Now this desire, we know, isn't just a certain kind of a wish. A desire is far deeper than that. It is something which is right in the very heart of our being.

It is a real heartfelt longing. There was a yearning in their heart. They really wanted to see Jesus. And we know that there were some of these Greeks that they had come, they were proselytes, they had come to embrace the Jewish form of worship.

And although they were granted many, many privileges, they weren't allowed to enter into everything that the Jew was.

They were only allowed into a certain part of the temple. And in passing we can see how wonderful it is that we're living in a day where there are no barriers. Because when that veil of the temple was rent in two, that put an end, put an end to all the barriers that had existed beforehand.

And it's wonderful to know that there is no, as Paul writes about it in Colossians, where he says that there is neither Jew nor Gentile. There is, in Colossians chapter 3, where he's saying that there is, the barrier has been broken down.

[2 : 53] Well, there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Wonderful thing. Greek nor Jew.

You know, there's an awful lot of, I suppose many of the wars today, they come around because of nationalistic fervor, nationalistic pride. It's our land. This is my land.

Some people seem to think that their own particular race is superior to other races. This is what it's saying here, no? There's not one race that's more important, more wonderful than another.

Neither Jew, Greek nor Jew. Circumcision nor uncircumcision. Isn't that wonderful? That's talking here about the religious differences. So that it doesn't matter whether a person was a Buddhist, a Baptist, or a Jew.

It doesn't matter what background they've come from. It's the same gospel. It's the same one. And then it's saying barbarian or Scythian. And the Greeks looked at all others who weren't Greeks as being barbarians.

[3 : 58] And the worst of the lot were the Scythians. So it doesn't matter what your background is, born or free. Whether you're somebody who's from the palace or whether you're living in the gutter.

It's the same gospel. Same gospel for everybody. And that's really what we, the wonderful thing that we have about this great and wonderful gospel.

That there's no skin color. There's no culture. No philosophies. No rank. No position. Creates any particular difference. Just this one thing. Believing and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

So these Greeks had come and they were deciding to see Jesus. Now this particular desire that they had to see Jesus wasn't a desire to see what he looked like.

To see what he was like. Physical size or how he spoke or something like that. It wasn't a desire of curiosity to see what Jesus was like.

[4 : 56] We could see that at any time. This was a desire to get to know Jesus more. They wanted to, as it were, to come to have a particular time of fellowship with them.

They wanted to have a time of intimacy with them. And you know friends, this is a desire of every single soul that has begun to take an interest in the Lord.

They desire to see Jesus. If you are here tonight and that was your heart's desire to see Jesus, remember that that is a supernatural work. You couldn't desire to see Jesus in and of yourself.

The Bible says, with regard to the Lord Jesus, that they saw no beauty in them that they should desire. That's what Isaiah tells us. And that is the reason why there are so many people who have no interest in the Word of God.

They've got no interest in coming to church. They've got no interest in spiritual things or spiritual fellowships. Because they see no beauty in Jesus. You can tell them. You can try and convince them.

[6 : 02] But it means nothing. It's like water of a duck's back. And if you are here tonight and your desire is to see more of Jesus, then that is because you have first come to see Him.

Maybe there's somebody here tonight and Jesus, it's only just now that you're beginning to come. I don't know. There might be somebody like that. And there has been a gradual opening of your eyes to see Him.

Beginning to see a little of who He is and a little of what He has done. And beginning to discover that that work that He did in Calvary is a personal work for you and to you.

Beforehand, you used to see Him as somebody who did a great work. And you knew that it saved lots and lots of people, but you didn't know anything about it personally. But maybe tonight it has become more and more personal.

For you're able to say, not that Jesus died for sinners, but you're able now to say that Jesus died for me, a sinner. And that is the work of grace. And that is what goes on within the people of God.

[7 : 09] But that is why so many have no thought or no notion of Jesus. Because they see no beauty in Him. Then we see these Greeks here.

And they have this great desire to see Jesus, to be near to Him and to have fellowship with Him.

And it's in response to this particular desire of the Greeks to see Jesus that we have verse 24.

Now Jesus begins in verse 23. And he says that the hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Now, I believe that Jesus is involving the Greeks that are there, but he is particularly speaking to his disciples.

And you see, just prior to the Greeks' coming, we have the account of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Now, although Jesus had frequently spoken about his death, he was always telling the disciples, you'll find that if you go through all the Gospels, you'll find dotted here and there, that Jesus would take the disciples aside, and he would tell them what was going to happen.

But the disciples had not come to grasp. None of them had grasped what was really going to happen to Jesus.

[8 : 30] They were still clinging to the old idea that Jesus was going to set up an earthly kingdom, that it was going to be a time of temporal prosperity.

They had this belief that everything was going to happen in this world. And they weren't grasping what Jesus had to do.

Remember how, on one occasion, just after Peter had made the great confession that Jesus Christ was, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Just after that, when Jesus went on to tell what was to happen, remember how Peter was trying with all his power to dissuade Jesus.

Jesus, from that. And in the end, the Lord had to say, remember where he said, get thee behind me, Satan. But they hadn't grasped what exactly was happening.

And they were being disappointed at the way that people were forsaking Jesus, because you remember in the earlier part, if we went back a few chapters in John, back to John chapter 6, Jesus was an immensely popular person, and vast kings were following.

[9 : 40] Remember after where he fed the thousands? They wanted to take him and make him king. And when Jesus then had this great crowd in front of them, and he began to teach them the

nature of his work, and that, about the bread of, with that great statement, I am the bread of life, and the importance of feeding on Jesus, they began to take umbrage, and they began to take offense, and they went away in droves.

to the extent, I've often thought that must have been one of the most heartbreaking scenes in the life of Christ. Although Jesus knew the heart of all men, though he knew what was happening, and he could read and understand, and he knew how fickle people were, yet to see all these thousands of people going out after him, and yet they're all turning away.

And I would imagine that thousands turned away from them on that occasion, because Jesus turns to the twelve, and at the end of chapter six, he's saying to them, will you also go away?

It is as if nearly everybody had deserted him. And again Peter had come, and he said, to whom else can we go? For thou is the words of eternal life. So the disciples were noticing that things were changing.

Jesus wasn't that great figure of popularity that he had been. And yet just prior to this incident, again there was a moment of popularity where Jesus rode into Jerusalem, and the crowds were out, and they were crying, Hosanna, Hosanna.

[11 : 21] And again we see the fickleness of people. You know people are, oh that's what makes God's love so wonderful. It's unchanging. You know we're so fickle.

And what we love one day, we're against the next day. You know that's one of the, I suppose one of the awful things, that's what we love when we find somebody who is stable. Somebody who is loyal. Loyal is a wonderful thing. Always be there. There for you. That's one of the wonderful things about the Lord. His love is stable. His love is unchanging. It's not subject to the way that we operate.

When we fail him, his love doesn't cease. He loves us. He continues to love us. It's a wonderful thing. But you see, here are people, and they're shouting Hosanna.

And yet just a few days later, that same crowd probably, who's shouting Hosanna, are shouting crucify him, crucify him. That's the fickleness of man. But coming back to the disciples, and the popularity of Jesus, you see, despite the fact that Jesus kept telling them what was going to happen to him, it tells us in verse 16, these things understood, not as disciples at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they, that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

[12 : 51] Remember when Jesus had risen from the dead? Remember how Peter and John ran to the empty tomb? It tells us here that, you remember how John, how Peter went in with John?

When he saw, he believed, he remembered. It all came together for him. All the teaching, the earlier teaching, and then at that moment, it all came together for him.

You know friends, it's often the same for ourselves. We're something slow to understand. There are many things sometimes, we think we understand, we read them and we say, oh yes, yeah, that's great, I understand that.

And then maybe it's, down the road, a year or two or three or ten years. And you begin to say, I never really understood that before. And I think it will go on like that for us.

And I'm sure that the, more senior people here, will be the first to say, that they, that there are many things, that they thought that they had understood.

[13 : 54] And they're seeing them in a new light, with new understanding today. That's the way it will go on. It will go on into glory like that. A continual developing, and opening up of the wonder of it all.

And in passing, we may say that, there in John chapter 12, at the beginning of the chapter, where we have Mary, anointing the feet of Jesus. That Mary was the most, spiritually minded follower, that Jesus had.

She was the greatest disciple, that Jesus had. Mary understood, what Peter didn't understand, what John didn't understand, what James didn't understand, none of the others understood.

But remember, when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus, that Jesus said, that she has done this, let her alone, against the day of my burial, as she kept this.

Mary alone, understood, who Jesus, or what Jesus was about. And no doubt, Mary had come to understand that, through her continual, sitting at Jesus' feet.

[15 : 03] So, Jesus was telling them, look, it's not going to be the way, that you think. But anyway, the time has come, and Jesus says this, the hour has come, that the Son of Man, should be glorified.

Now, all along, Jesus was talking, about a particular hour. You'll find many references, in the Bible, about that. For instance, remember, at the wedding, to his mother, at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, he said, mine hour has not yet come.

To his disciples, he said, my time has not yet come. Elsewhere, we read it saying, no man laid hands on him, because his hour, was not yet come. And that shows us, that Jesus was keeping, to a heavenly timetable.

And that's wonderful. That is something, which is so, so, meaningful to us. Because it means, that Jesus wasn't taken, by force, that he wasn't taken, against his will.

When they came, to take him in the garden, Jesus gave himself. Remember, when initially, when they came, and he said, whom seek ye? They said, Jesus of Nazareth.

[16:12] And he said, I am he. Remember what happened? They fell to the ground. It was as if, they were thrown, to the ground with force. They couldn't take him. Unless he, himself, yielded himself.

Remember when he was on the cross? They said, he saved others. Himself, he cannot save. Come down from the cross. Jesus could have come down, from the cross in a moment. Do you think that, two nails, hammered through his hands, could have held him there?

Of course not. They couldn't. But he had given himself up. He yielded himself. And the hour, had now come.

And you know, it's wonderful to know, for you and me, that although, our lives are different, in the sense that, Jesus came into this world, with the express purpose, of dying, that there was a heavenly, timetable set for him, we can also say, that there is a heavenly, timetable set for you, and for me.

The day of our birth, and the day of our death, is appointed. It's often a mystery to us, the way that God works, by a young child, is taken away.

[17:25] You can understand, these things. A loving mother, a dotting father, a soul winning minister, taken away, what we would say, way before their time.

And yet, it is not before their time, from God's point of view. And that's what brings us, so often to understand, or not even, we cannot understand it.

But remember how God says, my ways, are not your ways. My thoughts, are not your thoughts.

And so often, we're faced up, to God's providence. And we have to say, that is true.

I cannot understand, the way that God works. His ways are in the deep, they're beyond, my understanding, they're beyond your understanding. But there is a purpose.

And it is only, throughout the endlessness, of eternity, that we will see, his purposes. And you know, we will praise him. We will praise him. Because we will see it, from his perspective, and understand it.

[18:28] But we know not now, we shall know hereafter. So nobody could take Jesus, before his appointed time. But Jesus has said, the hour is come.

The hour is come, when I'm going to be taken. My work is over. Now again, from a human point of view, you would say never. Use this man. Yes God, but man.

33 years of age. And he has brought, so much healing, to so many people. He's doing so much good, and he's brought, so much hope, into people's lives.

He has excited people, and thrilled people, wherever he went, people were following him. People were touched, by his work. 33 years of age, he's really just, coming into his spine, from a human point of view, as far as his world, is concerned.

Yet he's saying, my time has come, the hour has come. And he says, the hour has come, that the Son of Man, should be glorified.

[19:30] He's speaking here, about his death, and about his resurrection. Now again, from one point of view, or from one sense, there is nothing glorious, about the cross.

It was a place of degradation, a place of shame, a place of curse. It was a place of wrath, it was a place, where God, poured upon Christ, his wrath and anger, for sin.

And yet, there's a tremendous glory, attached to the cross. Because it's here, we see the supreme work, of God, and the supreme work, of Christ. It is here, that we see love.

A love, that transcends, any love, if you could ever know. Remember, how it puts it, in the Bible.

What has the Lord done for us? Who loved us, and washed us, from our sins.

Now, we would put it, the other way around. We would say, who washed us, and loved us. But now the order, is the other way around. You and I, love something, when it's, there's something, appealing about it.

[20 : 38] You love something, that is attractive. Something that is repugnant, and vile, and hateful, we kind of, recoiled from it.

But you know, that's what the Lord did, while we were like that. While we were sinners. While we were rebels. While we were enemies. While we were disgusting, and putrid, all the way through. He loved us, in order to wash us. In order to cleanse us. That's his love. Wonderful love. And it's on the cross, that we see the display, of this love.

This love, that loved us, in order to wash us. And there's a tremendous, glory attached to it. There were glorious happenings, when Jesus was on the cross.

Remember how the very rocks, tore. The very sun, hid itself. You know, it's an amazing thing. Remember what it says. If these, should hold their peace, the very stones, would cry out.

[21 : 41] And you know, in a sense, we find that on the, when Jesus, died on the cross of Calvary, or when he dismissed his spirit. But there was, man, the crown of God's creation.

And there they were, abusing the Son of God. And yet the very testimony, of the natural creation, all around, the rocks, and the sun, and everything, was bearing testimony, in a glorious way, that this is, Christ, the Son of God.

Then we find, remember in the temple, how the, how the, how the vein was torn in two, from top to bottom. So there was this glory, that was mingled with the shame.

But of course the cross, led into glory. The cross was a pathway to glory. And the cross is a pathway to glory, for you and for me. Let us remember that.

That we will never, ever, ever taste of glory, unless we come, by the way of the cross. And we know that, when the Lord Jesus Christ, died, and his lifeless body, was taken down from the cross.

[22 : 53] In one sense, it was almost, although he was still, in a state of humiliation, because part of his humiliation, involved being buried. And yet there was an aspect, of the glory attached to it.

Because as we were singing there, in Psalm 16, that his body, saw no corruption. That's one of the great distinctions, between Christ's death, and the death that you and I will die.

Because when death sets in, when we die, corruption begins. That's one of the, one of the fearful, fearful fruits of sin. Is that those that we love, we have to get rid of.

We cannot bear to have them. We have to bury them. That's one of the, the most devastating things, about sin. Because the body begins to corrupt, and decay, and go back to the dust, that it came from.

Oh, let us thank the Lord, for the believer. That Christ is still guardian, over the very dust. And that that body will be raised. A glorious body, to be reunited with the soul.

[23 : 59] But for Jesus Christ, his body saw, no corruption. So there was this glory, mingled with the shame. And then just, very briefly, a word in verse 24.

And Christ is illustrating, what is happening. He's illustrating the glory. The glory that is taking place here, by this, the corn, except a corn of wheat, fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.

But if it die, it bringeth forth, much fruit. Now if you take a grain of wheat, and you keep it in your hand, well, and you just leave it in your hand, or you put it on the, on the e-desk, or you put it on the table there, and left it there.

That's what it would remain. It would remain a little grain of wheat there, and it would be all alone, and that, it wouldn't change into anything else. That's what it would be. But if you take that same grain, and you put it into the ground, a wonderful process takes place.

Because that grain of wheat dies, but from it, there will come the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn, then the ear. And that's what Jesus Christ is saying, about himself.

[25 : 09] And he is saying there that, he has to die. Because if he didn't die, he would be alone. Not that he would be alone in one sense, because he would always, as he always, from all eternity, Christ as a second person of the Godhead, enjoyed all the fellowship, and love, and communion, and interaction between Father and Holy Spirit.

And that was in need of nothing. But if Christ didn't die, there would be no church. You and I wouldn't be here tonight. And although there is a great company of angels, that have also been created, if Christ didn't die, he would be alone, with no church.

No church. And Christ didn't die, we mentioned that earlier, he didn't die by accident. He died deliberately, just as a sower. When a sower goes out, and sows the seed, he sows it deliberately, in a particular place, in order that that seed will die, and then will grow up, and the grain will grow up. It's a deliberate work, a deliberate process. And that's what the Lord Jesus did. And that's why he said, the hour is now come. And again, Christ's death.

As we're really saying, it's a way, of bringing in, this great harvest. You know, when you look at the grain, in your hand, or if you had a few grains, in your hand, you could never imagine, just, or supposing you had a, sack of grain, and you looked at it, and there's nothing very particularly, or particularly inspiring, or wonderful, about a sack of grain.

[26 : 46] And you can never imagine, what it will, one day, turn into, until it's sown, and grows, and harvested. And similarly, when people looked at Jesus, and they saw him walking in this world, there was nothing about him, that was indicating really, the wonder, and the glory, of who he was, and what would be achieved, by what he did.

People looked at him, just as a man. And he was a man, but he was a God man. And it, but it wasn't until he died, and it wasn't, but through his death, that people are able to see, the glory of what Jesus has done.

And I believe, that this is all tied in, with the Greeks, desiring to see Jesus. They cannot, see Jesus, who he is, but, by the way of death, and the harvest.

Oh, what a glorious harvest, is coming from that day. Where they're going to be gathered, from all corners, of this world. Millions being brought in.

We didn't hear, in the Bible Societies, little pamphlet, that came out, that's saying that, 50,000 people a day, being brought into, the Christian church, worldwide.

[28 : 09] We never hear of these figures. That's wonderful. That's awesome. And the reverse is true here, they're saying, that the equivalent of a, a congregation, has been lost in our country, every week.

And that's terrible. But you see, worldwide, this is what's happening. This is the great harvest, where men and women, boys and girls, have been brought in, from all countries, from all backgrounds.

They're brought in, because Jesus, has lain down his life. He has died, he has won victory, over death, and over the grave. He died, a personal death.

You know, when Jesus, went to the cross, he saw, if you're here tonight, and you love the Lord Jesus, if he is your savior, he went to the cross, seeing you.

He went to the cross, and he tasted, passionately, your death. We so often, when we think of the cross, we look at it, in an abstract sense, and we say, yeah, yeah, Jesus died for sinners.

[29 : 14] But the word tells us, that he tasted death, for every man. It was as passionately, as if Jesus was dying, exclusively for you, and not for anybody else.

Of course he died, for all his people, but he died, passionately, for you. It is a wonderful thing, and that is what we really, have to focus our mind upon.

And if Jesus, died passionately for you, then that is what he is asking you. He's not asking much of you, but he's asking that you, will remember him.

Tomorrow is Remembrance Sunday. But it's more, it's an even greater, and I don't in any way, am I taking away, detracting, from all the brave, and courageous men and women, who gave their lives, in the war.

Greater love hath no man in this, that a man should lay down, his life for his friends, and for a sacrifice, in that last war. But you know, there was one death, that was even greater, and that was Jesus'.

[30 : 16] It was personal. And if he died for you, then he's asking you to remember him, by coming, to profess his name, to take that cup, and to take that bread, and to do this, in remembrance, of me.

I hope that every single one, who loves the Lord Jesus, will do that tomorrow. Let us pray. O gracious and ever-blessed Lord, we give thee thanks, for all thy goodness to us.

We pray that, this word may, be meaningful to us, that we may be able to see, our risen saviour, be able to see, that, the personalness, of what Jesus has done for us.

O Lord, our God, we thank thee, that thou art, gentle, in thy dealings with us. O there might be times, when we feel, that it's been hard.

There might be times, when maybe somebody here, has a broken heart, in the way, that the Lord, has dealt with them. And yet, the amazing thing is this, that there is a tenderness, mingled with whatever comes.

[31 : 29] And we pray, Lord, for each and every one, here tonight. We pray that the love of Jesus, may fill our hearts, and that we may have that joy, and peace, that is found only, in himself.

Bless us then, we pray, and take each one of us, home safely. Part us with thy blessing, and take away sin, for Jesus' sake. Amen.