

**Rev. Seth D. Bode † Sermon 417, 03-21-2021 † Lent 5**

“Lord God, you have appointed me as Pastor in your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon you: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon your Word. Use me as your instrument – but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all.”

“Sir, we would see Jesus.”

**JOHN 12**

<sup>20</sup>Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Festival. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we want to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup>Philip went to tell Andrew. Andrew came with Philip and told Jesus.

<sup>23</sup>Jesus answered them, “The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it continues to be one kernel. But if it dies, it produces much grain. <sup>25</sup>Anyone who loves his life destroys it. And the one who hates his life in this world will hold on to it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>If anyone serves me, let him follow me. And where I am, there my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

<sup>27</sup>“Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, this is the reason I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name!”

A voice came from heaven: “I have glorified my name, and I will glorify it again.”

<sup>29</sup>The crowd standing there heard it and said it thundered. Others said an angel talked to him. <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, “This voice was not for my sake but for yours.

<sup>31</sup>“Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be thrown out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” <sup>33</sup>He said this to indicate what kind of death he was going to die.



Who is the most famous person you have met? This was the icebreaker question for a room full of WELS pastors. Many repped off big golfers and athletes. Mine happened to be the famous surgeon and eventually politician, Ben Carson. But I only got there because of the person I know. She was the pianist for the event, my wife. She worked at the college with a former opera singer, and the former opera singer was asked to sing for an awards ceremony in

St. Louis. Before we knew it, we were in a room with Ben Carson, as the award was going to his wife, Candy. Afterwards we caught up with the Carsons and met them.

I kind of liked being a trophy husband for the night. But it was really about who I knew. My dad often says that; it's not about what you know, but about who you know. Life is like that—less about what you know and more about who you know. Need a job? a promotion? tickets for the ball game? It's likely going to be better to ask who you know rather than figure out what you know.

Salvation is like that, too. It's all about Whom you know and trust.

## Interview With The Son Of Man

### 1. Not with Philip or Andrew, but directly with Jesus

Some Greeks came to see Jesus. The denotation “Greeks” does not exactly suggest they were from Greece, but that they were “by nature Greek.” It does not matter where they come from, but, that it mentions Philip was from Bethsaida, could imply they were from there. These were possibly Gentile converts to Judaism, or perhaps businessmen who knew where their Jewish customers would be during the Passover week. If Jewish converts, then, the fact that foreigners came to Judaism was due to the bankruptcy of materialism and Epicureanism. That Jews came to Jesus was due to their religion's bankrupt representation by priests and Pharisees. The Greeks were harbingers to Him of a future entering of the Gentiles into His kingdom.

They likely were able to “see” Jesus, as in to catch a glimpse or look at Him, but the question was to set up an interview with Him. Some think that Jesus was in a part of the temple these Greeks did not have access to. They may have had some special question, or some further information on faith, or His Messiahship, or the kingdom of God.

They came to Philip, not directly to Christ, maybe held back by a certain timidity and respect for Jesus. That would only be natural due to Christ's reputation and mighty works.

Spiritually we may now draw closer to Jesus than if we stood before Him. We may commune with Him to our hearts' content, speak to Him, visualize Him, let Him be our friend. We need no intermediaries like Philip and Andrew, or Mary and Joseph. We may go to Him directly in spirit. These Greeks could have done so. Jesus would not have rejected them. But their faith was not equal to the occasion—the same as that of many weak Christians of our day—who imagine that they cannot pray. So they ask others, their pastor or some friend, to pray in their place.

*“Sir, we want to see Jesus.”* This is the best verse of the text, as it reminds those who preach and teach Jesus what our followers came to learn and be taught. No one is here to see Philip. No one thought Andrew was the main event. No one ought to be here to see Seth Bode. They are here to see Jesus. No one was converted to the friends or followers of Christ, but to Christ. Otherwise we would be in trouble. Jesus seems to answer these Greeks in verse 26, *“If anyone serves me, let him follow me. And where I am, there my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”*

Where is Jesus and how do we have access to Him? This is the right question. “We would see Jesus” is the right attitude. He is in the means of grace—the gospel in Word and sacrament. There we may find Him always. Let the Church be warned; we don't get in the way of these inquiries. Let the Church be mindful; some haven't gotten this far, and the example is worth identifying and treasuring. Let the world know; an appointment and an audience with Jesus is what you want, because He is the start and finish line for eternal life and rest for our souls. Where Jesus is, there we want to be.

Psalm 73:25-26 prays, *“Whom have I in heaven but You, and earth has nothing I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever.”*

## 2. Not for Jesus, but for you

Again, it's about who you know. Jesus, as the only-begotten Son, knew the Father very well. While Jesus was speaking, He prayed to the Father. So the Father answered, but He spoke like thunder from heaven. He spoke of the glory that was already in the humiliation of Jesus. Jesus was about to suffer and die for all sins, but this is glorious. Jesus understood that. Do we?

*Jesus answered and He said, "This voice came not for me, but for you."* A remarkable saying! In the hour when He felt that His soul was troubled and when He was encompassed by the horrors of death, He had confidence in His Father and relied on it that He would hear His prayer. Jesus had no need of the voice, but the people did, and yet they didn't comprehend the meaning.

It has been said that the Bible isn't about us; it's about Jesus. It's not about us, but it is for us. This is a good verse to locate and confirm that truth. For example: Let my funeral be about Jesus, because I want it to be for those who attend; therefore, let it be all about the BEST thing for those who attend; namely, about Jesus. The best thing for those who come to my funeral will be the good news of the Lord of life.

Appropriate to the Father's glory, then, is the fact that proclaiming Jesus and His work of salvation is the highest praise of His glory.

Jesus explained His glory with a kernel of wheat. A high school science teacher once told me: "No one completely understands the germination process. Even biologically speaking, scientifically, a seed has to die before it sprouts. The endosperm becomes food for the emerging sprout; and, to bring forth life, it dies." Before science knew the mystery of the germination process, Jesus revealed it in this passage in plain simple language. Jesus knew exactly what changes were going on in the physiology and biochemical part of the seed in germination. No one completely understands the germination process, but Jesus does. Without His death, His life would be fruitless. In His death, we are the fruit.

His glory was literally to be lifted on high. Jesus is not only 'lifted up' on the cross, He is 'lifted up' in glory; that is, 'exalted.' Jesus said this to show the kind of death He was going to die. The words "kind of death" refer in the first instance to the nature of the execution itself (i.e. crucifixion, in which the victim is 'lifted up'; stoning is excluded). But "kind of death" continued to hint at the point made throughout the passage: Jesus' death is the pathway to his glorification, indeed an integral part of it. In the New Testament, Jesus' atoning death and His exaltation come together; what glory! Not only that, it is "for you."

So much glory that Jesus is worth meeting more than a pro golfer, a celebrity, a leading physician, or a world leader. Are you ready for your interview? Of course; it's about the Jesus, who, by faith, you know. Amen.