

Passion Sunday (Lent 5): Reflection: We would like to see Jesus! **[\(John 12:20-33\)](#)**

It's wonderful to look out of the window and see so many glorious signs of spring. The daffodils nodding in the garden, blossom of blackthorn and early cherry frothing in the hedges, the birds noisily singing and fresh grass coming up in the fields which looked like a thick, muddy soup only a few weeks ago.

These things are signs of hope, of new life, a reminder of the joy of living in a place where we can appreciate the passing seasons. We want to see it. We rejoice in the fresh immediacy of spring, the "now", but we also anticipate what is to come: the long, hot summer (we hope), the ripening fruit which we will enjoy, the harvest of grain from those delicate green shoots.

The Greeks who came to speak to Philip wanted to see Jesus. The fact that these visitors are so named makes it clear that they weren't Jews, but we can detect their curiosity and desire to meet Jesus face-to-face. They point to the existence of the growth of new groups of non-Jews, people from different cultures and languages who were taking their first steps of faith.

Interestingly, we don't know what happened about their meeting with Jesus. Indeed, the account takes a rather strange shift in focus. Rather than getting caught up with the "now" of the visit of these Greek-speaking strangers, Jesus recognises something else is happening. He knows that the really important thing is that their visit signals a new sort of timing.

Jesus is no longer called just to the Jewish people, but to all people. And with that fresh call, he knows that he is about to face his death on the cross. "Jesus replied, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.'" (v. 23)

Jesus presents his disciples with the picture of a little seed. It may appear as if nothing is happening when the seed is buried underground, yet it has to be buried and go through a process of being broken down in order to become the flourishing plant it was destined to be.

It is a strange and poignant image. It points to great pain, but also to a future which is far greater than that which is found if the seed is not set to its work of growing.

On this Passion Sunday, when we move into this period of "Deep Lent", perhaps doubly wearied by the rigours imposed by lockdown, where we have had to fast from gathering for public worship, sharing family time, a cup of coffee or meals with friends, and a haircut, it can seem as if the joy of resurrection is far away.

Jesus shows us that this is not the case.

The seed dies, but the resurrection is at work in it as it grows into a new plant, ensuring that it produces a wonderful harvest and goes on to create even more seeds. It's a picture of mysterious abundance and hope.

“We would like to see Jesus” – how can we see Jesus alive and flourishing in the world today? And how can we, through our behaviour and actions, enable others to see Jesus for themselves?

Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour’s blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Revd Vicky Barrett

