



“We Would See Jesus”

Kevin Presley

It is my pleasure to be with you today and I’m glad you’ve joined us for the broadcast. We’re going to talk about a wonderful scene that took place during the last week of the Lord’s ministry before His crucifixion. It is veiled in a little bit of mystery. We find it recorded in **John 12**.

John 12:12-22 “On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass’s colt. These things understood not his 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. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him. 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.”

A few things are unknown about this passage, like who these Greeks were who approached Philip, and whether or not the Lord actually granted their request. One thing that is not in doubt is their great request: *Sir, we would see Jesus!* I want to talk to you today about that great request because I think it is the need of our time.

This wonderful scene takes place during the last week of our Savior's life, just after He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Jesus' fame had spread throughout the entire land by this time, and fresh on the minds of many was the great miracle He had performed in Bethany when He raised Lazarus from the dead. There was quite a commotion when Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem and a crowd began to gather to listen to Him teach. Some Greeks who had come there to worship at the temple, likely Gentiles of the gate, were among that crowd. They approached Philip, one of the Lord's disciples, and said, *Sir, we would see Jesus.*

Now, they weren't asking to see Him with their eyes; they could do that already. No, they wanted to *talk* to the Lord, perhaps ask Him some questions and find out more about Him. Philip didn't quite know what to make of their request. Maybe he didn't think it appropriate to trouble the Lord with a group of Gentiles. So, instead of going to ask Jesus, he steps over to consult with his fellow disciple, Andrew. This is the same Andrew who brought his brother to Jesus when he first met Him in **John 1**. So, it isn't surprising that Andrew saw it as worthwhile to bring these Greeks to Jesus because he and Philip then went and told the Lord about these men who wanted to inquire of Him.

The Bible doesn't tell us if Jesus granted the interview. It's hard for me to imagine Him just altogether turning them away, but what the record does tell us is that Jesus began talking about the necessity of His death. Perhaps He turns and addresses these Greeks and His disciples, too, with His words. He tells them that His time had come, and His death was imminent, and that it would result in the whole world being drawn to Him.

It would be interesting to know how these Greeks reacted when Jesus said what He did. But we simply don't know; a curtain of silence falls around this sacred scene. What we DO know is that when others saw Jesus, they were convinced. Nathaniel was convinced with Philip brought him to Jesus in **John 1**. When Jesus laid Nathaniel's heart wide open, he declared, "*Rabbi, thou art the Son of God...*" (**John 1:49**). When Thomas later saw the nail prints in the hands of Jesus after His resurrection, he exclaimed, "*My Lord and my God.*" (**John 20:28**)

You see, to see Jesus is to love Him and to worship Him. I want to borrow this ancient phrase today in an effort to make a very critical point: if the world is ever to come to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, they must be given the opportunity to see Jesus as He is. To point men to Jesus—that's what our lives as Christians are all about. That's really what the function and work and existence of the church in this world is all about: to show Jesus to the world that so desperately needs Him. Regardless of what people may look to or be attracted to in religion, if they don't see Jesus, everything is in vain. Jesus is the brightest star in God's heaven. He outshines the sun and the beauty of the moon. He is the keynote of this wonderful message from heaven, from Genesis to Revelation. If we don't see Jesus, we are blind when it comes to the scriptures.

First of all, I want to say to every preacher and teacher, we would see Jesus in our preaching. That ought to be the desperate plea of the world! One Sunday morning, a new preacher stepped into the pulpit of his congregation. Someone had written and folded a small note and left it on the podium. Before he started his sermon, he unfolded it and it contained one simple sentence that was in today's text: *Sir, we would see Jesus!* What a profound statement someone had made to that preacher. It's one that a lot of preachers today need to hear and be reminded of. There is far too much preaching that is not Jesus-oriented.

Make no mistake, there's plenty of so-called preaching going on in the world today. You can't flip through the channels on television for very long without finding a preacher of some kind. Up and down the streets of America, churches of every variety will sit and listen to someone get up and 'preach' but there is a dearth in the land of real, meaningful, soulful, penetrating, sin-convicting preaching about Jesus. I'm not saying that they don't mention His name from time to time, but I'm talking about preaching that centers on and revolves around Jesus Christ: who He is, why He came, how He is the way, the truth and the life, how He is to be honored and obeyed. He is to be the centripetal force in every pulpit.

The preacher isn't there to build himself an empire or a great ministry or following; he is there for one reason and that is to point people to the Lord Jesus. He isn't there to preach on socioeconomics or the latest political issues of the day. He is not there to preach about psychology or human philosophies. He is not there to make people laugh or to entertain people. He is there to lift up the crucified Christ, to hide himself behind the cross and exalt Jesus by his work. The preacher should so preach that he fades out of view and the overwhelming image is of the Jesus whom he preaches.

The greatest and most effective sermons ever preached were "Jesus" sermons. When Peter and John preached to the elders of Israel in **Acts 4**, Peter unashamedly proclaimed:

Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The next verse says this:

Acts 4:13 "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

That's where the power of the pulpit is found. It is not in some smooth talking, seminary graduate's charm or sophistication or speaking skill. It's not in his many degrees or his ability to put the crowd at ease with his after-dinner stories and philosophical sermons. It's in the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. When Philip encountered that sincere nobleman from Ethiopia in **Acts 8**, the Bible says that he began in Isaiah's prophecy and *preached unto him Jesus (Acts 8:35)*. Earlier in that same chapter, the record says that Philip the evangelist went down to the city of Samaria and *preached Christ unto them (Acts 8:5)*. We see the results of his preaching a few verses later:

Acts 8:12 "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

By the way, I want us to learn from Philip what it means to "preach Jesus." I'm not saying that every sermon that we preach has to be about the specific events of Jesus' life or death. I mean exactly what Philip meant by *preaching Jesus*. Notice that Philip preached the kingdom of God--the church-- to them. The Bible also says in the case of both the Samaritans and the eunuch that when Philip preached Christ to them, they were immediately baptized. That tells me that preaching Christ involves preaching His commands and leading people to the point of doing the will of the Lord in order to be saved.

Sometimes people say, *Why don't you leave all of that doctrinal preaching off and just preach Jesus?* Some people don't really like the authority of Jesus exerted in their lives and in the church. They just

sort of have this sentimental view of Jesus. But, you see, Jesus is not only Savior; He is Lord and King over His kingdom. The fact is, Jesus has a will, and to preach Jesus is to preach His will and His authority and headship over our lives. I can't preach Jesus without preaching what He said, without preaching His word. I can't truly preach the Lord Jesus Christ without telling men what the Lord said to do to be saved and telling them about the church that He built. If I preach Christ, I'll preach the doctrine or teachings of Christ.

There are a lot of preachers who claim to preach Jesus, but they leave off a lot of what Jesus said and taught. You might say, *Are you really preaching Jesus when you preach that people have to be baptized to be saved?* Jesus told His disciples this:

Mark 16:15-16 “...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

That word *gospel* means *good news*. Could we not agree that that is synonymous with saying, *preach the message of Jesus?* What could be more practical for the sinner than to tell them what Paul said?

Romans 6:3-4 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

When I preach baptism as the Bible presents it, I am not cutting Christ out of the equation; I am preaching Christ by preaching *the will* of Christ. In preaching baptism for the remission of sins, I am telling sinners how they can unite with Jesus and identify with Him in His death, burial and resurrection and have a new life in Jesus with their sins washed away.

Sometimes we preach on the Lord's Supper and when I do that, I am preaching Jesus. Paul said this:

I Corinthians 11:26 “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.”

In fact, all of the great doctrines of the New Testament find their origin, their relevance and their efficacy in the Lord Jesus Christ. What we need to cut out of the modern pulpit are all of these so-called sermons that really don't have much to do with Jesus and His will. We need a return to theologically sound Bible preaching today. This modern stuff that doesn't convict anyone of sin, that doesn't point people to the Savior, His authority and His way is NOT getting the job done. That is not the kind of preaching that people need to hear. Sir, we would see Jesus in our preaching!

Secondly, we would see Jesus in the church today! After all, Jesus is the builder of the church and Paul declared Him to be the one and only head over the church.

Colossians 1:18 “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

So, we would expect to see Jesus when we consider the church. Friends, Jesus is to be more than a name that's stuck on the sign out front. He is to be more than a by-word or a name used once in a while to try to legitimize the thing. He is to be the focal point and object of worship and adoration in the

church. A lot of churches today claim association with Christ, but their program is all about everything else.

I never cease to be amazed at how men find more and more ventures to get the church involved in. The church is not a political organization. It's not a social organization. It's not a health club. It's not a social justice organization. It's not a business nor an enterprise. Simple buildings for churches to meet and worship in have become complexes that take up a city block consisting of gymnasiums, fitness centers, baseball diamonds, schools and on and on the list goes. Those things have to do with providing for the physical, recreational and entertainment needs and desires of people, and I'm just far enough behind the times to believe the church doesn't need all of that. In fact, people today are prostituting the church to things the Lord never intended the church to be involved in. You certainly don't read about such things belonging to the early church. No, sir! They were all about Jesus and bringing men to Jesus and they believed the simple preaching of the gospel was sufficient to do the job!

Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Notice that Paul didn't say "I'm not ashamed of our basketball court and all of our programs and inducements, for they are the power of God unto salvation." No, he said, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for IT is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believeth.*" Sir, we would see Jesus in the church today! He needs to be re-enthroned in His rightful seat of authority in the church. And that means we set about to do His business and we do things His way instead of our own. That's how we honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in the church today.

Thirdly, we would also see Jesus in our worship. I don't want to belabor our last point because they're very much related. However, the Lord is to be the focus and the object of our worship in the church. Worship is not about pleasing me, the worshipper. It is about bringing a sacrifice of praise acceptable to Him! Today, we have this all wrong. We try to draw people in by making the worship exciting and tantalizing to the worshipper instead of focusing on doing what pleases the Lord. Jesus had something to say about this:

John 4:23 "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Worship isn't a show. It is not a performance. It is not about whipping people up into an emotional frenzy. It is a time to honor Christ in the way He has appointed. The worship of the early disciples was simple, orderly, and reverent. They sang songs, hymns, and spiritual songs together (**Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19**) They ate the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week sharing a loaf of unleavened bread and a cup of fruit of the vine. (**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**) They were taught the word of God by one man at a time expounding upon the revelation of God (**1 Corinthians 14**). They continued in these things along with giving and prayer (**Acts 2:42**) and they often did so in homes, in hiding, or in public places like the synagogue. Worship is not about what *we* want – it's about what *the Lord* wants and following the commands and examples left by Jesus and His apostles brings honor and glory to Him. It's time we return to biblical and reverent worship – worship where Jesus is seen and magnified.

Finally, we would see Jesus in our lives. And that's really what it's all about. Jesus wants us to so live that others see Him when they look at us.

Galatians 4:19 “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you...”

That’s the objective! Every one of us should desire to have Christ formed in us. When we look in the mirror, Christ should look back. When others see us, they see Jesus.

Philippians 1:20 “Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.”

When people hear you speak, do they hear Jesus speak? Would Jesus use the kind of language you use and tell the kinds of jokes and stories that you tell? Would He go to the places you go? Would He have been found in the place you were last night doing the things you did? Would He be found running with the same crowd you run with and living by the same standards and ideals you live by? Would he be seen wearing the kind of clothing you wear, perhaps immodest, revealing and suggestive? Would he conduct His business like you conduct yours? Would He treat people like you treat people in business or in other relationships?

Those are all important questions because not only our own salvation, but the salvation of others often depends on whether they can see Jesus in us.

The poet famously wrote,

We are the only Bible
The careless world will read;
We are the sinner's Gospel,
We are the scoffer's creed;

Annie Johnson Flint’s *“The World’s Bible”*

How true that is! How many people will never take the time or have the interest to pick up the Bible and learn about Jesus. But they can learn about Him by seeing your life and mine. Sir, we would see Jesus!

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