

## SERMON

John 12:20-26

Knowing Jesus and Introducing him to Others

Nunawading and Waverley, 21-3-21

Dear friends in Christ,

There is a difference between knowing who a person is and actually knowing that person, e.g., the Prime Minister. We have heard about him but do we really know him? Once we can spend time together with someone, then, we can be drawn to that person and may even love her or him. I am saying the obvious but when applied to the Lord, this has a much deeper meaning. You can know about Jesus but do you know him? Meeting him through the Spirit is crucial so that we know him, love him and enjoy being close to him.

It usually takes somebody else to do it for us. The Spirit uses others, a parent, a sibling, a friend to introduce us to the Lord. I came to know the Lord Jesus through a friend inviting me to Youth for Christ rallies, as I have mentioned before. Before my friend, my mother introduced me to Jesus. We should never underestimate the impact you or I can have on others. A life-changing event could occur because we spoke up, we invited and we introduced someone to Christ.

**The Greeks** attending the Passover were probably proselytes or God-fearers, those who accepted the major teachings of Judaism but were not necessarily following all the holiness regulations, including the formal step of circumcision for males. They came to Phillip asking, **we wish to see Jesus**. They didn't mean they wanted to look at him but to meet Jesus and thereby know him.

Phillip and Andrew did the important work of introducing them to Jesus. There you have the task of mission given to each of us by the ascended Lord.

It looked like success following success for Jesus. How astonishing that our Lord could speak of death at such a triumphant moment. Indeed, people were coming to him from

East and West. Throngs followed him as he entered Jerusalem. Yet, at this very time he said, **the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified**. The hour was his crucifixion for he spoke of **a grain having to fall to the ground dead, be buried** but to then rise up to be a fruitful plant. In a back to front way, his death and burial comprised his glorification because these acts completed his Father's will. He was the sinless **lamb of God who took away the sin of the world**. Victory would come through making the troubles of the world, your suffering and mine his very own and triumphing over them by the power of his indestructible life. His death was our death and the failures of all people made him into the Passover sacrifice. As he said from the cross, **it is finished**, the great work of the universe was now done; he had overcome the evil of the world. At his lifting up, Jesus had fulfilled the reason for his birth. Jesus became human in order to taste death for all and so it was, indeed, necessary to speak of death at this moment.

Isn't this how we know the Lord, his nature and intentions toward us? Just listening to this draws us closer to him. It would be interesting to know more about his personality. If you or I were writing a gospel, we would put a lot more psychology into it. How did he feel when he fed the five thousand or healed someone of his blindness? There is so much I want to know about him, the detail about his kingdom, what it means for him to restore the universe and how the physical can change to be the spiritual and not lose its features. Our knowledge of God is incomplete as the apostle Paul said, **now I know in part; then I shall know fully as I am fully known**. This is the funny thing about knowing the Lord: the gospel is that we do not know him but he knows us. His knowing us and loving us is all we need to know. It is his feeling toward us that counts and what he was prepared to give up to gain us as his own that opens God up for us and lays bare his heart. How much he loves us and how much he has done for us are all we need to know. There has to be this breakthrough, doesn't there? Hearing about Jesus is not faith; we really do need to know Jesus and meet him.

What we ask for, now, is that others know him, too, which can mean, at certain times, push back or disinterest, rejection or even

ridicule. This is what the Lord referred to by **hating our lives**: not literally but a willingness to be a seed like him, and be thrown to the ground. However, the Father will honour us when we wish the name of Jesus to be revered and hallowed. Many people will be drawn to him through us. Our role is to be praying for opportunities, to be on the look-out for openings. Let us pray about knowing Jesus and introducing him to others.