

Meditation for Tuesday of Holy Week

 **Read: John 12.20 - 36**

Today's Gospel reading is a strange one. It starts by describing a group of Greek people who wish to talk to Jesus.



Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

Now we don't know whether these people are non-Jewish or whether they were Jews from the Greek regions of the Empire. Either way it sets off a discourse from Jesus.

Why? Well what all too many people fail to notice is that Jesus' mission was only to Jews. Indeed there are some really uncomfortable scenes in the New Testament to do with Jesus and Gentiles (non-Jewish people).

Why? Well, Jesus realises that he is limited in time and space. He has come to call the People of God to live out that call.

But now he realises that His work is done. That in some way that these Greeks represent the new phase when all people will be welcomed into the family of God.

Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

Jesus realises that His being broken and His death won't be the end but rather the beginning. That out of His death will come new life in abundance. That the seed needs to be broken in order that life is to come out. In one of the Servant songs in Isaiah there is a prophecy about the Messiah:

*"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." - Isaiah 49.6*

So, Jesus sees that this time and this place is to be the beginning of this new phase when all peoples everywhere will be called. No longer will it be limited to a single people group. Up until the time of Jesus "gods" were seen as limited to a place or to a tribe or people.

Jesus breaks this apart.

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

Jesus calls all people. Not just people in Church. Not just people in the West. Not just people of one nation or language or colour. So, too often our churches have represented one type, one music style, one expectation. Jesus challenges this. All peoples and all cultures are brought into His gaze and under His wing.

Does this mean that anything goes? Absolutely not!

Jesus said to them,

"The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light."

The problem for us is that we often judge others and their cultures, but the reality from Jesus' point of view, is that ALL are called to walk in the light as children of light.

So, we need to look at how we live our lives as those who walk in the light...

We need to work out what this means in our culture and our place and our time...

- Do we live in the light of the love of God or do we live in judgement and anger?
- Do we live in generosity and love and justice or do we live in selfishness and apathy?

Like Jesus, when we stop living our inferior lives and take up His life that we also die and give birth to new life not only in ourselves but in those around us. We find that God breathes His new life into our place and our situation.

A Prayer for today

God our Saviour,
help us to follow the light
and live the truth.

In you, we have been born again
as sons and daughters of light.

May we be your witnesses before all the world.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.