

All are welcome

John 12.20-33

Some Greeks have asked to speak to Jesus, aware of the buzz surrounding him. Their request is passed through several people before it gets to Jesus; but it does – no one is too much trouble for Jesus. Jesus then speaks about his death, using the image of a seed which must die in order to produce the fruit for which it is designed. He finishes by saying that all will be drawn to him – Greeks included!

Now read John 12.20-33 see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

The message – that Jesus (God) is not just for Jews or any other particular nation or religious group: all are welcome! – is radical enough. What makes it more so is that to make this possible, Jesus must die and rise again. Only after he is 'lifted up' on the cross are all people drawn to him. What might we need to give up so that others may feel welcome?



If you are to welcome others, what are you carrying that may need to be put down?

LET go

The disciples had to let go of a lot of their ideas about how things should be, in order to fully embrace Jesus' ideas about God's kingdom and those whom it fully embraces. All of us hold onto things that reinforce how we think things should be. Is there anything you can let go of as a symbol of being open to embrace all that God has for you? For example, maybe you could give away some money or sell a possession to support people in incredibly difficult situations – probably the people whom Jesus would choose to hang out with, if he were physically among us today.

SIL_NCE

Silence can be a very helpful way to connect with God. One way to do it is by looking at a picture. As you look, really notice all the details and think about what's going on. What questions does it give you? What feelings come up? What might God be saying to you through it? We call this meditation. If your mind wanders, when you notice, just bring it back to the picture! Take five minutes of silence each day to look at a picture of Jesus on the cross (do an internet search) and meditate on it.



BAKE

To make fruit flapjacks, melt together ½ cup butter, 1 cup brown sugar and 4 tablespoons golden syrup. Stir in 2 cups rolled oats, ¼ cup chopped dried blackcurrants, ¼ cup sunflower seeds, ½ cup pumpkin seeds and ¼ cup sesame seeds. Stir well until all combined. Press the mixture into a greased baking tray and bake on 150 C/gas mark 2, for 20-30 minutes until golden brown. Allow to cool before cutting into pieces.

As you bake, talk or reflect about seeds and how their seeming death in the soil leads to huge multiplication.

PEOPLE WATCH

Take a walk round your local area and 'people watch' as you go; notice all the different ways that people are busy with their day. Ask God for fresh eyes to see them as he does, and pray that God would draw them in.

LENT GARDEN OF RESPONSES

Look at a picture of a sunflower. The head of a sunflower is absolutely jam packed with seeds. Each one potentially another plant that can grow until it too has a head full of seeds. Sunflowers can produce up to 1400 seeds per head! Think about how quickly you could multiply sunflowers! Now think about your impact on the world around you. If you were to positively impact two people, and they in turn another two each, how quickly would the world become a more positive place? This week, make it your daily mission to encourage someone in something they are doing. Create or draw a sunflower to represent each person you encouraged, and place the flowers in your garden tray or on your garden page (that you've been progressing throughout Lent).

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Everyone wanted to hear what Jesus had to say. There were some Greeks in the crowd who wanted to see Jesus. They asked Philip, Philip asked Andrew, and then they both asked Jesus. Jesus wondered how he could put into words all he wanted to say, especially for people who spoke different languages. 'It is time for the Son of Man to be glorified,' he said. What other words would help them understand? 'A single grain of wheat is simply a seed, but if it falls into the earth and dies, it will bear a lot of wheat.'

'Those who love their life will lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for ever. Whoever follows me must be my servant and should go wherever I go. God will honour everyone who serves me.' So Jesus spoke words of death and life, of loss and gain, of serving and honouring. But sometimes the right words were hard to find.

'Now my soul is troubled,' said Jesus. 'What should I say? Father, save me from what lies ahead? No, I have come to this moment for a reason. Father, your name be glorified.' So Jesus spoke words of courage and obedience. Then a voice came from heaven: 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd, standing there, heard the

voice and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' God spoke words of promise. Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the time for the world to be judged; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.' Jesus spoke these words about his death, and hinted at what would happen afterwards.

John 12.20-33



Did you know?

- Philip and Andrew were two of the 12 disciples – the closest friends and followers of Jesus.
- Other stories where a voice from heaven could be heard are: at the baptism of Jesus; on the mountain at the Transfiguration.

John 12.20-33 (NRSV)

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.'

'Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say – "Father, save me from this hour"? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.