

Gospel and Father Eamon's Commentary for All Ages Fifth Sunday of Lent March 21, 2021

Opening prayer: *(Let us take a minute to consciously acknowledge that we are in the presence of God and ask him to help us to hear the Word he wants us to hear this week.)*

God of our ancestors, you have entered into a new covenant with us through the death and Resurrection of Jesus. Help us to be more faithful to our covenant relationship with you. Bless us now as we prepare to share our lives and your Word this we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gospel: John 12:20-33 *(Let us listen with our hearts to what Jesus is saying to us.)*

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we would like 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. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me. "I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come for my sake but for yours. Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

Commentary:

The religious leaders are worried that the "whole world" is flocking to the side of Jesus. The first evidence of this is the appearance of some Greeks who come to Philip to ask if he can arrange for them a meeting with Jesus. Their presence shows that Jesus has come to save all people. The following are eight observations on this discourse from John's Gospel:

1. Jesus begins by speaking of his "*hour*"- a reference to his return to God. he will pass through death, be raised up, and return to his Father.
2. Jesus uses a *wheat grain* to speak of life and death. Just as a grain of wheat must first die before it bears fruit, so too must Jesus die prior to his Resurrection, and so too must we die to sin and selfishness before we bear godly fruit in our lives. Married couples know this more than other people. For the marriage to grow, each spouse must frequently die to his/her own desires.
3. "*Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life, will preserve it.*" This means that those who cling to their lives, concerned only about themselves, will eventually lose out on the meaning of life, which is to love and serve others. Thomas Merton talks about our *true self* and *false self*. The *true self* is that part of us that seeks to follow God and his ways. The *false self* is that part that wants to be independent of God and his ways, the part that is self-centered,

controlling, jealous, etc. this self we must “hate” – or we might say “deny” – and not allow to control our lives. This false self must be transformed through prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

4. *“Whoever serves me must follow me...the Father will honor whoever serves me.”* Serving Jesus means, being willing to lay down our life for others—to die to the desires of our false self. To serve Jesus is to follow him in his path of love and to carry our cross. Such service and love will honor the Father.

5. *“Save me from the hour”* is a reference to Jesus’ agony in the garden. It is a beautiful statement about Jesus’ humanity. As a person who loves life and people, he has no desire to die. He recoils from it. Yet, if going through this *“hour”* is what he must do, then he is willing to do it.

6. *“Then came a voice from heaven”* reminds us of the voice that spoke at Jesus’ baptism and transfiguration. *“I have glorified the Father.”* Jesus gives “glory” to the Father (and so do we) by following the will of God. Jesus also says: *“I always do the things that please the Father.”*

7. *“Now is the time of judgment in this world. Now the ruler of this world will be drawn out.”* The judgment is our “yes” or “no” to Jesus. When we say “yes,” love is released into the world, and darkness and evil are overthrown—and vice-versa.

8. *“When I am lifted up, I will draw everyone to myself”* is a reference to Jesus’ Cross and how the force of his love will attract and draw people to him.

Questions:

1. What word or phrase stuck out to you in the gospel?
2. How do you think that word or phrase relates to what is happening in your life right now?
3. Is Jesus asking you to change something to be a better person or do something to help someone else?

Closing prayer: “May your Word grow strong in our hearts. Amen.” Father Eamon Tobin