

Reflection Sunday 21st March

John 12:20-33

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very 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. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

²⁷"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. ²⁸Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." ³⁰Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Whilst I am reflecting on this passage where Jesus seems to ignore the fact that foreign visitors wanted to meet him Anita is in the garden planting a variety of seeds. It will soon be time to get the potatoes in the ground, some of last years crop being put back into the ground to produce a new crop for this year.

Jesus starts to talk about a grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying and then of himself being lifted up from the earth so that he would draw people to him. What has this got to do with the issue at hand? The Greeks want to meet Jesus and he goes on about the Son of Man being glorified. Yet there is relevance in the message John presents us with. The Greeks, and indeed people from all nations, will be drawn to Jesus as the one lifted up on a cross. They would not just see Jesus, but be attracted to him in a more real way, drawn by the love of God into a living relationship with the creator of all.

John sets out the message that God will bring salvation to the world through the death of Jesus. Jesus' death will be like a seed being sown into the earth. It will seem like a tragedy but in truth it will become a triumph of God's self-giving love, the love that looks death in the face, and in this voluntary act of self-giving, defeat death on behalf of all, not just for Israel but for the whole world represented by the Greeks standing by and looking on.

As John continues with the teaching of Jesus we are given the picture of those who follow ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour." That is the call to each of us.

As Christ's people do we desire to be raised up for glory in a public display of honour or are we prepared to be "placed in the ground", figuratively speaking, in order that new life might come forth for God's glory and the Kingdom?

Last seasons potato may have become a mouthful on the plate, if peeled and cooked, but by being put aside to be planted in the ground this year it will provide more than one meal later this year.

We never know what impact we have on the lives of others but when we follow the ways Christ calls us the impact will be incredible though still not known to self.