

**Coop's Scoops # 178 Lent Five Sermon, March 21, 2021**

*Including the Order for the Reconciliation of the Penitent.*

**Anyone who serves me must follow me, says the Lord, and where I am, there shall my servant be also. ( John 12: 26)**



**Readings: Jeremiah 31: 31-34      Psalm 51: 11-18      Hebrews 5: 7-10**

**The Collect:**

**Most merciful God, by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, you created humanity anew. May the power of His victorious cross transform those who turn in faith to Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and for ever. Amen.**

**The Holy Gospel: John 12: 20-33**

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

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

### **Sermon: Sirs, We Would See Jesus**

It is a very common scene. Jesus is gathered with His friends, teaching. Some people come to the door or the public space, and tell a disciple, "**Sir, we would see Jesus**". In that simple request is the heartbeat of thousands of years of seekers. We might say it differently... "**God, where are You?**" Or "**Is there really any meaning at all to life?**" Or "**I think I knew You as a child, Jesus, but what's changed?**" But it all means the same. It means that we are looking for hope, help and forgiveness and believing that He is the One we need. Our readings today tell us clearly where we will find Him.

**We will find Him at the Cross.** Jesus said "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all peoples to Myself". Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain". He was indeed lifted up upon a Cross, and He did indeed die. He has drawn people to Himself from all of the world. We can never see Jesus if we are not willing to look and go to the Cross. There, like Jesus, when we pray "Not my will but Thine", we are dying to ourselves. We die the first time, when we see with our heart and our mind and our soul how really evil sin is; how terribly costly; how dreadful. Sin brought death to all of us and to the Son of God Almighty. Seeing that, and turning from sin in repentance, we still need to continue to go to the Cross, often daily. For it is at the foot of

the Cross that we find forgiveness when we sin, and strength for living free from sin. Is it any wonder then that one of the greatest hymns ever penned is “In the Cross of Christ I glory, towering o’er the wrecks of time”. The last time we will be delivered at the Cross is on the day that we die, for it is the Cross and Resurrection together that defeated the final enemy, death. Our own death, as Jesus’ death, will be swallowed up in life.



Where else will we find Jesus? **We will find Him sitting at the right hand of God** in indescribable glory. Weeks Jesus was resurrected and had left His parting instruction to His followers, He ascended from this earth and is seated at the right hand of God. We sometimes don’t realize how marvelous and wonderful it is that seated beside God is Someone who looks like us : the Man Christ Jesus. We will see Him in His glory. And we will share that glory. Perhaps that sounds somewhat pompous. But the promise of God is that, in Jesus, we are adopted children, His joint-heirs to the Kingdom, sharing in all that Christ receives from the hand of the Father. That is something that not even the angels of God have experienced. Finding Christ in Glory is not something which has to be put off until we arrive in the Kingdom. The Glory of our Saviour can shine into our daily lives here on earth. As we praise Him, and glorify Him, the Holy Spirit warms our hearts with the love of belonging to Him.

So we can see Jesus in the Cross and in Glory. Where else might we look? We need go no further than **the servant’s quarters**. For Jesus came to seek and to save, to serve human beings. Throughout the Scriptures we

find Him helping, serving, healing, saving, lifting up, strengthening ,  
consoling and above all else loving. If we want to follow Him, and want to  
see Him closely and personally, we will go to those who need help and  
consolation and encouragement and strength, for that is where He will be.  
The Lord of Glory picked up a towel and basin to wash the dirty feet of His  
friends. We are called to do likewise. When we do, we will be sharing with  
Him in the servant's quarters.

Finally, we will find Jesus at the Table of Ministration. What's that?  
It is where we are ministered to; the opposite side of servanthood. In His  
time upon this earth, Jesus was from time to time the recipient of great love  
and tender care. He accepted that love and ministry from others. Remember  
Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who used precious ointment to bathe His feet  
and dry them with her hair. Remember the prostitute who "crashed" the  
banquet to break open an alabaster flask and pour fragrant oil upon His head.  
Remember how Jesus rejoiced, and laughed, and congratulated His disciples  
when they returned from their first mission without Him. Think of the ride  
into Jerusalem, when the children sang Hosanna, and the people applauded  
and waved palm branches. He had times of great joy because **others**  
**ministered to Him.**



If we are looking for Jesus, we will find Him also in our joy. Our lives are  
not intended to be ones of grim determination, grinding our teeth and  
nerving our souls only to serve. For as we serve, we will find that others  
will also serve us. Minister to us. And bring us great joy. Our greatest joy

will be that our Lord Himself exults over us, sings songs about us, and loves us as His adopted brothers and sisters. There will be an echo of “Well Done” that lifts our hearts and thrills our spirits. We will see Jesus also in our joy.

If someone were to come to us and say “ Friend, I want to see Jesus” we would do well to point them to the Cross, to the glory of Heaven, to the servant’s quarters and to the table of ministrations. For that is where they will find Jesus, and it is the best possible place to be. We could also tell them to look into their own hearts and minds, and ask the Holy Spirit to give them an introduction to our Lord. Our Old Testament reading in Jeremiah tells us something most beautiful...our God is not far from us. We do not have to climb mountains and attend academies and study for years to find Him. For He has written His word and His law into our hearts, and sends His Spirit to instruct our minds. As our **Psalm** tells us, He desires that we know the truth, and He will give us wisdom. He it is who cleanses away our sin, and makes us white as freshly fallen snow. He it is who creates a new heart with us. I confess that sometimes Jesus seems as close to me as my own shadow, and other times I feel like I’m looking up to find Him from the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

There is a story about two people who were returning from the celebration of their 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. The husband was driving the car. The wife was in the passenger seat. They were talking about what a time they had had at their party provided by their children, and she was lamenting about how the romance can leak away from even the best relationship. She looked over at him, and said “ Honey, remember how we used to drive? I’d be in the middle leaning on your shoulder!” And he smiled and said, “Who moved?” When Jesus seems far from me, I have to

remember that it is I who have moved away. Then it doesn't take a whole lot to scramble back; usually a quick prayer, a change of attitude, a bit of repentance, and a fresh look at the Scriptures is all that is required. And even when I have trouble seeing Him, I can still see all of you! And you remind me of Him. Thanks be to God. Together, we have seen the Lord. Amen.

**I INVITE YOU TO THE CROSS TODAY, AS WE MAKE OUR  
CONFESSION:**

**Priest & People:** Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone, We have not loved you with our whole heart: we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Priest: Do you turn again to Christ?

**Penitent: I turn to Christ.**

Priest: Do you forgive those who have sinned against you?

**Penitent: I forgive them.**

Priest: Our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice to the Father, and who conferred power on His Church to forgive sins, absolve you through my ministry by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and restore you in the perfect peace of the Church. Amen.

Priest: Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven.

**Penitent:** And whose sin is put away.

Priest: the Lord has put away all your sins.

**Penitent:** Thanks be to God.

*( These prayers of absolution are from the Book of Alternative Services, Pg. 168 in the office of Reconciliation of a Penitent. Private confession is always available for anyone who's conscience is troubled, and is a sacred trust. Contact me at any time if you desire to have this service).*

**BLESSING:**

**May the God of mercy transform you by his grace, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always! Amen.**

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**Judie+**