**John’s gospel Chapter 12 :v 20- 30**

A few days before the crucifixion some Greeks from Bethsaida in Galilee came to Philip and Andrew and asked to be introduced to Jesus, saying “Sir, we wish to see Jesus”. These may have been ethnic Greeks, or non-Jews of other nations who were attracted to Israel’s God and the Jewish festivals that celebrated his deeds in the past and promises for the future, and who in their own cities worshipped God in the synagogue. It is interesting to learn that much of the known world at that time spoke Greek.

Instead of Jesus saying “bring them to me”, he did not respond. It would appear that Jesus was troubled; and out there, there were people to welcome him and his message. Perhaps he was thinking the cross might be evaded. If he were to go out on the wider mission to the world; there would be people to welcome him and his message. We know what that feels like in our lives. It is joyous and reassuring for us when friends and people we know, and even complete strangers, want to know about Jesus and what He means to us in our lives.

 Soon the words of Jesus in this passage from John’s gospel gives us a clue when he says “Unless a grain of corn falls into the earth and dies, there can be no harvest.” Jesus sees the end anxiously but without a trace of bitterness. He knew that the Father’s overarching purpose for his life was to die on the cross and become the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of a humanity, past, present and future. Yes his death will be like sowing a seed into the ground and God will save the world through his death..

However Jesus does not pray to be saved from the cross, only that God may be glorified. Within the mind and heart of Jesus is the confidence that when he is lifted up from the earth, he will draw all people unto him, and through him to the Father; but never imposed; always with the gift of freewill. There is the glory, there is the triumph, God clearing the way ahead for the whole world.

Many people today do not know Christ, or even know much about him. But always they should be able to see something of Christ in us, in me and in you, in all who profess their Christian faith; God’s love in Christ, the ability to see God’s influence in our lives in our thinking, our attitudes, and our behaviour. The more we accompany Jesus in prayer and meditation and the more we study Jesus in the gospels, the more we shall grow closer, and in anticipation more like him.

Love is always precarious, always vulnerable; love takes risks and involves pain. This is what Jesus saw ahead of him, “Now is my soul troubled”. Already Jesus could see at the end of his journey the shadow of the cross. and that cross within the heart of God. Jesus was anxious, longing to find some alternative, some other way that did not mean going to the Cross. And yet, Jesus only wanted one thing - the glorification of God’s name.

Jesus chose the way of love, the way of humble service, the way of suffering and, if necessary, the way of sacrifice and death, for at all times the Father’s love was to be revealed, even if people were to ignore him or reject him, he must not fail in love. Now indeed Jesus realizes that his time has come, the preparation has been completed and the final moment of love and liberation is soon It will be the triumph of God’s self-giving love,

In John’s gospel he invites us to be still and know; to look again into the human face of Jesus of Nazareth, until the awesome knowledge comes over us and we find we are looking into the human face of the living God.

Jesus received that word of assurance of glory to God, not by military conquest, but by he himself being lifted up on to the Cross, the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus dying and his imminent death and yet ending on a note of confidence and the certainty of the outcome. It will be the triumph of God’s self-giving love. In John’s gospel he invites us to be still and know; to look again into the human face of Jesus of Nazareth, until the awesome knowledge comes over us and we find we are looking into the human face of the living God.

It has been said that there was already a cross in God’s heart before ever there was a cross on Calvary; a cross symbolizing the pain of our sinfulness, as well as our foolishness and refusal of love. Furthermore that cross would continue until the last prodigal son or daughter finally comes home to be embraced within the everlasting arms of God.

When each one of us can speak of Jesus as the Son of God, who loves us and gave his life for us. it is then that each of us can go forward in the way of Christ and follow the way of the cross, leading us to the heart of God and His everlasting love and mercy.

Praise be to God, our Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Janet Ridgeway