

What it means to be with Him

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Let us turn to **John 7: 32-36**

John 7: 32-36

- 32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.
- 33 Therefore Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me.
- 34 "You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come."
- 35 The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?
- 36 "What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"

The Lord Jesus had encounters with the Jews many a time and there were various groups of people among the Jews, but many of them were not happy with Him and there were those who sought to kill Him. The Lord Jesus told them: "You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come."

One of the aspects of the meaning with regard to this statement, "where I am, you cannot come", has to do with their attitude, their character and their relationship with the Lord Jesus.

He said, "Unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins": They would not be able to be with Him, they would not be able to go to be where He would be.

Let us consider further what it means to be with Him. Who are those who will be with the Lord Jesus and what would it mean for those who are with the Lord Jesus?

John 12: 20-28

- 20 Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast;
- 21 these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and *began to* ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."
- 22 Philip **came and *told* Andrew; Andrew and Philip **came and *told* Jesus.
- 23 And Jesus **answered* them, saying, "**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.**"
- 24 "**Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.**"
- 25 "**He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.**"
- 26 "**If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.**"
- 27 "**Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.**"
- 28 "**Father, glorify Your name.**" Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

The Jews had wondered whether the Lord Jesus was going to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks. In this passage, we are told there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; and these... came to Philip and they asked Philip to help them so that they could see Jesus. Why did they want to see the Lord Jesus? And they made this request to see Jesus. So Philip **came and *told* Andrew; then Andrew and Philip **came and *told* the Lord Jesus.

And we see how the Lord Jesus answered them. He said: "**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.**"

The way the Lord Jesus answered did not seem to be addressing the issue.

And this is often the case when we read the Scriptures: The way the Lord Jesus replied in many situations may not seem to be a direct reply to the issue concerned. But if we pause and consider what was in the heart of the Lord Jesus, we may be able to have some idea why He responded in that way.

Who were these Greeks and what did they want in wanting to see the Lord Jesus? From the context, it seems likely that they had a good intention: They would like to know more about Him, they wanted to hear what He had to say and possibly, they wanted to respond to Him positively if they could. But we are not told that this was the case. It is also possible that they were just curious: they just wanted to know who the Lord Jesus was.

If you are a person of importance and there are people who come, asking to see you, how would you respond?

How would other people of importance respond when there are those who want to come to see them?

For some, they would be very glad: "Come, come!" and they will share many things with them so that they can publicize them and others might come to know them. So we know that many celebrities often have press conferences where people come and they report what they have to say, and this is transmitted to many parts of the world.

Then there may be others who say: "Who are these Greeks? I do not know them. They are not important. I do not wish to see them" - some may respond in that way. They are more important than these Greeks and they do not want to waste their time with these people.

Here we do not see the Lord Jesus responding in any of these ways. His response helps us to appreciate what is in His heart.

What the Lord Jesus was concerned about ultimately is what is really important in life. What is it that is really important?

Whether it be the Greeks or the Jews, whether it be disciples or otherwise, He wants them to know what is truly important: What are you seeking?

So He said: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." This statement is a very important statement and very meaningful, and many people would be very interested to see the Lord Jesus glorified.

Glory is something that many people seek for, but the Lord Jesus went on to explain the meaning of being glorified.

"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" and his description of that glorification has to do with the most intense suffering ever possible, the most difficult time of His life.

Is this what we look for when we think of glory and glorification?

The Lord Jesus said: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." Here, from what I can see in the context, it applied first and foremost to the Lord Jesus with regard to the cross, but the principle applies also to us who want to follow Him.

If the Lord Jesus were not to come into this world, He could have carried on in heaven. It was not required of Him that He must come into this world and die on the cross for us. It was His choice. He came willingly.

A grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying – if He did not come, then He would be who He was, but would there be those who would become His disciples?

Would there be the body of Christ? Would there be people who could be saved and receive eternal life? That would not be the case. Without the cross, there would be no eternal life for all who have sinned.

“...but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” It is because the Lord Jesus came and He died that it is possible for there to be fruit: The grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying, and in its place comes forth a wheat plant; and that wheat plant bears many more grains.

It is a picture of the church: The Lord Jesus giving up His life – a life of self-giving – as a result of which in giving up Himself, many people have come to believe in Him, have come to be forgiven, have come to be born again, to find life, to become members of the body of Christ. He died so that we may live.

But then the Lord Jesus came also to set us an example, so that we may follow in His steps.

We cannot follow Him to go through the cross in terms of His death for all mankind, but we must follow Him in terms of the spirit of self-giving, the preparedness to give up our lives for that which is meaningful, valuable, for the well-being of others because of love.

That is what motivated Him and it came from the heart of God: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. “The Lord Jesus loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

This principle must be properly appreciated by us. If we want to see the Lord Jesus, if we are seeking Him, we want to know Him, then we need to know who He is, we need to appreciate who we are looking at. We are not just looking at someone who is popular, someone who is capable, someone who has great power.

But primarily, we are looking at someone with perfect love in His heart, who desires to help us to become what we ought to be in our moral and spiritual being and to fulfil the will of God.

And so He goes on to tell us: "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal."

If we are to follow the Lord Jesus in the same spirit of the cross, then we must understand that if we are clinging on to our life in this world, following the ways of the world, pursuing the pleasures of this world, what the world can offer us, then we will lose our lives: We will not be able to develop a life of meaning, of quality. But if we hate our life in this world, we will keep it to life eternal.

Hating our life in this world does not mean that we seek to do harm to ourselves. Hating our life in this world refers to our attitude to the things in the world that can draw us away from God. We hate these things in the sense that we reject them – we will not allow them to draw us away from God. We are not of the world, even as the Lord Jesus is not of the world. We are His disciples. We are to follow Him, we are to live as He lived.

If we give up our lives in this way, we will keep it to life eternal. Eternal life comes about when we give up the life of this world. And that was the reason why the rich young man could not receive eternal life. He was clinging on to the riches in this world. He was not prepared to give them up in order to follow the Lord, and so he went away grieved. This principle is applicable to all who cling on to the things of this world.

So the Lord Jesus said: "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me". It is good that we are more conscious of this. Many people want to serve the Lord but He says: "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me".

If we are not sufficiently committed to follow the Lord Jesus, then we cannot properly serve Him. To serve Him, we must first learn to follow Him. We know Him, we love Him, we are prepared to walk with Him. Follow Him – where? Follow Him – how?

Here in this context, the primary aspect of following Him is the principle of the cross: the preparedness to give up ourselves for the will of God; the preparedness to deny ourselves, to take up the cross daily and to follow the Lord Jesus; the path of humility, of self-giving; the preparedness to go through any situation, however humiliating it might be, however painful it might be in order to be faithful to Him.

So that is important: We cannot properly serve the Lord if we are not properly prepared to follow Him.

And so He says: "...and where I am, there My servant will be also". So if we want to be with Him, where He goes, we can go, if this is what we long for, if this is our desire – we want to be with Him, we want to know Him – then we must appreciate who He is, we must follow Him, walk with Him, obey Him; and then where He is, there we will be also.

So while the Jews who rejected the Lord Jesus would not be able to go where the Lord Jesus would go, those who serve Him, who serve the Lord Jesus, who follow Him, they will be able to join Him where He goes.

And then He says: "...if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

True honour must come from God. And the honour that comes from God is pure. God cannot be bribed. We cannot tell Him, "I will give you this and this, so You honour me." God looks at the heart. Are we worthy of that honour? And that can only be possible if our hearts are right, fully pleasing to God who is holy and perfect.

The Lord Jesus then went on to elaborate: "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour."

Many may want to be with the Lord Jesus because He is great, He is powerful, He is famous, He is able to help us.

But the Lord Jesus wants us to know: the path of following Him can be a path of much trouble, a path that is painful and difficult.

Not that it will always be that way: there can be many moments where it is very enjoyable, very pleasant but we must recognize that at the heart of it, there is a conflict between sin and righteousness; there is a burden for the people of the world under the rulership of the evil one. If we are to be involved in this battle to help people to be free, then we need to go through much trouble.

The Lord Jesus was troubled because of the sins of the world and because of that, He had to go through the cross. If we are to follow Him, we must also identify with this path: Are we concerned about sin in the world? Are we prepared to do our part in order that people may be saved from their sins through the power of the Lord Jesus, through the cross, through the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives?

That is a mission that we have together with the Lord Jesus. He came with this mission to save the world.

If we follow Him, we also have this mission to save the world. And to save the world is not just to help them to find forgiveness. It is to help them to become righteous, to become like the Lord Jesus in the moral and spiritual quality of His being.

And so He said: "Father, glorify Your name." Why did He say that?

He said that to express His absolute commitment to the will of God. "Father, glorify Your name. Do whatever you wish with My life that will bring honour to Your name, to fulfil Your will."

Is this how we want to follow the Lord Jesus: whatever the will of God be, however difficult it is, we want it in our lives?

We cannot decide to choose a path of our own preference. We cannot say, "I prefer this path and I want God to honour me in this path": we see examples of this in the Scriptures and it is not a meaningful path.

God's will is perfect and if we submit to Him, it is then that God will glorify His name.

Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The Lord Jesus lived His life such that the name of God was always glorified. It was constantly being glorified and this will be particularly so in the event of the cross. It was the most difficult and painful situation. But notice that while the Lord Jesus said: "Father, glorify Your name", it was also in that context when He said: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified".

It was not just that the Father would be glorified. The Son would also be glorified in the event of the cross.

And this will also apply to all true disciples: All true disciples who follow the path of the cross, who follow the Lord Jesus will be glorified.

At the end of his life, the apostle Paul said he looked forward to the crown of righteousness. He would be glorified, God will honour him because, he said: "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

He had given his life to the Lord just to fulfil the will of God. And so God would glorify him, God would glorify the Lord Jesus, and God's name will be glorified.

So the Holy Spirit will help us, enable us to live that way if we are willing to follow the Lord.

So whether it be Greeks or anyone else who want to see the Lord Jesus, it is important for us to understand: Why do we want to see the Lord Jesus? Do we know who He is? Do we know what it involves to see Him? Do we really want to know Him? Do we appreciate Him? Do we want to follow Him? Is this the path that we are prepared to walk in?

So as we come before the Lord, as we seek to consider what He has done for us on the cross, let us ask Him to help us evaluate our lives so that we will not waste away the opportunities we have in the short time that we have on earth.

The time passes by very rapidly and soon, we may no longer have the opportunity to continue the way we have. So let us ask the Lord to help us so that each day, each moment, will be spent in a way that will have a meaningful direction that will develop the potential for eternity, so that when we leave this world, we will not regret it in that we have not lived as we should.

Can we say at the end of our lives that we have fought the good fight, we have finished the race, we have kept the faith: that we can now look forward to our time in eternity with God?

Let us ask the Lord to help us so that it may be true for us. Let us thank Him for what He has done for us and ask Him to help us to respond more deeply to Him.