

Sunday 21st March 2021

The Fifth Sunday of Lent

Passion Sunday



Today's Gospel reading: John 12: 20-33

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St John
Glory to you, O Lord

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish 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. 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. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

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

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ

Jesus used many analogies and parables to try and explain to people who he was and why he had come. Today, we hear another of these word pictures.

Our Gospel reading tells of the Passover festival in Jerusalem, when crowds of people had come to the city, many from other countries – including Greece. We are told that these people specifically asked Philip – one of Jesus’s disciples – if they could see Jesus. They had obviously heard about him and were curious to find out more for themselves.

🤔 If we are curious about Jesus, where can we go to learn more about him?

Who can we ask? *

Perhaps, as disciples of Jesus, we might find ourselves in the same position as Philip, being asked by someone else about Jesus. How would we respond? How would we describe him? What does he mean to us?

Jesus talks about himself using the metaphor of a grain of wheat – it can’t do what it is supposed to do, which is to grow into a plant, unless it stops being a grain of wheat. Jesus said it’s as if the grain of wheat dies, which is sad, but living as a plant is better. As a plant, it can offer things that the grain, or seed, can’t, like shelter, shade and food. It can even grow more seeds!

Jesus is using this beautiful word picture to describe what is going to happen to him. Just as a grain of wheat has to “die” in a sense, in order to come up out of the ground and grow and bring food and goodness to many, he will soon stop being Jesus in the way his disciples know him.

Jesus knows he is going to die and then be raised from the dead. After his resurrection, he will be different. Jesus wants his followers to think about his life, death and resurrection in the same way that they would think about a seed turning into a plant. He wants them to know that his resurrected life will be like a plant that keeps growing and making new seeds, which is what his disciples will become. They will be seeds that are part of his new life, seeds that will share God’s love and healing, just as he has done. Through his death, we have life!

If we choose to accept Jesus’s invitation to follow him then we, too, can be seeds that are part of Jesus’s new and better life, that we can then share with others – and that is very good news for today, as we mark Passion Sunday and begin Paschontide.

A prayer for today:

Dear God, thank you for Jesus, who shows us how to grow in you. Amen.

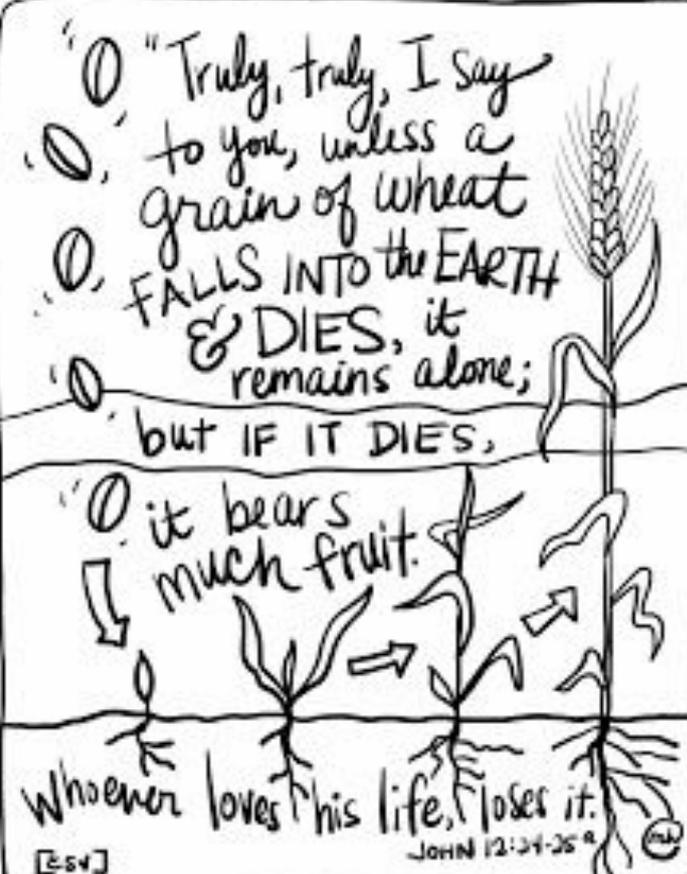
*The Bible is the best place to learn about Jesus. For starters, St Mark’s Gospel gives us a really good introduction to his life and ministry.

Once we are able to meet up in person, others in the congregation or a priest can help us with any questions about Jesus and point us in the right direction for further information, but really we learn best by developing a relationship with Jesus, which we can do through prayer - just finding a quiet place where we can be undisturbed and talking to him like a friend.

E	C	N	E	T	N	E	S	V	F	WORSHIP	FESTIVAL	WHEAT
L	A	V	I	T	S	E	F	E	T	BETHSAIDA	SINGLE	SOUL
G	E	D	S	D	E	A	T	H	R	VOICE	THUNDER	ANGEL
N	L	G	I	C	V	S	L	I	O	SENTENCE	PRINCE	DEATH
I	I	E	N	A	T	O	O	L	U			
S	S	I	G	A	S	H	I	U	B			
H	R	P	E	E	K	H	U	C	L			
P	I	H	S	R	O	W	T	N	E			
I	W	O	L	L	O	F	A	E	D			
R	E	D	N	U	H	T	S	E	B			



"Truly, truly, I say
 to you, unless a
 grain of wheat
 FALLS INTO THE EARTH
 & DIES, it
 remains alone;
 but IF IT DIES,
 it bears
 much fruit.



Whoever loves his life, loses it.
 [254] JOHN 12:24-26

UNLESS A GRAIN OF WHEAT
IS BURIED IN THE GROUND,
DEAD TO THE WORLD,
IT IS NEVER ANY MORE
THAN A GRAIN OF WHEAT.

