



Lord, We Want to See You!

By Pastor Haywood A. Robinson, III

Now some Greeks were among those who went up to worship at the festival. So they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and requested of him, “Sir, we want to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. John 12:20-22



In this issue we revisit our 2020 theme. Since its adoption, our nation and world have faced challenges consistently described as “unprecedented.” These challenges, however, may provide our generation with an unprecedented aperture through which others might come to see the Christ we serve. Jesus said, “When I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all men unto Me.” In the midst of prolonged, perilous and polarizing crises, there exist fertile opportunities for our Christ to be exalted as the beacon of hope and wholeness that He is, such that we see many people attracted to Him. How might we play a role in this? A person’s desire to see Jesus today may find its roots in the same key factors that drew Greek worshipers to Him in our focal text. Allow me to suggest three things about our Savior which people have found attractive both then and now.

People are attracted to **His Acclaim**. There is little doubt that Jesus’ fame was widely spread in Bethany and beyond. To the chagrin of the religious leaders of His day, Jesus was celebrated and cherished among the common people. His *ministry, messages and miracles* often were the center of conversation and controversy in the marketplace.

Jesus’ ministry displayed unparalleled compassion and concern for the welfare of all people, especially, the outcasts and outliers of society. He interacted openly with persons thought to be unclean, unsafe and otherwise, unwelcome. The talk of the town sometimes centered around the way in which Jesus’ teaching of the Scriptures was different. His messages offered a radical perspective on who and what really matters to God. His message was at times consoling, always compelling and often, convicting. Strangely, His miraculous feats blessed young and old, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, noble and peasant, yet baffled the self-centered, self-sufficient and self-righteous.

According to Acts 1:8, we have the privilege, purpose and power to promote Christ locally and abroad. As one hymn argues, “People who know, go to people who need to know Jesus.” A more familiar one says, “O, the world is hungry for the living bread, lift the Savior up for them to see.” Friends, we have but the present time to fulfill this calling. And, what a ripe time it is.

People also are attracted to **His Authority**. Authority was the term tossed around when distinguishing His pedagogy with that of other religious leaders. Matthew records, “...the crowds were astonished at his teaching, because he was teaching them like one who had authority, and not like their scribes” (7:28-29 CSB). Furthermore, anyone reported to display command over *demons, diseases and death* would arrest our attention today. So it was during the festival that was underway in the biblical account

before us. Jesus' reputation for exercising such astounding authority was growing rapidly. Throughout the regions of Judea, Galilee and beyond, verifiable accounts of healings and deliverances abounded. Just days earlier, throngs of people hailed and heralded Jesus as He made His way from Bethany to Jerusalem as a triumphant warrior, yet humbly seated on the foal of a donkey.

What particularly was being noised abroad was the recent raising from the dead of His dear friend, Lazarus (John 11:17-44). Never before had such authority over death been demonstrated. There were witnesses whose sheer amazement fueled the viral circulation of this otherwise unbelievable story. It was His very acclaim and authority that insulted and infuriated the Pharisees and Chief Priests, so much so that they sought to dispose, not only of Jesus, but also of the most irrefutable evidence to the miracle, Lazarus himself. In our generation, we bear the responsibility to broadcast the praiseworthy deeds of Christ and to provide living proof of His mastery over the many diabolical, distressing and destructive forces that threaten our existence.

Lastly, people were attracted to **His Agenda**. For three years, Jesus strategically and systematically had been sowing seeds about the Kingdom of God (Mark 4:26; Luke 9:2; Luke 13:20; Luke 18:24-25, Matthew 6:33). He exhibited and expounded upon the principles, priorities and practices of a government, which had been prophesied to come and was, in fact, being established by Him. A viable, but not so visible, threat to the dominion of earthly geo-political regimes, this Kingdom's power resides in its unsuspecting presence and its transformational, rather than transactional, nature (John 12:24). It poses a threat only to systems and structures that stand in opposition to its agenda: *love, life and liberty*. How profoundly was this agenda illustrated throughout Jesus' ministry, and perhaps most powerfully, when, with only three words, "Lazarus, come forth," all three tenets were on full display. Jesus' response to Mary, Martha and Lazarus revealed the Father's *love* for us as His broken, bruised and burdened creatures. In Christ, the Father makes *life* and *liberty* available to those whose purpose and promise lie hopelessly bound and buried in swaths of time, tradition and transgression without Him.

It is to this agenda that lonely and lost people are attracted. It is to those weary of being wretched, tired of being trapped, done with being dead, that Christ's invitations will appeal:

"Come unto Me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28)

"I have come that you might have life and that you might have it to the full." (John 10:10)

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John:15:13)

"He Who the Son sets free is free indeed." (John 8:36)

Dear friends, It's up to us to make some noise. We must attract them to His Acclaim. We must attract them to His Authority. We must attract them to His Agenda. We must make known to a darkened, diseased, distressed, divided and decaying world that the Kingdom of God is here. Yes, just like Hope is Here... Love is Here...Life is Here...and Liberty is here.

Beloved, as we do our duty, people consistently will cry out, "Lord, We Want to See You."