

McGregor Baptist Church

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John 12: 20-28

"MR.JONES,MEET THE MASTER!"

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Intro:

By chapter 12 in John's biography of our Lord Jesus Christ, things are really starting to accelerate toward the climax. Jesus is a national hero. Many believe He is the Son of God – especially since the word has spread that He raised a man from the dead. The “powers-that-be” are afraid of Him. He threatens their vested interests. They are already plotting His destruction. Finally, Jesus is greeted with a hero's welcome when He enters the capital city of Jerusalem. Palm fronds are thrown out like a royal carpet when He arrives, and the people hail Him like a king. Things are really coming to a fever pitch.

But, all of a sudden, John throws in a quaint little incident about some foreigners (Greeks) who come up to one of the disciples and say “We would see Jesus.” And it all leads up to Jesus' making one of His most dynamite statements.

Now why would John interrupt this high-powered drama with such a trivial little story? Why would I want to devote a whole sermon to it? Because it is something that is happening all around us every day, and I don't want you to overlook it. People are forever saying to us “We would see Jesus!”

“I don't recall anyone saying that to me,” you may answer. Maybe they don't know how to put it in the right words. Or maybe you are not listening attentively enough to pick it up.

Look at this story with me more closely, and let's try to see how it illustrates what is going on all around us.

Notice first that (like the people in the story) PEOPLE AROUND US ARE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING.

our modern world could be characterized by one word, it would be "restless." People today are restless. They are searching. Some of them, frantically, shockingly, recklessly looking for more to life than they have found. Others are more laid back. They blend-in and we scarcely notice them in the crowd, but their eyes are scanning the scene, taking it all in, trying to find some meaning, something better than what they've already found.

Tell me: Why do so many try one thing after another? People go from one fad to the next, from one relationship to another, always experimenting with the latest thing that is supposed to be "in." It gets a little ridiculous. I was reading in a national magazine about the changes between what is now "in" and what is now "out." In the list, it told what clothes were now "in" and which were "out," what foods, what hobbies, what lifestyles. I was glad to read that marriage was again coming "in" and living together with now "out." But, it just pointed out to me how people go from one thing to another over and over. Can't you see, this shows that they are searching! They are saying "We would see something we haven't found yet."

Some just rebel against established ways. They try drugs, illicit- sex, far- out philosophies and lifestyles. We tend to look on them as "kooks," but don't we ever ask why? They are searching, they are searching on the outskirts of society, to be sure. But are they finding anything? One girl told a friend of mine, "My heart's like a desert." I've tried drinks and drugs, sex and self-gratification. The deeper I go, the dirtier I become. The more I sin, the less satisfied I am. Right now, I'm not getting anything at all, just guilt and grief." Don't you see, she's been searching, She's saying "I would see more to life than I've found."

Of course, a lot of us live in nice neighborhoods, with people who seem to be decent, prosperous, and successful. They smile happily and wave at

us as they drive by. But you never know what's going on "behind closed doors," until they announce that they are getting a divorce, or it comes out that the wife has cancer, or the son has been arrested with drugs. Sooner or later, each of those attractive homes will house people that will be searching for answers, for power to cope, for hope in the storms of life. They will be saying, "We would see something ..."

Please, let's not be as naïve about outward appearances as the lady who watched a missionary from Japan, showing slides at her church. After watching, she went to the missionary and said, "I never dreamed that Japan was so civilized and technologically advanced. They have such splendid buildings and a great railway system, and you say they have one of the world's highest rates of literacy. Why in the world do we need to send missionaries to them?"

You see, outward signs of prosperity and progress don't mean that people are not still in the dark and searching. Our affluent friends may be hurting where we can't see and be saying, "We would see something better to life than we've already found."

These "Greeks" who came to Jesus would also have looked well-off at a casual glance. They were the most educated people in the world. They were religious, with more Gods on Mt. Olympus than you can shake a stick at. They were obviously prosperous to afford traveling aboard, and were probably sight-seeing in Jerusalem at the big national holiday called "Passover." But, in their hearts, they were searching.

They were looking for something better and more satisfying. They had long been disillusioned with their Gods. Their great philosophies had become cynical. Their prosperity and self-indulgence

had not brought them real happiness. This is a historical fact.

We live in a Greek- type society. Education, religion, and affluence are all around. But don't be so naïve that you fail to realize that people all around us are seeking. They are crying out, "We would see something more ... something better ..."

The second thing I would like you to notice is that HAVE WE WHAT IT IS THEY ARE AFTER.

We know that Jesus Christ is the answer. No matter what may be lacking in a man's life, a personal saving relationship with Jesus Christ is the key that will open the door of supply.

You do believe that, don't you? If you are not sure, then maybe we'd better try to get you saved! Someone has said that, if you are not a missionary, then you are a mission field. And, if you are not convinced that Jesus is the answer to man's search, then perhaps you need to take another look at your own Christian experience.

Ever since I came to Jesus as a teenager and found forgiveness and peace – ever since I realized that I had been adopted into the family and could now operate as a king's kid – ever since I have moved through life, guided by God's "sealed orders" – ever since, in any situation, I found Him to be a "friend that sticketh closer than a brother," I KNOW that all it takes to end a man's search is to get him together with Jesus. This is not bragging, narrowed- minded, nor bigotted. This is the calm assurance that all Christians have had since the beginning. Paul said, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able."

Are you saying that you've arrived and everything is perfect in your life? My, no! But it's so much better than it was before I met Jesus, that I

Shudder to think where it may have been if I hadn't met Him. If you think my life is "not all that great" now, you should see what it would have been if I hadn't met Him! Wow!

When I met Jesus, I found the answer to the three basic questions in my life:

**Where did I come from?
What am I here for?
And where will I go when I die?**

Since He gave me the answer to these, I have a perspective on everything that happens and a foundation upon which to build. And I would confidently share it with anyone! How about you?

Yes, people are searching. And we, the disciples of Jesus Christ, have what it is for which they are looking ... which leads to the third thing I want you to notice:

THEY NEED OUR HELP TO FIND IT.

They are saying to us "we would see Jesus." "But everyone has heard about Jesus," you say. "There are churches in every neighborhood." Turn on the tv. Anyone can hear about Jesus. Yes, but they want to "see Him." They want to see what difference He can make in a life. They want to see if His power makes us able to handle the same storms that scuttle their lives. They want to see if we seem more, contented and fulfilled and at peace with ourselves than they have been able to be without Jesus.

I understand that we remember 10 times more of what we see than of what we hear. Listening to preachers will not help people nearly as much as seeing what He can do in our lives. No doubt, that is why Paul says to his congregation, "You are our epistles (writing), known and read of all men." (2 Cor. 3:2)

People need a “middle-man.” Searching people don't know how to just come to Jesus on their own. That's why they needed Philip to help them. It was easier for them to relate to him.

It is interesting that of all the 12 disciples, Philip was the only with a Greek name. They said, “Say, here's one we can relate to.” In most cases, it still works that way. People need a middle-man to help them to Jesus, and it's easier if they can relate to that person. It's so natural for young people to help other young people to Christ, and older people to reach other older people, and businessmen to reach businessmen, and ladies to reach ladies. They relate.

That's why it's so foolish for some people to wait for the preacher to lead all the lost people to Christ or to “pay the preacher to do the witnessing.” God never called the preacher to do all the witnessing. He is called to “equip the saints so they can do the work of the ministry.” (Eph. 4: 12)

Besides, who relates to a preacher? Now, everyone knows, there are “men, women, and preachers.” We are strange “holy Joes,” “sky pilots.” We are “different.” One reason I've been able to get next to so many people and win them is because, they tell me, “you don't remind me of a preacher.” I don't know exactly how to take that, but I consider it a compliment and say, “Thank you!”

Hey, those friends and relatives and business associates of yours who are searching (and you know Whom they are searching the for) need a “middle-man” to whom they can relate ... from whom they can get an introduction to the Saviour. And you are the prime candidate, because they already relate to you. You can say, “Mr. Jones, meet the master.”

People need to be led to Jesus. They thought of Jesus as just too far above them. I've been in the room with celebrities, heads of state, honored

leaders. I've never had the courage nor the "gall" to just walk up and say "Hi, I'm Jim Holbrook." But if someone who already knew them would introduce me, I appreciated meeting them.

Now you may have known Jesus since you were a little child. It may be second nature for you to talk to Him on several occasions everyday. You may read His Word as if it were a personal love letter to you (which it is). It may be a constant activity to follow the leading of His Holy Spirit. But just think what it would be like if you had never done any of these things before. Put yourself in the other fellow's place. Show some sympathy for how strange and different it would be for them to approach Jesus.

Thin you'll begin to see why Jesus told us to "go and teach all peoples." They need help. Then you'll see that you are not "cramming religion down them." You are offering to make an introduction. You are saying: "Mr. Jones, meet the Master." And when you see how happy it makes someone to meet Jesus, you'll want to become a regular introducer."

It's interesting that Philip wasn't sure he could do it alone. Even though they related to him, he got Andrew to help him bring them to Jesus. Philip sounds like a lot of people I know. They get things all set up, but then they ask someone like me to go along and actually make sure it's done right.

That's fine. I like nothing better! But, what if the day comes when none of the rest of us are around? Don't you think it would be a good idea for you to be prepared to lead them to Jesus all by yourself? The Apostle Peter tells us to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason for the hope that lies within you." (1 Peter 3: 1) Every one of us needs to have our gospel gun loaded and ready at all times. Who knows when someone will say "we would see Jesus."

Now there are only two reasons of which I can think why a christian would not be ready to lead someone else to Christ. The first is given by Peter in the next verse: "having a good conscience." Some of us have a guilty conscience, we are so embarrassed at our lives that we are ashamed to speak up for Christ. Well, only you can do something about that! With eternal souls hanging in the balance, I'd make up my mind which side of the fence I was on.

The other reason Christians don't lead others to Christ is that they don't know how. And we can help you with that. We are challenging you this very day to commit yourself to train and get on-the-job experience in how to lead someone else to Christ. Please take advantage of it! Prepare yourself to "be ready at any time ..."

Oh, people who are searching need a middle-man who is able to lead them to Jesus. But there is one more thing they need help in. They need to see what Jesus is all about.

Once Philip had introduced these Greeks, Jesus said to them (vs. 23-25), "You are about to see me glorified. You are about to see what I am really all about. I am going to die and be buried, like a seed. But that's the only way I can give my eternal kind of life to anyone else. My real purpose is to die for your sins, so you can be set free from the terrible guilt that separates you from your Creator God. And I'm ready to do this now."

How many people have never "seen" the real glory of Jesus. They don't know what He's all about. They may see Him as some great religious leader, along with others like Buddha. They may think of Him as the greatest example who has ever lived. He is a pattern of what all men should be. We should try to be more like Him. Or they may see Him as the Founder and Teacher of a religion, and we should join it and follow His teachings. And, all of these

are somewhat true. But they are not what Jesus is all about. And if this is all people ever see about Him, they will miss what He has to offer.

He is not primarily a leader nor a teacher nor an example. He is primarily the Substitute who died to pay for our sins, so we could go free. He is the one who traded us His place in the family of God in the place of our sins. And He took our sins, that had kept us separated from God, nailed them to His cross, buried them in His grave, and rose to offer us complete pardon and a whole new life as children of God. And we've got to help people see this about Jesus.

I spent the first 15 years of my life in church learning about Jesus. But I had to leave home and go 500 miles away before anyone ever explained what Jesus had done for me. I kept trying to live up to His example and failed miserably. When someone showed me that He had already died for my sins and finished purchasing my adoption papers into the family of God, it was the greatest thing I had ever learned. And it was like being "born again" to me.

People need someone to help them when they say "we would see Jesus." You can be the one who says, "Mr. Jones, meet the master!"