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— Our Pastors Speak —



WE WOULD SEE JESUS

by Rev. Stillman Cameron*

"Certain Greeks came up to worship at the feast . . . saying, Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12; 20, 21).

No idle curiosity this. It is a cry of desperation: "Sir, we must see Jesus." Not merely to satisfy their curious minds did these Greeks come in search of Christ. Ah, no! They were reaching after reality, and this strange Teacher from Nazareth spoke of things real as no other could.

Further, their cry was a representative one. It represented a world that was desperately calling for the very things Christ offered. Men were in spiritual darkness; Christ spoke of the Light of Life. Men were thirsting for satisfaction; Christ spoke of the Water of Life. Men were feeling their way after God; Christ presented Himself as the Way to God.

It was the time of the Passover, and to engage in this great feast were these proselyte Greeks come. Possibly they had travelled far, but their deep sense of devotion assured them of reward for their effort. Upon their arrival, they learned that Jesus was also come to Jerusalem, and they desired to see Him. Perhaps their desire to see Him indicated that they had some previous knowledge of Him, but not enough. They desired to know more.

It is imperative that we have a correct understanding of Jesus—a full knowledge of Him. Half-truths about Jesus Christ can be very misleading. Very probably these Greeks had heard only that Jesus was a great miracle-worker, a brilliant teacher, a doer of good. But that was only half the truth about Him. When they stood before the Master, they heard from His own lips the fullness of truth as it concerned Him. He spoke to them of His vicarious death, of cross-bearing, of discipleship. It therefore follows that if we present Christ to people only as an ideal Man, or a great example of goodness, we deal in half-truths concerning Him. Christ is infinitely more than that. He is the great sin bearer, the Redeemer of lost humanity. To ask men to pattern their lives after His example is indeed commendable, but quite impossible if they do not see in Him the answer to their problem of sin. A whole Christ must be presented to sinners; perfect Saviour as well as perfect Man.

The world has need of seeing Jesus—sincerely seeing Him—as did these Greeks. We need not pause to enumerate the reasons why the world has need of Jesus, though many could be given. The one paramount reason, however, is that the world is lost. If no other reason could be given, that is sufficient. The world is as lost as a derelict upon the ocean, and the one hope of its being salvaged lies in Jesus Christ. This being true, we are faced with a very searching question: How is He to be revealed? That responsibility Christ throws back upon His followers. He is to be revealed in His church. And how is the church to do this? By its MESSAGE, and by its MEN.

Our message must centre in Christ and Him crucified. That is a New Testament "must". The flaming-hearted men of the early church had but one message to proclaim: Christ crucified and risen! Philip the evangelist, when speaking to the Ethiopian eunuch, "began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus." Peter, at the house of Cornelius, "preached peace by Jesus Christ." Paul, at Damascus, "preached Christ that He is the Son of God." What, then, in so forlorn a world, have we to do with preachments that are Christless? What time for uttering "pious platitudes in stained-glass attitudes"? The soft, velvety phrases of neo-nothingness offer no safe repose to the sinner. In the words of Martin Luther, "Man only needs Jesus Christ." If that be true, then He ought to dominate every message we preach. Recently, on an outdoor bulletin board there appeared this sermon title: "Christ's Chief Competitor." Immediately below was the pastor's name. It looked as though he were telling the community he was Christ's chief competitor. It is lamentable that so many sermons today exclude Christ. They actually make competitors for Him, leaving the man in the pew looking to the pulpit saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus."

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