

**TIME TO GROW UP** (JN 12:20-33)  
Sermon by the Rev. Corinne Hodges  
Sun., March 29, 2009, St. John of the Cross, Bristol, IN

- I. Recently in news, “If you could meet anyone in the world, who would it be? President, rockstar, saint?”
  - A. For the Gentiles/non-Jews in Gospel it was Jesus, “We wish to see Jesus.”
    1. Hearing about him, his works, reputation & fame was not enough
    2. Knowing he existed and took care of people, he could help them when they needed him, also not enough
    3. When most people would have settled for knowing Jesus from afar, they did not. They wanted more.
    4. Why?
      - a. Did not just desire to see Jesus out of desperation, “God to the rescue” in tough times
      - b. Turn to God petition for things “Genie in a bottle”
      - c. “God of convenience,” only when they thought about it
      - d. Sincere desire to know Jesus better, on another level, even when other non-Jews did not and so they requested a meeting
- II. “Be careful what you wish for.”
  - A. Meeting Jesus would require a whole new level of commitment and responsibility
  - B. Was not going to be a one-time meeting
  - C. Becoming a follower of Christ—change their lives and they were ready
  - D. Would be life-giving and inspiring, but also have consequences
- III. To become a follower:
  - A. In MK 8, second Sun. of Lent required three things:
    1. Pick up your cross
    2. Deny yourself
    3. Follow Christ
  - B. In JN, 2 things:
    1. Death of sorts, “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies...” but this death will result in true life
    2. Service, “Whoever serves me, must follow me...”
- IV. Death
  - A. Grain of wheat as Jesus
    1. One death for many produces a great harvest
  - B. All of us encounter little deaths throughout our lives—think of situations

1. Giving up for God; sacrifice
2. For Christian death is always followed by life, goodbyes by hellos
3. Death does not have final say, life does
4. This is story of Jesus' life and story of ours as well
5. One often comes to Jesus through a kind of death in one's life—death of old self brings new life
6. Can't have our will and God's will--submission

V. Service

- A. Look over my life, had many jobs in service...customer service (babysitting, waitress, retail, cashier, camp office manager/nurse, golf cart, PR)
- B. Service involves other people, not just ourselves
- C. Jesus as example—serving people through healing, producing wine, food, foot washing—turning the table on expected order
- D. For those saying “But what do I have to offer? How can I serve?”
- E. Again look to Jesus—greatest act of service was self-offering out of love
- F. Giving up his own life out of pure and passionate love for God, he served all of humanity—we too can give our love
- G. Love should guide our service and then we'll know what to do, how to help others

VI. Take home message today is that becoming a follower of Christ requires maturity

- A. Couple married 25 years and have moved 17-18 times
  1. Handle transitions, goodbyes and hellos with grace—fact of life
  2. Move through changes and transitions with grace and faith that they will be brought to a better place, the “right” place at the right time
  3. Through moving on in our life, we evolve—develop greater understanding and appreciation for the cycle of life, sacrifices we have to make and learning that comes along with those sacrifices
- B. Maturity also involves thinking of the other—service. To put yourself second, third or last, that requires maturity—we have inherited Jesus' call to service. This is how we produce much fruit
- C. Growing up is never easy and maturing spiritually is no exception, but to be honest, it is truly the only life-giving way

VII. The Gentiles knew that the time had come for them to grow up and mature. They had heard the stories, just like us. They knew Jesus from a distance, yet they yearned for a deeper, more intimate and involved relationship with Christ. Their words still call out to us today “Sir, we wish to meet Jesus.” They wanted Christ in their lives that badly, that intensely. Do we?