

## **An Encounter with Jesus**

### **John 12:20-33**

A few weeks ago, you entered this year's Lenten journey. Why? Because you, like the Greeks, wanted to see Jesus. You wanted your doubts and your fears washed away. You wanted your sins forgiven and you wanted to meet Jesus in a real way. In many ways, we are just like the Greeks. We have heard of Jesus. We've read stories of Jesus. We've heard sermons about Jesus, but all those things had still left questions, possibly doubt, possibly pain. We needed more of God, more of Christ and so we took the first step towards seeing Jesus. Our lives before weren't enough. We decided we wanted more than three dollars' worth of God. Wilbur Reese wrote this short, tongue-in-cheek piece.

"I would like to buy three dollars' worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough of him to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine. I don't want enough of him to make me love a black man or pick beets with a migrant. I want ecstasy, not transformation. I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack, please. I would like to buy three dollars' worth of God, please."

You entered your Lenten journey because you knew that you hadn't given your whole heart to Jesus. You've been buying only three dollars' worth of God, whenever you needed it. When a child was sick you would stop by and buy three dollars' worth. When there were struggles and stress at work, you bought another three dollars' worth. Has it been enough? Listen to what Jesus taught the Greeks and the disciples.

"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me."

There comes a time in our journeys when we realize that we must serve Christ to follow him. When we serve God, we get a lot more than three dollars' worth of God. We get honor. We get eternal life. This is the point in your spiritual journey when you must make that decision. Can you exist on a few dollars' worth of God every couple of months? Or do you need to be like that kernel of wheat that falls into the ground and dies to yourself so that you produce an abundance of seeds?

Jesus tells us upfront that it is not easy to follow him. We must be willing to take up our cross. Die to self to truly serve our Lord and Savior. Lent is a time of reflection of what is keeping us from truly following Jesus. It a time to reflect on what God has gone to get our attention. What do we still need to repent of, to walk closer with our Lord and Savior?

Let us want more than three dollars of Christ in our lives. In the hymn "Jesus Paid it All" we sing Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow. What are we willing to give back to God for all God has done for us?

God bless,  
Pastor Barbara