

Tuesday in Holy Week

Philip of Bethsaida: John 12:20-26

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

Reflection by Jessica Ault:

As a disciple of Jesus, I traveled with him often. I was one of the first disciples chosen by Jesus, just after Andrew and Simon Peter, so I had witnessed many miracles and heard many of Jesus' teachings. This was just like any other day. But that day, some Greeks came along. Because I spoke Greek and had connections with the Greek community, I spoke with them. They told me they wanted to see Jesus, so my friend Andrew and I went to Jesus to let him know.

Like he often did, Jesus answered with something that seemed like nonsense at first: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor."

In the moment, it seemed like silliness. How can you lose your life to gain life? Why are you talking about grains of wheat? I didn't fully understand this until several days later: after we, with Jesus, washed one another's feet, enjoyed a Passover meal, watched Jesus die on the cross, and then saw him after he rose from the dead. I knew then that to lose your earthly life meant to inherit eternal life. For some of us, it literally meant to give up our lives. For others, it was to give up our lives as we knew them. To truly serve Jesus meant something different for each of us, but we were all forever changed.