

Desiring Jesus

Opening Scripture: John 12:17-21-22 AMPC

“Sir, we desire to see Jesus”

We have little knowledge of who these people were, or even the outcome of their request. However, it is recorded here that they *desired* – they desired to see Jesus! The original Greek words of this text say that they *desired*.

Greek: *thelomen* - means *to desire, to be fond of doing something, to be inclined to, to delight in, to be disposed*. It comes from the word *thelo*, which is equivalent of ‘to love’ (Strong’s. Dictionary).

This group of Greeks were obviously no longer followers of Greek gods, but they were converts and had come to worship God. They would have firstly *desired* to be in Jerusalem for the Feast.

- They must have travelled for weeks, by land and sea
- They must have made a substantial financial investment and great preparations to come all the way to Jerusalem to worship.
- They were definitely not people half-hearted about their faith in God.

However, when they arrived in Jerusalem, they would have realised that there was a lot more going on than a regular Feast of the Jews: Jesus was there. There were amazing stories and testimonies circulating about the greatest visitation of God ever. Dead people were being raised, blind seeing, and Jesus was at the centre of all this excitement.

A new desire was awakened within them: they desired to see Jesus! – not just to hear another story about Him but a firsthand, face-to-face encounter with Him! May we always desire Jesus like that!

Passionate Gentiles and indifferent Jews

Just as a side thought, allow me to highlight the fact that this story is about a group of Greeks - not Jews. They were gentiles. Indeed, the words of **Haggai 2:7** had come to pass: Jesus is the “*Desire of All the Nations*”. In every nation Jesus will be known and He will be desired!

In fact, **Romans 10:19-21** says that God reached out to the Gentiles to provoke the Jews to jealousy!

The Jews had something with God that they had lost. God reached out to Gentiles to awaken desire in the Jewish people.

The salvation that Jesus announced first to the Jews was being seized by the Gentiles.

Earlier in his Gospel, John mentioned that Jesus “*came to His own [the Jewish people], and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name*” (**John 1:11**)

This is another example of how God wants *desire* to be awakened in people’s lives.

Sir, we desire to see Jesus. Like the Greeks, there was also another man in the gospels who desired to see Jesus. His name was Zacchaeus!

His desire moved him up a sycamore tree and his desire was granted: he saw Jesus up close and personal, in his home, around a meal!

Come and see Jesus!

The Greeks and Zacchaeus desired to see Jesus. Interestingly, the Gospel of John is full of invitations to come and see Jesus:

- **John 1:39** - *He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).*
- **John 1:46** - *And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”*
- **John 4:29** - *“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”*
- John who also wrote Revelation recorded 4 times those same words “**come and see**” (Revelation 6: 1, 3,5 and 7)

The invitation to see Jesus, to encounter Jesus, is still an open invitation to every person. And even when one encounters Jesus, it doesn’t have to stop there. We are to live in His presence, hunger for His presence, crave Him, the Bread of Heaven. Desire should never stop.

John wrote much about invitations:

- The invitation of Jesus in **John 4** to drink from the well springing up to everlasting life
- The invitation of Jesus in **John 7** to believe in Him and drink from rivers of living water
- The invitation also penned by John, inspired by the Holy Spirit in **Revelation 22:17** - *And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever **desires**, let him take the water of life freely.*

These are all open invitations to come and encounter Jesus. ‘Water’ is used symbolically because it is something essential to life and easy to crave. We can go without food many weeks but not without water. We can’t survive without water more than 3 days.

We are to desire Jesus with the intensity of a thirsty person.

RVSP required

The Bible is full of invitations. and Jesus told us a story about how God feels when His invitations are met with indifference:

- The invitation of the great supper – **Luke 14:16-23**

16 Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ 18 But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ 19 And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ 20 Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ 21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ 22 And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ 23 Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.’

Every one of those who were first invited had no desire. They showed indifference. This passage shows us how strongly God feel about the absence of desire when it comes to all that He has made available for us. This is not a topic peripheral to our faith but absolutely central! This is a big deal.

The ones who were hungry, poor, maimed, lame and blind came. They acknowledged what was before them. They desired it for sure. Those were filled but not the indifferent. Let you and I be people who never lose our desire for Jesus. Let you and I be known for our passion and hunger for the things of God.

Closing thoughts

Athanasius was a theologian and religious leader who lived almost 1700 years ago. He wrote that the Book of Psalms not only contains information about God but also trains us in the language of desire.

As you think about awakening your desire for God, here are a few desire-drenched prayers from the Psalms:

Psalms 41:1-2 - *As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?*

Psalms 84:2 - *My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.*

Psalms 143:6 - *I spread out my hands to You; my soul longs for You like a thirsty land.*

Make these your own prayers!