

HOLY TUESDAY 2025
Immanuel Highlands Episcopal Church
Wilmington, Delaware
April 15, 2025

“We wish to see Jesus.” Philip hears the request, goes to Andrew, and together they go to Jesus. That’s all we know about some Greeks who are in town to celebrate. It looks like if their request was answered, it was from a distance.

Jesus doesn’t seem to have time for drop-in meetings. There’s no “do they have an appointment,” or even “show them in.” Instead, we have his answer in the description of a cosmic event, based in familiar agricultural knowledge turned into Christology.

We probably wouldn’t go that far in explaining that which we likely don’t understand all that well. So let’s take a moment and look at what those Greeks, and in turn, we think we know.

To see Jesus is to see the work of God taking place in human reality. Those gathering to celebrate Passover would have been taught that God’s dwelling place is in the Temple, in the Holy of Holies. A thick curtain obscured the vision of all save the high priest, who could enter the holiest place of the Temple on one day each year. It’s where the Ark of the Covenant is held, the national archive, if you will, of the law of Moses.

While Jesus spends his brief ministry pointing any and all who pay attention to the activity, and therefore, the presence of God, he doesn’t give anyone directions toward the Temple. He speaks of glorification and death and sacrifice all at the same time.

What he’s really saying is that if anyone wants to see him, they’ll find him in the sacrificial love of himself for the benefit of all. We’re told of an instant example of this as he hangs dying on a cross, when at his last breath the veil obscuring the holiest place in the Temple is torn in two, revealing its emptiness. To see Jesus, the human form of God, look outside the city walls to the place of the skull, and find him in the middle of death itself.

“We wish to see Jesus.” The request is made to us today. Do we brush it aside by giving the GPS coordinates to the nearest church building, citing the times when the doors are supposed to be unlocked? No. The invitation is ours to make. “Come and see.”

Come and see the evidence of the work of Christ, the ongoing creative activity of God, when suffering is joined by able hands and hearts. Come and see sorrow shared by the joining of breaking hearts so that healing is not such a lonely thing to endure. Come and see willful sacrifice to share the abundance of God’s life with those lost on the winding trails of the shadow of death.

Do we really wish to see this Jesus? There are those still making the request. The answer they truly seek is found when our desire is to *be* the Jesus we want to tell them about. For others to see, we must in some way be Jesus to them.

But, of course, there's more. We, too, wish to see Jesus. And to do that, we need to open our eyes to the possibility—the probability—that Jesus can be found as easily in those who seek as in those who claim to know where to look. It is not ours to decide where the seeds are planted. It is ours to nurture the growth that God gives in the life springing from the seed that is willing to die.