

Sermon for the Fifth Sunday in Lent, 2.iv.2006, 10:00 a.m.
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint James the Apostle / Brogue, Pennsylvania
Holy Eucharist, LBW Setting 2
Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-13; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

J. J. !

Grace to you and peace from Him Who is and Who was and
Who is to come! ✎ Amen.

*[The Greeks said to Philip:] "Sir, we wish to see Jesus . . .
[and Jesus concluded His response to the Greeks by saying:]
"Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there
will my servant be also."*

-- John 12:25,26

he Greeks, or perhaps Hellenic, Greek-speaking Jews, who
tell Philip they want to see Jesus have their wish granted, but
Our Lord tells them, in essence, that they had better look
quickly, because everything about the way Jesus looks,
everything about what it is like to be with Him, is about to
change. He will be as different in His suffering, in His dying and

experience of Christ in His Holy Supper teaches us to believe, as the loaf of bread is from the grains of wheat and barley and rye from which meal for the bread was ground, as different as wine is from grapes or grapes from the vine that bore them. If we want to 'see Jesus,' we had better prepare to be on the move, to experience change, to be with the Crucified and Risen Christ, as He says, *where He is*.

And we will be, in and by His Holy Spirit, because of the seed of grace that has been planted in us, 'inscribed on our hearts' as the Prophet Isaiah proclaimed it would be. Beginning with God's intervention in our lives at Baptism, formed and given definite shape by the confession and teaching of the Church, reinforced and inspired by the example of those other Christians who want to see Jesus and who continually do see

whom God's goodness and love is rightfully present, acted on instinctively in kindness and mercy *and* in self-respect. We cannot look on our fellow man and woman as anything but those who share in the same human flesh and blood, in the same human body, mind and spirit that God the Son sanctified forever by His pure birth into our humanity (Hebrews 5:7). We cannot look upon others, from the greatest to the least, and see anyone but the One Whom the eyes of faith seek. Seeing Him we choose to be with Him where He is, where they are, whether well and prosperous, or hungry, sick, naked and in prison of one sort or another.

And yet, we do . . . *not!* We, the people of the New Covenant Jeremiah prophesied, we the people of the conscience that does not need to be whipped and prodded into merciful

where He *is* each day of our lives and not only on this, *His Day* as He stands among us in Word and Sacrament?

If you are one who feels as though no one listens to you, as though you are continually *misunderstood* and *misjudged*, your actions always interpreted in the unkindest of ways, then look to the Cross and to the One hanging there. He preached to tens of thousands, but was heard by few and believed by a handful at first. The crowd, practically the whole assembled nation cried out that He should be crucified, silenced forever. Do you want to see Jesus? Then go to the one begging to be listened to, begging to at least be heard, even if not understood. Pour out your *self*, like planting a seed in ploughed soil, by spending your *time* understanding the misunderstood. He will be there.

that, not exactly the Man of Sorrows prophesied by the Psalmist? Do *you* want to see Jesus? Look then to the brokenhearted among us and around you. Look to those for whom you do not have a pat answer to the mystery of their suffering. *They* are the ones in whom you will most certainly see Christ Crucified. *They* are the ones in whom you will 'see Jesus.' Stay with them a while, like Our Lord's Blessed Mother, like Mary Magdalene and like John, not like the majority of the Disciples who fled in fear. Stay with them a while in their worry and in their fear, and you will see Him in your own life.

If you are one who would very much like to see the Prince of Peace before our whole world goes up in the flames of war, but you do not know where to look, then try *making* peace between warring parties on even the smallest of scales. Try

to the One Who did not avoid conflict but Who brought and offered peace by His Word, and Who still does. See Him in every attempt to bring peace out of the chaos and mindless cruelty of war. Rise and give thanks for His Word of forgiveness, above all, to *you*. ✍ Amen.



Now to Him Who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made of us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion with the Father and the Holy Spirit. ✍ Amen.

