

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Oh, that was awesome. Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

All who are able, please stand. Welcome to morning prayers. We'll begin with our responsive reading found in your black psalter, Psalm 130. Out of the depths, I have called to you, oh God, hear my voice. Let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.

Congregation:

If you were to note what is amiss, oh, God, who would stand?

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

For there is forgiveness with you. Therefore, you shall be feared.

Congregation:

I wait for you, oh God. My soul waits for you, and your word is my hope.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

My soul waits for you, more than censure eyes for the morning, more than censure eyes for the morning.

Congregation:

Oh, Israel, pray for my God with love and prayers of mercy.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

With God, there is plenteous redemption. God shall redeem Israel from all their sins. You may be seated. A reading from John, Chapter 12. I will not read the entire passage. I'll read Verses 20 through 22. Now, among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida and Galilee and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew. Then, Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. (singing)

Jesus is known for seeing those who are typically not seen. Jesus is found in places where those who are sanctimonious and religious may not go. Jesus was not supposed to be teaching in the Jewish temple with the elders at a young age, but he was there found praying. Jesus was not supposed to heal on the Sabbath, but he was found caring for the sick, the unhoused, and the poor. Jesus allowed an unclean woman, who was bleeding, to touch him. Jesus sat with the sinners and tax collectors. Jesus sat with those who were marginalized. Jesus even traveled through Samaria so that he could be with the outcasts. God knows the names of those who are typically not seen. Today is Holy Tuesday. Some call it Fig Tuesday, because of the story about Jesus cursing the fig tree.

But Psalm lift up this passage, "Jesus has made his entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, a political act to give voice to those who have been violated by the Roman Empire. He has cleansed the temple yesterday of the money changers who economically cheated the poor, a political act advocating for justice,

fairness, liberty, and hope. And today, Jesus is seen seeing those who are typically not seen." In the beginning of the gospel reading, we are introduced to some Greeks who have come to participate in the festival in Jerusalem. It is not obvious whether they were civilized and that they took part in the Greek culture or even spoke Greek, or if they were part of the greater diaspora of people who visited Jerusalem during this season. However it may be, it is clear that they are outsiders.

It is interesting because after John writes this one line about the outsiders, he jumps to another point. Instead of elaborating about the Greeks, he speaks about what Jesus says. Jesus says, "The hour has come for the son of man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls onto the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain. But if it dies, it brings much fruit." It's almost as if John introduces the outsiders to us and then shares why. This Jesus responds and says, "I must make a sacrifice for those who are not seen." Jesus says, "In order for me to live, I must do something deeply to liberate the least of these." And as we continue to go into Holy Week, just as Jesus saw the most vulnerable, may we open our hearts to those who may have not been welcomed to speak in another's language, to speak another culture, to express someone else's experience, to say their names. That they are no longer an other, but they are a part of God's family. For ultimately, on Friday, that's what Jesus would do.

Let us pray. God, you know our names. You invite us to walk with you during this week. Help us to see and recognize the least of these for you came for them. And as in your name we pray, amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Now, let us stand together and recite the Lord's prayer together. Our Father ...

Congregation:

who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, Amen.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Amen. Now, let us sing together, hymn number 157, found in your hymnals entitled Beneath the Cross of Jesus. (Singing) May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make us find face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. As you go through this Holy Week, may you know that we serve a God who sees. As we travel with Christ to Friday and ultimately to Sunday, may you remember the least of these. Go in peace.