

## John 12:20-26

Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration <sup>21</sup> paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, “Sir, we want to meet Jesus.” <sup>22</sup> Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, “Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. <sup>24</sup> I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. <sup>25</sup> Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. <sup>26</sup> Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

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## Background

The “Greeks” in verse 20 were likely Gentile converts to Judaism. They might have approached Philip because of his Greek name. It seems the disciples acted as some kind of screening filter to shield Jesus from the growing crowds. These Greeks may have been moved by Jesus’ cleansing of the Temple, particularly the court of the Gentiles, and they wanted to understand His actions.

Jesus’ response in verse 23 initially seems unrelated to the Greeks’ request, but it was deeply connected. This “time” referred to His death and resurrection, which, until now, had not yet come (John 7:30; 8:20). But through His sacrifice, the gospel would be opened to the whole world, including Gentiles like these Greeks. Their request symbolized the coming shift: through His “time,” the message would extend beyond Israel to all nations.

## Teaching Points

### 1. For Christ, death was the way to life.

In verse 24, Jesus uses the image of a grain of wheat as an illustration. Just as a seed must die to produce a harvest, Jesus had to die to bring eternal life to others. Without His death, there would be no salvation for us. His sacrifice paid the penalty for sin, and through His death, believers receive not only forgiveness but also the very life of Christ—eternal, divine life.

## **2. For the Christian, death to self is the way to life.**

Verse 25 teaches that those who cling to their earthly lives for selfish gain will ultimately lose true, lasting value. However, those who surrender their lives for Christ will gain eternal life. The verse contrasts two kinds of “life”: living for self versus living for God.

To “care nothing for” one’s life doesn’t mean self-loathing. It means to deny selfish desires in favor of serving Christ. This “death to self” principle, echoed in Romans 12:1 and Galatians 6:14, means living sacrificially now for eternal reward.

## **Application**

### **1. If you had three wishes, what would your first wish be?**

If you had the proverbial “three wishes,” what would your first request be? The Greeks in these verses had a powerful wish: “*Sir, we want to meet Jesus.*” This should be at the top of everyone’s list! Not just to be with Him in Heaven in the future, but to know Him more deeply and experience His presence in our lives *right now*. That should be our greatest desire.

### **2. Let’s not lead the Lord in our Christian service.**

Verse 26 emphasizes that true Christian service means following Jesus, not leading Him. Jesus said, “*Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me,*” highlighting that we are to go where He leads, not ask Him to bless *our own* plans. Although our spiritual gifts often align with our desires to serve, we must always seek the Lord’s guidance through prayer and remain attentive to His direction.