

A helicopter is chartered out for a photo shoot around the city of New York. A pilot and 5 passengers begin their flight. As they pass over the East River, the helicopter loses power. The pilot cries out, "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, East River. Engine failure." A social media buff films the descent on their cellphone camera. The helicopter lands on the water and turns over. The passengers are strapped in securely. They can't escape. The pilot manages to get out, and is the only one who survives. Now tell me. If you were one of those 5 passengers and you knew this trip would end in disaster, wouldn't you have changed your plans, or canceled them?

Jesus Christ has something in common with this helicopter disaster in New York. He was on a sightseeing trip of planet earth. His trip would also end in a major disaster. Not strapped to a seat in a helicopter, but to a cross. However, Jesus was different than the 5 who died. Jesus knew exactly the tragedy that lay ahead, where and when it would happen. And you know, Jesus had every opportunity to cancel the flight. But He didn't. He made the trip. And we are so thankful He did. What appeared as a tragedy really turned out to be a display of His glory. Today, we are able to see what most in the world cannot see. We see The Real Jesus."

Some Greeks had come to worship in Jerusalem for the great Passover celebration. They came to Philip. They wanted to talk to the disciple who had a Greek name that means "lover of horses." So they came with the words, "Sir we want to see Jesus." Philip went to his brother Andrew and together they went to Jesus with the message that some Greek people wanted to see him. What about these curious Greeks who wanted to see Jesus, people so foreign to the Jews. We don't know if they were just interested in Jesus as an important person, or whether they have come to believe in him as their Savior. That is not told us.

Sometimes it does happen that people come to Jesus for the wrong reasons. They come looking for Jesus to see a miracle or to have him heal them of a serious illness. Once in a while a member of Open Bible asks a friend who is in the hospital if Pastor Schulz can come to visit them. They think, "well it wouldn't hurt to get some help from above." Some want to see Jesus to be blessed in their business. Others come seeking more meaning or purpose in life, or help in get along better in their family and marriage. They may come to church invited by someone whose life has been changed by the gospel. They are not sure what they are looking for but they seem to want that same peace in their lives they see in their friend or relative.

Notice what Jesus does to help people see less of themselves and more of what he is about to do for them. "Jesus replied; 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.'" The finest hour of Jesus life on this earth was coming quickly. When the bombers were attacking London during WW2, Winston Churchill told the people of England that this would be their finest hour as they sacrificed their lives to save England and the world. Jesus was about to enter his finest hours here on this earth. His vision and understanding of what was about to happen was so clear.

He compares his life to a seed being planted in the ground. "I tell you the truth, unless the kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." The Christian faith is all about death, and dying and

crucifixion. It is about seeing Jesus as the source of your salvation, not yourself. If I take some kernels of wheat in my hand and place them in a cool dry place, they will last for years without sprouting. However, if I plant them in the ground, they will die and grow into a new life that produces many more seeds.

Jesus was more than a great teacher who we admire like seeds in a jar, an exalted master who provides guidelines for how to improve your life. He is the Savior who planted his body in the ground through death so that our sin might be forgiven and paid for and we might live for ever. He did this for us, and all people even the Greeks who said, "Sir, we want to see Jesus."

What do you see in Jesus as he draws this comparison of the seed being planted into the ground? Please allow for this illustration of what Jesus means to us: Imagine for a moment that you have been chosen to take the diseases of the world on yourself, die for them, rise from the dead and eliminate all disease forever. Every form of cancer, every virus, heart disease, diabetes, everything placed is placed on you. What a privilege that would be, even though it would be painful. That is what Jesus, Lord and God from all eternity, did during a certain time or hour of world history. He took the sin of the world upon himself. Isaiah 53 says, "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." He died and was buried and gave his life and was raised up again that he might bring forth the fruit of new people who have eternal life through him.

When we understand the glorious nature of Jesus' death, we begin to see how we too can find glory in death, our death and the death of every believer. The death of a believer, like the death of Jesus, is not the end. It's the beginning of an eternal glory in God's presence.

Since death is only glorious for those who believe in Jesus for forgiveness, Jesus went on to say: "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" If you want to find glory, don't look where the world looks. The world looks for glory in this life. It thinks that money, fame, athletic skill, and good looks are glorious. These things, however, only produce a fading glory. This truth was illustrated in the news several years ago Brigitte Bardot visited Canada. Bardot is a French movie star famous for her beauty. She came to Canada to protest the seal hunt and, although at one time she was the toast of motion pictures, the beauty that made her famous has faded, and therefore her influence on politicians and the world in general has also faded.

Because this world can only give us fading glory, keep things in proper perspective. The life we have now is nothing more than a seed. It really isn't that beautiful, nor is it the kind of glorious life God intended us to have. When we think this life is the only one we have, we start to run after things that don't matter. We think that a European or Caribbean vacation, a bigger house, the right kind of iPhone will make our lives more glorious. But that's like playing dress-up with Mr. Potato Head. You can dress up Mr. Potato Head in some pretty fancy clothes and accessories but it still doesn't change the fact that underneath it all Mr. Potato Head is nothing more than a lowly spud. In the same way don't waste your time dressing up this life at the expense of losing your hold on the next life. This life is only a seed for the next life. Die a believer and God will

raise you to an eternal life gloriously free from sin and pain.

Death is not the only unlikely place a believer will find glory. A believer will also find glory in service. Jesus said: “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me”

While the world says that if you have people serving you, then you have arrived, you have found glory. Jesus says, “Not so.” Real glory comes from serving God and one another. In God’s eyes the Christian wife who takes care of her disabled husband, who faithfully makes sure he has food to eat, clothing to wear, and gets him to the doctor’s office for visits out of love for their spouse, or the one who volunteers time to help out at church will receive more glory than the most successful professional athlete or movie star who couldn’t care less about the Lord. Sure that glory might not become evident until the next life but it’s a glory we don’t want to miss out on.

Knowing that our purpose in life is to serve God will move us to pray that God’s name be glorified in everything we do and experience. Perhaps our text can explain better what I mean. Although the thought of his approaching death twisted Jesus’ stomach into knots, he prayed: “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name!”

“Father, glorify your name!” Is that what we pray when we are faced with difficulty? Instead isn’t our first request, “Father, save us!” While it’s not wrong to pray for rescue and is in fact something God wants us to do, let us do so with humility. Let us ask our heavenly Father to save us or to heal us only if it is his will, and only if his name will be glorified through it. There are times when God may not choose to rescue us because he wants to use our suffering for his glory. That was true of Lazarus wasn’t it? Jesus let him suffer the pain of death before he came to his aid and raised him back to life. He did this so that we would have the confidence that Jesus has power over life and death.

So if God has seen fit to have you live on your own, or suffer chronic illness, pray and trust that his name will be glorified through these challenges. Trust that through these trials God is refining your faith and putting you on display for others to marvel at the strength he gives you to get through your trials. Trust that in the midst of pain, loneliness, and sorrow God’s glory is still there.

While you would never go to a sushi restaurant if you wanted to eat a juicy hamburger, today Jesus teaches us that some things, like glory, are found in unlikely places. Real glory is found in death – Jesus’ death, and the death of believers. Glory is also found in Christian service. It’s even found in suffering. May God help us remember these truths so that we keep our faith focused on Jesus. May we say like the Greeks, “We want to see Jesus! Amen.