

Sunday, March 29, 2009
The Hour Has Come

An actor moves to the microphone, then gestures to the right and left for two friends to come.

First Friend: What is it? Why did you call us?

Actor: The most incredible thing just happened! You aren't going to believe this!

Second Friend: Tell us! Don't make us wait. What did you hear?

Actor: I was standing with some of our friends at the edge of the crowd on the street. People were coming from everywhere for the festival.

First Friend: I know. We could hardly find a place to stay.

Actor: I saw our friends talking to some Jews.

Second Friend: Our friends? Why would Greeks talk to Jews?

Actor: They were asking questions concerning that Jesus we've been hearing stories about. They recognized his disciples and were asking them to see if Jesus would talk to us.

First Friend: And then what happened?

Actor: He spoke to his disciples, but we could hear him. Sometimes he looked at them and sometimes he

looked over at us and smiled while he talked. I can't describe the feeling in words.

Second Friend: What did he say?

Actor: I didn't understand it all. Something about "the hour has come" whatever that means, and then something about how things grow.

First Friend: How things grow? What does that have to do with anything?

Actor: I'm not sure. He said, "I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

Second Friend: Well, we know that's true about seeds. But what does it have to do with why he's here, teaching and healing people?

Actor: I don't know. He said something else, then there was a noise. It sounded like a voice was speaking from heaven. All I know is I will never forget his next words. He said, "And when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." Did you hear that? All people!

First Friend: Do you think that means us too?

Actor: He said, "All people." He didn't say just Jews or just some other special kind. He said all. You, me, us—and even them. (gestures toward the congregation; then the three leave)

Explanation, if needed:

Jesus was saying that the hour had come when he could make himself available to the world. His present ministry in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria would be extended to all when the Son of Man was glorified. This was an important understanding for the community to which John is writing—a gentile community, separated from the historical Jesus by at least six decades. They needed to be assured that living in another geographic place and a different historic time did not remove them from the life-giving and saving work of Christ. We also need to hear John's testimony to us in the twenty-first century—a community separated by almost two millennia, but not removed from the life-giving and saving work of Christ.