

## Lent 5- Passion Sunday Zoom Talk by Phil Baker

It is now a year since we started the first lockdown due to COVID-19. It has been a time when our lives have been very different from those to which we are accustomed and which we had planned. Much of what we would normally have done has not been possible. Who ever dreamt we would have to wait months to go and get a haircut, or just to go into a clothes shop? We have had to put up with restrictions and changes which have been life changing and for many have been severe and very challenging.

In our gospel today we see the Greeks coming up to Philip and saying that they want to see Jesus. They have heard of the wonders he has done and want to see it for themselves. He tells the Philip and Andrew that the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. He goes on to say, *'Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me the Father will honour.'* He is saying that he is not there to be gawped at, but to be followed. Jesus is in anguish because He knows his future, *'Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say-“Father save me from this hour?” No it is for this reason that I have come to this hour.'* His time has come when He will be lifted up, not only onto the cross to suffer death, but to heaven and He will draw all people to him he says. That's us if we but follow him.

As we head down the path of a return to a new normal, we inevitably have some uncertainty about how life will be. For many it looks, bleak. Many have lost jobs their jobs and many more may do so. It is predicted unemployment may be up to 2.2 million by the end of this year. Furlough payments have saved many but there is still much uncertainty in the future.

As I said on the pew-sheet, George VI famously quoted, Minnie Louise Haskins, the American poet and social scientist and I repeat:

*"I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, ‘Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.’ And he replied, ‘Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!’ So I went forth and finding the hand of God, trod gladly into the night."*

It is by following Jesus and serving Him that we are honoured by God the Father. As we step forward into the unknown we must put our hand in His and proceed with faith whatever confronts us because Jesus promises that he will draw us up to himself.

AMEN