May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

“*Sir, we wish to see Jesus*,” they said to Philip. It’s not an unusual request. I suspect most of us have said or thought it.

I wonder, however, if the visitors who came to Philip had any idea what they were asking. I wonder if we know what we are asking? It seems a simple enough request, but Jesus’ response is anything but simple. I don’t know what answer Philip and Andrew expected but I’ll bet they did not expect to hear about death. It is probably not the answer we expect or want when we ask to see Jesus, but it is the answer Jesus gives.

*“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. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also.”*

Somehow death and seeing Jesus are intimately related. To see Jesus is more than looking at him. It is more than just believing the things he said and did. We follow Christ as participants not spectators. If we want to see Jesus then we must learn to die. To the degree we avoid and deny death, we refuse to see Jesus.

Seeing Jesus means dying to all the parts of our life that blind us: fear; the need to be right or to be in control; anger and resentment; the guilt and disappointments of our past; attachment to power, wealth, and reputation; the ways in which we separate ourselves from one another; our obsessions, compulsions, and emotional agendas; the ways in which we hurt one another and damage relationships.

Ultimately, it means dying to our own self-sufficiency. We let go of our life to receive God’s life.

This work of dying is difficult and painful. It is, as Jesus describes, soul troubling. It shakes us to the core. Dying, however, begins to clarify and heal our vision. We see a new life, and a new way of being. It looks like Jesus, and his way of living and being. That’s what this week is about.

Lent and upcoming Holy Week are a school for learning how to die and death is the window through which we see Jesus. We must be careful, however, that we do not get stuck looking at the window rather than through the window. Dying is not the end, but a means, a way of transforming who we are.

Do you want to see Jesus? Look for the ways in which and places where your life is most guarded, insulated, and isolated. Those are places of blindness, places that need to die. Each one of those is a grain of wheat containing much fruit. Let it fall into the earth and die, and you will see Jesus. Amen.