

That You May Have Life in His Name

John 1:35-51

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In today's text ...

- We will see John the Baptists ministry coming to its fulfillment. His "preparing the way" has been prepared.

The hearts of his disciples and hearers have been readied.

The waiting is over...the Messiah has come.

"Behold, The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)

- Today we will read and marvel at the first recorded words of Christ in John's gospel - still just as rich and challenging to would-be disciples as they were to the first two who heard the question.

And at the end of our text we will see the promise of God for all who follow him.

John 1:35-42

The next day again → John will repeat the same message to his disciples and all who would continue coming to be baptized and have their hearts prepared: **Behold the Lamb of God!**

- The Lamb permeates scripture. (Last week) From cover to cover of your Bible the Lamb is waited for, hoped for, pointed to, seen as one who dwelt among us, and the One who sits enthroned on High with all of the elders and 100,000,000 angels worshiping Him...
- John can not help himself → there He is, the Lamb of God!

To have the kind of following John had was no small thing. To be the center of attention with people coming from all around to hear your message and be baptized into your faith family is a pastor's dream.

- **But John the Baptist makes no play on this momentum.**
- It is likely these events took place immediately following Jesus' 40 days of preparation in the wilderness.
- John bucks every human tendency to build his own kingdom the moment he encounters Jesus.
- ***This is the one. He alone is worthy. All of you who are following me, this is Him we have been waiting for. Repent and believe, the Kingdom of God is here, among us...***

So, two of John the Baptists disciples begin following Jesus. Perhaps at a distance at first. Then close enough for Jesus to turn to them and ask, arguably, the most important question in the history of questions.

The english says, "Jesus turned and **saw** them (literally → "intently beheld them with his gaze"). Jesus turns and looks deep into their eyes, deep even into their very souls, and asks

"What are you seeking?" (v.38)

Context of the day:

- Let us for a brief moment remember who these two are. Andrew and likely John (since he's never named) - both fishermen, scraping by month to month, doing their best to provide food and pay their taxes to Rome.

Others around them...

- The **religious elite** sought prominence and reputation. Seeking out the best seats at banquets and keeping down the average man who couldn't hack it in school.
- The **Romans** sought control through fearmongering and military prowess. Literally hoping to expand their kingdom to the end of the earth.
- The **Zealots** sought revolution - freedom from Rome's tyranny by any means necessary. For them the Kingdom would come by force, and each of them was ready to be the tip of that sword (or hidden dagger)
- What could these fishermen want with Jesus?
 - Security? Peace? Provision? A change in career? Possibly, but their answer is telling...

“Rabbi, where are you staying? He said to them, “Come and you will see” so they followed him and stayed with him (John records the very hour). (v.38-39)

- These two have not come for a sermon. These two are not merely passing by.
- They have left home, family, and jobs to know where this Jesus is going. They wish to be with him, to stay with him.
- Barclay : “They wished to **linger long** with him and talk out their troubles and their problems. The man who would be Jesus's disciple can never be satisfied with a passing word. He wants to meet Jesus, not as an acquaintance in the passing, but as a friend in his own house.”¹

“Come and you will see” (v.39)

They do, and Andrew goes and finds his brother, Simon. We have **found** the Messiah.

Simon comes, sees Jesus, and is called to more.

You were this, Simon, now you will be Peter - something different, a new man.

John 1:43-51

Jesus finds Philip, “Follow me” → he does and immediately goes to tell Nathanael.

Philip tells his friend, come, we have found him who fulfills all of our laws, all of our prophets, and all of our hopes.

A bit skeptical, Nathanael is not convinced.

Instead of arguing, Philip simply invites him to come and see for himself.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him... (v.47)

- Super interesting interaction b/w Jesus and this future disciple
- **“Behold, an Israelite indeed in whom there is no deceit.”**
 - Jesus beholds → again a word meaning to intently look into - to gaze into
 - An Israelite indeed
 - Jesus not talking about his outward Jewishness, marked by the covenant of circumcision
 - Jesus says he as an Israelite indeed, a true son of Abraham → one who truly hoped for the coming of the Messiah and believed wholeheartedly that God was not finished with his people.
- “How do you know me?”

¹ Barclay, William. The Gospel of John, Vol. I, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1975 (87).

- **Before Philip called you I saw you under the fig tree.**

- Immediate belief and faith → not fully perfected, fledgling in its understanding, but enough!

Jesus speaks to Nathanael's faith as he witnesses the all knowing, or **omniscience**, of Jesus to see him when he's out of sight...

Do you believe because of these things?

You will see greater things than these...(v.50)

- "Just you wait!!"
- **"You will see heaven opened, angels of God ascending & descending on the Son of Man" (51)**
- Oh yes, you will see the Kingdom of God.

In these early interactions with his disciples, we see these threads running through the gospel:

- Seeking and finding are matters of the Kingdom of God.
- **And when we seek, we find, and when we find Jesus, we realize we have already been found by him.**
- Jesus longs to be found and followed.
 - Here's the wonder → in seeking Jesus, & his kingdom, we truly/fully **have life in his name.**
 - That's why these things are written! That you may have life (but not in the words themselves) but that you may have life as a son/daughter of God, friend/brother of Jesus.

Found in and By Jesus

There is an abundance of look, seek, find, see language in these verses.

And while there is much "come and find" come and see, There is an equal if not greater emphasis here put on **being found.**

So who really finds whom?

Augustine: "We could not even have begun to seek for God unless he had already found us"²

No, here at the beginning of John's gospel, we are convinced based on their experience, and our own that...

- **Those Who Follow Jesus are first Chosen by Jesus.**

- **"You did not choose me, but I chose you." John 15:6** (more in weeks to come)
- Chosen to do what? → 3x we see "Follow me" (v.37, 38, 40).
- Chosen to behold the lamb of God, to really behold him
 - To see him, to gaze intently, not with bodies that are covered in eyes like the creatures around the throne but as creatures made in his image with these eyes and the eyes of faith.
 - **And we all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 3:18).**
- **Simply put, in following/beholding Jesus, we become like him, and the world desperately needs to see him as we have seen him.**

² Quoted in Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, 88.

- **Those Who follow Jesus Are Being Transformed by Jesus**

- For Nathanael, can it be actually said that he is a pure Israelite with no deceit or guile? Possibly.
- For Peter, who was renamed from Simon...
 - Here is a dear brother who's failings will be abundantly evident.
 - One who would become an example for all of us who think we have a lot of great ideas for God...
 - And yet Jesus immediately renames him Peter, or rock.
- Barclay: "The great thing about this story is that it tells us how Jesus looks at men. He does not only see what a man is; he also sees what a man can become."³
- D.A. Carson: ***Jesus so calls them that he makes them what he calls them to be.***

- **Those Who Follow Jesus Call Others To Jesus**

- We see it first in John the Baptist → calling others to repent and believe and BEHOLD the Lamb
- We see it in Andrew finding and inviting Simon to come and see (in fact, Andrew only appears a handful of times in John's gospel and **every time he is bringing someone to Jesus**)
- We see it in Philip telling Nathanael that we have found the One
 - NOTE → there is no argument/reasoning with Nathanael → "Come and See for Yourself"
- We will eventually see it in Peter, through his sermons, teachings, and his letters
- **When we behold Jesus, we truly have life in His Name.**
- And if you have life in his name, telling others of this Name is not merely a responsibility but our greatest privilege and JOY.

If we believe that we are first found by God,
and that in calling us he calls out and creates in us what we WILL be,
and our greatest joy is in sharing of our greatest friend...

I ask is that true for you today?

Or as Jesus asks you, this morning, "What are you seeking?"

- Are you seeking acceptance? Escape?
- Are you seeking promotion? acclaim? Reputation?
- If so from whom?

Oh would you first, and always, seek the one who has already found you?

Would we be a people who seek first his Kingdom, and His righteousness, believing that we have life in His name?

And would your manner of life (all of it) → be an anthem that sings to/with the heavens, "Come and See!"

³ Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, 90.