

Dig Deeper – Come and See

8.2.26

John 1:35

Sunday AM

During the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, John Stephen Akhwari from Tanzania became entangled w/ a few other runners at the 19th km causing him to fall violently to the pavement – badly injuring his leg and shoulder to the point that he could barely walk much less run. Still, Yet Akhwari refused to leave the race. As a result, more than an hour after the winner had crossed the finish line and the medal ceremony had concluded – w/ darkness descending over Mexico City – suddenly, the remaining crowd heard the sound of sirens as Akhwari – limping, bandaged, and exhausted – entered into the stadium to cross the finish line. Even though he knew he wasn't going to win a medal, or set a record – step by painful step, he continued until he completed the race. When asked later by the press why he had continued when there was no possibility of winning, Akhwari answered – My country didn't send me 5,000 miles to start the race. They sent me 5,000 miles to finish the race.

To me – this is the spirit behind what it means to **Dig Deeper**. And after 5 yrs of *Aiming Higher to Dream Bigger* – I want to challenge us to get our second wind. To find that next gear. To dig in w/ a spiritual/G.C. determination/fervor that says we will never give up, never give in, never give out, and never give way – b/c we're committed to fighting the good fight, to finishing the race, and to keeping the faith.

Truth – Jesus didn't call us just to begin the Christian life, He called us to follow Him faithfully, grow intensely – as we run thru the tape to finish our race.

This is the task of Colossians 2:6-7 | Hebrews 6:1:

Just as you received Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing w/ thankfulness. Colossians 2:6-7

Let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Jesus and be taken forward to maturity. Hebrews 6:1

SEE – in a post-Christian world, shallow faith won't be enough. We need deeper roots, greater courage, stronger convictions, and an unwavering dependence on Jesus. We need a second wind – the determination to double down, to find another gear, and to keep moving forward when following Christ is difficult.

As such, to **Dig Deeper** is a call to pursue Jesus w/ an unrelenting devotion that refuses to *give in* to pressure, *give up* to discouragement, *give way* to preference, or *give out* from fatigue. Instead – it's a call to bow up!

Thru-out this series, to help refocus our commitment to Christ and His mission – we're going to ground ourselves to the Big 4 invitations of Jesus to – ¹*Come and See*, ²*Follow Me*, ³*Abide in Me*, and ⁴*Go and Tell*.

Come and See – means to seek Him more intently

Follow Me – means to commit to Him more fully

Abide in Me – to depend upon Him more completely

Go and Tell – to represent Him more boldly

WTM – today, let's take the first step in digging deeper by discovering the invitation to **Come/See**.

The next day John was there again w/ two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Teacher, where are you staying?" He replied, "Come and see." So, they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day w/ Him. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and

who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah.” And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas.” The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.” Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. Philip said, “**Come and see.**” When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, He said of him, “Truly, here is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.” “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus said, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.” Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.” Jesus said, “You believe b/c I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.” He then added, “Truly I tell you, you will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” John 1:35-50

Notice – Jesus didn’t begin w/ pressure, but w/ an invitation. He didn’t demand that people ¹understand everything, ²resolve every doubt, ³answer every theological question, or ⁴correct every part of their lives before coming near. He said, “Come and you will see.” This invitation is at the heart of the gospel.

This is b/c before anyone can understand, believe, or follow, they must first come close enough to see who Jesus is. And this is where digging deeper begins – when we move beyond secondhand information about Jesus to actually encountering Him personally.

For the church, digging deeper speaks to our witness, hospitality, and openness to engaging others. It’s when we say w/ our words/actions – **Come/See** who Jesus is and what life w/ God can be.

This is what occurred in John 1:35-50. John the Baptist pointed (2) of his disciples to Jesus and they left him to follow Jesus. As they arrive, Jesus asked them what they were seeking and invited them to come and see.

I **EXAMINE** What You are Seeking

“The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God!’ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, ‘What do you want?’” John 1:35–38

Notice that Jesus didn’t begin by asking – *What do you know? How religious are you? or Do you have the right behavior?*” Instead, He looked beyond their actions to their desires and asked – **what do you want?** DYR – this remains today the vital question of Jesus.

SEE – each of us walks thru life seeking something – whether it’s *security, success, relief, purpose, truth, hope, or forgiveness* – we’re all looking for answers.

Likewise – people come to Jesus for many of the same reasons. Some come running in desperation, while others approach Him cautiously, carrying wounds from churches/people who professed Christ but have failed to demonstrate it. Yet beneath every immediate need is a deeper hunger only Jesus can satisfy.

As such, the key element of ministry is helping people to understand/recognize why they need Jesus and can’t live this life or experience eternal life w/out Him.

But for this to occur, those who know Jesus have to have a similar posture that John had. John said – *Look, the Lamb of God.* He didn’t say – *look at me or join my movement* b/c he understood that his calling wasn’t to collect followers for himself, but to point people to Jesus. And this remains the responsibility of every believer/church today: to help people to see their need for Jesus – and to introduce them to Him.

In John's case, he identified Jesus as the Lamb of God – the One who'd bear our sin, provide forgiveness, and become God's final/sufficient sacrifice. So, when John pointed to Jesus, the disciples followed. **This is successful ministry** b/c ministry isn't measured by how many people admire us, attend our events, or appreciate our organization, but by whether we help people take another step toward Jesus.

It could be as simple as not parking in guest parking so that first time guest can easily ***Come/See*** who Jesus is and what He's done for them.

SEE – the message of the church can never be – *Come and see how impressive we are!* But only – *Come and see how wonderful Jesus is.*" This is most evident in how we love people, not in the events we hold, songs we sing, or the sermons and programs we offer.

NOW – this doesn't mean we don't plan or do things w/ excellence – it means we never lose sight of the primary goal of helping people to discover Jesus. Our love should make Jesus attractive, but our witness must make Jesus unmistakable.

Digging deeper means becoming less concerned that people notice us and more committed to helping them see Jesus for who He is and what He did for them.

II **COME** Close Enough to See

They said, 'Rabbi, where are You staying?' He said, "Come and see." So, they went and saw where He was staying, and spent the day w/ Him. 1:38-39

Make no mistake – these disciples weren't just asking for an address; they wanted an audience w/ Jesus to check Him out – to listen, ask questions, and discover more about Him. And Jesus said – *Come and see.*

The order matters as **coming precedes seeing**. It requires movement, trust and response. We must allow our curiosity to drive any skepticism so that even if our faith is weak or our questions seem far-fetched – we still come w/ an openness to see.

Yet the disciples did more than come – they remained. Their curiosity opened their eyes to see Jesus, to listen, and to begin following Jesus – and eventually, it led to them inviting others to meet Jesus.

This is b/c to ***Come and See*** is to make enough room to draw near w/out pretending and to deal honestly w/ our doubts, confusion, wounds, and uncertainty. It's to open our eyes, ears, and hearts to see Him.

Digging deeper means coming w/ curiosity, staying for the encounter – to see who Jesus is – so that we can allow what we see/experience to change us.

III **EXPECT** Jesus to Reveal Greater Things

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We've found the Messiah.' And he brought him to Jesus. John 1:40-42

Let's make this simple – what's the first thing we do when we see or experience something awesome... we tell someone else. We show it to them and invite them to experience it too.

I don't know about you, but I do this all the time. Whether it's a video/picture on social media or some thing one of my kids has done – I want others to know.

After spending time w/ Jesus, Andrew immediately thought of his brother. And while he didn't have a seminary degree, evangelism training, or an answer to every question. He simply knew that he had found Jesus and that Peter needed to meet Him too.

And look at who Peter became. **Never underestimate what Jesus may do thru one sincere invitation.** We don't have to change someone's life; we simply only need to bring them to the One who can.

Remember – our job isn't to convince, convict, or convert people – that's the H.S.'s job. Our calling is to convey the message when God calls us.

BTW – this pattern continued when Jesus found Philip, and Philip found Nathanael. John pointed Andrew to Jesus, Andrew shared it w/ Peter – while Philip invited his friend. This is the pattern of grace: Jesus finds us, and then we introduce Him to others b/c when curiosity becomes encounter and encounter becomes conviction, conviction becomes invitation.

VI **EXPECT** to See Greater Things

When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, He said, 'Here truly is an Israelite in whom there's no deceit.' 'How do You know me?' Nathanael asked. Jesus said, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." 1:47-49

This might be my favorite part of this text. Nate came to examine Jesus, but before he could decide what he thought about Him, he learned that Jesus already knew him. He came a skeptic and left a follower – and it was all predicated on a divine moment – when Jesus said – *I saw you under the fig tree.*

Look – we don't know what occurred beneath that tree, but whatever it was, Nathanael knew immediately that Jesus was no ordinary person.

Point – those who come to see Jesus most often discover that Jesus already sees them and knows them. He sees behind the image, knows our history, understands our questions, recognizes our wounds, knows the sins we conceal, and understands the longings we struggle to express. B/c just like w/ Nathanael, Jesus sees/knows everything about us – the good, the bad, and the ugly – and He still wants us to know Him and be known by Him. Thus, the gospel isn't just the story of humanity trying to find God; it's the story of God coming to find us.

But notice what Jesus said next. He said – *Nate, that's nothing. If you will follow me, you will see even greater things than this.* And He did. He saw Jesus heal the sick, calm storms, raise the dead, and ultimately, give His life on an old rugged cross, only to rise victoriously from the grave (3) days later.

All this to say – to **Come/See** isn't just an invitation for unbelievers; it's an invitation for all. No matter how long we've sought to follow Him, we haven't begun to scratch the surface of His grace/glory.

Like an iceberg – what we see is only a small part of what lies beneath. The deeper we go, the more we discover. Meeting Jesus is just the tip of the iceberg.

What This Means for Our Church

¹We must become a church that points clearly to Jesus. Like John the Baptist, our preaching, worship, groups, ministries, conversations, and service must continually say, **“Look at Jesus.”** We need to be ready to engage the honest seekers, doubters, skeptics, strugglers, and those whose lives remain complicated.

²We must become a church that remains. We can't settle for a Sunday snack of Jesus. We must spend time in His Word, seek Him in prayer, walk in obedience, and learn to abide in His presence.

Finally, ³we must trust Jesus to find/rescue people. We don't have to manipulate them, pressure them, or argue them into the kingdom. We only speak the truth in love, extend the invitation, bring people near, and trust Jesus to meet them at the point of their need.

So, COME. Come w/ your questions, doubts, wounds, and uncertainty. Come closer and allow Jesus to speak for Himself. Then REMAIN. Remain long enough for curiosity to become an encounter, your encounter to become conviction, and your conviction to become your confession.

Come w/ your curiosity. Stay for the encounter. See who Jesus is. Follow where He leads. And bring someone else w/ you.