

XI. Personal Evangelism in Biblical Perspective
iShare – Encounters with Jesus in John’s Gospel
“An Encounter with Two Seeking Students”

John 1:19-42

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April 22, 2012 – Morning Sermon

We are in the Gospel of John and we have begun a series on iShare encounters with Jesus in the Gospel of John. I’m going to actually begin reading at verse 19. This is the Word of God. It’s the truth. John 1:19-28 says [19] *And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” [20] He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” [21] And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” [22] So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” [23] He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”*

[24] (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) [25] They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” [26] John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, [27] even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” [28] These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I am so excited to move to this second section in our iShare series. This year we are focusing on the great call, opportunity, privilege and excitement of every person sharing the Gospel. We are calling it iShare and it has been taken from I Thessalonians 2 where Paul says “We shared with you not only the Gospel but ourselves.” We share the Gospel with people so that they might know Christ as their Lord and Savior. Each one is evangelizing everyone everywhere. There are the four “e’s” for you right there. We have already looked at a series of iShare What, iShare Who, iShare When, iShare How and iShare Where. Now we’re expanding the series to go through an exposition of the Gospel of John particularly focusing on the encounters with Jesus in the Gospel of John. In this study we are looking at the first encounter in the Gospel of John.

Before we look at the text, in the 1980s when this church built this sanctuary for worship there were three things that were done architecturally. One is the expansion of the sanctuary speaking of the transcendence of God calling us in worship. The second was the prevalence of the cross. When you look up the lights are in a cross, the roof line is in the shape of a cross and the steeple has a cross on top as well. We are not given to images in the sanctuary but there is a third that was chosen by this congregation to put before and it matches the cross and that’s Jesus went to the cross. Why? It is above the choir loft and that is the rose window which has in the middle of it, the Lamb. He is the Lamb our Substitute. We are reminded that our hope is in Christ our Substitute at the cross. It is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. It is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

We are coming to this first encounter in the Gospel of John. There are three weeks that are highlighted in your Bible. One week relates to creation and the other two weeks relate to redemption. There are three weeks chronologically, categorically and definitively tell you what happens on those three weeks, the writers of Scriptures through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The first week is the creation. The second week that is highlighted is the last week in the life of Jesus, from Palm Sunday all the way to the cross. The third week highlighted is the first week of Jesus' public ministry. I'm going to walk you through the first three days of the seven days of Jesus' first week of public ministry. On the third day is the first encounter where you end up with the first four New Testament Christians. They are Christ's followers who have trusted in Him for salvation.

The first day of Jesus' public ministry doesn't begin with Jesus. It begins with the one who is the forerunner of Jesus, who prepares the way for Jesus and his name is John the Baptist. We have already learned about John the Baptist. We have learned that Jesus is the Word. Then John says "I'm the voice." Now Jesus has come to John the Baptist. He has been baptized and the Father affirmed Him as the Son of God by saying, "This is My Son in whom I am well pleased." The Father poured forth the Spirit of God anointing Him as the Prophet, Priest and the King. Jesus rose from His baptism, went into the wilderness and for forty days He is tempted in the wilderness. When He comes out of the wilderness He returns at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan. That was the key place where John the Baptist baptized. This isn't the Bethany near the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived. This is the Bethany beyond the Jordan in what we call today Syria.

Jesus' first day of ministry while He is arriving out of the wilderness, is conducted by the forerunner and that's John the Baptist. I read this in the text at the beginning of this study. A contingency had come down from Jerusalem and it was sent by the Pharisees to find out who this John the Baptist was. We could almost say while Jesus is coming out of the temptation from the wilderness that John the Baptist is getting his own temptation when they question him saying "Who are you? Are you the Christ?" What is he going to say? Is he going to do what he is called to do or is he going to take the glory to himself? John the Baptist says "I am not the Christ. I am not the Prophet. I am not Elijah. I have come in the spirit of Elijah. I am the voice crying out of the wilderness. I am not even fit to loosen the strap of His sandal. I didn't even know Him. You don't know Him. He is among you and I am the one who has come to point Him out to you." Then he quotes from Isaiah 40 in terms of his call to be the one who announces the Messiah. The day finishes. John the Baptist with his disciples there speaks to the crowd, confessing that he is not the Messiah and identifies that the Christ is the Messiah. When he finishes that the day is through.

Now let's go to the next day, the second day. John 1:29 says [29] *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* John the Baptist is fulfilling his calling here as a Gospel preacher pointing men and women to Christ as the voice of the Lord from the wilderness. He is preaching from Isaiah 40 declaring who he is to Isaiah 53 to declare who Jesus is. Here he is preaching a short sermon but it's a Presbyterian sermon because one it's Biblical and two it has three points to it. Let's look at the text that John is expounding which is Isaiah 53. This is the clearest text in the Old Testament concerning Jesus the Messiah. I'm not going to read the whole chapter on the Messiah but just a few verses.

Isaiah 53:6-7 says [6] *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* (The good news is that we have gone astray and God’s judgment ought to fall upon us but instead God takes our sin and He puts it on the Messiah. That’s where the judgment will fall.) [7] *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a **lamb** that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.* A Lamb is raised to be shorn by the shearer and to be slaughtered. We have a Shepherd amazingly who became the Lamb. Our Shepherd, Christ is the Lamb.

After John the Baptist says what he is here to do, he then preaches the Gospel. He gives us one of the multiple titles of Jesus, the precious title of Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God!” So he identifies Christ with His title, the Lamb of God. He then gives the second point of the sermon, the mission. What is the mission? It is Him taking away the sin. He is going to be the One who redeems sin. What’s interesting is that lambs weren’t sin offerings in the Bible. Bulls and goats were sin offerings. The lamb in the Old Testament was a substitutionary offering. It was a vicarious offering, a substitute. Jesus coming as the Messiah as the Lamb, doesn’t just come out of mid air from Isaiah 53. The had already been taught about a lamb from the book of Leviticus where they had been instructed year after year after the establishment of the temple everyday a lamb on behalf of the people was slain at the temple and that didn’t just start out of thin air either.

That started when they came out of Exodus before they got to the Promised Land, the last plague was a judgment upon the first born and what is it that saved the people of Israel so that their first born did not fall under the judgment of God? It was a lamb. The Passover lamb was slain and the blood was put over the door therefore the judgment of God passed over because of the substitute of the Passover lamb for the first born. But that Passover lamb doesn’t come out of thin air in the Old Testament either. For these are the children of Abraham and that means they are the children of Isaac. God sent Isaac up to an altar where He told Abraham to sacrifice his only son in whom He had given him with that supernatural birth between Abraham and Sarah. Abraham took Isaac up to Mount Moriah where later the temple will be established. Isaac says to Abraham “Father, I see the wood, the fire and the knife but where’s the lamb?” He says “Son, the Lord will provide a lamb.” There was the ram. The Lord said “Abraham, Abraham, don’t kill your son.” In the Mount of the Lord, the Lord provided the ram.

John the Baptist is now declaring from the Mount of the Lord, and not just Mount Moriah but Mount Calvary, the Lord will provide a Lamb and the Lamb is the Lord for you. Behold the Lamb, who becomes your sin offering and He silently goes to the cross to lay down His life that we might be saved. The Lord calls the iniquity of us all to fall upon our Substitute, the Lamb.

Then the third point of John’s sermon is the scope of this Good News. The scope is the world and it’s not just Israel. I brought it through Israel to preach to the world. John 1:29b says “*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” In other words, throughout the world this Gospel will be preached and the Lord will save His people from every tribe and nation. They will be brought from the entire world, not just Israel, every tribe and nation and they will become the bride of the Lamb. His church will be secured by His sacrifice on our behalf and that’s what the second day brings. It brings the Gospel preaching.

Let's go back to the text. John 1:30-34 says [30] *This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.'* [31] *I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.* [32] *And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. [33] I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'* [34] *And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."* God has come to be the Lamb. Behold the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Now let's go to the third day of this week.

John 1:35 says [35] *The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples.* These are what I call two seeking students. Why would I call them students? When you and I think of students we think of classrooms. That's a new invention. IN the Bible when you think student you think teacher. The teacher would have a classroom when he would say "Let's sit down on this mountain because I want to teach you something. Let's sit down here by the seaside. I want to teach you something." In the Biblical understanding of education the issue was the teacher. Here you have two that had been seeking and following John the Baptist. He was their teacher and they were his students. They were seeking students. Now Jesus is not walking toward them but by them. As Jesus walks by them John the Baptist renews his sermon now. He is repeating the sermon he gave yesterday. "Behold the Lamb of God" is back again. As soon as he says this watch what happens.

John 1:36-38 says [36] *and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"* [37] *The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.* (Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of Christ and therefore when they heard the Word about Christ they went to the Word, Himself, the Lamb and they followed Him.) [38] *Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"* Why did they say that? As much as they needed salvation and salvation of their sins (the mission of the Lamb), what they wanted was the Lamb. We want to be with You. It helps us to understand why later on when Jesus goes to the cross why He comforts them with these words. "Don't be fearful. Don't be troubled. Believe in God and believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions and if it were not so I wouldn't have told you. I go to prepare a place for you so that where I am there you may be also." So they follow Him. They come to where He is staying and now look at what happens.

John 1:39 says [39] *He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.* What does it tell you that they are seeking Him? The Bible tells you in Romans 3 that there is none who seek Him, no not one but they're seeking. Why are they seeking? He has already come looking for them. The Holy Spirit has already been working within them, giving them eyes to see and a hunger to know. Those whom the Lord awakens to seek He says "Those who seek will find Me."

So what is the tenth hour? If you're counting as an Israelite then it is 10 am but if you're counting as a Roman or Gentile it's 4pm. So which do I think it is? I think it's 4pm because of the way John counts other times but it could be 10am. That's not the point though. To get the point to you I want to go to the next verse. John 1:40 says

[40] *One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.* One of the disciples is Andrew but the other is not named. What disciple in the book of John, whenever he talks about himself, never names himself? It is John so this is John and Andrew. They stayed with Him at the tenth hour.

What is John telling you? He is telling you that was the day he came from death to life. He remembers the day and the hour. Does everybody who gets converted know the day and the hour? No. When I interview new members there are some who know they have put their trust in the Lord but can't remember the day or the hour. You don't have to have a date on your birth certificate but you have to have a pulse. Some covenant children are raised in a home and there is a date they put their trust in the Lord but they just don't know it because God has so graciously ushered them into the Kingdom. That's why we pray they will never know a day that they didn't know Jesus. This John says he knows the day. I thank the Lord for the voice but I found the Word. I thank the Lord for the one who pointed but I got to the Lamb. It was the tenth hour that day and I remember it.

What else occurs? John 1:41-42 says [41] *He (Andrew) first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ).* [42] *He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter, stone or rock).* Try to follow me with this. When I opened this up I said at the end of the third day there will be four converts. You're probably thinking there are only three. Notice what the text says. John says that he remembers that he and Andrew the tenth hour that day meet the Messiah. Then Andrew **first** found his brother said he found the Messiah and brought his brother Peter. When it said "he first" then it tells you that someone else did this second. So I believe the text is telling us that Andrew went and got Peter. So Peter was brought to Christ through Andrew and then I think what is unsaid because of the way that John doesn't talk about himself that much in the text is that John then went and did it by finding his brother James. You may think that is speculation and I agree that it may just be three but I believe it was four.

Then the final thing in the text is a prophesy. Peter let me tell you what you will become. You will become the rock. You can anticipate the day He'll say "Peter upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. You shall be called Cephas (Peter, stone, the Rock)." So Jesus gives him the prophesy of his future dynamic and how the Lord will deal with him as he moves into the future. There is a prophetic word from the Lamb.

Now I'd like to give you some takeaways. The first takeaway from this text is that Gospel preaching and personal evangelism are interdependent and inseparable. In this text you have iSharing going on. There is Andrew sharing with Peter and John the Baptist sharing with others but you also have Gospel preaching. John the Baptist is doing some Gospel preaching here. He is proclaiming the truth of the Gospel and that's the way it works. You share and as you're sharing many times God uses the Gospel preaching. Sometimes God uses the Gospel preaching and then you personally have the opportunity to lead someone to Christ. Sometimes you're leading someone to Christ and they come with you to hear Gospel preaching and they see Jesus. How do they see Jesus? Come and see as your sharing. How do you see Jesus today? You see Him in His Word,

in His gathered church and in the lives of His people. Come and see. So as the Gospel is being preached it is joined with your sharing.

Here are four conversions and they are all the same that they come to Christ but there is a different dynamic. Andrew and John heard the sermon from John the Baptist and they followed Jesus. Peter and James hear the testimony from their brothers and they come to hear the sermon and they come to follow Jesus. The does this in multiple ways. Here is an experience I want to share that happened just yesterday. Yesterday I finished my last talk that I was doing at the Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology and afterwards I was talking to some people who had been at the conference. One lady came up to me with tears streaming down her face and said "Pastor I just want to thank you." I said "Praise the Lord that He blessed you." She said "Yes the Lord blessed me but that's not it." She had brought this young man who was a Hindu that she had been sharing and sharing with and she said "Pastor we just couldn't break through. I thought about this conference we were coming to on Reformed Theology and thought he may not be interested in theology much less what is reformation theology but I'll bring him anyway."

My talk was on Romans 3:9-26 which was the bad news and God's remedy to Good news. As I had the privilege to preach the Gospel God turned the lights on in this Hindu's life. That is just one instance. The lady said "When we stood to sing 'amazing love how can it be that thou my God should die for me' he said 'I see.'" God pulls the preaching of His Word and the sharing. Not all of us are Gospel preachers but all of us can be Andrews and Johns. Not all of us are John the Baptists, Gospel preachers, but we can make use of Gospel preachers. Gospel preachers don't have anyone to share the Gospel to if you're not sharing and bringing them, so those two work together continually.

Here is a second takeaway. Mission fields become missionaries. I recently got an email from a good friend who said he was on a plane recently sitting in a middle seat and had the privilege to lead the two ladies sitting next to him to Christ. Now was it the real deal or not? We hope and pray it is and if it is the real deal it will be Christ alone with repentance and by faith. There are all kinds of evidences of a true conversion. Here is one. Whenever someone is truly converted the mission field becomes a missionary. I had the privilege to pray with a man in a restaurant and I said "Between now and the next time we meet I'd like for you to read the Gospel of John and tell three people that you have come to Christ." He said "They don't have to be Christians, do they?" I said "Preferably not."

So we go sharing the Gospel with other people and that is exactly what Andrew does when he's converted. He goes professing Christ publically and to share the Gospel personally with his brother. I believe John went and shared the Gospel with his brother James. When God works in someone's life, the personal sharing of Christ, personal evangelism is effusive and overflows out of a believer. New Christians are always the greatest evangelists because it's overflowing and they haven't gotten used to it yet. They know they have been saved by grace. I was headed to hell and God saved me from my sins. He is taking me to be with Him and I can take other people with me. I can go and seek to save the lost. So they begin to share their testimony with others. Personal evangelism is both effusive and intentional. I want to go get my brother, my neighbor, my office worker, etc.

It overflows all the time and it is also prioritized. I want to start in my home. I want to evangelize my kids, my friends, my uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces etc. I want to share with them that here is the Lamb of God. Come and see! That is what I want to do. I want to tell them what Christ has done in my life but it is not only prioritized but unlimited. I'll be glad to tell anybody anywhere. It is everybody evangelizing everyone everywhere. He calls them to tell them all that Jesus saves sinners so they go out and begin to share the Gospel continually and powerfully throughout all the places that they are. Mission fields become missionaries.

Not all of us can be Gospel preachers but all of us can be Gospel sharers. In other words, Andrew is going to win Peter and guess what Peter is going to become? He will become a Gospel preacher and three thousand will hear the Gospel and be saved then five thousand will hear it and be saved. All of us will not be Gospel preachers like Peter but all of us can be Gospel evangelists like Andrew. You might be the one that wins the Peter that will preach the Gospel, like D.L. Moody. Praise the Lord for a shoe salesman in Chicago by the name of Edward Kimball, who though intimidated stopped to share Jesus with this teenage boy who was D. L. Moody. He went to his Sunday school class and became a Christian.

I want to share with you one little story I've shared before. It is the story of Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley at Oxford College. I've been to the street where there's a ditch where they died. Hugh Latimer pulled the trigger on the English Reformation from which pulled the trigger which came all the way to our country. Hugh Latimer was the one that stood there beside Nicholas Ridley when Nicholas said when they were going to burn them at the stake for owning Christ, "Tie my bonds that I won't leave my post." Hugh said to him after he said that "Mr. Ridley, play the man today for by God's grace you and I shall light a candle for Christ that cannot be put out in all of England." They lit a candle that unleashed the reformation throughout all of England that began to spill around to all the world.

Have you ever heard of a man by the name of little Bliney? Why was he little Bliney? It was because he was little and his name was Bliney. He loved Jesus. He wanted everyone to love Jesus. The reformation was just starting in England. The church was being liberated from superstition and ritual to saving grace in Jesus Christ alone. Most of all Bliney wanted his priest to come to Christ but his priest wouldn't listen to him. There was one place that priest had to talk to him. So he said to his priest "Can I meet you at the confessional booth?" He began to recount his sins and then said "Now I want to confess to you the joy in my heart because the Lamb of God has paid for all of my sins and I rest in Him alone for my salvation. I am forgiven and wrapped in His righteousness." That priest was Hugh Latimer. We're not all going to be Latimers but we can all be little Blineys. God can use us to share that Gospel with other people. In other words, we may not be the great preachers but we can be a voice from the wilderness of this world crying out "Come to the Lord!"

Finally, the last takeaway is the message that changes people, lives and nations is "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" There are three Johns listed in the passage I just read for you. There is John the Baptist. There is John the Apostle and there is John the father of Andrew and Peter. So this can get a little confusing in what I'm about to say. John the Apostle heard John the Baptist preaching "Behold the Lamb" and through that sermon and witness he came to the Lamb and was

converted. Through him came James and Andrew and within the first day the church of Jesus Christ has doubled. They are converted and before the day is out they have already led someone else to Christ. They begin to follow the Lamb.

John the Apostle heard the sermon of John the Baptist that was “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” and that won’t be the last time he’ll behold the Lamb. He will behold the Lamb at the Passover Supper that becomes the Lord’s Supper. He will behold the Lamb on the cross. Then he’ll write the very last book he writes which is called the book of Revelation. The Lord will catch him up in the Spirit of God. He will look up into the heavens by the Spirit of God and the weeping that is there because no one is worthy to open the scroll and then an elder said “Weep no more! Look the Lion of Judah! He is worthy to open the scroll.” Revelation 5 says that John then looked to the Lion of Judah and behold I saw a Lamb, standing as if slain with the marks of the cross still upon Him. The marks of the cross are still upon Him but He is standing for He is risen.

He is risen and as He is standing there is no more weeping because the Lamb is worthy to open the scroll and the Lamb is worthy to sit on the throne. I am so incompetent here. I can’t tell you what I’m feeling. The Lion of Judah came but He didn’t come as a Lion to bring judgment. He came as a Lamb to bear our judgment. See the Lamb who has conquered sin, death, hell and the grave. Look! Then in the book of Revelation he says “Look the bride of the Lamb, His church. Open the book of the Lamb which is the Book of Life.” Then we end in Revelation 22 when all of the heavens are opened and the heavens come down in a new heavens and a new earth. John says “I looked to the throne and I saw the Lamb on the throne worthy to receive honor and glory and power.” That’s the Message that people need to encounter through our voice. “Behold the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world!”

In John the Lamb is identified. John the Apostle having heard that from John the Baptist and then sees Him in Revelation 5. The Lamb who identified is the Lamb who is magnified. Then in Revelation 22 it says “See the Lamb glorified”, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world in our place that we might live. Behold the Lamb! Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for these moments in Your Word. Thank You for the privilege to so declare this glorious message that Andrew and John encountered who quickly took it in that same day to their brothers. Father, some may be reading this because they are seeking, please let them see the Lamb, through all the inadequacies, inabilities and frailties of the one who is preaching and the mistakes of those who are around them, let them not see us but hear from us the voice of the Shepherd who became the Lamb and His sheep will hear His voice. Dear friend, this hour, this day follow Him and say “Christ I come from my sins to You my Lamb who paid for them all to follow.” If you made that prayer statement before God He says “Truly, truly he who believes in Me has eternal life.” Please contact us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 if you made that prayer for we can help you make those first steps in forever life for the Lamb. Father, for all of us who know Christ whom the Lamb has saved we declare to this world, free our lips, “Behold the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. There is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved but in that Name we must be saved.” May

He be seen and heard, the Word through the voice of His people, in the wilderness of this world bringing men and women to the garden of salvation in Christ for I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.