

“Come and See”

John 1:35-51

40 years ago when I first became a Christian, having accepted Christ as my personal Saviour, my pastor’s name was Lance Johnson. I always remember a phrase he used for a title for a series of messages on evangelism, for which he called it “Fishology”. Using Jesus’ words to Peter, and Andrew from Matt. 4, Jesus stated He would make them fishers of men. So we want to spend the summer specifically learning from Jesus how to make disciples.

The word fish in Greek is *ichthys* and it became associated with followers of Jesus early in the life of the church. When persecution arose and it became more dangerous to be known as a Christian, believers used the Greek word for fish as an acronym to define their allegiance [show slide].

Iota – Insus/Jesus
 Chi – Xristos/Christ
 Theta – Theos/God
 Upsilon – Uios/Son
 Sigma – Soter/Saviour

They would mark it near their houses and businesses to let other Christians know this was a safe place. Today we see the simple fish symbol on necklaces and bumper stickers letting people know they are followers of Jesus. Jesus, of course, used fishing as an analogy for making disciples. We’re going to explore some of the early passages in the gospels where His focus is drawing people to believe in Himself and Lord willing we will learn from Him and be encouraged to do what He did. Which is exactly what a disciple was all about. Follow the Rabbi to become like the Rabbi and John 1:35-51 is a great place to start because it is the first time that we see Jesus seeking to draw people to Himself.

After John the Gospel writer gloriously declares Jesus to be God’s Son (1:1-18), equally divine yet with the specific role of revealing the Father to us, he starts with John the Baptist’s ministry in 1:19. John was the forerunner to Jesus. He prepared the way as Is. 40 prophesied. He did that by preaching a message of repentance, because the Messiah was coming. As a demonstration of faith that you believed the Messiah was coming, you were baptized, a practice usually reserved for Gentiles who desired to be converts to Judaism. John’s message and this unusual practice aroused the attention of the religious leaders who felt the need to investigate John’s unorthodox methodology.

At this time, Jesus came to John to be baptized and the Spirit came down visibly on Jesus, affirming He was the One John was pointing people to. Now in v.35 we are introduced to two of John’s disciples, Andrew and John the writer (who never names himself). Jesus is passing by and John the Baptist says,

Look, the Lamb of God!” ³⁷ *When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.* ³⁸ *Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”* ³⁹ *“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”*

Literally, it's just 'Come and See' but since "see" is in the future tense, the 'you will' is provided. How did Jesus make disciples? He invited people to come to Him to get to know Him. And that's a great reminder for us. Our goal isn't to make converts to a religion, it's to

Invite People into a Relationship **(1:35-39)**

With God's very own Son Jesus (v.35)

John calls Jesus the 'Lamb of God'. This title is nowhere found specifically in the Old Testament but the concept is found everywhere in the Old Testament. Back in v.29 John the Baptist already announced when he saw Jesus and understood He was the Messiah,

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Lambs were used for sacrifices for cleansing from sin. God provided the lamb that would die in Isaac's place when Abraham obeyed God to sacrifice his own Son. Isaiah prophesied that the Lord Himself would lay upon one the iniquity of us all because we like sheep have all gone astray. The Passover Lamb was a reminder of God's saving Israel out of slavery. Did Andrew and John understand all this at that moment? No, but they want to know the Messiah. And they want to see if Jesus is Him.

Jesus doesn't force Himself upon them anymore than He forced us to follow Him. We are invited to come and see for ourselves whether he is indeed the Son of God. John points others to Jesus and they in turn follow Him. This is the first time the would-be disciples are invited to follow Jesus. Coming to faith in who Jesus is will take time.

When Jesus is aware that Andrew and John are following Him, He turns around and asks them a revealing question:

What do you want?" [or seek]

The word here for want/seek means, to desire. Jesus asks what's on your hearts that you are looking for that you think I can give you? We invite people into a relationship with God's very own Son,

Who invites us to find joy in Him (vv.37-39)

What did the Jewish people want from their Messiah? They wanted freedom from Roman oppression. They wanted improved living conditions, the freedom to own and farm their own land. They felt all these things would give them peace and joy. But the peace and joy Jesus offers is freedom from the penalty and power of sin. If we want true joy in our life we have to give it up to Jesus. He pays the price for our sin on the cross and invites us to have faith alone in Him. That results in eternal life. A life in His literal presence when we die, but in the meantime a life with His presence now empowered by His very Spirit. When we give up wanting our own desires to live for His, then we'll find true joy and peace.

Andrew and John answer Jesus' question "What do you want?" with "Where are you staying?" This is discipleship language. If a disciple was thinking of following a Rabbi, they would stay with him

for a while. During this time the Rabbi would assess them. If the Rabbi felt they were smart enough to be his disciples and share his knowledge with others, they would stay.

Jesus, however, invited young men – who have already finished their elementary training and who didn't have what it takes to be like a Rabbi. Having not passed the tests, they entered into an apprenticeship or the family business thus ending any dreams they had of being like a Rabbi. The night before He died Jesus reminded the 12,

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Once more Jesus invites them, 'Come [stay with me, learn from Me] and you will see that I can meet your true desires if you believe. And they spend the rest of the day and evening with Jesus. Andrew is getting it. He wants his brother Simon to know Jesus too. Which challenges us to ask ourselves,

Who Do We Care About to Bring Them to Jesus **(1:40-42)**

Andrew and Simon are brothers who are fishermen. We find out in v.44 are from Bethsaida, a little village the size of Westport on the Northeast side of the sea of Galilee. No doubt Andrew and Simon have had numerous conversations about the Messiah. Andrew has been following John the Baptist for awhile. After spending a day and evening with Jesus "the first thing" Andrew does is he finds Simon with more faith than we realize,

"We have found the Messiah"

While the word found is used twice in this verse; the first one is stated as a fact [Andrew found Simon] but when Andrew says to Simon 'we have found the Messiah', the idea is we have been looking for Him and now our search is complete. He's the real deal. And he brought him to Jesus. No arguing or debating.

He made Jesus the focal point (vv.40-42a)

Andrew brings Simon to Jesus because he believes Simon will believe if he sees him and spends time with Him like he had. Perhaps they had some discussion. Perhaps Simon questioned Andrew's belief, but Andrew simply brought Simon to Jesus to see for himself. When sharing the gospel people often like to get us sidetracked about less important or even irrelevant issues. Jesus is the central point to our faith. If He isn't the Son of God, if He didn't die for our sins, if He didn't rise from the dead and ascend to the Father, fulfilling Scripture, then we have no hope. But since He did all these things, this is the main thing we have to get people thinking about. Is Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. Since He is, you have to accept or reject Him because He is the only Saviour and we must all answer to Him. Andrew's faith in Jesus is simple yet deep. By bringing Simon to Jesus, Andrew

Let's Jesus change Simon (v.42b)

When Jesus sees Simon He says to him, "You are [now] Simon, son of John; you will be [future] called Cephas." Jesus is declaring He knows Simon and He will change Simon. Parents often named their children with the prayer that they would become like the name means. 'Simon' comes

from the Hebrew Shimon or shema, the word for hear/listen. Perhaps his parents desire was for Simon to hear the Word of God and obey it. It was one of the most common names in Jesus' day.

Jesus wants to change Simon into the rock upon which He will build this new community of disciples. While He doesn't change his name here. He does change it when Simon makes the rock-solid confession in Matt. 16:16 that Jesus is the Messiah. Cephas is the Aramaic for Peter.

As much as we want our family and friends to change the way they live, we have to pray that Jesus will change them, that He and the Spirit will save them and do the work necessary to conform them into His likeness as He is doing the same in us. Who are we burdened for and are we giving the over to Jesus to change them?

The next day Jesus does the finding. Unlike the rabbis of His day, Jesus sought out disciples. The ones were passed over by other Rabbis yet their hearts were open to what God could do through them. Still in Bethsaida, Jesus invites Philip to follow Him, to walk with Him, live with Him and get to know Him. The word follow literally means get behind someone and go in the direction they're going. We'll focus more on this next week. And this is the first time Jesus encountered these future disciples. The process to follow Jesus took a few invitations and time. Philip, like Andrew, is burdened for his friend Nathaniel and finds him, telling him like Andrew told Simon, we have found the Messiah, again, like Andrew, the second found means the one we've been searching for [as Scripture foretold] has now been discovered. We can stop wondering who it is.

What comes naturally to Andrew and then to Philip is that once we have found Jesus, we want others to find Jesus. This is what being saved does for us:

We Were Made Disciples So We Could Make Disciples **(1:43-51)**

Perhaps I should say it comes supernaturally once we have been saved. The Spirit comes into our life, we now understand why we're here and what life is about. It's about making God known and helping people find Jesus so they can find true joy and peace now and be ready for all eternity. Andrew wanted his brother to find Jesus. Philip wants his friend Nathaniel to find Jesus.

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.”⁴⁶ “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.

Notice how quickly Philip picks up on Jesus' invitational language, 'Come and See'. He believes, like Andrew, if I can get him to listen to Jesus he will get it. Philip gives Nathaniel Jesus' earthly address, coming from Nazareth. He might be scoffing at Nazareth specifically but he himself was from Cana (21:2) which was less than 10 miles south of Nazareth. What we're unaware of is that Bethsaida, Korazin and Capernaum at the north end of the Sea of Galilee was known as the spiritual triangle of the north. This was where rabbis lived and taught and people came to learn. Nathaniel's comment might simply be, Jesus is like me, he's from the wrong side of the tracks. What good comes from us over here? But Jesus approaches Nathaniel and says to him,

Here is an Israelite person in whom there is nothing false.

Or no deceit. Nathaniel was an honest man. The kind of person who was a straight shooter. Startled, he asks Jesus, 'How do you know me?' We've never met. Then Jesus says that He saw Nathaniel under a fig tree before he met Philip. What's the big deal about a fig tree? First, Jesus was

very specific about where Nathaniel was even though He was physically not there. Secondly, a fig tree was a common place of prayer for Jews to pray when they weren't at the synagogue.

Now we understand Nathaniel's amazing response of faith! Only God can see things without being there and know what we're doing when we're alone. This is encouraging to us concerning our desire to see friends and family saved,

Jesus is working where we can't see (vv.43-49)

Jesus will say in John 5:17

"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

A great way to pray for unsaved family and friends is to pray that God would bring other believers or the gospel message into their lives. That when blessings come their way or when 'coincidences' happen that they can't explain that they would understand God is working around them. Jesus said that there is common grace to all (rain and sunshine) so we need to pray they are awakened to God's work around them, which Lord-willing creates more opportunities for us to share Jesus.

After Nathaniel makes this great profession of faith Jesus remarks,

⁵⁰ Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." ⁵¹ He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Jesus is encouraged by Nathaniel's step of faith but He assures Nathaniel, that this is only the beginning. Once we're saved we

Find Jesus opening our eyes (vv.50-51)

To seeing life from His perspective. To see that He is working around us. That God's will in heaven is being accomplished on earth until one future day when heaven comes to earth and we live on Jesus' new earth.

Jesus is making a reference to Jacob's dream in Genesis 28 of angels ascending to heaven and descending on him, and the reaffirmation of God's promises to Abraham will be fulfilled through Jacob. Jacob's response was God is here and I was unaware, so he made it a place of worship and called it Bethel, the house of God.

Jesus is reaffirming God's promise to Abraham that He will bless the world through Abraham's descendent (Jesus) who is opening heaven up to those on earth and is the presence of God here that people should worship. It's a rich and pregnant statement that we could find more connections but Jesus is telling all disciples that He was going to open their eyes so they could see the world as He sees it and see how God is working.

This alone is one of the most powerful benefits of coming to Christ. When we accept Christ we now understand how the world works. We understand that pain and suffering is the result of sin and selfishness and that the only solution is faith in Christ. We confidently know that the world powers come and go, that God raises them up and takes them down, and one day Jesus will return. We know how the world came to be – God created it. We know who we came to be, God knit us together in our

mothers' wombs and we all have value and life. But now we see the world as God sees it; as lost and needing Jesus. There are only two kinds of people in the world; saved or unsaved. Wise and fools. Righteous and wicked.

We now understand all have sinned and fall short of God's glory. And only faith in Jesus saves you. We understand God is graciously fair. None of us deserves salvation, yet He opens some of our eyes to faith in Jesus.

Jesus' simple invitation 'come' invites us to check Him out, read His Word and 'see' if what we desire truly can be met in a relationship with Him.

* * * * *

If you have any comments or questions about this message, please contact us at olivet@rideau.net