

SERMON 7
The First Disciples of Jesus
JOHN 1:35-42

Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What week ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

John 1:35-42

The Apostle John is giving a day by day account here in the first chapter. We saw day one in verses 19-28. And on day one, John the Baptist was questioned by the Jewish delegation that came down from Jerusalem.

On day two, John the Baptist pointed out Jesus, presumably to his disciples, and identified him as the Lamb of God.

Day three begins with verse 35 and that marks the beginning of our text for this morning. On this day, John the Baptist was apparently sitting down with two of his disciples. And just like the day before, he looked up and saw Jesus walking. And when he saw Jesus, he and his two disciples stood up. I suppose they stood up in order to see him better.

Example: If you go to a basketball game, you get there just a little early and you find your seat. But when the team comes out of the locker room to take the court, you stand up so you can see the star player when he comes out.

And John the Baptist and his disciples may have been seated along the riverside hoping to catch a glimpse of Jesus if he came by. And sure enough, in due time, Jesus came walking. And John the Baptist and his two disciples stood up.

Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God.

Again, John instructs his disciples by repetition. Remember that the day before he had identified Jesus as the Lamb of God. And now, to impress this truth upon the disciples he repeats that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

And of course, when he says that Jesus is the Lamb of God, he is certainly suggesting that Jesus is the One who has come to be the true sacrifice for sins. The Jews were well familiar with the sacrifice of lambs. A lamb was sacrificed every morning and every evening in the temple. At every Passover feast, every family killed a lamb for the feast. It was a dangerous thing to be a lamb in Israel because you were likely to end up on the altar of sacrifice.

But animal sacrifices were nothing but types of that true sacrifice which was to come. And after 1500 years of sacrificing animals, which could never take away sins, John stood up and pointed at Jesus and said,

Behold the Lamb of God.

What a wonderful minister of the gospel John was. During his ministry, John had gathered several disciples. And John had busied himself with teaching his disciples. And I am sure his disciples were a great comfort to him. But when Jesus came by he pointed his disciples to Jesus. This is the business of a minister – not to gather followers for himself, but to point them to Christ.

This is a sign of many cults. They often have a dynamic leader who draws many men to himself. And the people are so devoted to that leader that they will do anything for that leader. And he cultivates that devotion and he becomes like a god to his followers. And he puts a fence around them and brainwashes them so that they follow no one but him.

But a true minister of Christ has no desire to hem in his followers. His only desire is to lead them to Christ. And his great satisfaction is when they find Christ and follow him.

Example: A school teacher doesn't consider it a loss when his student graduates and moves on to the university. It is mission accomplished.

And John gathered disciples, not for himself, but for Christ.

Jesus gains his first disciples.

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

I am sure that these disciples had previous instruction from John. This was not their first information about Jesus. They didn't simply follow Jesus without information. John had prepared them for this moment. So, when John pointed out the Messiah, his disciples were ready to follow him.

I suppose that they had heard John the day before when he preached to them that Jesus is the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world. And being convicted of their sins, they desired to know more about Christ.

I. The Awareness of Jesus

The disciples fell in line behind him - it says they followed him. But Jesus soon became aware of them. I suppose he was aware in his omniscience that they were following him. Nevertheless, he was under no compulsion to pay them any heed. He could have walked on without paying any attention. But this would not have been like Jesus. He was always the kind to take note of those who sought him. The lame man called out to him, and Jesus heard him. Zachaeus was in a tree, but Jesus took note of him. When Jesus was being swarmed by the multitudes, a woman touched the hem of his garment and he noticed her and healed her.

And here we find that John's disciples simply followed behind him and he turned around and saw them.

Then Jesus turned and saw them . . .

This shows the mercy of Christ. If a soul has any desire to know Christ, Christ is more than anxious to know that soul. If any man would have a Savior, Christ is anxious to be one.

And Jesus Christ turned around and saw them. But he did more than that. You will notice that Jesus first spoke to them.

Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?

This was not a reprimand here. Jesus was not angry with them for following him. Rather it was a kind invitation into his acquaintance. He that came to seek and to save never stopped anyone from seeking Him. Even little children were encouraged to come and sit on his knee.

And so Jesus turned around and spoke to them in a kind a humble way. They perhaps were afraid to speak to him and so he first speaks to them to calm their fears and to set them at ease. What is it that you seek?

II. The Question That Christ Posed to Them

What seek ye?

Isn't this the key question for anyone who is making a profession of religion? What seek ye? You are following somewhat behind Christ. You are making application to his church, but what is it really that you are seeking?

Many people follow after Christ hoping for worldly favors. They hope that Christ will increase their holdings and make them rich. They hope for health and welfare in this

life. Others hope for the praise of men. Some want to see his great miracles. And if we follow after Christ for these things only, then we deceive ourselves in our religion.

But if we follow after Him to be our teacher and to be our ruler; if we follow after Him to be our Lord and Savior; if we follow Him that he might take away our sins; then He will turn around and speak words of grace to us and He will invite us into His company.

III. The Question They Posed to Christ

They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

In calling Him Rabbi, they acknowledge Him as a teacher. Rabbi was a respectful term to the Jews. It was equivalent to the title "Master." For anyone to bear the title of Rabbi, he was acknowledged as a great man, one to be consulted in matters of importance.

And never was there such a Rabbi as our Jesus. He is the great one, In Him was hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And these two disciples were coming to Jesus to be His students. And so should each one of us.

Then they asked Him where he dwelt. Now remember that Jesus is a visitor in this part of the country. Jesus was from Nazareth in Galilee. And he is visiting here in Bethany. (John 1:28) And the disciples are wondering where it is that Jesus is staying while he is in town.

I am sure that the two disciples had some theological questions for Jesus. But it may have been an inappropriate time. Jesus may have had other people around him and they didn't want to be rude. But they did want to know where he was staying so that they could seek him out at a later time. This was their way of hinting that they would like to be better acquainted with Him and that they might like to visit Him.

Now let me say that if anyone is seeking Christ, it is a good idea to find out where He is staying. Christ does not have a house in this world and He resides in that house. And that house is His very own people. You see, Christ lives and resides in His people. He walks and talks and lives through His people. His people speak His words. His people demonstrate who He is with their holy lives.

And Christ's people meet in assemblies called churches. And if anyone wants to meet with Christ it is a good idea to find a church where Christ resides. Now there are many religious organizations where Christ can hardly be found at all. He is hardly mentioned. His Word is barely acknowledged. There are other assemblies where the doctrine of Christ is so distorted that it can hardly be said that he lives there. But there are churches here and there where Christ lives. And it is a good idea to seek out a place where Christ lives and go often to find Him there.

And so the disciples, being richly interested in Christ, ask where He is staying.

IV. Christ's Hospitable Answer

He saith unto them, Come and see.

This response from Jesus must have delighted John's disciples. They hardly expected that they would be invited in so soon. But this is the way Christ is for anyone who seeks Him.

Example: You remember Zacchaeus who climbed the tree just to catch a glimpse of Jesus as He walked by. And knowing this, Jesus walked under the tree and lifted up his eyes and said, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. (Luke 19:5)

And now, Jesus tells John's disciples to come and see where He is staying.

I want you to notice the sovereign mercy of Jesus Christ. During his ministry, Jesus had thousands of people crushing around Him. And he was merciful to them all. He healed them and fed them and prayed for them. But I wonder how many had the privilege of coming to see where he dwelt. I suspect this privilege was reserved for the few. But on this occasion, the honor fell on Andrew and the other disciple.

I don't know what the two disciples expected. Perhaps they expected Jesus to be staying in the luxury of the local Holiday Inn. Their question implies that they thought he actually had some place to stay.

But listen to the words of Jesus.

Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Luke 9:58

Our text doesn't tell us where Jesus was staying. But wherever it was, you can be sure it was not opulent. Perhaps it was a cave or a vacant room somewhere. Wherever it was, the disciples would not be tempted to follow Jesus because of his excellent accommodations. They would see no worldly advantage in following Him. And so, Christ says, "Come and see what poor accommodations I have. Come and see, lest you follow me for the wrong reason.

Christ never asks us to follow Him based on false promises. Christ doesn't say, "Follow me and I will put you up in the Holiday Inn."

Example: Remember what He said about Paul. "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. (Acts 9:16)

Example: The rich young ruler came to Christ and asked, “What must I do to be saved.” And in the course of the conversation, Jesus said, “Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.”

Following Jesus is not all health and wealth. Sometimes it is suffering. Sometimes it is poverty. So the question is, “What seek ye?” What is your motivation in seeking Jesus? Come and see this cave where Jesus lives and consider whether or not you would like to follow Him.

V. The Disciples' Acceptance of His Invitation

They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

It says they came and saw where he dwelt. If Christ ever invites you to his home, it is a good thing if you go immediately. Don't check your calendar. Don't go take care of business first. But run to his house, because you have received a priceless invitation. And this John's disciples knew, for they immediately came and saw where he dwelt.

Now it was about the tenth hour of the day. If we are going by Roman time, then it was ten o'clock in the morning. But if this is by Jewish reckoning, (their day started at daylight, or 6:00 a.m.) it is four o'clock in the afternoon.

At any rate, the disciples stayed with Jesus for by his humble dwelling, but they found it good to be where Christ was and they remained with him that day.

We are not told what they did that day, but we do know that by the end of the day Andrew was sure that this was the Christ. The excellence of Jesus so far exceeds that of other men that Andrew was able to conclude after a short visit that this was the Christ. Even Christ's enemies recognized the difference.

Never man spake like this man.

John 7:46

VI. The Evangelization of Peter

Andrew was so overcome with certainty that he had found the Messiah that he went to find his brother Simon.

He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

I suppose the Roman Catholic Church would have made a theological point if Peter had been the first disciple brought to Christ and we would have never heard the

end of how Peter is preeminent. But the simple fact is that Peter was not first, nor second. He was at least the third to come into the inner circle of Christ. Andrew and the other disciple were first and Andrew had the privilege of bringing his brother Simon to meet the Messiah.

Notice that the first thing Andrew did was to find his brother.

Example: If a man wins the lottery, the first thing he does is call his closest friend in all the world.

And Andrew, by the providence of God, had stumbled on the greatest treasure of all. And therefore, he went first to the one he loved the most, his own brother Simon. And he said, "We have found the Messiah."

There is something humble about this statement of Andrew. You will notice that he doesn't say, "I have found," as though the honor goes to him. But he says, "We have found." He is rejoicing in the treasure that has been found, not in the honor associated with the finding. And so he says, "We have found."

But there is also a sound of exultation in Andrew's voice. We have found. Andrew has found a pearl of great price and he can hardly contain his excitement.

But there is also a soundness in the doctrine of Andrew because Andrew does not say, "We have found a great prophet," or, "We have found a great teacher," or, "We have found a great miracle worker," but he says, "We have found the Messiah."

We are not sure what it was that convinced Andrew, but we are sure that he came to the correct conclusion. John the Baptist had pointed at Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God." And John also bare record that this is the Son of God. But after visiting with Jesus, Andrew was convinced that this was the Messiah. It is likely that Jesus pointed out the Old Testament Scriptures to Andrew and Andrew was so convinced that he ran to bring his brother to Christ.

And so when Andrew had found his brother, it says that he brought him to Jesus.

And he brought him to Jesus.

Andrew didn't take a lot of time to instruct Simon, but he brought Simon to the very fountainhead of knowledge of instruction. He brought him to Jesus.

VII. Christ's Reception of Peter

You will note first that Jesus knew his name.

And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

By all accounts, Simon was a stranger to Jesus. Perhaps Andrew had told Jesus his brother's name, but it seems more likely that Jesus knew Simon by his omniscience. Not only did Jesus know his name, but he knew his father's name.

The Lord knoweth them that are his.

II Timothy 2:19

But then, without delay, Jesus gave Simon a new name. "Thou shalt be called Cephas."

By giving him a new name, Jesus immediately claims ownership and authority over Peter.

Example: Can you imagine if you were introduced to someone for the first time and he then told you that he was changing your name?

This was an act of authority. From this point forward, Christ would be the master and Peter would be the servant. And if Christ would change his name, then so be it. So, Christ said, "Thou shalt be called Cephas."

But it was also an act of sovereign foreknowledge, predicting what Peter would become. Cephas is the Greek translation of an Aramaic word meaning "rock." And, in time, Peter would become a rock for Christ. He, along with the other apostles, were also the foundation stones upon which the church would be built. (Matthew 16:18 and Ephesians 2:20)

So, in our text this morning, we see that Jesus has begun to surround himself with his first apostles. We have Andrew, the other apostle who came with Andrew, and Peter, Andrew's brother. In the next section Jesus will find Philip and Nathanael.

We are seeing the initial formation of the New Testament church.