

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany  
"Come and See"  
John 1:29-42  
1/19/14

Our Gospel reading for today comes from the Gospel according to John.  
And since we don't have a whole year dedicated to readings from John, I'd like to start off this morning, but mentioning a couple of things that are unique about this Gospel

John is the only Gospel is where we find "For God so loved the world, that He Gave His Only Son..."

John's Gospel also gives us the great "I Am" statements about Jesus.

"I am...the bread of life."

"I am...the light of the world."

"I am...the True Vine."

"I am the Good Shepherd."

"I am...the way, the truth and the life."

"I am...Resurrection and the Life."

Think about those statements for a moment.

Think about them as word pictures that open up for us the reality of who Jesus is.

One of my favorite descriptions of John's Gospel is this:

"It is shallow enough for a child to wade in, and deep enough for a life-long disciple."

John is one of the first books of the Bible I'd recommend to a new believer

You could study it your whole life and never grow tired.

Take for example, the very first words Jesus speaks in John's Gospel.

In Mark, Jesus' first recorded words were:

"The time has come. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News."

But here in John, do you remember what He said?

Let's look together at verse 38.

When Jesus turned and saw two of John's disciples following him, he said,

"What are you looking for?" And when they said to him, "Rabbi, where are you staying?"

He said to them, "Come and see."

Eight simple words. "What are you looking for? And "Come and see"

And yet think about how much is behind those words.

Think about all how many people in this world are searching,  
and they are looking for meaning in life

or they feel trapped by the stress of their job and they are looking for some peace.

Think about how many people are looking for happiness and yet many are looking in the wrong places. Think about how many times in our own lives, when we've looked for peace or happiness in the wrong places.

There is a lot of stress in our world and a lot of change, and sometimes we find ourselves looking for something that will lift our burdens. Some days we just need a word of hope that can get us through to the next day.

That reminds me of a story about an Appalachian family. Years ago they lived in a remote area that was purchased by the Tennessee Valley Authority, an area that was planned to be flooded after a large dam was built.

Other families had reluctantly relocated, but this one family refused to move. It was a family that had lived on their land for three generations.

First of all, the letters from the lawyers arrived. The family ignored the letters and so bulldozers were sent in. But the father vowed to die before he would move.

Finally, a social worker was sent in to visit with the family. She found out that two generations previous the family had survived a deadly winter when the father had tended the hearth and managed to never let the fire go out all winter. He made his son, promise to never let the fire go out. And now three generations later, the promise had been kept.

So the social worker, came up with an idea. Saving the family's honor, she brought them a large cast iron kettle in which to carry the fire to their new home.

When their world was being turned upside down, in ways beyond their control, this social worker brought the family a word of hope. In the midst of this incredible stress, they needed something to carry them through to another day.

That cast iron kettle became the bridge between their old familiar world, and the new one they were facing. In the same way, when our world is being turned upside down, and we are looking for a word of hope, Jesus says, "Come and see."

Jesus becomes the bridge between the old world, and the new. Between the world of emptiness and broken promises, and the world of hope and new beginnings.

A few years ago, I attended a Confirmation retreat with my 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> class.

The theme verse for the retreat, came from John 11, verses 25 and 26.

where Jesus said to Martha,

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Throughout the weekend of the Confirmation Retreat, we were invited to think about Jesus’ question “Do you believe this?”

And for our confirmation students that was a very real question.

They were preparing for their Confirmation Sunday, when they would be asked, “Do you believe this?”

Do you take as your own, this faith in which you have been raised?

Or as an invitation, think of the way Jesus asked the question: “What are you looking for?”

“Come and see.”

And today, for all of us here this morning Jesus is also asking:

“What are you looking for?” “What do you believe about me?”

And inviting us... “Come and see”

John the Baptist saw Jesus and said, “Look, here is the Lamb of God.”

Because after Jesus’ baptism, John saw Jesus in a new way.

It’s as if John the Baptist is saying, “I didn’t really know him at first.

But now I see Him He is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”

The same thing is true of Jesus’ disciples.

Throughout his ministry they saw Jesus revealed in new ways.

Over time, and especially after his resurrection, they came to know him

And that’s true for us as well.

As the Holy Spirit works in our lives, our faith changes and grows.

As we respond to Jesus’ invitation, to “Come and see”

we are called to grow deeper in faith to sink our roots down,

so that we can stand against the storms of life.

That’s the message I’d like to both encourage and challenge you with this morning.

In this new year, Jesus is calling you to draw nearer to Him.

He is inviting you to follow Him,

To draw near to Him, and look to Him as your one true source of hope and meaning in life.

Look to Him, for peace.

Look to Him, when you are carrying heavy burdens.

Give him, those burdens.  
Give him, your sin and your shame.

Let him be the bridge between the old and the new in your life.

Let him transform you and give you life and joy.

And keep in mind these words from the prophet Jeremiah,

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord.  
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”<sup>1</sup> Amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah 29:11-13