

Come and You Will See

John 1:35-51

Key Verse: 39a

“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”

In today’s passage we learn about the first 5 disciples of Jesus. They are Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael (Bartholomew). There are some interesting conversations that happen and it seems that nobody answers anybody’s questions. But these are exciting times at the onset of Jesus’ ministry. John writes about them as a day to day chronicle that is unlike any other part of the gospel. He seems to remember these first days of Jesus’ ministry quite vividly, highlighting the bold conclusions people came to about Jesus.

Through these conversations and interactions, we will ponder Jesus’ question, Jesus’ invitation, and Jesus’ promise.

I. Jesus’ Question: “What do you want?” (35-38)

Let’s start by reading verses 35-38 together. ***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?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”***

After John makes his declaration of who Jesus is for the second time, the two disciples that were with him begin to follow Jesus. One of them we know is Andrew. The other disciple is not named but most believe it to be John, the writer of this gospel. Following Jesus from behind, Jesus turns around and asks, “What do you want?” Or as the ESV translation puts it, “what are you seeking?”

The disciples respond to Jesus’ question with a question, ***“Rabbi, where are you staying?”*** Jesus is usually the one good at answering questions with a question, but this time the disciples do. What can we learn from these first two disciples of Jesus?

-First we can see that they were truth seekers. We know they were truth seekers because, well, they were already John’s disciples. This means they had already left everything behind to learn from a man who wore camel’s hair, ate honey and locusts, and lived out in the desert. To be John’s disciple meant they accepted his teachings, especially his challenge to repent and be baptized. And when they heard John say, “Look the Lamb of God.” They dropped everything once again to now follow Jesus. They were hungry to find and to know the Messiah.

-Secondly, they were curious. Their response shows they were open and curious about Jesus. They had responded to John the Baptist’s testimony of Jesus, but they may not have known much else about Jesus. Not the details, anyways. There was no job description or explanation of what would be expected of them. They didn’t even know where Jesus was staying. So with hearts wide open, they were ready to find out.

-Thirdly, they were all in. While they may not have known exactly what they were looking for, they were willing to commit their lives to Jesus hoping he’d give all the answers. By asking Jesus, “where are you staying?” they showed that they were not in this for the short term. They weren’t in it

to get some immediate gain and then ready to bail. They were more than spectators or observers from a distance. They were ready to get up close and personal with Jesus to learn from him.

In summary, what the disciples were seeking was the truth about the Messiah. They wanted to find this truth so badly that they actively sought it out. By responding, "Where are you staying?" we can see that these disciples were seeking Jesus, and Jesus himself. Not something Jesus could give them.

This question of Jesus, "what do you want?" is an important question I think people don't ask themselves enough in general. But it is especially important to ask in regards to our walk with Christ. When Jesus asks us this question it is because he is most interested in our heart, specifically our heart motive. He cares about our spiritual desires. And when Jesus asks us, we can be sure that this question comes from the person who knows us through and through. And loves us through and through. Jesus ultimately asks us this question to challenge our faith.

I pondered this question all week for myself. Asking myself, "what do I want from Jesus?" And my honest answers weren't so spiritual. I want a happy home. I want stable, respectable kids. I want my business to succeed. I want to enjoy my life. I want my wife to be happy. I also do want to make an impact for God's kingdom. And I want to offer my gifts to God for his purpose. I believe I can only obtain all these things through Jesus. That is my faith. But I thought long and hard about Jesus, and why he was asking me this question. I heard Jesus tell me, "More than all those things, I want you to know me more." I was convicted to seek after Jesus himself above all else. Jesus wants to be the main thing. No matter what comes my way in life, I was challenged to draw nearer to Christ in all of them.

I believe this is what Jesus is looking for in all our answers to his question "what do you want?" And it's the same whether you are new on this path of exploration of Jesus, or if you've come to faith many many years ago. Apostle Paul was a man on fire for Jesus. He met him personally on the road to Damascus and committed his life to sharing with others who Jesus was. Yet we find his whole heart's passion in Php 3:10, "***I want to know Christ.***" Dr. James Kim shared a moving testimony at a united meeting a couple months ago that encouraged me so much. He said that at the age of 70 he is more excited about Jesus than ever before! I want to be as excited as Dr. James Kim when I'm 70 years old about Jesus.

So what about you, what are you seeking? What are you chasing after right now? Are you seeking Jesus?

II. Jesus' Invitation: "Come." (39)

So how does Jesus respond to his disciples? Let's read verse 39 together. "***Come,***" he replied, "***and you will see.***" If you notice, Jesus doesn't actually answer the disciples question with an address. Rather he extends an invitation, making himself available to them.

Let's sit on this first word for a little bit, "***Come.***" This is an invitation to be with Jesus. To walk with him. To live life together with him. In Jesus' time, this kind of relationship between a Rabbi and their pupils already existed. A person could become an apprentice or a student of a rabbi, and this would mean learning from that person in an intimate, day to day kind of relationship. Jesus didn't invite his

disciples to follow at a distance, it surely was an invitation to enter into the inner circle and inner life of Jesus. Jesus had nothing to hide. He invites them to eat with him and sleep with him. To walk with him and to talk with him. To do ministry together and to pray together. To experience the ebb and flow, the ups and downs of everyday life, together.

And this is an invitation Jesus extends to all of us. He desires for all of us to hear his open invitation, to come to him with our life questions. Where do you go with the big questions in your life?

Now I'm not very old. But growing up, when we were curious about something, or were looking for answers about anything, we'd have to go to the Library, or to a friend's house that had a set of Encyclopedias, remember those?! Then came google, and then this crazy thing called Wikipedia came around and answers to your curious questions became easier to find. Now, my kids just talk to a speaker when they're looking for the answer to something. But no matter what generation you grew up, one thing is still the same. Jesus is the person to turn to for all of life's biggest questions.

For the disciples, the invitation to "come" was relatively straight forward. They were going to follow, a living person and do life together with him. Face to face. But what does this mean now? Jesus is no longer here in the flesh. I can suggest a few ways to encounter Christ in your day to day.

-First, come to Jesus through the Word of God. P. Ron and P Kevin have been inviting us to have a sanctifying conversation with Jesus through our John's gospel study. As we read and study John's Gospel this year, we have a wonderful opportunity to get up close and personal with Jesus. These are more than just words in a book, they come alive by the power of the Holy Spirit, and can transform our lives. In 1:1 says, ***"In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God, and the Word was God."*** When Jesus says come, it means to come to the Word. So I encourage you to Read it. Memorize it. Study it. Recite it. Teach it. Critique it. Apply it. Live it. God's word is powerful and life changing. Engage with God's Word and get to know Christ through it.

-Second, come to Jesus through prayer. We have this amazing privilege to come into God's presence, at any time, in any place, no matter what we have going on, through prayer in Jesus' name. And I don't want to "over spiritualize" this activity. Prayer is just having an open conversation with God, something we can do throughout our day. We don't have to use a special voice, or be in a special place, or in a special mood to talk to him. We can pray anytime, anywhere. P. Abraham Lincoln in Boston taught me this. He picked me up one time from the airport when I went to serve the youth in their ministry. I got into his car and he said, "Let's pray" So, like a well-trained CBF alum, I close my eyes. Bow my head. Fold my hands. And the next thing I know, the car starts moving. He starts pulling the car out of his parking spot with the words, "Dear Heavenly Father..." and prayed while driving, almost the whole ride back to his house. I was inspired that day to talk to God in my day to day. He is there with us, ready to talk with us.

-Third, come to Jesus through community with God's people. One of the exciting ways to get to know Jesus is to gather together with other believers, and watch and see what He is doing. I know church communities are imperfect and messy, but when we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, and as we grow in love for one another, this is a most powerful witness to what Jesus is doing. This one takes some resolve, because it's not always going to be easy. But we really do need each other, and through growing in love and reconciliation we can experience the power of Christ most intimately.

These are actually the three ways I come to Christ most closely. I personally love quiet time in the mornings. I know I'm a rare breed, but I genuinely love to wake up at 5 in the morning to spend time in God's word. I love talking to God throughout my day. I've taken P. Abraham's example and pray for my kids in the car while I drive them to school every single day, reciting our key verses to each other. Just this past week Annabelle asked if she could start praying in the car herself. And I just love being with my brothers and sisters in Christ to share life together with them. The highlight of the Staff Conference last month was getting to room with my childhood friend and just hear how God is working in him and his family and the people around. Those are the places I come to Christ, and I encourage each of you to come to Christ, continually throughout your day.

Here's the thing about Jesus' invitation, "come". It's free, yet it's priceless. It is open to all, yet it is intimately personal. It is simple, but it demands our wholehearted devotion.

Will you take up Jesus invitation to "come"?

III. Jesus' Promise: "And you will see." (40-51)

When we take Jesus' question to heart, and we accept his invitation to, "come," what we get is a promise. When Jesus says, "you will see," it is a promise that He himself will be everything you need.

The events that follow Jesus' question, invitation, and promise are action packed and exciting. Let me review it really quick and then we'll unpack the verses. ***The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).*** (41) Simon Peter comes along and when meeting Jesus, receives a new name. The next day, Jesus finds Philip and invites him by saying, ***"Follow Me."*** Philip finds Nathanael, and shares with him his conviction about who Jesus is. Nathanael only has some rude things to say about Jesus, but Philip invites him saying, ***"Come and see."*** Then after one short conversation with Jesus, Nathanael comes to a personal conviction of Jesus. Finally Jesus promises, ***"You will see ever greater things than these!"***

Here we can find 4 things that we will see when we come to Jesus.

1. You see Jesus for who He truly is (41, 45, 49).

We have three bold convictions from three different people of who Jesus truly is. There is so much to unpack in each of these statements. And actually P Kevin did a great job expounding on Jesus the Messiah and Jesus the Son of God last week. It would be good to go back and check out what he said. But let's read the three personal testimonies of Jesus. Let's proclaim these truths about Jesus by faith. Claim them as our own.

-First, Andrew's conviction, in verse 41. Let's read it together. ***The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).***

-Next is Philip's in verse 45. ***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."***

- Finally, Nathanael's in verse 49. ***Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."***

These bold convictions about Jesus came through spending just one day with him? Really?!! Yes! That's all it takes. When we come to Jesus, his beauty, his gentleness, his kindness, his power, his authority, and his glory are all revealed. And he continues to reveal himself until we realize that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, the king of Israel!

2. You see others who need Jesus (41, 46).

The next thing that happens when we come to Jesus is that we see others around us to share Him with. Verse 41 says, "***The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him.***" We also see Philip, who after receiving conviction about who Jesus is, goes and finds Nathanael, and echoes the words of Jesus, "***Come and see***" (46).

Philip's words to Nathanael, "Come and see," are a wonderful model for us in learning how to share our faith with others and invite them to experience Christ. Nathanael had responded to Philip's testimony with hostility. But Philip didn't take it personally. He didn't argue or try to convince him he's wrong. Philip responded with just three words, "Come and see." He's basically saying, "Come and see for yourself. Don't take my word for it. I'm not here to cram my belief down your throat. Just come, see for yourself, and make up your own mind."

Talking about our faith is often difficult. But there are many ways to say to others, "Come and see." This is not about forcing Jesus, your faith, or your church, on anyone. It's about being willing to say, "This is what gives me life and hope," "This is what God's love means to me." Because it's not persuasive words that changes people, all we need to say is "come and see."

I'm encouraged to see all these NEIU students who are taking up Jesus' invitation to come, because I know they will see Jesus. I am encouraged to hear about how our Loyola coworkers didn't give up in their prayer for Loyola students, but rather found a way to reach students through their table ministry on the streets around the campus as we heard about through the United Meeting. I pray God will give all of us boldness to seek out the people around us. To reach out to the people in our workplaces, in our neighborhoods, in our own homes, and on our campuses with the words, "come and see."

Who around you is hurting and needs your love, along with a word about what your faith has meant to you? Who around you might be open to reading and studying the Bible with you? Share with them the three simple words, "come and see."

3. You see God's vision and hope for your life (42,47).

Two people in these verses receive a vision of who Jesus saw them to be. The first is Peter. Let's read verse 42 together, "***And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated, is Peter).***" Peter would go on to be the rock on whom Christ would build the Church. Peter certainly has no idea of the significance of this, but with a new name and a new identity from Jesus, Peter begins his walk with Christ.

The next person to receive new hope and vision was Nathanael. Nathanael had only made a prejudiced remark about where Jesus came from and concluded that "Nothing good could come from

Nazareth.” But Jesus speaks to Nathanael’s heart in verse 47. Let’s read it. **“When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, ‘Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.’”** These words encourage Nathanael so much, that it softens his heart. When Jesus reveals his omnipresence knowing his thoughts when he was under a fig tree, Nathanael gives his life to follow Jesus, the Son of God, the King of Israel.

People like to say, “You be you.” And I love the message of self-confidence and individuality. It reveals God’s beauty and his individual love and care for us one by one. But I think “you be you” is most powerful when we seek the one who uniquely designed us and created us. David praised God with the words in Ps 139:14, **“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”** When you come to Jesus you will see who He desires you to be, and this is the best version of you.

4. You see an amazing work of God (50-52).

And finally, if we think all the excitement and awe of meeting Christ is only in the beginning, we couldn’t be more wrong! Jesus promises ever greater things. Our spiritual eyes are opened to see unimaginable truths. Let’s read verses 51 and 52 together. **“Jesus said, ‘You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.’ He then added, ‘Very truly I tell you, you will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.’”**

Verse 51 is a reference to Gen 28:12, which is when Jacob first runs away from home. All alone he lays his head down on a rock, and has a dream of a staircase that rested on the earth and went up to heaven. This staircase had angels ascending and descending on it. When Jacob wakes up, he feels the presence of God deeply and names the place Bethel, which means “House of God.” In Jesus’ words here, this staircase from heaven doesn’t descend down to the earth directly, rather he says it ascends and descends on the Son of Man. Ultimately, through Jesus’ death and resurrection, Jesus would become the true “Bethel,” the meeting place between God and people. We are still anxiously awaiting Christ’s coming again, so that we can enter into glory with him. And this is our far greater hope.

Jesus promises Nathanael much greater proofs of Jesus as the Son of God. Those who truly believe the gospel will find more and more cause to believe it all the more. When we start our walk with Christ, his revelation doesn’t stop there. Next week P. Ron will share with us how Jesus begins to reveal his glory through his first miracle. It’s a good one! We are promised a lifetime full of awe and wonder of who Jesus is.

Conclusion

The life of faith in Jesus is the most exciting life we can live. It is life to the full. I pray that no matter where you are in your walk with Jesus, you would draw nearer to him. Take Jesus’ question to heart, “what do you want?” and surrender all things to him. Come to him in your everyday life, starting with his word, prayer, and community. Be assured that you will see Jesus for who he truly is and experience a full and transformed life.