

John 1: 29-42

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and declared "here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said 'after me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me. I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel". And John testified "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed "Look, here is the Lamb of God!". The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following he said to them "What are you looking for?" They said to him "Rabbi" (which, translated, means teacher) "where are you staying?". He said to them "come and see". They came, and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

When you hear that exchange,
especially what Jesus says
what's the tone of his voice?
Let me read it again:

We're going to come back to that in a minute – but for now, that's my question.
And let me just say that my prayer for you right now is that you'll hear Jesus say to you those two things:

- 1) What are you looking for
and
- 2) come and see.

This is going to be a Bible Study sort of sermon. We haven't done one of those in a while.

So, some background:

After the resurrection, for the first several years, there was very little writing going on. They were convinced that Jesus was coming back, as he said he would, very soon. VERY soon. It never crossed their minds that there would be a second generation of them and that they would have to pass on the knowledge of Jesus to people who had never met him.

As the years passed by, and Jesus did not return, (or at least in the way they thought he would) the people who had known him in the flesh; who had heard him teach and had seen him heal....those people began to die off and they thought - "we'd better write this stuff down"

You can see the early church working out; wrestling with the fact that Jesus hadn't returned in the way they had seen him go.....note all the parables that go something like this: "There was a master who went away for a trip, and left his servants in charge....he was gone for a loooooong time" There is no mystery about what's going on there, is there?

So they began to write things down. At first there were little collections of his teachings; things that were easy to memorize; things that were the basics for teaching to new converts, and then these were used to write more complete accounts....there were lots of gospels written. Of all of them, we have four: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Of these four, Mark was written first. About the year 60 or 65 – so 30 or 35 years after the crucifixion. About 10 years after Mark was written, Matthew and Luke wrote theirs. They wrote them with a copy of Mark in front of them; if you read them side by side, you can see them copying Mark, then adding, adjusting, correcting his grammar....it's a fascinating study. Those three, Matthew Mark and Luke together are called “the synoptic gospels” because of the way they were written – they are closely tied to each other. The “syn” part of the word means “together” as in synchronize and so on.

Finally about ten years later, the gospel of John was written. As far as we know, independent of the other three. If you read them, you can get to know the styles and characteristics of each one, but you can really tell the gospel of John. I'll give you some examples of how he is different than the other three. If someone were reading to you from a gospel and didn't tell you which one, you might recognize John by these things:

– in John, Jesus makes long, theological speeches. He never does that in the synoptics. The “I am” statements. Never in the other three, never does Jesus make claims for himself by saying “I am”. Only in John. “I am the way and the truth and the life” “I am the true vine...” and so on. You know right away it's John. In the synoptics he'll say something like “The Son of Man must suffer” ...never refers to himself in the first person.

Only John says “the Jews”. The other three will say “scribes and Pharisees” or “teachers of the law” but never lumps them together as the Jews.

John has a greater emphasis on John the Baptist, uses images of light and dark, up and down...

Today I want to highlight a couple of curious things from this passage for your consideration.

1) take a look at verses 35-40.

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed “Look, here is the Lamb of God!”. The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following he said to them “What are you looking for?” They said to him “Rabbi” (which, translated, means teacher) “where are you staying?”. He said to them “come and see”. They came, and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

Do any questions come to mind? I have a question: Who was the other disciple? (read the section again) “One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew.” who was the other? Why wouldn't John say? You might say “Oh well it's not that big a deal, don't make too much of it” which is fine but he keeps doing it. Check out the following verses: 18:5, 13:23, 20:1-9 Interesting eh? That's not coincidence, and no other writer does it. It just makes you go “hmmmm” and makes Dan Brown write best sellers!

2) Andrew. Again, only in the gospel of John do we hear specific things about this particular disciple. I'll do a whole sermon on him sometime, but for now – his strength seems to be inviting people. Putting people in touch with each other and with Jesus. In our passage for today it's Andrew who

meets Jesus first, then he goes and gets his brother. Compare that with Matthew's account of the call of the brothers in chapter 4 starting at verse 18. Another example is in the feeding of the 5000...all four gospels tell it but only John tells about the little boy who shared his lunch. Guess who found that kid and brought him to Jesus? ANDREW. One other time some Greeks came and said "Sir, we want to see Jesus" and take your best guess who made that happen. Right.

It's the ministry of invitation. Not in a pushy "you must" way, but rather "come and see". That's what Andrew does, and that's what Jesus does too. Jesus saw they were following and he said what are you looking for. Those are the first words out of the mouth of any psychologist worth her salt. Any counsellor doing his job says that. Educators often begin a course with "what are you hoping to get out of this?" and Jesus says, "What are you looking for?" Good question. Then, they said, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" And he said, "Come and see".

I asked you at the beginning of this sermon what you imagined the tone of Jesus' voice was when he said that. For me – there's a twinkle in his eye and a lilt in his voice. The life of faith is an adventure to which the Lord of life, the Light of the world, calls us. With a twinkle and a promise.

What are you looking for – he asks. And while you are thinking about that he adds – come and see. May we too hear him asking and may we go and see.