

WE BOTH HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH

John 1:35-42 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

When Andrew found his own brother, Simon, he said to him, “We have found the Messiah, the Christ.” Today, as then, if the truth were fully known, none of us were ever the first to find Jesus, for He found us first. Jesus said to His disciples in John 15:16, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you.” John later said, in I John 4:19, “We love Him because He first loved us.” Jesus found us all in so many different places, was it for you, in Sunday School, in Vacation Bible School, in a fishing boat, following Him at a safe distance, under a fig tree, up in a sycamore tree, in a hospital, overdosed on drugs, in a bar, on the street, watching a vulgar video, trying to get your way in a loud argument, or in so much despair that you could barely hold up your head? In all those situations and so many more, Jesus found us, and in our hearts, we rightly said, “I found Jesus,” because even though we were not first in seeking and finding Jesus, we still like Andrew telling his brother Peter, we too have found Him.

In truth, no one who has written a hymn has bested hymn # 535 in our Praise Hymnal, entitled Satisfied, or Hallelujah, I have found Him. The words were written by Clara Tear Born, before her last name became Williams. She was only 17 when she wrote the words, but they echo Andrew’s words. “All my life long, I had panted for a drink from some clear spring, that I hoped would quench the burning of the thirst I felt within. Feeding on the husks around me, till my strength was almost gone, Longed my soul for something better, only still to hunger on. Well of water ever springing, bread of life so rich and free, untold wealth that never faileth, My Redeemer is to me. Hallelujah, I have found Him, whom my soul so long has craved! Jesus satisfies my longings, Thru’ His blood I now am saved.”

As we turn to this new day in the life of John the Baptist, this last of the Old Testament prophets was standing with two of his disciples, Andrew and an unnamed disciple, which is a clue for us, means that probably John, the Gospel evangelist, was writing this verbatim account of hearing his mentor, John the Baptist say, about Jesus as He walked by, “Behold the Lamb of God!” Our text today seems to be only a historical account, but it is so much more. It appears to be John’s eyewitness account of the day he left the side of John the Baptist to become Jesus’ disciple. Our text today is the narrative of the search of two disciples, Andrew and John for Messiah. Their search for Jesus and their finding Jesus foreshadows hundreds of millions of future searches of people who have wanted to be one of Jesus’ disciples. Perhaps for all of us, the search of Andrew and John for Jesus is a picture of our own search for Jesus. Maybe for one or some of you today, you have not yet come to the place where you can say, “Hallelujah, I have found Him.” In our text, I find three stages in the progression of this search for Messiah:

THE SEARCH FOR JESUS BEGINS IN A GROWING AWAKENING (I.)

We read in John 1:35-37 these words. “The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.”

John the Baptist was still occupying an important place in the life of two of his disciples, Andrew, and probably John the Gospel writer. No doubt the setting was still very close to the Jordan River, if not beside the river at Bethany beyond the Jordan. John had addressed the multitudes as he was baptizing, by introducing Jesus as Jesus returned from the wilderness having defeated Satan in his 40 days of fasting and praying, and being tempted by Satan. The setting has changed. The day before, Jesus was walking towards John the Baptist who was baptizing. On this particular day, Jesus was apparently headed to where he was staying, and as He walked past John the Baptist, Jesus' forerunner announced again, "Behold the Lamb of God." It has well been said, "There are four stages in coming to Jesus." (1) Apathy/Indifference (2) Awakening (3) Conviction and (4) Conversion." This growing awakening of Andrew and John pictures each of us when we first were awakened to look towards Jesus. Jesus Himself in His Sermon on the Mount, said in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." This awakening was a growing attention:

Their attention was being aroused. v. 35-36a. This was a work of God. John the Baptist saw Jesus walking past him, apparently walking toward His own abode, and John the Baptist said to his two disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God." These disciples of John had listened to John the Baptist's testimony as he spoke of the wonder of Jesus being the Lamb of God, and what He came to do, what His higher rank was, the testimony of His pre-existence, the testimony authenticating who Jesus was to John the Baptist—the Holy Spirit's coming to rest bodily upon Jesus as a dove, the climaxing testimony from heaven from God the Father saying audibly, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." All of these words, happenings, and appearances of Jesus had to have aroused the attention and curiosity of Andrew and John. But as it is true of many seekers, nothing yet was convincing enough until this day as John repeated his words of who Jesus is. For these two disciples, this second time of identifying Jesus turned them from curiosity and awakening to decision, to transfer their loyalties from John the Baptist to Jesus. John's repeating to them of who Jesus was became for them an invitation to leave their mentor and to follow Jesus. The testimony of our lives and our words to others, our neighbors, and our friends is meant by God to raise their attention to look to the Lamb of God.

Their ears were open. v. 36b. God is the One who opens our deaf ears. Andrew and his fellow unnamed disciple was doubtless, John. By not naming himself, John appears to be giving himself away. John had heard it all with Andrew. This Gospel writer who always identified himself as that other disciple seems to have given away his secret. Thus, John the evangelist had good reason to know so well the words of John the Baptist, because he was the other disciple with Andrew.

Their awakening got the best of them, and they followed Jesus. v. 37 John himself writing in John 6:44, quoted Jesus saying, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day." The context appears that these two disciples of John the Baptist tentatively began following Jesus as a respectful distance. Andrew and John were in their beginning faith in Jesus' moments, afraid to approach Jesus directly. They were more than

awakened now. They were convicted-to leave John, and now conversion was something on the verge of happening, it was in process, on the way. When God's Word is being heard and God is drawing us, what is going on inside us? God's drawing of us takes us from hearing to heeding, but it starts with hearing. Paul said in Romans 10: 17, "So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ." A true disciple is more than just a student or a learner; true disciples apply what they are learning, and they become Christ's followers. That moment of new birth, being regenerated, Jesus called being born again in John 3:3. All of this work in our hearts and lives is the mighty work of the Holy Spirit wooing us to Jesus. Jeremiah 31: 3 prophesied of this divine work in our hearts saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore, I have drawn you with lovingkindness." Hosea 11:4 adds, "I led them with cords of a man, with bonds of love, and I became to them as One who lifts the yoke from their jaws; and I bent down and fed them." All this drawing of God pulling us, tugging us, with cords of love to Himself, calls me to the knowingness of Jesus, foreknowledge and omniscience.

Paul said in Romans 8: 29-30, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined, He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those He justified, He also glorified." Peter in I Peter 1:2 also spoke of the elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (being elect) according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood." In John 6:37, Jesus said, "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so, whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me." That is when the disciples told Jesus this was a hard saying; who can listen to it? (John 6: 60) Jesus then said, in John 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) And He said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted him by the Father." So, this search beginning with an awakening moved Andrew and John to follow Jesus. Secondly,

THE SEARCH FOR JESUS CONTINUES WITH HIS DIVINE INVITATION. (II.)

We read in verses 38-39b, "Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to Him, "Rabbi (which means Teacher), "where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come and you will see." So, they came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day..." As the disciples began following Jesus, Jesus turned and He did what Jesus does so often—a God thing, Jesus broke the silence, a sign and a symbol of what God always does, taking the first step—showing His divine initiative. Augustine once said, "We would not even have begun to seek for God unless God had already found us." When we go to God, we don't go to One who hides from us, or to One who stays at a distance. No, we go to One who stands waiting for us and who takes the initiative to run to meet us on the road. Look with me at Jesus divine invitation to Andrew and John.

Jesus' invitation begins with a probing question. We read in v. 38, "Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" Since their following of Jesus revealed that they were seeking Him, Jesus asked the tough, tough question, "What are you seeking? What do you seek? We all tend to seek something we've lost, or we seek a better situation. But here is a hidden promise tucked tightly in Jesus' question. That implied promise was and is, "I am, and I have what you are seeking for. John and Andrew came up with their answer, "Where are you staying?" John was writing to readers, Gentile believers and unbelievers, so he interpreted the Aramaic term Rabbi as meaning Teacher. Their answer of "where are you staying?" was their way of saying, "Can we go with you to your private abode to have a private conversation, where no one will disturb?"

Jesus' invitation is wide open. Jesus said to them, v. 39a, "Come and you will see." So, they came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. What a simple kind invitation—Come and a promise—you will see. This invitation foreshadowed Jesus' invitation in Matthew 11: 28, "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Jesus' invitation is accepted. v. 39b. They came and saw His abode and stayed with Jesus that day. We don't know much about this temporary abode, but it was probably a lean-to dwelling covered with branches with leaves. But whatever the accommodations Jesus had, Andrew, John, and Jesus had their private conversation all day long. Whatever was said is left to our imagination, but this conversation brought an end to their search for Messiah, the Christ. Thirdly,

THE SEARCH FOR JESUS ENDS IN AN UNFORGETTABLE NEW

BEGINNING. (III.) Look at verses 39c-42. "For it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother, Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah (which means Christ). He brought him (that's Simon) to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "So you are Simon, the son of John? You shall be called Cephas (which means Peter)." The end of the search is indicated in verse 41 as Andrew found his brother Simon and announced to him, "We have found the Messiah (which means Christ). This is the first "I found it" campaign with Andrew's slogan, "Simon, I found Messiah! You can find Him too." This announcement proves that sometime that afternoon Andrew and doubtless John were truly converted. John the Baptist had announced Messiah's coming. Now transferring allegiance from John the Baptist, to Jesus, these two disciples had become Jesus' first two disciples. What can we learn from this new beginning?

This new beginning we will never forget. v. 39c. Was the time they got to Jesus' abode, "about the tenth hour," by Jewish calculations, around 10 AM, or by Gentile or Roman calculations, about 4 PM? By context, we can tell it was by Jewish calculations for we read, v. 39, "and they stayed with Him that day." But back to the issue of who this other disciple was—why would I say it was John? The reason is the specificity of remembering the time was about the tenth hour. That hour shone brightly in John's memory, perhaps, to his dying day. It was the day his life was changed. It was the day he began following Jesus. John was saying

here to us, “We accepted Jesus’ invitation around 10 AM. I will never forget it.” It isn’t crucial for us to remember the specific day and time when the Lord saved us, but if you do, then with much joy you understand John’s words about the tenth hour. Beloved, I know in my soul this is John’s eyewitness testimony.

I am reminded of a southern Gospel song written in 1939 by Adger M. Pace, “I can tell you the time.” (1) “I remember the time, when in darkness I wandered, farther from home, on the mountains of sin, I had traveled so long. Like the prodigal son, all my goods I had squandered, sadly I’d roam, But the Savior came in, and He gave me a song. Chorus: I can tell you the time, I can take you to the place, where the Lord saved me, by His wonderful grace, But I cannot tell you how, Lord I know not the why., But “He’ll tell me all about it, in the by and by. (2) Just a sinner was I, far away from my Savior, going alone, with no hope of reward, at the end of the way, But the Savior came down, and He gave me His favor, all for my own, Now I’m singing His praise for He saved me that day. (3) I can never forget, when He spoke to me gently, “Follow Thou Me,” In the fountain of life, there’s a balm for your soul, there’s a balm for your soul. So, I heeded His voice, He was speaking intently, gladly I see, Thru’ His marvelous grace, I am happy and whole.”

This new beginning makes missionaries out of Andrew, John and you. vs. 40-42a We read, “One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.” One day with Jesus left Andrew so impressed that he became a missionary to his brother Simon. And John must have gone out fishing to tell his brother James, those two sons of thunder, and after telling James about finding Messiah, that must have been when Jesus stopped by on the edge of the Sea of Galilee and said to them both, “Follow Me.” Many of us have known Jesus for years. Who have we brought to Jesus? Dr. R. C. Campbell wrote of a blind man in China who was blind and was taken to a hospital. The missionary doctor operated on his eyes, removing the cataracts. The man went home seeing and rejoicing. A few weeks later, people saw him coming back to the hospital, holding the end of a rope to which 40 blind men and women were clinging. He led them to the place where he received his sight. Should we attempt to do any less for Jesus, going after the lost?

This new beginning promises an amazing future. Look at v. 42b. “Jesus looked at Simon and said, “So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas, (which means Peter).” Jesus took one look at this impulsive brother of Andrew, and He renamed him Cephas in Aramaic, meaning rock, and in Greek the word **petros**, is translated Peter. Peter – **Petros** would someday be the steadfast apostle of Jesus after Pentecost. Jesus foresaw Peter’s coming confession, his **petra** – the confession upon which Christ would build His church and the gates of Hell would not prevail against it. That confession--**petra** of Petros, Peter was, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” If one look at Simon Peter could hold such promise, imagine what the Lord Jesus Christ today sees in each of you? Have you found Jesus? The end of your search is the start of an eternally endless, amazing, and glorious future. Will you find someone and testify, “I have found Messiah!”?