

Jesus asked “*What are you seeking?*” or ‘What do you want?’ He **asked** this question of those who were **following** Him! In a real sense all of us here tonight at this service are following Jesus – we might say, we have followed Him to His house to where he is ‘staying’! Our **body language** at least is saying this evening, ‘We are following Jesus’ - so He has every right to ask us ‘**What** are you following Me **for?**’ “*What are you seeking?*”

The amazing thing about this passage is that those who followed Him were **Jews** and they had just heard from John Baptist that this man was “*the Son of God*”[34]! Being Jews, it was incredible that they would **believe** such a thing – that a human being, someone they knew and saw was the Son of God! Yet they had little difficulty believing what John Baptist said – that Jesus was “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*”[29]!!

Now that was because Jesus Himself spoke like no one else ever spoke “*No one ever spoke like this man*”[7:46] There was **power** behind His words. He had an **authority** when He spoke, and a **conviction** entered the heart when He spoke. Although some of the things He said had been said before by others, yet when **He** spoke they rang true – and **affected** the mind and heart of the hearers!

It affected them so much that they **wanted** to hear **more!** That is why they really followed Him. He had obviously ‘touched’ a nerve, as we say! They were **hungry** for more. Maybe they were **uncomfortable** at what He said; or maybe they were **comforted** and **wanted more** of the same. **APP** Is it because you have heard Jesus voice that you have come again to this house of God?

You know you can preach great sermons – full of truth - and yet **nothing happens** to people. And someone else can come and preach the same sermon, using almost the same words and people are blessed! Conversions and blessings! **Why?** Because the person who is speaking is ‘**living close to God!**’ And no one ever lived so close to God as Jesus did!! And the **Holy Spirit** has been at work!

When the Holy Spirit works things **do** happen. Unless the Holy Spirit works, there is no blessing! Jesus preaching was effective because He was **always close** to His Father and when Father and Son are there, the Holy Spirit is **there also!**

The Holy Spirit is **invisible** and you cannot ‘see’ Him at work – you can only see the **results** of His work. *“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you **do not know** where it comes from or where it goes. So it is **with everyone** who is born of the Spirit”*[J3:8] Thus ‘It is by **their fruit** we shall know them!

Now these followers wanted to **stay** with Jesus, that is why they asked Him where He was staying. He invited them to come and have a look first and *“they **stayed with Him that day**”*[39] Once you get a taste of Jesus, you **want more** and you are prepared to put up with a little discomfort for it. There is nothing like being in the presence of Jesus. Better than a lovely meal look at what David said *“You have put **more joy** in my heart than they have when their **grain and wine abound**”* [Psa 4:7]! And he had more joy in serving God than in **riches** – and he had plenty of riches! *“I love your commandments above gold, **above fine gold**”*[Psa 119:127]!

Peter said the same thing: *“you believe in him and rejoice with **joy** that is **inexpressible** and **filled with glory**”*[1P1:8] Have **you** ever had inexpressible joy that was **filled** with the glory of the Lord? Then if not, you do not know what you are missing! You do not know what it is like ‘Being with Jesus’! The Bible talks of ‘Being with Christ’ as the best of all joyful experiences! There are not enough adjectives to express and describe the **thrill** and **ecstasy** of being in the presence of Jesus! King David had all types of experiences and yet he said in all truthfulness *“in Your **presence is fullness of joy**”*[Psa 16:11] He knew what he was talking about!

**Personal** experience **cannot** be substituted. You can **know** things and even describe things, as a result of **reading** and **hearing** – but to experience something is far far more **impacting**. But it also the best form of **evangelism!** Person to person dialogue is far more effective than reading a tract or hearing a cd/tape! (But please carry

on passing out tracts and cds/tapes). But personal contact is best.

That is why God has appointed **preaching** as the **means** for **communicating** the gospel. Preaching is ‘**man to man**’, as Richard Baxter said he preached as ‘a dying man to dying people’! Technology does **not** have the personal touch. Oh, yes, technology is wonderful and praise be to God the Church is making use of the modern means of communicating – but it is not better than the personal touch! That is why we often tell the **children** when we want to convey something serious to them, ‘**Look** at me – look at my eyes’! Because there is **real contact** and ‘eyeball to eyeball’ communication ‘**connects**’ with our real inner self!!

And of course, when God Himself wanted to convey to us what **He** was **truly like** – He sent us Himself in **human form**! God knew the **impact** an ‘**in-the-flesh**’ God would make on humanity!

Being **with** Jesus is vital for **ministry**! That was why we read “*And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles) so that they might **be with Him** and He might **send them out to preach** and have **authority** to cast out demons*”[Mar 3:14,15]!

We will never be successful in ministry, unless we have **spent time** with Jesus – **prime time**! We need to know Jesus personally – **not ‘second hand’**! A man that has been in the **presence** of Jesus will **reflect** something of His Spirit. **Self** will take 2nd place when Jesus is king of our hearts! You can **be in ministry** without knowing Jesus, but you will not be one whom Jesus uses to bless.

Now Christ **died** that we might have a 24/7 life with Him “*Christ... **died for us so that** whether we are **awake or asleep** we might **live together with Him**”[1 Thes 5:9] Everyone is either awake or asleep during the 24hrs of the day!! God does not slumber day or night. Even in our **dreams** Christ is at work! Listen “*I sleep, but **my heart** waketh: it is the voice of my **beloved** that knocketh ‘Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove...’*”[Sol 5:2] **APP** Have **you** ever wakened up in the morning and found yourself speaking to Jesus? Have wakened up and found yourself **praying**?*

What is really amazing is not that we want to be with Jesus, but that **He wants** to be with us! In a time of crises, who do **you** want to be with you? Almost everyone when they come to die want their closest and dearest loved ones to be with them! Right? Well, listen to this: “*When **the hour came** (the most important hour of all history)...**He said to them** (disciples) **I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer**” [Luke 22:14,15] Isn’t that truly amazing? **Imagine** the Son of God, in His hour of crisis earnestly desiring that people like **you/me** to be with Him! Imagine the like of you/I being a support to Jesus Christ in His hour of crisis? Well it is true – **because** of our **human-ness together**!!*

Even our sins, does **not** ‘**put Jesus off**’ wanting **our** fellowship!! Did He not **ask** that Peter, James and John **accompany** Him into the Gethsemane Garden? And even although He knew they would be miserable comforters who would fall asleep again and again, He wanted them with Him in His hour of need. **APP** be assured of this – you/I **will want Him** in **our** hour of need!

‘Being with Jesus’ is **different** from **being in Church!** You can be in Church, and **not** be with Jesus. Mind you, that **ought not** to be the case, because Church is the House of God where He dwells. But the fact is that He can, and does, **withdraw Himself** because He is easily ‘offended’ (in a proper sense)! We **can frighten** the Heavenly Dove away by our **sins**. By our **thoughts!**

Church can be a **dead place!** Stone dead! Because the people there have not been with Jesus recently. God’s people can have a ‘bad savour’ about them. Jesus said to Peter “*But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, **Satan!** You are a **hindrance** to Me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man”*[Mat 16:23]

But thankfully God can be found ‘**on-line**’ He is **easily accessible!** He can pick up **signals** very **quickly!** Each of us are a signal which God can reach! God is everywhere – the **coverage** is 100% all areas! No matter where we are, God can reach our cry for help! “*Where shall I go from Your Spirit...from Your presence?*”[Ps139]