

Introduction: Pg. \_\_\_\_ READ 1:35-51

There are probably 1,000 ways to cover this text this morning, but I want to do so by focusing in on three statements that come from the mouth of Jesus . . . “What are you seeking?” Come and See. Follow Me.

**“Come & See. Follow me.”  
John 1:35-51**

*FCF:* I could not begin to know why each of you joined us this morning . . . Curious. Hurting. Friend brought you. Love Worship . . . But this is my hope. No matter why you came, what your background may be, or how you see the road that lies ahead . . . I hope everyone will carefully consider these invitations from Jesus.

**The Point: Jesus invites all people to discover who he is and follow him.**

The first statement from Jesus is found in verse 38. He simply asks them . . .

**I. “What are you Seeking?”**

Jesus was about 30 years old at this time (Luke 3:23) or 33 (Kostenberger). His public ministry has finally launched with the testimony of John the Baptist, and now we encounter the genesis of Jesus’ movement. The influence of Christ spans millennia and has impacted billions of lives, but these people were his very first followers.

John chapter 1 describes a huge week for Jesus.

- The first day, we’ll call it Monday, questioned John the Baptist about his identity . . .
- Tuesday - Jesus arrived on the scene and John declared his famous words (1:29): Behold, the Lamb of God . . .
- Now on Wednesday John says to two of his disciples: “Behold, the Lamb of God!” (excitement/amazement!) and those two disciples decided to follow Jesus.

**{P} Slide: John the Baptist > > > Andrew & John??**

As Andrew & John, presumably, begin to follow Jesus, Jesus turns around and says: “What are you seeking?”

- In other words: What are you up to? Why are you following me? What are you looking for?
- What are you seeking? There is something very natural and physical about this. They were actually walking behind him. It’s a legitimate question, BUT . . . It seems there is something deeper behind Jesus’ question.
- What is the deeper reason you are coming behind me?
- Many times in John’s Gospel, we will find him places phrases, terms, and descriptions that carry a secondary level of meaning...
  
- Based on the witness of their mentor, John the Baptist, they already knew Jesus was worth following, so they asked where he was staying.
- They obviously wanted to know him! “We Want to Know who you are . . . We WANT to know you . . .”
- By the time they arrived where Jesus was staying, it was around 4pm, the day was almost done, so they “Stayed with him...” They spent time together . . .
- And one of the things I love about this account is that it did not take much time for them to know they wanted to follow him!

- And on top of that, as we will see, it did not take them much time to know they wanted others to get in on this.
- I realize it takes most people today more than a few hours to decide if they really want to be “all in” with Jesus. There are many barriers that can possibly stand in someone’s way: social, cultural, familial, intellectual, and spiritual. In fact, one of my greatest joys as a pastor is to watch those walls erode or get toppled over as God shines greater light into their lives. That said, we should not be shocked when God shows people in a shorter time rather than a lengthier process.
- One of our favorite passages as a leadership team when it comes to this very thing is Acts 26 where Paul is in Roman custody sharing his story, defending himself before Governor Festus and King Agrippa. And at one point
  - **24** Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.”
  - **25** [And Paul replied:] “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. **26** For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. **27** King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” **28 And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” 29 And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”**
- What about you?
  - What are you seeking?
    - Better life.
    - Circumstantial peace.
    - Harmony in relationships.
  - Are you really seeking to know Christ? To discover if he is worthy of your highest hopes and greatest affections.

T: What are you seeking? That is the first question Jesus poses to us, but then we find an invitation . . .

## II. “Come and See.”

Look at *verse 39*: Come and See

- Marsha & I had some friends visit Boston last weekend, which is always a lot of fun (usually... in this case - it was) And, so we asked the question: What do we want them to see?? So many options...
  - Airport/Garden/Copley Square/Prudential Tower
  - All of our excellent food: Seafood, Italian, Choices from all over the world (Myers & Chang - Asian Fusion/off the charts)
  - We showed them around Medford (Tufts Library Roof Deck); We introduced them to friends.
  - I may or may not have splurged for a Celtics ticket. Just sayin’. Friends coming in are great excuses to have a little fun! :)
- Our weekend together was in some respects a mission of discovery - and we were only scratching the surface.
- On a much greater scale: Jesus sets forth *an Invitation to Discovery*.

- He wants them to discover who he is and the difference he will make in their lives.
- This is a conditional imperative, conveying the sense: “IF you come—and I want you to—you will see.”

*T:* There was a man named Simon, who experienced a startling discovery at the very beginning of his journey with Jesus!

*PETER*

- When Andrew discovered Jesus was the Messiah, he went and found his brother Simon.
- Look at *verse 42* . . . [Andrew] brought [Simon] to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas”
  - WHAT! People don’t do that.
  - Chris Lee, is a new guy at Redemption Hill. I met him a couple of weeks ago at our NEXT gathering. Can you imagine how unbelievably awkward, strange, and out of place it would have been for me to look at him and say: “You are Chris, son of Tom. You shall be called Josiah.”
  - People don’t do that, but Jesus does that.
  - He gives him a new name...
  - I love this about Jesus. He was always dropping nicknames on his disciples (Peter, Sons of Thunder). If I give you a nickname, even if it’s not cool, it’s because I love you.
- What does this tell us about Jesus? Because make no mistake, the focus is on Jesus’ authority, not Peter’s unique role.
  - 1) Jesus has sovereign authority. Jesus, because he is God, because he sees what we can’t see, he has the authority to call the shots in our lives.
  - 2) Jesus desires personal intimacy with us. Who names people? Parents name kids and often, at least we hope in most cases, there is some painstaking thought that goes into that name.
    - During Lent this year, leading up to Easter, many of us as a church decided to give up certain things in order to gain more of Christ (fasting to feast). During that time, God led me to meditate on the letters of Revelation 2-3. (Intros... descriptions of Jesus; Final words: “to him who conquers . . .”)
    - Listen to **Revelation 2:17: “To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.”**
    - Peter had his moment. We all, who follow Jesus, will have that moment as well. Intimacy. Relationship. Christianity is intensely personal. You’ve never been loved like Jesus loves you.
    - On top of all that . . .
  - 3) Jesus sees what we will become. He sees what he will make of us.
    - Peter was not the Rock at this point. He was often bombastic, wishy-washy, loud-mouthed, not trustworthy . . . Fast forward to Acts . . . The Rock.
    - Jesus sees what he wants to make of us, and he takes us there as we place our lives into his good hands.

There are actually 2 “Come & Sees” in our story. Look back at *vv. 45-46. Come and see...*

40-42

We saw this first with Andrew.

- “Every time Andrew is mentioned in John’s Gospel, he is described as bringing or referring someone to Jesus” (Kostenberger/Morris)

### **John the Baptist > > > Andrew & John??**

#### **Andrew > > > Peter**

- This theme is peppered all throughout the story. People discover who Jesus is. They tell others about him. Those others believe, and the process is repeated.
- \*Everyone is coming because of someone else’s witness . . . Isn’t this how it works?

This is also the case with Philip and Nathanael.

- Can anything good come from Nazareth?
  - Small town, insignificant in the scheme of Israel’s culture.
  - People did not expect the Messiah to come from Nazareth.
  - Nathanael is skeptical but honest. He’s just being real.
- And we can learn a lesson from Phillip... Rather than debating Nathanael, rather than feeling like he had to provide a 15 irrefutable points, he simply says: “Hey, Come and See.”
  - No debate. Simple invitation.
  - I love this! Just invite people to explore. Just invite people to take a look.
    - Here’s what I’m beholding, take a look.
    - Would you read a book of the Bible with me?
    - Would you watch this movie (I’m not talking about the Jesus film!) and tell me what you think? Why are they unfulfilled? How do you explain the brokenness? What could bring renewal?
  - Simple Invitation. Be a pointer . . . That’s what \_\_\_ did . . .

### **John the Baptist > > > Andrew & John??**

#### **Andrew > > > Peter**

#### **Philip > > > Nathanael**

- If you have discovered who Christ is, how intent are you on telling others about him? How deeply do you want to see the people you love come to experience what you have experienced through Christ?
- God pursues people through people. God distributes his love through our love. God persuades people through our humble, patient, persistent conversations with the people we care about.
  - Here’s a little encouragement: don’t make this more difficult than it has to be.
  - “The most common and effective Christian testimony is the private witness of a friend to a friend, brother to a brother.” (Carson)
  - Start with your most natural relationships.

My most audacious prayer for our church is this: 35 people becoming new followers of Christ over the next year. Will anyone join me in that prayer? Will anyone join me in that pursuit?

- Why not?!? (E320-21) It will require . . .
- *Faith* to step out and pray. Faith to step out and share . . . [It seemed so natural to them. I’d like to propose that it was so natural to them in these moments.]
- *Boldness*. To move past the fear and awkwardness. But listen. Boldness flows from beholding.
- *Love*. They really believed in Jesus, all of their expectations were fulfilled, and this moved them. We have found him!

- Love for Christ.
- Love for them.
  - Survivors remorse. (We still have an opportunity!)
- Some of you, because I know your story, because I love you, I want to say: maybe you need to be the first of the 35. You've been counting the cost; you finally see your need for Christ, and you're ready to say: "I'm in!"
- Others of you, might say, "Tanner, I'm not there yet, but maybe in a few months, I'll be there. I want to investigate more."
  - Listen, there's no pressure here.
  - I try to disarm people all the time and say: "If I could snap my fingers, everyone would see what I see . . ." Ultimately this is between you and God.

T: Here's what I know friends point friends to Jesus. Friends say to other friends: "Come and See." It is an open invitation, and then some of those friends hear Jesus say: "Follow me."

### III. "Follow me."

"Jesus' practice of calling his followers ran counter to the contemporary practice whereby disciples opted to attach themselves to a rabbi of their choice."

#### FOLLOW - What does it look like to follow?

- On the one hand, the gift is absolutely free. We will see this in John 4 where Jesus is speaking with a woman from Samaria and says: **"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. . . . whoever drinks of that water that I will give him will never be thirsty again."** (John 4:10-14)
- On the other hand, it will cost us everything. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus said this to the crowds who followed him: **"And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?'"** (Luke 9:23-25)
- 'What are we to make of Jesus Christ?' This is a question, which has, in a sense, a frantically comic side. For the real question is not what are we to make of Christ, but what is He to make of us?

#### ME - Who are we following?

- 1) The Messiah. Verse 41: "We found him! The Messiah..."
  - Messianic Expectation... (N. T. Wright - 307-20, *The New Testament and the People of God*)
    - "The main task of the Messiah, over and over again, is the liberation of Israel.
    - He will be the agent of God.
    - There was never an expectation of suffering.
    - What would this deliverance look like? Previews in the Gospels. . .
      - Physical
      - Spiritual
- 2) Son of God! King of Israel! Verse 49: Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"
  - Son of God! Is one who possesses supernatural knowledge. When you thought no one saw you, I saw you!
  - 
  - Humble King, Servant King. Good King.

- Verse 45 . . . The one Moses and the prophets wrote about. Jesus fulfilled the OT...
- "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Village
  - Humility
    - Not Jesus the Bethlehemite (there would have been Davidic overtones!), Jesus the Nazarene.
  - Christmas -
    - Song - this little town of no great renown, God sent his own Son.
- 3) Son of Man, who will do greater things. (*Verse 51*)
  - "Jesus' response to Nathanael's confession is *vintage Jesus*, serving notice that this confession does not fully encompass all who Jesus is as the Messiah." (Kostenberger)
  - "Truly, truly" "Amen, amen;" "in truth, in very truth"
  - So MUCH here. . .
  - Son of Man - ". . . behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." (*Daniel 7:13-14*)
  - "Greater Things"
    - Relates "not to a future beyond the death of Jesus, but to the entire gamut of the action of the son of Man for the kingdom of God: from the heaven that became open at his baptism, the blessings of the saving sovereignty will be poured out through I'm in the signs he performs, the revelation of his word, the life that he lives, the death and resurrection that he accomplishes . . . Till the goal is attained when the Son of Man welcomes the redeemed to the Father's house."
    - Signs - will point to the greatness of the Son. . . First one - Next week
    - GLORY TOUR!!
  - Verse 51 is an allusion to Jacob's dream of a ladder stretching to heaven (recorded in Genesis 28)
    - Jesus is the true Israel -
    - Jesus is the true Bethel - where God reveals himself.

*Conclusion:*

- \*\*So why all the lofty descriptions of Jesus in these encounters? They explain why they'd leave it all!
- This is the glory of the Son of God. This is the grace we receive.
  - Follow ME, when we really know who he is... Really taste of how great he is... We Will be quicker to say come and see...
  - Beholders are the best pointers.