

“Come and See, Follow Me”  
Sermon by Rev. Elaine B. Kirkland  
Edina Morningside Community Church; January 7, 2018

**John 1:29-42**

*The next day [John] 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. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).*

When reading any of the New Testament, it is crucial to remember that in his own time and in the lifetimes of the writers of the bible, Jesus was a complete unknown outside his circle of followers. Therefore, it is best to read these stories – not with 20-20 hindsight – but with the perspective of a First Century Judean man, who is apt to be skeptical about this unknown teacher, bastard son of Mary, from some dinky, remote village – Nazareth, was it? . . . And that Joseph! No self-respecting man would marry a woman like that! . . . And we still don’t know who Jesus’ real father is . . . As we re-visit the story we just heard, remember to enter through **that** context.

Two of several themes central to the Gospel of John are illuminated by this story. They are **Seeing/Revealing . . . & Staying/Abiding . . .** In this short story alone, there are six different words about different kinds of **seeing**. For example, setting one’s eyes upon something and identifying it; or the *I see what you mean* kind of seeing; having understanding or insight about something or ‘getting’ it in a visceral way: and then there’s the *beholding* kind of seeing; i.e., “Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy!” You don’t stand at the 46<sup>th</sup> Street light rail station and say, “Behold the train is coming!” Nope! *Behold* is an active kind of seeing, a SEEING charged with anticipation and expectation. *Behold* requires more than observing from a distance; it invites engagement, movement toward the thing to *behold*; it implies a compelling eagerness to SEE it!

I wonder if when John the Baptist **saw** the dove land on Jesus, it was a *Behold* moment for JTB who, in that instant, perceived Jesus as the Son of God! And almost immediately, JTB began telling his disciples to **Come and See!** This was not a casual, good-old boys-slap-on-the-back kind of introduction but an unbridled imperative, “**Look!** Here is the Lamb of God! Pay attention and get to know him!!!”

JTB’s *enthusiasm* peaked Andrew’s and Disciple X’s curiosity enough that they began to follow Jesus. They didn’t call out **to** Jesus, but when Jesus turned around, SAW Andrew and DX following him, the connection was made with Jesus’ first question: “What are you **looking** for?”

**What are YOU looking for? . . .** Just thinking about Jesus asking me that makes me all tongue-tied! Not so with Andrew and DX, who had an immediate answer to Jesus’ question. **Teacher, where are you staying?** Let’s note 2 things about Andy’s and Dx’s response to Jesus’ question:

1 – The way they addressed Jesus: Andrew and DX were curious enough to pursue Jesus, but they were

not yet ready to call him *Son of God*. By respectfully addressing Jesus as *Rabbi (Teacher)*, which they recognized him to be, these two Seekers claimed their right and responsibility to make and trust their own discernment about Jesus, rather than accepting their beloved JTB's experience of and name for Jesus as their own.

2 - And then, having defined themselves in that way, Andrew and DX responded to Jesus' query with a question of their own, ***Where are you staying***, ; it was at the same time, a profound **answer** to the question Jesus *had* asked, What are you looking for?

***Where are you staying***, is in part a request for Jesus' contact information. It also indicates their desire to spend time with Jesus. What is telling here, is that the **verb** that the Gospel writer, John, puts in Andrew's and DX's mouths indicates a much deeper intent than a casual conversation over a few appetizers. The English word ***stay*** obscures the many nuances of the Greek verb, *meno*, which the Gospel writer used, meaning ***to abide, to stay, remain, endure, continue, dwell, to be steadfast, to lodge or sojourn with, to be in close and settled union with, to persevere*** --- Inherent in **all** of these meanings is ***a sense of permanence, stability***. And it communicates to Jesus, Andrew's and DX's desire for deep and lasting connection with Jesus.

So when Andrew and DX ask, **"Teacher, where are you staying?" abiding . . . remaining . . . dwelling . . . continuing**, the unspoken subtext of their question is **"Wherever you are going, may we stay . . . continue . . . persevere . . . lodge or sojourn there with you?"** And Jesus' answer to us is the same as it was to them, ***Come and See!***

*"There are things you can't reach. But  
You can reach out to them, and all day long.  
The wind, the bird flying away. The idea of god.  
And it can keep you busy as anything else, and happier.*

*I look; morning to night I am never done with looking.  
Looking I mean not just standing around, but standing around  
As though with your arms open." — [Mary Oliver](#)*

Close your eyes and imagine for a moment pausing long enough to ***Behold*** Jesus - Avoid borrowing anyone else's ways of naming or experiencing him; simply **behold** that Presence of Love, by whatever name you call it. What is your answer to the question, ***What are you seeking?*** . . .

Imagine watching Jesus welcome Andrew and Disciple X. Can you imagine yourself being welcomed? Imagine hearing Jesus' say to Simon, "from now on you are called the Rock". What is the new name Jesus would give to you?

What if you were to abide with Jesus for a little while every day?

Might you, might we, EMC, come to

***See and know yourself, and others*** - more dearly -

***Understand the courageously outrageous Way of Jesus*** more clearly

***Choose again and again to Follow the Way of Love*** more nearly?

***Day by day by day by day abiding with Jesus.***

**Open your eyes, Friends. Come and See!**