

January 15, 2017

**Come and See**  
**John 1:29-42**

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What questions do you have about this passage? What do you think it says about discipleship for you? Your answers to those questions are possibly more important than my musings. But since we are together, and I have been wrestling with this passage for a couple of weeks, Perhaps some of my musings will be helpful as we consider questions about discipleship today

First the identity and influence of John the Baptist: (in John it is hard to miss) John recounts how the religious elite show their true stripes in their interrogation of John, how they betrayed their human rather than Godly perspective, (their focus on following rules rather than seeking to follow new ways in which God was leading) The writer then moves to recount how John the Baptist shows his true identity And reveals the truth about Jesus.

This truth has not come from John hearing Jesus words or watching his actions, but by the revelation of God, through God's word and the Holy Spirit. As such it is important for us as disciples as we live in the post resurrection era. The truth is that John did not seek earthly riches or fame or power Instead he oriented his living to prepare for the coming of the "Messiah", He seemed never to tire of preaching the message God had given him and baptizing people with water. As he was sent to do.

But in all of this, he never stopped looking for what God was doing in the world, and seeking to be faithful and change in response to what God was continuing to reveal to him. As he said, God told him that he would recognize the Messiah because the Spirit would come down on that person and remain on him.

John saw this happen at Jesus baptism, he recognized that his ministry was winding down, And his job was to reveal the Messiah with his words and actions. So in this passage we catch a glimpse of John's insistence that Jesus is the Lamb and Son of God. This was long term work, so it seems. Even John's disciples were not convinced at first. But day after day, as John pointed to the identity of Jesus as the Messiah, Finally at least two of John's disciples took the initial steps to follow the One John had pointed out. Andrew proved to be a good disciple of John because his first step was to go and tell his brother. He did not stop at telling, but then brought Simon was brought to Jesus So it was through John that those two disciples came to follow Jesus and other through them The truth is that today we still come to know Jesus through other people In other words, God uses people like you and me to tell others about Jesus. I wonder what keeps us from sharing, from finding and bringing others to Christ. Is it our lack of confidence? Our deference to professional culture, and we don't know enough. Our negative associations with words like evangelism and testifying? I wonder what Andrew would have to say about the things that hold us back? The truth is we are St. Andrew's people! Let's embrace our heritage, as St. Andrew kind of people To recognize our call to invite others to come and see, to ask questions, We do this not because we have all the answers but because this is what God has called us to. To be a community where we welcome questions and outsiders a place where God's love and grace overflow. Discipleship is about revealing God's Light, being St. Andrew's kind of people. Secondly, Discipleship is a gradual or step by step process, involving challenge and change. For the two disciples that followed Jesus tentatively from a distance, This process began long before they encountered Jesus, with discipleship to John, With listening and following Jesus from a distance, With Jesus question about what they were looking for.

It think there were good reasons that they did not answer him directly  
Perhaps their reasons were less honourable that they wanted Jesus to know.  
Were they looking for adventure? a place of prominence? to fight the Romans? Or something deeper?  
Whatever their reason, they recognized that Jesus was a teacher, or Rabbi,  
With this they signalled that they might be interested in learning from him.  
I think that Jesus probably knew better than they did about what they were looking for.  
He certainly knew better than they what discipleship would mean  
But notice, Jesus did not make stipulations or ultimatums for following him,  
Instead of asking for theological credentials, or statements of belief, proof of serious intent or ethics  
He extended generous and radical hospitality, inviting them to come and see, they were welcome  
This invitation echoed that of angels to startled shepherds on a hillside in Bethlehem  
And that understood by foreign priests when they saw a new star in the sky.  
So they accepted Jesus invitation, and began a process where they would be changed,  
They found not just where he was staying but how he answered questions,  
But how he lived, his mission in the world and learn to change so that they could carry it out.  
Today, we also are invited to come and see Jesus, as the risen Christ, in the words and actions of others  
The difficult news is that as disciples, we will change and be changed over and over again.  
Just as Andrew would change allegiance from following John to following Jesus,  
And as Simon would gradually change so a new name like Peter or “rock” would fit  
We are called not just to a set of head beliefs,  
but every day to integrate our discipleship with our lives  
Discipleship is a step by step process that will involve change for us.  
Thirdly, Discipleship is lived out in community.  
Together in the company of Jesus as they remained with him,  
They learned to see God and others in different ways,  
It is true that as a group they would not always see eye to eye, that conflicts would arise,  
Differences in opinion, in theology, and you can name the rest.  
But Jesus did not just download the information and say now you know it all, off you go,  
He invited them to come together, to learn to live and go out in mission together.  
Discipleship is not just about individual mission but is fully realized in community.  
The Apostle Paul wrote that communities of faith were comprised of flawed individuals,  
And that it is in community that we experience the grace of God given us in Jesus Christ,  
That we are enriched in coming together in faith  
And as we work together the testimony of Christ is strengthened in our midst.  
Discipleship is lived out in community.  
Over the past couple of weeks, I have had the opportunity to see discipleship in action.  
In different ages and stages of life.  
A dear friend in hospice who continues to seek ways to share God’s love and grace,  
Even as she is tended to by others. She shares light in the only way open to her now,  
In graciously receiving visitors, all are welcome.  
In prayer offered—and prayers received. Story  
Each week, disciples arrive at St. Andrew’s and share faith stories with our children.  
On Christmas eve, disciples of all ages gathered and retold the story of Jesus birth,  
In their faithfulness, in their preparation, in sharing their gifts, they revealed Christ to us.  
I could tell you many stories of team members, or Side by Side volunteers, of those who visit the home  
bound or those who come in to pray for the church and all those with prayer requests  
Working side by side to build houses in Mexico,  
We are not all the same, not all perfect, but we are disciples, following step by step  
Changing and being changed as we together we testify to the Risen Christ. amen