

# "Come and See..."

John 1:35-51

## "Come and See..." John 1:35-51

by Pastor Tim Dodson  
at Jesus Fellowship of Believers  
in Menomonie, Wisconsin  
on September 27th, 2015

### John 1:35 - 51

35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. 36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?" 39 He said to them, "Come and see." They came and

saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour). 40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone). 43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" 48 Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." 49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51 And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

**I can never read this passage without wondering** what would have been going through John's head as this story played out. John the Baptist had given his *life* for the ministry. There was no retirement plan, no 'safety net' in case things didn't work out. There was no house in the 'burbs or a car parked in the garage. No company paid insurance, vacations or positional tenure. This was the quintessential "fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants" ministry endeavor. No promises, no guarantees, no back-up plans. And yet John held nothing back it seemed. He was in for a penny and in for a pound. And after all He had sacrificed, He was "rewarded" by his followers dumping him to follow Jesus.

Plenty of people have “moved the world.” But it seems that outside of very few exceptions, they went **to the people**...to the ‘gathered crowd’ to speak. But not John. No, the people came to Him. And at the climax of his ministry, he lost the crowd. They left him. However, that point of view is through the eyes of outsiders, and I’ll warrant that John did not see this event as a slight at all, but rather a triumph! Because it appears that all of what John was living for was apparently one purpose and that was to bring people to Jesus. He is the only man that would have seen the loosing of all his followers as success! He literally lost them all because they believed him. We live in a place and time where people use their gifts and talents to draw people unto themselves...to gather admirers...to garner self interest and appreciation. Yet John spent his life pointing people to Jesus and eventually he succeeded. For John, it was never “his” church. It was never “his pulpit.”

John, speaking about this very event said, “*He must increase, but I must decrease.*” The literal translation of that statement takes into account the tense of the Greek words which John used, and they imply a continuance of that. So what John actually said was “He must *keep on increasing* and I must *keep on decreasing.*” For those of us who seek to move the world for Christ, the answer is not to become more famous and increase our visibility. For us, there is no such thing as getting to the place where we have arrived at supreme humility and therefore cannot go any further. A disciple must forever go on decreasing.

John’s ministry was like a shooting star. He went from the top of the heap only to be put to death by beheading while in a dark dirty dungeon. Yet can any of us today say that John was a failure or that His ministry was a bust? Perhaps we need to reevaluate just what a successful ministry is in light of John the Baptist!

**At various places in the gospels**, we find Jesus preaching/teaching to large groups...to the people “en masse.” But let us never forget that Jesus seemed to always do His ‘best work’ with individuals...in the “one-on-one” mode. Herein the ministry began: *with two guys*. Two guys who wanted to be where Jesus was...“Teacher...where are you staying?” “Rabbi...*where are you...*?” They didn’t ask Jesus what church He went to, or from what denominational persuasion he hails. Religion was already available to them. Jesus was not. They wanted to go where He was going. Do you today?

They weren’t seeking to *study* Christ. They wanted to walk with Him. To be where He was. And it was that single desire that made them what they became. It was that attribute that made them what they were; *apostles. Disciples. Unwitting legends.* They would move the world. Not because they were brilliant or dynamic or personally charismatic. But because of their constant proximity to the Son of God.

Jesus asked them “what are you seeking.” It is perhaps one of the most profound and powerfully life-encompassing questions of all of our short time here on this planet. “What are you seeking?” What is this whole church thing to you today? Why are you here? Are you looking for comfort? Security? Community friendships? An escape from hell? What brings you here to this place?

One of these men was Andrew...Peter’s brother. The other was quite likely John himself...the writer of this gospel. The answer that Jesus gave to these two men held a benign depth and a profound impact: “*Come and see.*” Jesus also was not in this for merely a classroom dynamic. He was not here to teach moral living nor religious observance. He did not merely *bring* the answer. He *was* the answer. And He remains so today as we gather together here in this place. And religious practice and spiritual observance is not our answer today any more than it was for those two guys that day. The magic was held in that directive: “*Come and see...*”

Rarely, if ever, does God make promises as to the play by play manifest of our lives. God doesn't say "I'll make you rich." Or "you'll be free of pain" or "life will be imminently comfortable and worldly rewarding." He says "*come and see.*" For those of us that seek to be His ministers and servants, He doesn't promise earthly success or a plaque on the door with your name on it. He says "*come and see.*" Certainly there will be many that just don't get it. "Why then? Why give what you have for what you don't know?" Andrew understood. He told his brother the secret: "*We have found the Messiah.*" Nothing else mattered, nothing else compared.

For these guys and many others who have followed found the person that would make them whole. For them, there was a choice: The path of life, or the *journey*. The beaten down road that everyone took and had left them empty and without meaning or purpose, or the grand odyssey for which they were born. They were thirsty and Jesus was the living water. No guarantees. Just satisfaction. At the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, Peter asked Christ about His plans for John's life and ministry. Jesus answered him saying "*If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me...*"

Andrew expressed immediate faith and trust in Christ. You can always recognize when someone has truly found Christ by their immediate actions. Andrew went to tell someone else. He went to get his brother. It's as if he won the lottery. It was and never is something one keeps to themselves!

Jesus, upon meeting Philip says to him what he says to us all today. "Follow me..." The meaning of the word "follow" is "accompany." Jesus was telling Philip to "follow me," or as Dr. G. Campbell Morgan put it, "Come and travel with me."

It's a sad thing to see how far from Christ we can attempt to live our Christian lives. As if somehow the distance insulates us from His knowing eyes. That we can duck His intuitive understanding of our true being. Philip went to find his friend Nathaniel. And Christ makes it clear that He saw him and He knew him long before he ever came to Him. Philip rightfully and succinctly tells Nathaniel "we have found him." Apparently they had actually been looking and waiting and watching. Ironically, like many of us, Philip thought *they had found Him!* But the truth is...just like with Nathaniel, God found *us*.

*The Lord knows us by name. He knows our character. He knows where we are sitting and where we live. What's more, He sees us this moment and every moment. When no one else can see us, He does and can. There is not a thing hid from His eyes! Whatever our name or character, our whereabouts, wherever we might be—He knows!* (Erling C. Olsen, "Walks through John's Gospel) Nathaniel thought he was but a stranger to this Jesus fella. Certainly Jesus was a stranger to *him*. But Christ had been monitoring Nathaniel...as He had no doubt with all of these other's who would become the 12, for a very long time. God told Jeremiah, "*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...*" (Jer 1:5)

How many of us would be able today...with a clarity of spirit-filled hindsight, to be able to share with wonder how God was there through all our running and rebellion? How He kept us inexplicably alive. How he doggedly pursued us unrelentingly. He saw it all. Every sin and every act of selfish pride! And yet He would not quit us. And as with Nathaniel, God made us an offer like no other. He promised us too that in following Him, we would "see greater things than this." Not in merely believing in Him, but actually following Him.

It is here that we can lose out on the grand promise of God. For so often we live out our faith trying to get God on board with our plans and dreams, never grasping the fact that whatever God has planned for us *hands down* beats anything we could ever muster up on our own accord! 1Corinthians 2:9 says *"But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."* Psalms 31:19 also, saying *"Oh, how great is Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You, Which You have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of men!"*

Today the Lord is following you around saying "come and follow me." I will show you why you were created. I will unveil to you your purpose and your commission. I will reveal to you the majesty of my plan for mankind as well as for you specifically. *And I will make you fishers of men.* "...you will see greater things than this!" But we must move beyond the "believe" and into the "follow." Because it is beside the Master that everything is happening. It is where he is working that manifests His glory and frankly where the thrill of Jesus exists!

No worldly guarantees. No earthly promises. Just "I will never leave you nor forsake you." It is in that place we find purpose, fulfillment, and a reason. *Come and see...*