

I. John the Baptist, His Disciples, Finding Jesus

A. John 1:35-42 . . . Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, [36] and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" [37] The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. [38] And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" [39] He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for 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 found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). [42] He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

B. Pray

II. Third Story

A. John 1:35-37 . . . Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, [36] and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" [37] The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

1. As you may recall, a few weeks back I pointed out that Jesus is called the Lamb of God only twice in the NT. Both times are here in this first chapter of John (vs 29, 36), and both times John the Baptist is the one calling Jesus the Lamb of God.

a. However, what I did not mention the first time we encountered this label for Jesus is that He was crucified on the Jewish Passover, This is significant because that celebration commemorates God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt though the use of ten plagues – and the tenth plague was the Angel of Death. Therefore, God had the Israelites use the blood of a slain lamb on the doorposts to signify they were to be saved from His judgment on any home in Egypt that lacked that sign.

b. In a similar way, the Lamb of God delivers us from slavery to sin and saves us from God's judgment of eternal death.

2. The next thing I want to point out about these three verses is that from here to the end of the chapter, we are given evidence that at least a few Jews were of the right mind and heart to understand the scriptures concerning the signs surrounding the Messiah's coming, which is why they were prepared to receive Him when He came.
 - a. For me, this is a picture of life in the world today. Though there may be many who know about God and His son, Jesus Christ, and though most of them want Jesus to come and make life better, only a few value and pursue God and righteousness in a way that gives them the knowledge, insight, and motivation to seek Him until they find Him.
 - (1) The hopeful part of this picture is that there have always been and will always be those who hunger and thirst for righteousness – and they are either looking for God, or they have found Him.
 - (2) But there is also a sad side to this picture. And the sad part is that – as it was in the days of Noah and in the days of Christ, so it is today – only a few are looking for Jesus in a way that prepares them to find Him, and enables them to properly respond when they do find Him.
 - (3) I believe that this is the reason Jesus said, “The gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. The gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).
 - b. Now it is probable that most of John's disciples were of the right mind and heart to be motivated to seek the Messiah until they found Him, and they were godly enough to know what they should do once they found Him.
 - c. It is also probable that John had been talking with his disciples about the Messiah being the Lamb of God. And so when Jesus was near enough for John to point out to two of his disciples that the Lamb of God was in plain sight, they followed Jesus home.
3. Now I know I've spoken about John the Baptist's humility before, but I want to do it again because his example is a good example.
 - a. Last Monday I was at a church where they had day care for about 25 or so young children between the ages of 2-5. I was with the Pastor of the church and while we were walking through a large room where these children were playing, upwards of ten children, one at a time, came up and showed us something – be it a picture,

- a Halloween costume, a pretty dress, or the toy they were playing with. And why would they do this? I believe it was because they wanted to be noticed, to feel important, and to be praised for something that set them apart from the rest of the children.
- b. Now my purpose in telling you this story is not to criticize those children – for they are just children. My purpose is to show you that from an early age we like being singled out as the important person, or as the one held in high esteem and given praise for our accomplishments. We like being the one regarded as having done something significant or as possessing something of importance that sets us apart from everyone else.
4. So what is my point? John the Baptist did not seek to be the popular person, or the person held in high esteem, or the respected teacher, or the one recognized as having who had the truth. He sought to fulfill his purpose – which was to serve God by preparing the way for Jesus. And once Jesus was on the scene, John was willing to lose his disciples to Jesus.
- a. Though ministers, church leaders, Bible Study and S.S. teachers, small group leaders, and missionaries and anyone else who is pointing people to Jesus and godly living ought to have the humility of John, it isn't always the case. There are those in God's service who not only want a following, they want a large and loyal following because it makes them feel important and successful, and feeds their sense of self-worth.
- b. But John was not like this. Even though he had enjoyed a superior position before Jesus on the scene, he was not jealous of Jesus. And even though he had a following, he was not possessive of his followers. John lived as one serving God, not himself, and as one seeking glory for God and not himself. Therefore, John pointed out the Lamb of God to his disciples knowing it was better for them to follow Jesus. And he willingly lost numbers in order to increase the number of Christ's followers.
5. As a pastor, I am keenly aware that over the years I have struggled with pride in relation to numbers and wanting to be seen as important – while at the same time wanting to serve God. Yet rather than striking me down, God graciously made it clear that in spite of being in a position to serve Him, I was using that service to seek glory for myself. Such is the ugly evil of pride and double-mindedness. And the reality is, though pride is not always evident on the outside, it can still lurk deep within and long for gratification.

6. However, in reality, though God may be willing to use me, it does not mean He needs me. And though you may have been helped by what God has taught me, it does not mean you need me either.
 7. Therefore, may we value humility and hate pride. May we live to bring glory to God and not ourselves. And may we help each other run from pride and toward humility – for pride kills, but humility brings life.
- B. John 1:38 . . . And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?"
1. In asking John's two disciples what they were seeking, Jesus gives us a good example of communication that makes it easy for those who come to us for something to make their request known.
 2. Without question, we have a responsibility to listen in a way that helps us hear what the other person is really saying – which requires listening to understand rather than listening to respond.
 - a. And when I say we ought to listen to understand, we should listen to understand no matter how the speaker says what he is saying.
 - b. Too many of us take offense and or get derailed by how the person is talking to us rather than listening carefully to understand what the person is saying – in spite of how they are saying it.
 - c. Once we understand what the other person is saying, we can move toward responding – a move which may include praying for wisdom or asking for more time before we respond.
 3. However, we not only have a responsibility to listen to understand, it is my opinion that we have a responsibility to say things in a way that helps the one we are talking to hear what we are saying.
 4. This is what Jesus did with these two disciples. He made it easy for them to ask what they wanted. And He did this by asking a question that showed Him to be accessible, gentle, and kind.
 5. Now you may be wondering why the two disciples of John asked Jesus where He was staying. It is probable that they wanted to spend a prolonged time with him and learn what they could from Him, and thought the best way to do that was to be in a relaxed setting.
- C. John 1:39 . . . He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.
1. In telling this story, John makes a point of telling us what time of day this happened.

2. However, not knowing what method of telling time he used, we are left with a bit of uncertainty as to what time it was.
 - a. The Jews divided their daylight hours into twelve equal parts, beginning at sun-rise – which would be about 6:00am. If John used this method of telling time, it would have been about 4:00pm.
 - b. However, the Romans divided their entire day into two equal parts, with 12 hours in each part. Therefore, if John used their method, it would have been about 10:00am.
 - c. But does the exact time of day really matter in the telling of this story? No, but it does provide an example of taking something that doesn't matter and treating it as if it did matter, and in so doing, miss the intended point of the story – which is to affirm that Jesus is God in human flesh.
3. Notice that Jesus did not tell these two men where He was staying, but rather He invited them to come with Him, that is, to follow Him to where He was staying.
 - a. But that would mean following Jesus without knowing what part of town or where in the country-side it would take them – other than by following Him they would end up where He was staying.
 - b. You see, Jesus put the responsibility for deciding if they would trust Him enough to follow Him squarely on them. They had to be willing and motivated to leave where they were and follow to wherever Jesus would lead them.
4. One of the lessons we can learn from this is that wanting what Jesus has to give enough to trust Him enough to intentionally go where He leads, is essential to learning what we need to learn in order to live as He lived.
 - a. And why is this essential? Because learning this way is willful, intentional, and desired learning that is also first hand learning, or learning through personal experience. This does not mean we won't need someone who has traveled this path further than us to help us on your way or to point us toward better ways to gain the growth desired.
 - b. But even with their help, we will be the ones taking the initiative and pushing ourselves to persevere. We will be the ones hungering and thirsting after righteousness – which Jesus says is the way to have that hunger and thirst satisfied (Matthew 5:6).
5. Now without question, this learning process requires self-motivation, self-discipline, and perseverance. You have to want the hoped for end results enough to push through whatever it takes and follow long

enough to get there. But if you do push through, the rewards are such that you will never look back with regret for having endured the challenges of this growth process.

D. My reason for bringing this part of the process for growing to Christian maturity to our attention is because this is the path to such unequaled things as:

1. Growing in your knowledge of God, and in the value you place on God, and in the esteem you have for God, and in your humble submission to God, and in your desire to please God,
2. Growing in our knowledge of God's word and in its practical application to how you live each day – in thought, word, and deed,
3. Growing in your faith – until you are so confident of God's goodness that you have an abiding inner peace regardless of the circumstances,
4. Growing in the frequency, focus, and purpose of your prayers until talking with God about everything that matters is so natural and frequent you no longer have to have planned times to pray in order to pray,
5. Growing in the quality and effectiveness of your daily preparation to live godly and serve humbly to the point of living each day aware of your weaknesses, committed to godliness, prepared to resist temptation, and nurturing the qualities of Christ-likeness until you live them without having to think about them,
6. Growing in your pursuit of a godliness that affects every area of your life, and persevering in that pursuit no matter how many times you fall or how long it takes to put off specific areas of sin and your old fleshly ways, and replace them with Christ-likeness,
7. Growing in your sensitivity to and vigilance in guarding what you are thinking, desiring, saying, and doing until you no longer have to work so hard at being sensitive and vigilant because it has become natural to you,
8. Growing in the whole area of love so that you love God more nearly as you ought, love your neighbor as yourself, and love your enemies just as Jesus teaches us to love them,
9. And growing in your intentional fellowship and intimacy with God.
10. This kind of growth will take hard, focused, steady work, but it is the path to the abundant life that is filled with joy and inner peace regardless of the circumstances.

- E. Returning to our story here in John 1:40-42 . . . One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. [41] He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). [42] He brought [Simon] to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).
1. John the Baptist pointed out that Jesus was the Lamb of God. Andrew, being one of John's disciples, after following Jesus home, went and found his brother Simon Peter and said, "We have found the Messiah."
 2. Though this part of the story can be intriguing because it gives us a glimpse of how some of the twelve disciples of Jesus were gathered together, it's most important part for John's gospel has to do with Andrew telling Peter that Jesus is the Messiah.
 3. And what makes this so significant? There are three reasons –
 - a. First, both Andrew and Simon Peter were fishermen – which is an indication of their status in the community. And yet, though mere fishermen, they were not just looking for the Messiah, they were prepared to recognize the Messiah when they found Him and respond accordingly.
 - b. Second, if a fisherman can know enough about God and His word, and have the heart and life necessary to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, so can the rest of us.
 - c. Third, the fact that mere fishermen recognized Jesus as the Messiah lends support to John's presentation that the Messiah has come, and He is the Son of God – being both human and divine.

III. In conclusion I want to ask three questions –

- A. Are you aware that the more you study and apply the scriptures, the more you will recognize Jesus' presence and activity in the circumstances of life?
- B. Have you considered asking God to show you your pride, and asking Jesus to teach you His way of meekness and humility of heart?
- C. Do you understand that even if you don't yet hunger and thirst for righteousness, you can choose to exercise the necessary amount of self-motivation, self-discipline, and perseverance to gain the satisfaction promised to those who do hunger and thirst for it?
- D. May God continue to grant each of us the grace to continue growing in faith, godliness, humility, and love.