

Come and See
John 1: 29 – 42
January 17, 2010

I. Introduction

- A. Christian author and public speaker, Stuart Briscoe, tells about a time
 - 1. When he was speaking at a church in Edinburgh, Scotland
- A. During the service, Stuart says, a delightful young lady gave her testimony.
 - 1. It seems she was back home from Cambodia, where she was a missionary nurse
- A. She said how she was really enjoying the work she was doing there
 - 1. And then, how she met a young man and fell in love.
- A. He asked her to marry him, but she had said, "I made a commitment to my church back home to serve on the mission field. If I were to marry you, I couldn't devote myself fully to the work that I committed to. So before I can give you an answer, I need to talk with the leaders of the church." And so that was why she was home. She had come all the way from Cambodia to talk to the leaders of the church about her situation.
- A. A bit later, Stuart noticed a young fellow sitting across the aisle who had the weirdest look on his face. So when the missionary woman had finished her testimony and sat down nearby, he asked her, "Who is that fellow over there? Do you know him?" She said, "That's the young man." "But I thought he was in Cambodia." She said, "He was. He heard I was flying back to Scotland to talk to the leaders of the church, and he decided he wanted to talk to them as well. So he jumped on the next plane."
- A. You can always tell lovers, Stuart says. Because they don't give up. They "come after," their beloved, wherever that may take them. End quote
 - 1. "Coming after" - that's also what it means to follow Jesus
 - a. Not for any other reason than because we love him because he first loved us
 - (1) There's just something about Jesus' love that draws us irresistibly to him
- A. I don't know how much these two disciples of John the Baptist recognized that
 - 1. That day down by the Jordan River, at least, not in the beginning
 - a. Perhaps it was curiosity at first, or a desire to learn more about this man, Jesus
- A. But there were many people who were curious, many who came to learn more about him
 - 1. Those who stayed with him and followed after him, learned to love him
 - a. They became disciples of Jesus because of a strong attraction to his love

2. And I believe that is what makes the difference for followers of Jesus today as well
- A. We are in a period of time on the Christian church calendar
 1. Between our celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas
 - a. And our remembrance and celebration of his death and resurrection at Easter
 2. While we certainly can't do justice to all of Jesus' ministry and teachings
 - a. In these weeks between now and the third Sunday in February
 - (1) When the Lenten and Easter seasons begin
 3. Lord willing, I want to look at a few important events in Jesus' life and ministry
 - a. That led people to put their faith and hope and trust in him
 - A. At the same time, remembering that the love Jesus showed, that drew people to him
 1. Also attracted the negative attention and jealousy of some people
 - a. Who may have felt that their lack of compassion was being exposed
 2. Who certainly felt their power and authority was threatened by Jesus' popularity
 - a. And that jealousy and fear would eventually lead
 - (1) To Jesus' arrest and crucifixion
 - A. This morning, one of the things I would like to focus our attention on
 1. Is why we believe that Jesus is truly the one sent from God
 - a. To be the Messiah, the Savior and Lord over the church today
 - A. I hope we communicated some of that throughout the Advent/Christmas season
 1. As we looked at the heavenly announcements of his birth
 - a. The miraculous nature of so many events surrounding this baby in a manger
 2. And then last Sunday, we heard the affirmations of Simeon and Anna
 - a. People who lived close to God, proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah
 - A. The testimony of those people who lived during the time of Jesus' earthly life
 1. Is not the only reason we have for believing in him as Savior and Lord
 - a. We'll talk about that some more in another message
 2. But it provides much of the basis for our understanding of God's plan
 - a. To rescue humankind from the power of evil in our lives/world
 - (1) And to help us live as God's children in harmony with all of creation
 - A. And so, today we look at the testimony proclaimed by John the Baptist
 1. Who clearly saw his purpose in life to prepare the way for the coming
 - a. Of "one who is far greater than I" - one "whose shoelaces I am unworthy to untie"
 - A. I don't know if you've ever thought about how much John knew, or understood

1. About the Messiah who was coming, or who that person would be
- A. John was surely told by his parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth
 1. Something about the miraculous events surrounding his own birth
 - a. And the prophetic words that were spoken about his cousin, Mary's son
 2. But we are not told whether there was any connection between John and Jesus
 - a. During the first thirty years of their lives
- A. What we do hear is that John took seriously the message of the angel
 1. Foretelling his calling and purpose in life
- A. We can assume that influenced him to make some of the choices that he did
 1. About living out in the wilderness, wearing the traditional clothing of a prophet
 - a. Feeding himself from what nature provided
- A. There's a story about a Sunday school class studying a lesson about John the Baptist
 1. When it was mentioned that he ate locusts and honey comb
 - a. One young student was puzzled - "I never knew they had cereal back then!"
 2. I'm sure John would have been just as puzzled over a cereal named "honeycomb"
- A. But, what I find most remarkable about this unique wilderness preacher
 1. Was his challenge to the people who came out to hear him speak -
 - a. Repent, be baptized as a symbol of God's forgiveness and cleansing
 - (1) And prepare yourself for the coming of the Messiah
- A. It must have taken a lot of courage and boldness to preach such a message
 1. Not knowing when or how the Messiah would come or be made known
 - a. Perhaps fearing the response of the Roman authorities
 2. But simply believing that if God said it, then it was going to happen
 - a. And trusting that his job was to prepare the way
- A. John's choices, and his message, also led to some controversy
 1. Many people following his direction to prepare themselves for the Messiah
 - a. And others questioning his authority to speak about such matters
 2. Are you one of the prophets of old come back to us...or are you the Messiah?
- A. However, the writer of our scripture text for today emphasizes two things –
 1. One, that John was certain about his role as a messenger and not the Messiah
 - a. Two, that John was also given a special revelation of who Jesus is
- A. The other gospel writers include a more detailed account of Jesus' baptism
 1. Our text doesn't include the narrative, but points to that event as evidence –

- a. Evidence that Jesus was indeed the one John was expecting to come
- 2. And evidence that Jesus was truly appointed and approved by Yahweh
 - a. To be the one who would rescue and deliver his chosen people
- A. Note the personal tone of the language in these verses –
 - 1. **I didn't know** who this man was, but **I saw** the Spirit of God descending on him
 - a. I didn't come to this understanding on my own, but it was revealed to me
 - 2. The one who called me and sent me to prepare the way said to me –
 - a. The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain
 - (1) He's the one you've been telling people about
 - b. You have baptized with water, but he is the one who will bring about
 - (1) The baptism of the Holy Spirit
- A. I have seen and heard, John says, and now I testify to the truth –
 - 1. This man Jesus is the Lamb of God, the Son of God, the Messiah
 - a. It doesn't get any plainer or clearer than that
- II. Our text verses are then divided by the phrase “the next day”
 - A. But the setting seems to be the same – John the Baptist is there
 - 1. And this time we hear of two disciples that are with him, and Jesus is coming by
 - A. Again, John points to Jesus with the words – “Look, here is the Lamb of God”
 - 1. It's a description that carries a lot of meaning
 - A. Today, as we look back to Jesus' death and resurrection
 - 1. We can make the connection between Jesus and a lamb sacrificed for our sins
 - a. But that would have been a radical, even unbelievable idea
 - (1) When John the Baptist made this declaration
 - A. The Messiah was assumed to be one who would come in strength and power
 - 1. Overcoming the enemy, securing freedom for the land and its people
 - a. The last image they would have thought of in reference to the Messiah
 - (1) Is a lamb, and certainly not a sacrificial lamb
 - A. We may still struggle today with understanding/accepting that concept
 - 1. Of a Messiah who did indeed have all the power of heaven at this command
 - a. And yet, that power was demonstrated through sacrificial love
 - (1) Rather than the display of superior force that we might anticipate
 - 2. We are not used to thinking of love as a powerful force
 - a. But that is surely a part of the implication in the words – Jesus, the Lamb of God

- (1) Who takes away the sin of the world
- A. Most likely, the disciples of John who heard him speak of Jesus this way
 - 1. Did not stop to think all of this through
 - a. The fact that they had already chosen this strange wilderness prophet
 - (1) As the teacher they wanted to imitate and learn from
 - b. Says something about their search for deeper meaning in life
- A. They weren't satisfied to go through life just making a living for themselves
 - 1. They believed that John was onto something special
 - a. With his teaching about preparing for the coming of the Messiah
 - (1) And they wanted to know all they could about it
- A. So, when John points to Jesus as the one he has been teaching them about
 - 1. It must have seemed perfectly natural for these two men to follow him
- A. I've sometimes wondered why John the Baptist didn't follow Jesus, too
 - 1. Become one of those close disciples of Jesus
 - a. The only answer I can find is that was not John's calling
 - (1) He would continue his own ministry of calling people to repentance
 - (a) Until his own arrest and death at the hands of political authorities
- A. Our text doesn't question the motive of these two men who followed Jesus
 - 1. But we have recorded a fascinating conversation that takes place
- A. Jesus turns and sees them, and since they seem to be expecting something, asks –
 - 1. What are you looking for?
 - a. They respond by asking a question in return – Teacher, where are you staying?
 - (1) And Jesus doesn't bother giving them an answer
 - (a) He just says to them – “Come and see”
- A. What are you looking for? Such a basic, simple question
 - 1. And yet it cuts to the very heart of what life is all about, doesn't it?
 - a. We all face that question at some point in our lives, or at many points
 - (1) And if we don't find a satisfying answer, we will continue searching
 - (a) Perhaps until the very end of our life
 - 2. What are we looking for? Success, happiness, fulfillment?
 - a. There are many words we could mention as possible answers to that question
 - (1) These two men who decided to follow Jesus still didn't have an answer
 - (a) Just as many of us might find it hard to put an answer into words

- 3. But, these guys had an idea in mind – whatever they were looking for
 - a. They were hoping to find in this man, Jesus
 - A. And so they addressed him in a particular way – Rabbi, or teacher
 - 1. Indicating their desire to become his disciples
 - A. But then, perhaps because they were men, they turned to a practical issue
 - 1. We are interested in following you, learning from you – so, where are you staying?
 - A. I would liken it to starting a conversation about spiritual things
 - 1. But then, rather than talking about God’s forgiveness and love
 - a. We might steer the conversation in a safer direction by asking –
 - (1) And where do you go to church?
 - A. These men were talking to the person who could fulfill the deepest longing of their heart
 - 1. And all they could think of to ask him was – where are you staying?
 - a. But Jesus doesn’t in any way discourage their question
 - (1) Instead, he encourages them to dig deeper, to find out more
 - (a) Come and see for yourselves
 - b. The invitation was not just a casual “come on over for a visit” kind of thing
 - (1) It was really an invitation to a life-changing commitment
 - A. But it was an invitation that was extended in a very compassionate/welcoming manner
 - 1. You may not understand fully what you are looking for, but come along with me
 - a. And we will find the answer together
 - 2. And Andrew, one of the two men who followed Jesus
 - a. Was so impressed by what he experienced in his encounter with Jesus
 - (1) That he immediately went and found his brother, and gave the same invitation
 - b. Simon, I believe I have found something/someone that I’ve been looking for
 - (1) Why don’t you come along and see, too
- III. We have chosen as a theme for this year at Sonnenberg – “Welcome to the table”
- A. It’s also an invitation, and I hope we think of it that way
 - 1. In our conversations on the job, at school, on the street corner
 - a. Even in our conversations with our sisters and brothers
 - A. But it will be important to know what we are inviting people to – more than a meal
 - 1. More than good food or fellowship, as wonderful as those can be
 - A. But if we have found what we are really seeking for in life
 - 1. And we are as passionate about finding Jesus and falling in love with him

- a. As the young man who was willing to fly halfway around the world
 - (1) Because of his love for a certain missionary woman
- A. Then, what we are inviting people to is the love relationship we have found
 - 1. And it is that love of Jesus and for Jesus that will be attractive
 - a. More than anything else we have to offer
- A. We may not understand everything about God or how God works at first either
 - 1. But we can understand the invitation to “come and see”
- A. If you have never responded to that invitation, I hope you will do so this morning
 - 1. Open yourself to the Spirit of God inviting you, welcoming you, loving you
 - a. If you have questions, I would be happy to talk with you after the service
 - (1) Or go to someone you know and talk to them
 - 2. And don't worry about asking the “right” questions
 - a. Jesus still invites us, just as he did those first disciples, “Come and see”