



Meeting Jesus (PART 2):

Teacher

JOHN 1:38-39

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If you were with us last week, you might remember we started a series based on the last half of John 1 as the future apostles start meeting Jesus for the very first time. We talked about the fact that most of us carry some kind of ID on us at all times, and if someone were to start piecing these various forms of ID together, they would start to get a pretty good picture of who we are - based on the titles we wear, the places we shop, the activities we engage in, and the people who are important to us. In a similar way, we learn some very important lessons about Jesus based on the titles or descriptions that are given to him in Scripture. And in the last half of John 1, as people start to meet the Lord for the very first time, Jesus is described in various ways. At the beginning of John 1, Jesus is introduced as the WORD. He is introduced as the LIGHT. But as John starts introducing Jesus to the disciples, Jesus is first described as the Lamb of God.

Last week, then, we looked at that description, and we learned that most Jewish people, when they heard Jesus described as a Lamb, would think of the various sacrifices that were made. And we applied this description of Jesus to our situation today by remembering how Peter explains that we are redeemed (or saved) from our sins, not with perishable things like silver and gold, but we are redeemed **“...with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”** We learned, then, that as the Lamb of God, Jesus is completely worthy of our worship in every way. As we sing and as we pray, we need to be thankful for Jesus as our Lamb and for the sacrifice he made for us as he took our place on the cross.

This morning, we move on to the next few verses. As John introduces Jesus to Andrew and most likely also to John (the future apostle), Andrew and John immediately follow the Lord, and we pick up with the next description in John 1:38-39,

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.

So, the new description, of course, is “RABBI” or “TEACHER.” These two disciples recognize right away that Jesus is a TEACHER. As we work through these two verses, I want us to look at the three statements that are

made here - a statement from Jesus to these two disciples, the disciples' answer to the Lord's question, and then the Lord's answer to their answer. And all three statements are rather unusual.

- I. **But we start with the Lord's statement in verse 38. Jesus suddenly realizes that he has some followers - these are his first followers, in fact - and the first thing Jesus does is to turn and ask these two men, "WHAT DO YOU SEEK?"**

And it's an interesting question, because it could be taken in different ways. In one sense, we have Jesus who steps out into public life as a teacher, these two men start following him - quite literally, they are walking behind him - and Jesus basically asks them, "What do you want?" Years ago, in the city of Rome, we got off the subway, and we had the very clear impression that two men were following us. We crossed the street, they crossed the street; we stopped, they stopped, and so on. It was rather disconcerting. I don't know if you've ever been followed, but we were clearly being followed. I had never really been in that situation before, but I had my family with me, so running and leaving them behind wasn't really an option (it was an option, but it wasn't a good option). So I made myself as big and scary looking as I could, and I suddenly spun around and faced them. They weren't really expecting that, apparently, so they turned aside and took off down an alley. I mention that only to point out that on the surface, Jesus has these two followers (this is a first for the Lord), so he turns around and he basically asks them, "What do you want?"

However, knowing Jesus as we do now, we understand that the question is probably not that simple! And it's not that simple, especially when we realize that these are the first words spoken by Jesus in the book of John! If you have a red letter edition, it's even more obvious - these are the first red letters in the book of John. And the words come in the form of a question. So, it's not a "Why are you stalking me?" kind of question, but it's probably more of a "What is the meaning of life?" kind of question. Jesus was known for asking some profound questions. And right away, we notice, the Lord is not asking, "Who do you seek?" Instead, he is asking, "**What do you seek?**" In other words, this is not a question that invites a one-word answer. If he had asked, "WHO are you seeking?" they could have said, "You!" So instead, this is more of a thought question, a challenging question. And we know that Jesus as the master teacher is the master of questions.

We think of God asking that first question in the Garden of Eden, "**Adam, where are you?**" God knew where Adam was! God was asking that question for Adam's benefit. God wanted Adam to ask himself, "Yes, where am I? How did I get here? How did I get in this situation?" God wanted Adam to think. The Greek philosopher Socrates was considered wise - not because he knew all of the answers, but because he knew how to ask the right questions. [Gordon Curley; Five Who Followed in Faith; February 9, 2015]. And so today, we have a process or a philosophy of teaching known as the Socratic Method. Socrates understood that much can be taught by challenging the student with tough and thoughtful questions. In a similar way, Jesus also taught quite often not by making statements, but by asking questions, and that is what he does here with his very first words in John's gospel account.

So the question is: What do you want? As these men were just starting to follow, Jesus wanted them to think: What do we want to get out of this relationship? What are our goals here? What are we motivated by? Of course, Jesus had the power to know what they were thinking (we'll see this later in the chapter). But Jesus wanted THEM to think this through. Jesus wanted THEM to figure it out. Because, as we know, some people followed Jesus with less than pure motives. Some were looking for a military leader to kick out the Romans. Some were looking for power - we think of James and John who were looking to sit on the Lord's right and left when he came in power in his kingdom. Some were following simply because Jesus was the latest fad. Some would follow Jesus because he gave them food. Some followed Jesus just to see something amazing (we think

of King Herod who was hoping to see Jesus perform a miracle). Some followed Jesus because he healed their diseases. But Jesus is challenging these men to really consider: What do you want? What are you really looking for here?

And that is a good question for us to consider. What do we want out of Jesus? What are we looking for? Why are we here together as a group this morning? It is a question that all of us need to answer for ourselves.

- II. **As we go back to our text, we continue, and we find that in response to the Lord's question, the two men go on and ask what seems to be a stranger question - Jesus asks, "What do you seek?" and to answer that question, the men ask Jesus, "WHERE ARE YOU STAYING?"**

I had to go back and re-read that a few times! It's almost as if they didn't hear what the Lord said! So again, if two men start following me, and I ask them, "What do you want?" and they reply, "Where do you live?" that's when it's time to deploy the pepper spray! And yet in this answer, the disciples start by addressing Jesus as "*Rabbi*," or "*Teacher*." "*Teacher, where are you staying?*" So, perhaps it's not quite as creepy as we might imagine. Literally, the word "*rabbi*" means "my great one," and it was a title of respect given to teachers. Today, we might compare it to a title like "Doctor" in an educational setting, a professor, someone with great wisdom or experience, someone with training, someone who has all the answers. Last week, I read a report from an acquaintance who has been doing some mission work in India, and on a recent trip, someone referred to him as a "guru." At first, he objected, "Oh, I am no guru!" But then someone explained that the word "guru" simply means "teacher."

So, when Jesus wants to know what they want, and when they ask, "*Rabbi, where are you staying?*," it seems that the two disciples are basically saying, "Jesus, we don't really know what we are looking for, but we do know that we need to sit down for a while and talk about some things. We need more time than just this discussion by the side of the road." They don't have a quick and easy answer. They don't say, "We are looking for the meaning of life," "We are looking for the truth," or anything like that. Instead, it seems that they want to spend more time with Jesus, which (obviously) is a good answer in itself! "*Rabbi, where are you staying?*" All these men know at this point is that Jesus is the Lamb of God, and these men want to know more. Basically, they are inviting themselves into the Lord's life. They want to know more!

- III. **Of course, now we get to the Lord's response to their answer to his original question, and the Lord's response to their question is, "COME, AND YOU WILL SEE."**

So, they are not scolded or insulted for not having a good answer, but the Lord gives them an invitation. And we learn from this that Jesus is looking for followers who want to know more. He gives us time, he gives us opportunities to learn. He doesn't give us the "hard sell." There's no arm-twisting going on here. Most of us are pretty turned off by the high-pressure sales gimmicks. Over the past few weeks, Gary has been doing some more research into getting some new windows up here. He's been getting estimates and advice, and this past week Gary met with the elders and went through some of those. And the first one was from a company that gave us 48 hours to accept the offer. This is it - you have two days to accept or reject this offer. And, of course, all four of us immediately said to each other, "Well, that makes it a lot easier, because there is an offer we don't even need to consider!" And so, our choices were narrowed. Jesus, though, doesn't do that. There's no manipulation here, but he gives an open invitation, "*Come, and you will see.*" Investigate. Make up your own mind. No coercion, no pressure, but an invitation to "*come and see.*"

And that is exactly what Andrew and John do. They come and they see. The text tells us that they spend the rest of the day with Jesus, because it was about the tenth hour. We don't know whether this is Roman or Jewish time. Roman time is the time we use today, so **"the tenth hour"** would be 10 o'clock in the morning (ten hours past midnight). Jewish time would be ten hours past sunrise, so about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I would lean toward John using Roman time here, since he was writing so late in the First Century. Ultimately, though, it doesn't really matter to us. What is interesting is that the author gives the exact time. As we discussed last week, we would add this to the list of reasons why we tend to think this is John writing about himself in this passage. He gives the time, because he remembers the exact time that he met Jesus and became a disciple. It would be like us remembering the time of our wedding or the time of the birth of a child - it was a significant event. He meets Jesus at **"the tenth hour."**

We aren't told what they talk about for the rest of the day, but we do know that these two are now disciples of Jesus Christ. They are followers of the Lamb of God. They are students of the Teacher. And from this moment on, these men spend time with Jesus. In fact, over in Mark 3:14, Mark tells us that Jesus **"...appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and [so] that He could send them out to preach."** He appointed twelve **"so that they would be with Him,"** so that they could be his close friends, his students, so that he could train them, so that he could teach them by example, so that he could spend time with them.

And the amazing lesson for us is: We can do what they did! We spend the day with the Lord when we read his words, when we notice how he treated people, when we learn about the amazing things he did when he was here. We "come and see" when we sit down and study with others who also want to learn more about him. We "come and see" when we sit down and read the book of John. Coming to Jesus and seeing for ourselves is an invitation into a relationship. The more serious we are about it and the longer we stick around, the deeper the relationship grows. It starts with an introduction and we grow closer over time.

Conclusion:

So, the question for us today is the same as it was for those first disciples: What are we looking for? As we come to Jesus, what do we want? Obviously, I want to avoid being lost. I want to avoid hell. That's a part of it. But there's so much more to it. Some have tried to describe all of us having a God-shaped hole in our hearts, a void of some kind that only God can fill. The concept was first put into words by Augustine, who said, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." Our hearts are restless until we find rest in Him. The idea is similar to what Paul explained to the philosophers in Athens in Acts 17. He complimented these men on being religious, but he explained that something was missing, something that causes all of us to **"seek God,"** the idea that we grope and feel around in the darkness until we **"find Him,"** even though **"He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist."** Or, as we sometimes sing, "There is a God, He is alive, in Him we live, and we survive." God is always nearby, he wants to be found, but we have this need to go looking until we find him. We have this restlessness, this hole in our hearts.

In today's passage, this emptiness in Andrew and John is filled by Jesus. And the same is true for us. We start to understand that Jesus is the Lamb of God, we see how he lived, we see how he treated others, and we want to be like him. Then, like Andrew and John, we want to know where Jesus is staying so that we can spend time with him and learn. Today, that means spending time in the Word. According to John 1:1, Jesus is the Word. When we are in the Word, we are spending time with the Lord. And that makes Jesus our Teacher.

Is Jesus your teacher? Are we eager to learn from him? And are we really learning? Are we spending time in the Word right now? I think of our visit to a nutritionist years ago. All four of us sat down with her, and she

asked us a really unfair question. She didn't ask us, "What is a nutritious breakfast?" We know the answer to that question. She didn't ask us, "What is the ideal breakfast?" or, "What do you hope to have for breakfast tomorrow?" But instead, she asked us, "What did you have for breakfast this morning?" And we were so busted! So the question for us today is: Do we respect Jesus as our Teacher? Are we learning from him? How much time did we spend in the Word this week? Not: "How much do we hope to read the word this COMING week," but, "How much did we read the Word LAST week?" But regardless whether Jesus is really our teacher right now, the invitation is always open. As John read for us earlier from Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus says, ***"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."***

This morning, we are passing along this invitation. Jesus is the great Teacher. But whether we are his students is completely up to us. He invites us to turn to him in faith, and he calls us to turn from sin and to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins. He invites us to be born into the family. He invites us to come and see. If you have any questions, we hope you'll get in touch. But if you are ready to accept this offer right now, we would love to help in any way we can. You can let us know about your decision as we sing this next song. Let's stand and sing...

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