

Preacher: Pastor Twyla

Scripture: John 1:29-42; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

John 1:29-42: The Lamb of God - 29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God." [a]
The First Disciples of Jesus - 35 The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed[b]). 42 He brought Simon[c] to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter[d]).

Our oldest son, Nicholas, and his wife, Vicki, and our grandchildren, Felicity and Phineas, live in a beautiful home not far from the college in Elizabethtown, PA. Whenever we go to visit them, there's one thing I can always count on happening. Felicity and Phineas will say to me, "Gram, come and see our room."

So, I go with them to see whatever they want to show me. Felicity always wants to show me her jewelry box filled with things that are special to her, like a watch that doesn't work, a spinner, her pitch pipe, a set of three rings, beads, a seashell, and once in a while something new that she's added to her treasures. Phineas, who shares the room with her, likes to show me things he can do on their set of bunk beds. We usually need to take a few minutes to play with their horse farm set that sits in the corner of their room. The last time we were there, we played hide and seek with the toy horses.

After spending time in their room, Felicity wants me to come and watch her do some of her gymnastic moves in the big upstairs room. Up there, she has a high bar and mat and she shows me her improved or new moves, flipping around on the bar. Of course, Phineas, who is younger than Felicity, shows me moves he can do, not on the high bar, but perhaps on the small trampoline.

Lately, Felicity has invited me to come and watch her draw. She's using a YouTube program that shows her how to draw pictures. Her latest interest is a series that has her folding paper into thirds and drawing something on each third. The finished product when collapsed reveals one picture, and when it is opened, it reveals a more complex picture.

These special invitations from Felicity and Phineas to come and see, help me to know their interests, what's important to them, who they are. And as we engage in play together, we

strengthen our relationship with each other. These are special moments of enlightenment and bonding.

In today's scripture lesson, Jesus invites two of John the Baptist's disciples to come and see after they asked Jesus where he was staying. We learn from the beginning of the text that this event took place after John baptized Jesus and he proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah. The next day, John and two of his disciples saw Jesus walk by them; and the two disciples began to follow him. Jesus noticed them following him and that's when they asked where he was staying and Jesus responded by saying, "Come and see."

Now remember, these were two of John the Baptist's disciples. But John told them that Jesus was greater than he. It was John's job to point others to Jesus; he wanted them to know that Jesus was the one they really needed to know and earn from. Jesus, not John himself, was the long-awaited Messiah who would change their world.

As followers of Jesus, it is also our job to point others to him and not to ourselves. There's a wonderful contemporary Christian song sung by the group Casting Crowns that reminds listeners of this lesson. The words to the chorus are "And I, I don't want to leave a legacy, I don't care if they remember me, Only Jesus. And I, I've only got one life to live, I'll let every second point to Him, Only Jesus."

Following Jesus is not about us and what we can get out of it. It's not about making a name for ourselves, getting strokes of affirmation, feeling proud of ourselves; it's about inviting others to come and see Jesus.

Now, back to John's two disciples who, apparently on an impulse and prodded on by John's announcement of Jesus' identity, just took off after Jesus. It appears that they had no plan other than to try to get close to him because when Jesus turned and asked them what it was that they were looking for, they answered with a question: "Where are you staying?" It could have been that at this point John's disciples were simply trying to gather enough information so that they could then find a way to stay nearby, just close enough so that they could listen in and tag along behind — anonymously even maybe at a safe distance. Or maybe they really didn't know just what it was they were looking for. Whatever the case may have been, Jesus didn't answer their question. He simply invited them to "Come and see." And they did. They 'come and see' not only where Jesus was staying but they stuck around for a while. Actually, they stuck around for the next three years and then continued Jesus' ministry after Jesus' resurrection and ascension.

Now admittedly, we don't know exactly what happened when the disciples went with Jesus. The bible simply tells us that they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent the day with him.

Did they see him interacting with family? Hosting the Sabbath meal? Praying over the food? Singing a psalm? Laughing at a joke? Telling stories? Do they see him sharing leftovers with the poor? Talking to unclean people on the way home? Talking about what to do about a widowed neighbor or a depressed friend? Did they hear some of his teaching, or was just seeing how he lived on a random day life-changing enough?

How much time do you spend with Jesus? What has he been showing you? What have you been learning from him? There are many other things competing for our attention. We choose which of those things we want to recognize and give our time to. Whatever we spend the most time with will shape who we are, how we live, and what we show others about what matters in our lives.

We might try to justify our minimal—or lack of—time with Jesus using reasons like, my schedule is too busy, after work I am too tired, I fall asleep when I try to read my bible and pray, I had so many other things on my mind that I just forgot.

Sometimes, it takes discipline to make time for Jesus. Some Sunday mornings, it takes discipline to get up and go to church to worship God instead of rolling over because it is the only morning that we have to sleep in.

Taking a few moments each day to pray the short “Take a Moment” prayer I write for you to use to help your prayer life and to help us build unity as a congregation, takes, perhaps, putting it in a place where we will see it and disciplining ourselves to pray it. Jesus taught us how to pray.

It doesn't need to be a marathon session of using all the proper phrases, coming together in an eloquent, almost poetic sequence of sentences meant to impress God. Prayer connects us with God. God just wants to spend time with you, the real you. With discipline we can make sure to go to God, whether it's for a few minutes here and there, or for a dedicated time period, whether it's to say something or to just listen for God's still small voice, prayer.

The same is true when it comes to reading scripture. It takes discipline. We don't need to read the whole bible in a year. We don't need to read a chapter a day. It may be that we pick up our bible to read it and find ourselves drawn to a particular verse, maybe the only verse we read, and we just need to live with that verse, living, for a while, in the wondering of why we feel drawn to it.

It takes discipline to look for Jesus in your day. Perhaps recognizing his presence in a kindness that someone does for you, he is reminding you to take time to extend kindness to someone you know needs it. Or perhaps in a moment of anger, seeking his presence will help you discern the best way of dealing with your anger instead of taking it out on someone. Or when someone criticizes you, turn to Jesus, remembering that his love for you is greater than any criticism, instead of using someone's criticism to devalue your own self-worth.

Spending time with Jesus really does make a difference in our lives. He invites us to come and see, to experience, to learn, and to know all about him. Whether we go with him out of curiosity, desperate need, or discipline, we can be assured that something will be changed in us.

Whatever the disciples who followed Jesus that day experienced, it was interesting or moving enough for them to tell some others about it, and to give them the same invitation to come and see. Our scripture text tells us that the one disciple, Andrew, went and told his brother Simon Peter that they had found the Messiah, and he took Simon to see Jesus, and Simon ended up getting his name changed to Peter.

The Gospels go on to show us that the circle of Jesus' disciples grew, and they did not come and see what Jesus had to show them only one time—they were there again and again and again. Even more, however, they were so drawn to him and all that he revealed to him that they followed him. They dug in and joined him in bringing his ministry to life and inviting others to join them.

I expect it almost goes without saying that this is also true for us in our lives of faith. **It is only as we join the mission, dig in, and invite others to tag along, that we really see what faith filled lives can mean for the life of the world, and, in turn, for ourselves.**

Indeed, our faith grows as we follow the invitation to 'come and see' over and over again:

It is as we see kindness offered and find a way to practice it ourselves.

It is as we gratefully receive the generous gifts of others and learn to share, in turn, from what we have been given.

It is as we are prayed for that we learn to remember to pray for others.

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It is as we experience forgiveness and then seek reconciliation where it has been broken between us.

It is as we hear the call for justice and join others in working for it.

It is as we 'come and see' in all these ways, as the disciples did with Jesus so long ago, that faith is born and grows and is passed on.

Yes, my brothers and sisters, Jesus is urgently calling all of us to come and see, today, tomorrow, the next day and the day after that, and every day after that. Come and bond with Jesus. And while you're digging in to help with his mission, think about just who you might invite to come along and see as well! Our friends, our family, our neighbors and our world need us to invite them through all we say and do to come and see. We can change the world starting in our corner of it, and what a blessing it will be for all. Let every second point to Jesus. Amen.