Jan 7 2018 Epiphany John 1

Jan. 7, 2018 Jesus Says Come and See John 1:35-51 (Psalm 66:1-5) Liturgical color: White

**PRAYER OF THE DAY God of all people, You called many by name, asking them to follow Jesus and obey. Call us by name, and help us to follow and obey. Amen.**

Psalm 66:1 <To the leader. A Song. A Psalm.> Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;

 2 sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise. 3 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! Because of your great power, your enemies cringe before you.

 4 All the earth worships you; they sing praises to you, sing praises to your name." Selah 5 **Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds among mortals.**

Announcements prayers

2018 Office hours will be MW 11:30-3:30 TRF 9a-1p Marie P healing at home

 Baby born early & mom are healthy!

Many meetings this week check WFMZ!

*Any snow dates?*

Directories, offering envelopes and sign-ups Bible study,

Sunday morning readers, PEP, youth activities…

*Children’s Message last week was don’t ignore Pearl at the lectern by being blinded by expectation that Pastor would read scripture from aisle ☺ God works in ways we don’t anticipate or expect… don’t miss what God is up to.*

*This week: Epiphany – star – light – communion bread star connection? Baptism of Jesus (last week)*

*Wise guys.*

*Hide the Hot chocolate & have the children find it {with the wise men of nativity scene} – come and see!* Something you do not expect*.* Something good or something bad… how do we share different news? With whom?

This good news about Jesus is for everyone! Come and see (at church, at school, at home…) come and see the love of God.

Sermon:

While it is true that the heavens are ripped apart and God Almighty comes to live among humanity as a baptized person from Nazareth… humans have little to nothing to do with this mysterious amazing grace. On the other hand… humans in this passage are far from passive when they encounter Jesus. We too receive the sin-removing love of God in Jesus the Christ in baptism, as a free-gift that cannot be earned by anything we have done or left undone… and as a result, we cannot stay silent and passive about this remarkable gift… we too have an active role as Christians: ‘Come and See!’

Come and see (in the Bible)

In John’s gospel we will hear this refrain from the lips of the woman of Samaria (Jn 4:29) and from the friends of Lazarus as they direct Jesus toward his friend’s tomb before weeping. (Jn 11:34); ‘come and see’ was used before that to make a point about something important, that a witness does not want to be forgotten over time:

* 2 Kings 10:16 Jehu massacre of Baal followers – There is only one God
* Psalm 41:6; Psalm 59:4; Psalm 66! – the wonders of God’s mighty deeds

And most notably for us today, Isaiah 66:18… I, the LORD, will set a sign among them…

*At a time of judgement:*

 17 Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following the one in the center, eating the flesh of pigs, vermin, and rodents, shall come to an end together, says the LORD. 18 For I know their works **and** their thoughts, **and** I am coming to gather all nations **and** tongues; **and they shall come and shall see my glory**,

 19 **and I will set a sign among them. From them I will send survivors to the nations**, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud-- which draw the bow-- to Tubal and Javan**, to the coastlands far away that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations.**

 20 They shall bring all your kindred from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and on mules, and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring a grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD.

 21 **And I will also take some of them as priests and as Levites, says the LORD.**

 22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, says the LORD; so shall your descendants and your name remain.

 23 From new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath, **all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the LORD**.

 24 And they shall go out and look at the dead bodies of the people who have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh. *{Here ends the book of Isaiah}*

Come and See… the wonders that God has done, God is doing and God will do:

Back to the verse before our reading today… where we ended last week: “This is the Son of God!” says John. The next day, John is standing with 2 of **his** (John’s) disciples… and again (John sees Jesus as in 1:29 and) exclaims “here is the Lamb of God” (Jn 1:36)… [this time] the 2 disciples heard him say this and they followed Jesus. {They left John, their mentor! An action John encourages, because this teaching is not about John, rather John’s teaching is all about Jesus; and getting others to follow Jesus no matter where that takes them away from John.} It seems those former disciples of John didn’t say anything to Jesus; they silently follow… and Jesus notices that he is being followed.

Remember John has told his disciples, and anyone who will listen, that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the **SIN** of the world {*as I said last week*}. **One** sin… not all the stuff we have done, or have left undone… no, in John’s gospel **the sin of the world, is** alienation from God. When John has the opportunity he re-directs people to God, God in the flesh, Jesus the Christ! John directs, Jesus does the rest.

 ~~One of the ways we are alienated from God is by being alienated from one another… Nathaniel wanted nothing to do with Jesus, because Jesus was from Nazareth.~~

Jesus asks WHAT are you looking for (not WHO). But John’s disciples asked a different question: WHERE.

**Jesus said come and see**… they saw WHERE… one was Andrew (1:41 Andrew **went and found** his brother) and speaking in 2 languages so there is no confusion… Andrew announces the successful quest… we have found the Messiah! (Aramaic/Hebrew) which is translated Christ… for whom they have been looking! ~~Maybe they thought John was the Messiah until John said ‘no, I AM not!’~~

(1:42) Andrew then brought/*led (Gk lit.)* Simon to Jesus who immediately knew him as Simon, son of John} Jesus {looked straight at/**SEE** Gk lit} Simon and Sees right through Simon to a new identity: Jesus renamed Simon - Cephas which is the Aramaic equivalent of Petros in greek meaning rock. This simple act of sharing good news by saying ‘Come and See’ … actually the witness means ‘come and see with me!’ together the first witness accompanies their friend as together they follow Jesus and learn from Jesus, as disciples do from their rabbi.

1:43 the next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee… there the tables are turned and this time it is **Jesus**  **who finds** Philip and says follow me! Philip was from Bethsaida, the same city as Andrew and Peter… **now** Philip is the one who leaves for a moment and finds a friend to whom he witnesses the good news. {This is evangelistic ministry! When something great happens, Philip’s first impulse is to share this wonderful find with a friend who does not yet know about this amazing occurrence! We have found the one we are seeking! Philip is clear - “Moses in the law, and the prophets, Jesus son of Joseph of Nazareth”… there is no ambiguity… this is the earthly sign-post of identity.

Nathaniel may have been part of the group on the messiah quest… but he’s partially blinded by his own pre-conceived notions; by his own perceptions… {great we found the Messiah} but from Nazareth?! Really, Nathanael cannot believe that anything good can come from Robesonia. Notice that it is Philip, his friend, who calls Nathanael on this limiting imagination! By simply saying ‘Come and See’, with me.

This simple action of ‘Come and See, with me’ is a step toward recognizing the SIN of the world, alienation from God. One of the ways we are alienated from God is by being alienated from one another… Nathaniel wanted nothing to do with Jesus, because Jesus was from Nazareth.

This is funny because Nazareth is a slightly larger small town to the west in the hills of the region of Galilee. If you look at a Biblical map you will often see Nazareth… but not Bethsaida, there is now disagreement even about the location of Bethsaida! Bethsaida may have been a tiny hamlet just north of the Sea of Galilee. This could be like people from Robesonia and Stouchburg debating which town is more important based on size and reputation. So Bethsaida is likely nothing more than Nazareth.

Well, anyway… Nathaniel wanted nothing to do with Jesus, because Jesus was from Robesonia… I mean Nazareth! ☺ Almost alienated… Look what Nathaniel would have missed! Andrew found Jesus, and he followed Jesus after the invitation to come and see! Then Andrew parted from the disciple he accompanied that afternoon in order to go get his brother Simon… whom Jesus renamed immediately to Peter, the rock! Then Jesus found Philip and said follow me… Phillip went and got one of his friends; and said come and see! With me.

To his credit Nathanael does go along with Philip… and then he gets a surprise of his life {ironic since they’ve presumably been looking for the Messiah since the time of Isaiah (about 500 years) yet the surprise is not so much that they found the Messiah… it was that this guy from Nazareth SAW Nathanael under a fig tree… before Philip CALLED him!

Then comes a divine identity sign-post… Rabbi (human term); Nathaniel confesses, you are the Son of God… the King of Israel!

The response of Jesus is almost humorous! ‘You think that’s a miracle?! Seeing you under a tree? You believe because of *that?*  We can almost hear the laughter in his voice as Jesus reveals so much more that Nathanael will see… Heaven opened! Angels of God! Ascending and descending[[1]](#footnote-1) upon the son of Man!” This is what Jesus will say to Mary Magdaline on Easter morning at the tomb!

Come and See with me… Jesus takes the lead.

As baptized Christians… we keep our eyes open to observe the ways that God is present and active in the world… when we observe a star shining brightly, or someone who brings light into darkness… or something miraculous like healing from prayer… find a friend with whom to share the good news; and extend an invitation to come as see, with me! Jesus does the rest.

Today we thank those who have shared this invitation with us, like John, Andrew, and Philip… please take a moment to tell the person near you; someone who invited you to faith, or church, or to see a wonderful act of God in life… Thank you Jesus for these people in our lives: …

Jesus we pray, open our eyes so that we can see the wonders you bring to light… come into our hearts, fill us with wonder, and may your abundant spirit compel us to burst out with the invitation to Come and See, with me. Amen.

1. { *anabaino* and *katabaino*… connect with cross} [↑](#footnote-ref-1)