

IN THE PRESENCE OF JESUS

JOHN 1:35-42

As this passage opens, it is three days into the accounting of John's narrative. During the last two days, John the Baptist has been talking about Jesus. On this day, our attention is drawn away from John the Baptist and he steps entirely out of the picture.

Both this day and the following day will be taken up with accounts of how different people meet Jesus. If we were to give this period a title, we could call it: "A weekend of encounters with Christ."

Day		Events of that Day
Thursday	John the Baptist gives testimony about himself and about Jesus	John speaks to the delegation from Jerusalem about his ministry (John 1:19-28).
Friday		John publicly introduces Jesus and describes the events that took place at least 41 days earlier at His baptism (John 1:29-.34).
Saturday	A weekend of encounters with Jesus	John points out Jesus to two of his disciples and they follow Him, spending the day with Him. Later that day, one of them brings his brother, Simon, to Jesus (John 1:35-42).
Sunday		Philip and Nathaniel meet Jesus (John 1:43-51).
Note: The specific days of the week are not mentioned in John's account but are suggested by the popular practice among the Jews of that period to hold wedding feasts on Wednesday. This may or may not have been the case with the wedding feast of John 2.		

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN

35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (John 1:35-36).

As this day opens, it begins once more with John on the banks of the Jordan River. There are two men with him. They are described as two of his disciples. They are men who had devoted themselves to following John and learning from him. They would be the very first to follow Jesus. Who are they?

One is Andrew. His name shall be given in verse 40 where he is described as *Andrew, Simon Peter's brother*. When the Bible describes Andrew, it generally describes him as the brother of Simon Peter. He seems to have spent his life walking in the shadow of his brother. Peter was a leader. Andrew was a follower. I can't help but wonder if Andrew ever had problems with this. I don't think so. The reason I don't think so is because of this passage. It tells of when Andrew took the initiative and the leadership. Indeed, if it had not been for Andrew, you never would have heard of Simon Peter.

The other disciple is not named. We never see his name anywhere in the gospel of John. I tend to think this other disciple is the apostle John himself, the writer of the account. John never mentions himself by name in this book. I suspect it is because John does not want to bring the focus upon himself, but to put it solely upon Jesus. He wants to hold up Jesus and he is determined not even to mention himself by name, lest he detract from the story of Jesus.

Imagine the scene. Verse 35 tells us that *John was standing with two of his disciples*. Though the passage does not tell us, I suspect that I know what they were talking about. They were talking about what John the Baptist was always talking about. He was talking about the kingdom.

Suddenly he stops. For a moment there is silence with only the soft rippling of the Jordan to break the stillness. A figure is passing by. It is a man. John points to Him and he speaks.

"Behold, the Lamb of God!" (1:36).

John had said the same thing yesterday. Perhaps these same two disciples had heard him say it on the previous day. They have pondered John's word. They are words that call for a corresponding action. If this person is indeed the Lamb of God, then it calls for an action on their part. If He is indeed the Lamb of God, it calls for an action on your part, too.

Why was Jesus called a "Lamb?" There are a lot of other things that He might have been called.

- The Lion who reigns over sin
- The Elephant who crushes sin
- The Bear who destroys sin
- The Eagle who sees sin
- The.... Lamb?

Why a Lamb? I think that there are several reasons.

- Represents purity: *“Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like WOOL” (Isaiah 1:18).*
“Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things... but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19).
- Gentleness: *“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a LAMB that is led to the slaughter, and like a SHEEP that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).*
- Represents a Sacrifice: *“...For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7b).*

When a Hebrew living in Biblical times heard the word “lamb,” he thought immediately of a sacrifice. An innocent substitute. He knew that the only way he could ever approach God was upon the basis of a sacrifice. And that sacrifice was usually a lamb.

- One lamb for a man.
- One lamb for a family.
- One lamb for the nation.
- One Lamb for the world.

The lamb was an innocent substitute. It had done no sin. But it was put to death for the sins of another. Jesus did that, too. He is the substitute for sin. He died instead of us.

MEETING JESUS

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" And they said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?"

39 He said to them, "Come, and you will see." They came therefore and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. (John 1:37-39).

These two disciples hear John the Baptist speak. They decide his words are true. Their decision brings forth a corresponding action. Because they believe, they follow.

Before we leave John the Baptist, I want you to notice something. We have no indication that these two disciples ever went back to John. He is losing two of his best disciples. He doesn't send a letter to Jesus, asking Him to send them back. He doesn't seem to resent

the fact that they have abandoned him. This issue will come up in the third chapter of John, but it will not be John the Baptist who brings it up. He does not think poorly of them because they have left him. If anything, he has prompted them to go.

John realizes something that a lot of preachers and teachers today seem to miss. The ministry is God's ministry. The people within a ministry are God's people. Preachers and teachers often get possessive with the people under their ministry. I know this because I am a preacher and a teacher. The problem is that preachers and teachers (myself included) begin to think of the ministry as THEIR ministry. It is not.

John has taken these two disciples as far along the road to discipleship as he is able. It is time for another to take over.

I have had this same experience. There are people whom I have discipled and trained who reached a stage where they needed to leave and go out and be discipled by someone else. That is a good thing because it is a necessary part of growth.

1. An Insightful Question: *Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" (1:38).*

I find it interesting that Jesus did not ask, "Whom are you seeking?" The question in both the Greek text as well as in our English translation is: "What do you seek?" It is a key question.

For what are you looking? What do you want out of life? If I were to ask you that question right now, you could probably give me an answer, but it would most likely not be what you are really looking for in life.

You are no different from these two disciples. They are going to give an inadequate answer to the question of Jesus. He asks them what they are seeking and they are going to ask for Jesus' local address. It is evident they want more than that.

These two men have left their homes, their businesses and their families to follow John the Baptist. They have demonstrated an intense desire to find God. They have a spiritual need. They have been seeking to satisfy that need. Even John the Baptist has not been able to fully satisfy that need. If he had been able to do so, they would not have left him to follow Jesus.

This brings us to a question. Did Jesus know what it was for which they were looking? Was He aware of their spiritual need? I think that He was. If that is the case and if He knew what was their need, then why did He ask them what they were looking for?

It was to show them their need. This is the way God works. He never begins to teach you a spiritual truth until He has shown you a need for that truth. God uses your needs. His primary ingredient for growth is need.

This accounts for some of our failures in the area of evangelism. We attempt to save people who do not yet realize they are lost. We attempt to bring people to Jesus when they do not know that they need Jesus. People are called to grow to spiritual fulness when they have not yet known spiritual hunger.

It is for this reason I think Jesus brings these two disciples face to face with their need. He does it by asking them a question: "What do you seek?"

2. A Flustered Answer: *And they said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" (1:38).*

The question of Jesus put them on the spot. They are taken back by this question. Perhaps they are a bit flustered. Their mind goes blank and they give the first answer that comes to mind. "Where are you staying?"

I want you to see the humor in this situation. These two Bible College students approach the Lamb of God, the Lord of all creation. What deep, theological question do they ask of Him? Where do you live?

It is evident that they wanted more than just the street address of Jesus. They had a pressing need. But they were not exactly sure what it was.

3. A Gracious Reply: *He said to them, "Come, and you will see." (1:39).*

What was the response of Jesus to this lame request? Did He say, "Man, that's about the dumbest question I've ever heard." Did He ignore them? Did He use the opportunity to launch into a sermon?

No. He simply says, "*Come, and you will see.*" This is the invitation of Jesus. He invites you to come and see. He invites you to examine His claims and He invites you to come and to get to know Him. For what are you looking in life? Your needs will be answered in this simple invitation.

4. A Day with Jesus: *They came therefore and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour (1:39).*

It has been suggested by some that this was the Sabbath day. This is based upon a popular practice among the Jews to begin a wedding feast on Wednesdays (a wedding would be described in John 2:1). Counting back the days would make

this particular day a Sabbath. Excessive travel was prohibited on the Sabbath. Jesus was evidently staying close by. He goes to His place of lodging to spend the day and these two men go with Him.

We are told that it was about the tenth hour. A close study of John's gospel account indicates that he utilized the Roman system of reckoning time in contrast to the other three gospel accounts. By that Roman system, this would be 10 a.m. These disciples spent the entire day with Jesus.

What kind of man was Jesus? He was the kind of man with whom you could sit down on the Sabbath and with whom you could talk. He was a friend to sinners and to tax collectors. He was a warm, accepting person. He spoke freely with Samaritans and with men and with women and with children.

There is something compellingly winsome in this simple account. It reminds us that Christianity is not so much taught as it is caught. These men spent the day with Jesus. They saw how He lived. They saw Him in His shirt sleeves. Because of that, they came to believe in Him.

What drew you to Jesus? Was it an eloquent sermon and a brilliant presentation of the evidences of Christianity? Or was it the winsomeness of Jesus?

BRINGING SIMON PETER TO JESUS

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). (John 1:40-42).

Andrew is not mentioned very often in the gospel accounts. He is usually in the background, mentioned only in the context of the other disciples. The Gospel of John mentions him three times. Each of these three times, he is seen bringing someone to Jesus.

Passage	Andrew's Action
John 1	He brings Simon Peter to Jesus
John 6	He brings a boy with 5 loaves and 2 fish to Jesus

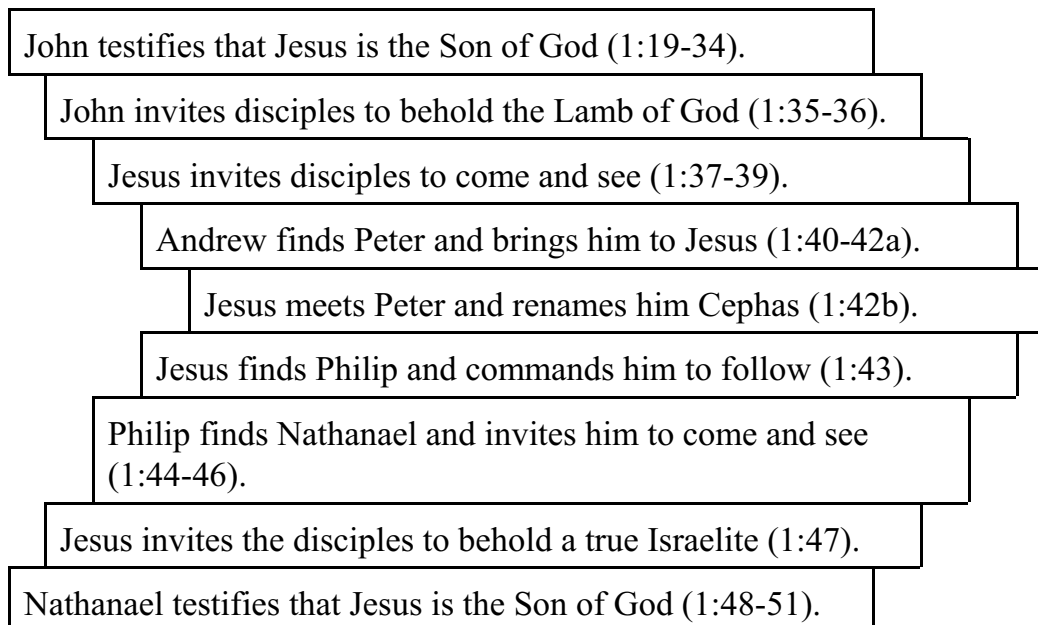
John 12	He and Philip bring Greeks to Jesus
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This is the picture we have of Andrew. Once he had come to meet Jesus, he wanted to share that experience with others. The first person he tells is his brother, Simon.

Here are a pair of brothers who seem to be completely different. Andrew seems to be quiet and reserved. Simon is an extrovert. He will develop the reputation of being the apostle with the foot-shaped mount. Yet both will become disciples of Jesus.

There is a lesson to be learned in this. It is that Jesus calls all types of personalities. He calls the loud, boisterous Simon. He also calls the quiet and reserved Simon.

We ought to take note that the calling of Simon occupies a central place in this chapter. This is noted in the following chart:



1. An Illuminating Claim: *He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (1:41).*

In verse 38, the two disciples of John the Baptist had called Jesus by the title, "Rabbi." They had seen Him and had understood Him to be a teacher. But now, after spending the day with Him, Andrew is ready to proclaim Him as the Messiah.

The word "Messiah" is a Hebrew word. It is the counterpart of the Greek word, "Christ (Χριστός)." Both of these terms have an identical meaning. They both describe "the anointed one." It is a reference to the promise from the Old Testament of the One whom God would anoint with His own Spirit.

2. An Introductory Meeting: *He brought him to Jesus (1:42).*

We could call Andrew the first modern evangelist. He did not stand behind a pulpit. He did not preach a lengthy sermon. He did not wax eloquent. He simply brought a man to Jesus.

In 1856, there was a Sunday School teacher named Edward Kimball who taught a small class of teenage boys at the Mount Vernon Congregational Church by the Charles River in Boston. He wasn't a particularly gifted teacher, but he determined to visit one of his boys where he worked at a shoe store. He walked back and forth outside the store for several minutes before getting up the nerve to enter. Nervous and haltingly, he spoke to the boy in the back room of the store and led him to faith in Jesus Christ. The boy's name was D. L. Moody.

D. L. Moody became the most noted evangelist of his day, conducting revival campaigns throughout the United States and England. Thousands came to know the Lord through his ministry. Yet you never would have heard of D. L. Moody if it had not been for the faithful witness of that humble Sunday School teacher, Ed Kimball.

It could be that God has not called you to be a Simon Peter or a D. L. Moody. You may not feel comfortable preaching in front of a congregation or leading masses of people to Christ. But you can still be an Edward Kimball. You can still be an Andrew. You can still bring a single person to meet Jesus.

3. An Insightful Naming: *Jesus looked at him, and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas " (which is translated Peter). (1:42).*

The name of Andrew's brother was Simon. It was a Jewish name. He had been named after Simeon, the impetuous son of Jacob. Simon was a lot like his namesake. He was impetuous and unstable. He suffered from a hoof and mouth syndrome -- he had a habit of putting his hoof into his mouth.

He is going to be given a new name. He is going to be called Cephas. That is an Aramaic term. It carries the same meaning as the Greek name Peter (Πετρος). It means "rock."

Simon is going to become Peter. He has been impetuous and unstable, but that will eventually change. His life is going to change. He will become stabilized. He will become the leader of the new church.

There is a principle here. It is that Christianity changes people. If you are a

believer and have been one for some time and your life has not changed, then perhaps you should check your Christianity.

On the other hand, this change does not come about immediately. We are going to see a gradual change in Peter, but there will be times when he acts like the same old Simon. It will take a long time for Peter to reach this point of stability.

- He will not seem particularly stable when he tries to walk on water and begins to sink.
- He will not seem very stable when he tries to tell Jesus not to go to the cross.
- He will be anything but stable when he denies Jesus three times.
- He will not be too stable when Paul rebukes him for compromising the truth of the Gospel.

This brings about an important lesson. It is that reaching the point of mature stability takes TIME. It would take Simon many years and many failures. This is how God works.

As Simon comes to Jesus, Jesus sees something in this man. He sees beyond the instability. He sees the mature, steadfast believer that God will make of him. And so, Jesus names him Peter -- the rock.

God has a name for you. It is a new name. When He looks at you, He does not see a Simon. He sees someone special. He sees what you will be someday. He sees Jesus.

*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become **conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the first-born among many brethren (Romans 8:29).*