

## John, Part 4: Partners with Jesus to Reach the World, John 1:35-39

**John 1:35 ESV** The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, **36** and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” **37** The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. **38** Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which 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.

- I. This morning we are going to continue our study of John chapter one by learning a couple of truths from Jesus’ gathering of his first disciples.
  - A. “The disciples” refer to Jesus’ 12 closest associates. The word “disciple” means a pupil, student, or learner.
    1. It was common for Jewish sages and philosophers in Jesus’ day to have groups of disciples that would follow them, being educated by them.
    2. The two men that followed Jesus after John points to him are saying that they are recognizing this is the type of relationship they desire with Christ when they address him as “Rabbi” (teacher).
    3. There are several passages throughout the gospels that show that Jesus had many other disciples, men and women, but that these 12 men from all walks of life were the closest to him.
    4. Even among the 12, Jesus seems to have had a particularly close relationship with 3 in particular: Simon Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John. It is recorded that on at least 3 separate occasions, Jesus allowed only these three to accompany him; at the resurrection of Jairus’ daughter, during the transfiguration, and during his prayer in the garden in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before his crucifixion.
  - B. The 12 were more than mere students, however. Christ also named his disciples “**the apostles**” the word apostle means “one who is sent”, or a messenger. This indicates that Jesus always had the “big picture” in mind; that those whom he had chosen to teach personally would continue to preach his message and do the works of ministry that he had done on an ongoing basis.
  - C. There are three comprehensive lists of the 12 apostles in each of the three synoptic gospels (Matthew 10, Mark 3, Luke 6).
    1. They are identical in Matthew and Mark. Luke, however, calls Thaddeus “Judas the son of James”. He also calls “Simon the Cananean” “Simon the Zealot”.
    2. John has no comprehensive list of the 12 disciples, but he mentions 8 or 9 of them specifically throughout his book.
  - D. It’s also important to note that John’s account in chapter 1 is not the only story of how Jesus chose his disciples in the gospels.
    1. Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell of James and John, who were called by Jesus as they worked their normal day-to-day jobs as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. They all place Simon Peter with them in their accounts, but we

learn from John that Peter had most likely been introduced to Christ by his brother Andrew at an earlier date.

2. Matthew says he was selected while working at his job as a tax collector; an occupation that caused him to be viewed as a Roman sympathizer.
  3. We have no information on how the others came to follow Christ, but there are hints scattered throughout the gospels about their personalities, associations, and devotion to Christ.
    - a) Simon the Cananean is called “the Zealot” in Luke because he was a member of a radical, insurrectionist party called “the Zealots”.
      - (1) What a contrast to Matthew, the tax collector who worked for the foreign occupying power!
      - (2) What do you think that can teach us about Christ’s ability to bridge even our most deep political divides?
    - b) Three times in John we see that Thomas has a tendency toward pessimism, yet that he was also deeply committed to following Christ.
    - c) Phillip shows a evangelistic drive during the life of Christ (as we will see next week in our text). We see that this passion to preach the gospel to the lost continued after Pentecost according to Acts 8.
- E. Probably the most important fact (and without a doubt my favorite one!) about the 12 disciples is found in Mark’s list of their names in **Mark 3:13 HCSB Then He went up the mountain and summoned those He *wanted*, and they came to Him.**
1. Now think about that for just a moment. It’s obvious from reading the gospels that these guys weren’t on society’s “A” list, that they were not the most talented, or spiritual...sometimes they were flat out knuckleheads! But the scripture says Jesus **wanted** them to be his disciples.
  2. I don’t know about you, but I take comfort in this fact! I too am not such a smart or talented guy; but what if I am a disciple simply because Jesus **wants** me?.
  3. What if we are his disciples, not because (as I’ve said before) that we figured out that we needed him; but solely because he **wanted** us.
- F. **1 Corinthians 1:26 ESV For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.**
1. Unwise. Not powerful. Not of Noble birth. Low and despised. I know that this is true about me! How about you? Where were you when Christ found you? Who were you? What did your life look like?
  2. Rest assured, no matter how highly you or I might tend to think about ourselves, when we got God and God got us, God got the short end of this deal! But good news! He loves us way too much to leave us as he found us!
- G. **1 Corinthians 1:30 ESV And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and**

redemption, **31** so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

1. Did you follow what Paul’s saying there? You **were** unwise, and not powerful, and not of noble birth, and low and despised; but because you are in Christ, all of that has changed.
  2. And it’s not because you had your act together, or even got it together later; but because you are in Christ! He did the heavy lifting! Paul says he became **to us** wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption from God! Now, we boast in God because of this fact. And we call that “worship”!
- H. Later, in 1 Corinthians 6, Paul makes a long list of sins that disqualify us from participation in the Kingdom of God, but then he says something amazing about those who have placed their trust in Christ alone in spite of their sin...
1. **1 Corinthians 6:11 ESV** And such **were** some of you. But you **were** washed, you **were** sanctified, you **were** justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
  2. Thank God that through his washing, sanctifying, and justifying of us in the name of the Lord Jesus, by the Spirit of God, our old life of sin and guilt and shame is now **past tense!**
  3. As Randy Daniel likes to say, “If you is what you was, then you ain’t!”
- I. But there is so much more that we can we learn about being a disciple! What I want to do is discover what we can, over the next two weeks, using our passage in John 1 as a case study, about our lives as disciples of Jesus.
- II. **John 1:35 ESV** The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, **36** and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” **37** The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.
- A. We talked about this last week, but it bears some repeating. The first thing we see about discipleship is that **The testimony of another is vital for anyone to become a follower of Jesus.** In other words, we all hear the story of Jesus Christ somewhere. Without hearing Christ’s story, we cannot be his followers!
1. Where did you hear about Jesus? Was it at the church you grew up in? Perhaps a concerned friend pointed you towards the gospel. Maybe you heard the gospel on the TV or at a concert. Perhaps your parents told you the story at such an early age that you can’t remember ever not believing!
  2. But the fact remains, if you are a believer, it is because someone cared enough to share the story of Jesus, what we call “the gospel”, with you, and you believed.
- B. **Romans 10:14 ESV** How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
1. Motivated by deep love for Christ, and awe of his mission and majesty, John again bears witness, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God!” He was impressed with Jesus!
    - a) Who impresses you? Donald Trump? Dak Prescott? Some actor of musician? What if they walked in the church right now? Love ‘em or hate ‘em, you would tell everyone you know that they showed up this morning!

- b) Once I was trying to have a business meeting at a coffee shop with a guy and Marsha Sharp walked in. The meeting was over at that point! This guy was starstruck! He couldn't focus on another word I said!
  - (1) My heart aches for you and I to have an infinitely greater reaction to the presence of Jesus; that all of us were blown away that he was here, but we're just not! Most of us (including me) show up way too often and simply work our way through the motions and routine.
  - (2) And it's not about here, in this building, once every week, but every day! I want love for Jesus to overwhelm me; love for the one who said "I will never leave you or forsake you" and "I am with you always!"
- 2. It's so easy to talk about what thrills us: Young love, the success of our favorite sports teams, the new house, car or raise. So what does that tell us about our love for, and satisfaction in, the Lord Jesus?
- 3. And what happens when young love becomes old love? The our team loses? When the house needs painting and the car has 100,000 miles on it? When inflation catches up with our raise? Have we started treating Christ as 'yesterday's news'? Are we like B.B. King when he sang, "The thrill is gone?"
  - a) **Revelation 2:4 ESV** But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. **5** Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.
  - b) Their love had not faded. Jesus says they abandoned it.
- C. It seems to me that one of the marks of a true, in-love-with-Jesus disciple is the inability to keep quiet about how you feel about Jesus!
  - 1. Early in my Christian life I've worked hard to tell people about Jesus out of duty, or out of some fear of not pulling my weight in the kingdom. The results of this have never been long lasting, effective or satisfying.
    - a) I was simply trying to make my quota, and check a spiritual discipline off of my imaginary list.
    - b) Do we really think Jesus needs or wants us to do that? Do we think that our memorized scripts and dutiful strategies are even remotely helpful in advancing the Kingdom of God?
  - 2. When I decided (by accident) that instead of trying to be a model Christian, I was just going to revel in how amazing Jesus was, I fell deeper in love with him! Then sharing the gospel story became much less of an obstacle for me.
    - a) Think back to when you first believed. Aren't you really grateful for the person or persons that told you what Jesus had done and who he was? It was the greatest kindness that anyone has ever done for you!
    - b) So shouldn't we 'pay it forward'? What if you faced whatever fears you might have, or whatever apathy you might have embraced and, out of renewed love for Jesus, you targeted just one person, someone that you truly care about, and determined to have ongoing conversations about the gospel with them until they too became his disciple?

- c) This requires absolutely no preaching skill, on trips across town to skid row, or to a mission field in Africa; Your close, trusting, already formed relationships are the best place to start.
  - 3. Now notice the progression of this story. John the Baptist starts a process by pointing with his life and words to Jesus. I want you to see how Jesus takes over, and let what happens next inform and empower your prayers for your lost friends, family members and co-workers.
- III. **John 1:38 ESV** Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which 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. (4:00PM)
  - A. Jesus asks the two men following him, who had been pointed to him by John the Baptist, “What are you seeking?”
  - B. This question was not mere small talk on the part of Jesus. He is asking these men to fully explore the ramifications of what they are doing, and the risk involved with whom they are pursuing. What we notice from this is that, ***The call to discipleship begins with a diagnostic question from Jesus.***
    - 1. This is never because God needs information he does not have, but because of something we need to acknowledge; a healing truth, or the real state of our innermost heart and soul.
    - 2. A great example is seen in the Garden of Eden, when after Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, the Father goes for a walk in the garden where the man and his wife are now hiding, and he calls out, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9) Was God asking because he couldn’t locate them?
    - 3. No! The question was diagnostic. His concern was to expose the real state of their souls, so they would not live the rest of their lives in a fig-leaf covered lie, thinking that they were OK, or that they could manage and work this mess they’d gotten themselves into out.
    - 4. That was the effect of the question, wasn’t it? Remember their answer? “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” (Genesis 3:10)
  - C. Because he was one with the Father, Jesus also asked various diagnostic questions throughout his ministry; things like, “What do you want me to do for you?”, “Do you want to be made well?”, “Why do you call me ‘good’?”, and “Who do you say that I am?” to name a few.
  - D. These types of questions from God are important because we cannot enter the life of a disciple without being honest about who we are and where we are.
    - 1. There may be people here this morning who are not yet Christians and need to answer such questions. What question is Jesus asking you this morning? “Where are you?”, “What do you want do you want me to do?”, “Do you want to be made well?”, “Who do you say that I am?”
  - E. We must enter and participate in the Kingdom of God through honesty, by allowing Christ to assess and diagnose us in truth, and then by acknowledging who we really are.

1. Christianity is not a meritocracy. The grand prize doesn't go to the one who knows the most Bible verses by heart or says the fewest cuss words.
  2. Beginning a life of following Jesus, what we call being "born again", happens only when we recognize 3 things:
    - a) That we are deeply, critically, fatally flawed in the ways we think and act, and in the things we value and hope in.
    - b) That the only way out of our mess is for someone to rescue us because we are incapable of rescuing ourselves.
    - c) And that Jesus is the only someone that can save us.
      - (1) That's what we mean when we say that Jesus died for our sins and rose again to give us a new life.
      - (2) That's why we tell people to be filled with his Spirit after you believe so that he can transform you from the inside out.
      - (3) These are things that, though many have tried and still try, no human being can do for themselves. Genuine Christianity requires absolute trust in Christ alone; not your good works or best efforts.
  3. If you want to begin this life of trust in Jesus, come see me after the service. Jesus is waiting for you.
- F. Jesus asked the men following him that day, "What are you seeking?" He's asking the same thing to you today. Their answer was to ask, "Where are you staying?" In essence, they were simply saying, "We want to be where you are."
1. Jesus didn't respond by saying, "Well it's kind of late, and you guys appear to be stalking me...why don't we meet at Starbucks tomorrow and talk about the 4 Spiritual Laws?"
  2. No. His response was beautiful. "Come and see." This is always the way Jesus responds to those who want to be where he is. He doesn't make you wait, or jump through complicated hoops. He simply says, "Come and see."
  3. **John 6:37 ESV All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.**
- IV. So how does this all come together? Simply this. It is by the grace of God that we are allowed to participate in his work. Our job of spreading the gospel is best accomplished by becoming so filled with a sense of the beauty and glory of the love of God on display through the gospel, that we cannot remain silent.
- A. If this is not where we are, let's be quick to repent and ask the Lord to overwhelm us with his glory once again. He wants to woo us back, so that our first love might be restored.
  - B. But remember, the proclamation of the gospel is not our job alone. It is a partnership. We like John the Baptist must constantly point people to Jesus with the word of our testimony. Let us always be found saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
  - C. But let us also pray for those we are pointing to Jesus, that they would have open ears, and clearly hear him saying, "What are you seeking?"