

Today we hear Jesus' first spoken words in John's gospel. Two men, disciples of John the Baptizer, decide to follow Jesus after they hear their teacher's testimony of what he witnessed at Jesus' baptism. Jesus is aware they are behind him. He turns and asks, "*What are you looking for?*"

In later half of the first decade of the 2000's, the Irish rock band U2's songs inspired a liturgy in Episcopal and Anglican churches called the U2charist. You may have heard of it. The service, infused with the band's music, highlighted a global focus of unity and service. These are a portion of the lyrics of one of their songs. Their composer, the band's vocalist Bono, in an interview with Rolling Stone magazine, called it "*a gospel song with a restless spirit, an anthem of doubt more than faith.*" Joshua Rothman, a writer for The New Yorker, called it "*A song that celebrates wanting.*"

*I have climbed the highest mountains  
I have run through the fields  
Only to be with you  
(Only to be with you)*

*I have run, I have crawled  
I have scaled these city walls  
(These city walls)  
Only to be with you  
But I still haven't found  
What I'm looking for...<sup>1</sup>*

So, I wonder, what are we wanting, what are we looking for, who are we searching for, here in this place, on this cold Sunday morning?

Companionship?    Comfort?    Music?    Spiritual Nourishment?    Relief from the news of the world?  
Perhaps a bit of the *Good News?*

*"What are you looking for?"*

I think the two who followed Jesus were caught completely off guard by his question. Jesus does not ask, "why are you following me?" That would have been more expected. "*What are you looking for?*"

Of course, they were curious about this "*Lamb of God*" after the buildup their teacher has given him. Perhaps startled by Jesus' directness, their answer seems as unsure as our own might be when addressed by a person they were probably just a little afraid of, .....and not just a little in awe of,..... this man called by their own teacher "The Son of God". So, they ask another. "*Where are you staying?*"

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<sup>1</sup> U2, I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For. Lyric by Bono, Music by U2. 1987.

That’s a curious question. “Where are you staying?” The root of the Greek that John uses several times and in different ways in the first chapter is present in that query. *Meno* - meaning to stay, to dwell, to abide, to remain.

*“And the Word became flesh and lived (dwelt) among us” (1:14)*

*“Abide in me, as I abide in you.” (15:4)*

With this turn of phrase, Jesus takes this seemingly awkward response from Andrew and his companion and offers something more than an address for his lodging. This is no fly-by-night teacher. Perhaps their question really arises from a need for purpose, a place for a “restless spirit” to find a dwelling, and a sense that this Jesus knows the way there. Deep in their hearts, what they desire to know is, “Who are you?”, “What power do you hold?” and “Do you know what it is we are really looking for?”

Jesus invites them to “*Come and see*”. There is promise and assurance in his words. They go with him to where he is staying, and they remain there with him. In this staying and remaining, there is belonging and deep connection, and with that the promise of the indwelling Spirit through Him.

Michael Marsh reflects, “*What are you looking for*” is the question that takes us into the human heart. “*Come and see*” is the invitation that takes us home, into the heart of God. There is only one thing to do with an invitation like “*come and see.*” *Get up and go look.*”(Marsh)

This encounter with Jesus stirs in Andrew the desire to seek out his brother Simon and share with him what he has been shown. To invite Simon now to “*come and see*”. *Come and see* that he has found what they have been looking for, “*the Messiah, the Anointed One*” Thus, begins their journey with Jesus, in John’s account of the calling these fisherfolk. We know the resolve of the bothers will not always be solid. They will face their doubts, there will be times they, and especially Simon, now called Cephas, are “still” looking for what they hope to find as they remain with Jesus.

When Jesus asks the question, “What are you looking for?”, he knows it is the question lying within each of us. For “*even if we never directly ask ourselves the question, we are always answering it.*”<sup>2</sup>

We answer with our words. We answer with our actions. We answer in the ways we seek, or fail to seek, relationship. We answer in the ways we include, or neglect to include, the other. We answer with how we spend our time, talent and treasure. We answer in the ways we talk about ourselves. We answer in the ways we talk about others. We answer with our prayers and in how we talk about our faith. We answer as we invite others to “*come and see*”.

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Marsh, Blog [www.InterruptingtheSilence.com](http://www.InterruptingtheSilence.com) 1/17/2011.

*Come and see....come and see.....*I wonder, can we be like children, excited to show their parent what they have created or discovered? "Mom, Dad! Come and see what I have found!" They invite us into their world, their discoveries, their life.

When we "Invite One", what is it we are inviting them to here at ECOTA? This is the question we are in the midst of answering as a church. What do you see here that is worthy of sharing? What are you excited about? What inspiration is rising up in you? New ideas? New programs? New adventures?

When we invite others, perhaps we might recall a time when we were asked to be a part of something. A neighborhood picnic, a painting party, caroling. Once we have taken part, something has changed. We are now sharing some small bit of our lives. Perhaps then we have found a glimpse of what we are looking for.

Paul affirms to the church in Corinth they have every gift the need to prosper and serve. They are not and have never been without God. And so, it is with us.

Curiously, Jesus never really answers the follower's question, "where are you staying?" There was no need. He was right there with them. He is dwelling right here with us.

ELCA Bishop Kevin Strickland preaches,

*"The Lamb of God, the forgiver of sins, the one who baptizes not just with water, but with the Holy Spirit; invited those questionable disciples to "come and see." They went and stayed awhile with Jesus. And when they came and saw, what an epiphany they had! Andrew, the brother of Simon, proclaims, "We have found the Messiah". .... And, from then on, nothing was ever the same."<sup>3</sup>*

Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://day1.org/weekly-broadcast/5e1c81fe6615fb14cc00003b/kevin-strickland-come-and-see-what-found-me>