

# Jesus and the First Disciples

## John 1:35-42

One of the most amazing truths I have seen in the Bible is the truth that God invites people to come to Him. Of course, the Lord has to make the first move. The Bible teaches that man is a sinner and his sinful condition has left him spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1) and blind to God's truth (2 Cor. 4:4). No person actually makes an independent move toward God. God always takes the initiative and He reaches out in love, grace and mercy to call lost sinners to Himself.

It may be easy for those of us who have come to Christ Jesus and have walked with Him for some time to think about that invitation as normal and expected. We may forget what an startling thing it is that God invites sinners to come to Him.

In our text today Jesus invites some men to consider what has been said about Him. This passage highlights the condition of man and the compassion of the Savior. Jesus only says a few words in these verses. He asks a question, "**What do you seek?**" in verse 38. And, He give an invitation, "**Come and see**" in verse 39. This question and this invitation have my interest today. Jesus invites those who do not know Him to come to Him and to examine Him.

Listen to our text: **John 1:35-42**

**35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.**

**36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"**

**37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.**

**38 Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"**

**39 He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).**

**40 One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.**

**41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ).**

**42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).**

As we take a little time today to look into these verses, in them we find another of the great invitations of the Bible. Here I want us to consider that Jesus invites people to know Him and follow Him by considering the claims about Him, His call to know Him, and the changes He makes in those who come.

## 1. Consider the Claims about Jesus. (John 1:35-37)

Verse 35 begins, “**Again, the next day.**” I have not mentioned it in my other messages, but you may have noticed that starting in John 1:19 John covers a seven day period in which quite a few significant events occurred. The first day (vs 19) was when the Priests and Levites came from Jerusalem to the Jordan River to find out who John was and why he was baptizing. John made it very clear that he was not the Christ, or Elijah or the Prophet, but the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3 of the voice crying in the wilderness to make straight the way of the Lord (vs. 23). He told of the One “**who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.**”

Verse 29 records that the very next day John saw Jesus and declared to everyone that Jesus was “**The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” He testified that the God had revealed to him that Jesus was the one that would baptize with the Holy Spirit because He is the Son of God (1:33-34)

Now in verse 35 we find that on the very next day, day three, John the Baptist and two of his disciples are together when John sees Jesus again. John’s response is to again call attention to Jesus. It’s what John always does. He points people to Jesus. The text does not indicate if the two disciples had been with John the previous day when he identified Jesus. What is clear is both John’s response and the response of the two disciples.

John’s response is to make sure his two disciples know exactly who Jesus is. John repeats the testimony he had made the previous day, “**Behold, the Lamb of God!**”

This simple statement by John the Baptist is loaded with meaning as we learned when we studied verse 29. John the Baptist could have used many other titles for Jesus or said any number of things about Him. For instance just here in John 1 we see at least twelve titles for or descriptions of Jesus:

1. *The Word.* Verse 1: “**In the beginning was the Word.**”
2. *Light.* Verses 5-9: “**The true light . . . was coming into the world.**”
3. *Only Begotten Son of the Father.* Verses 14,18 “**the glory as of the only begotten of the Father...**” “**The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father...**”
4. *Jesus Christ.* Verse 17: “**Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**”
5. *Lamb of God.* Verse 29,36: “**Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**”
6. *Son of God.* Verse 34,49: “**I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God**” “**You are the Son of God!**”
7. *Rabbi.* Verse 38,49: “**And they said to him, ‘Rabbi’ (which means Teacher), where are you staying?**”
8. *Messiah.* Verse 41: “**We have found the Messiah**” (which means Christ).”

9. *Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote. Verse 45*  
**“We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote.”**
10. *Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph. Verse 45: “Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*
11. *King of Israel. Verse 49: “You are the King of Israel!”*
12. *Son of Man. Verse 51: “You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”*

That’s just a summary of who Jesus is from our text! When you realize that all of the Old and New Testaments proclaim who Jesus is, you can see that there are far more glorious truths about Jesus than we can ever know. When you meet a new friend, you begin with an introduction and then you spend time over the years getting better acquainted. So it is with Jesus (except that the years will continue throughout eternity; Eph. 2:7).

But here, John the Baptist’s emphasis is on the saving work of Jesus. He is “**the Lamb of God.**” Which means He is the Savior for sinners. The definite article “**the**” identifies Jesus Christ as the one and only Lamb of God. Man’s problem is that he is a sinner (Rom. 3:10-13, 23). Jesus is God’s solution, the only solution (Acts 4:12), to that problem.

He is the Savior for sinners because He is the sacrifice for sin. Again, as we saw when we looked at verse 29, Jesus is the once for all substitutionary sacrifice that saves from sin.

Have you considered the claims the Bible makes about Jesus? Have you trusted Him as your Savior or are you still trying somehow to pay for your own sins? In the words of that old hymn,

*Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?  
Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?  
Are you washed in the blood,  
In the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb?  
Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”*

So first, consider the claims about Jesus. Then secondly our text invites you to,  
**2. Consider the Call of Jesus.** (John 1:37-39a)

These two disciples of John the Baptist heard John give this declaration of the identity of Jesus. And as he points again to Jesus, his testimony has its desired effect. They leave John and follow Jesus. Verse 37, “**The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.**”

Here we see first,

A. The interest of the disciples (v. 37)

**“The two disciples heard him speak.”** What they have heard about Jesus has made them curious about Him. John’s testimony has been used to prick their hearts and they become interested in Him.

That’s how people come to know the Lord! The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to show the lost person their need of a Savior. He uses that Word to point them to Jesus. He uses the Word to create a hunger within them for something they do not have. He gives them the desire for more!

This is an essential component of salvation. When the Spirit of God begins to create this hunger within a heart it is called conviction. Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit and His role in conviction in John 16:7-11:

**“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”**

The sinner becomes convicted about his sinful condition; his condemnation in Hell; his need of a Savior; and of his need to get to Jesus Christ! Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit. The only thing any of us can do for someone who needs Jesus is to do what John did. Give them the Word of God. Point them to the Savior, **“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”**

By the way, being *“under conviction”* is not always pleasant. To be convicted and to repent is to grieve over your sin (2Co 7:10, **For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted**). Conviction may be a horrible feeling, but the day God reveals your sin to you is one of the greatest days of your life if it leads you to the Savior.

These two disciples go after Jesus.

#### B. The Inquiry Of The Disciples (v. 38a)

Jesus knows these men are behind Him and He turns to speak to them. He asks them a strange question, **“What do you seek?”** He seems to be asking **“What are you looking for?”** Now we know from the rest of the Gospel account that Jesus does not ask this question because He does not know the answer. As John 2:24-25 tell us, **“Jesus ... knew all men, 25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.”** He knows why they are there. He asks it for their benefit. He wants them to consider why they are following Him.

These men are hungry for a relationship with God. This is clear from the fact that they have been following John the Baptist. He has been teaching them that Messiah is coming and they are longing for a relationship with that Messiah. When Jesus asks them **“What do you seek?”** He is asking them to examine their motives for wanting to follow Him.

William Barclay points out that,

“It was very relevant to ask that question in Palestine in the time of Jesus. Were they legalists, looking only for subtle and recondite conversations about the little details of the Law, like the scribes and Pharisees? Were they ambitious time-servers looking for position and power like the Sadducees? Were they nationalists looking for a political demagogue and a military commander who would smash the occupying power of Rome like the Zealots? Were they humble men of prayer looking for God and for his will, like the Quiet in the Land? Or were they simply puzzled, bewildered sinful men looking for light on the road of life and forgiveness from God?” (Barclay, [Gospel of John](#)).

It would do us well to ask ourselves that question that Jesus asked them. What am I seeking? What am I looking for in life?

If you are looking for Someone Who can save you from sin, give you eternal life, and be your Lord and Master, then Jesus is for you! If you are looking for Someone Who can forgive your sins and change your life, then Jesus is just Who you are looking for!

What you get out from life often depends on what you are looking for in life. So, what are you looking for?

C. The invitation to the disciples (v. 38b-39)

These men respond to Jesus' question with one of their own, “**Rabbi, where are You staying?**” This is a revealing question. First, they call Him “**Rabbi**”. This word, as we are told, means “**Teacher**”. It was a term of respect. It is what a disciple would call his master. It is clear that these men held Jesus in high regard. When they asked Him, “**where are You staying?**”, I think they are asking more than just “*Where do you live?*” or “*Where are you spending the night?*” These men had heard about Jesus and they wanted to know more. They desired to spend more time with Jesus. They wanted to ask Him questions and hear Him speak as their teacher. They are really asking if they can become His disciples.

Jesus' response is simple, yet it is profound. Jesus simply invited them to “**Come and see**”. It's both a command and a promise, “Come and you will see.” Jesus gives them an invitation to follow Him and see more from Him. They have heard about Him from John the Baptist; now Jesus invites them to see for themselves.

Here, I think, we have one of those statements of Jesus that may have multiple levels of meaning. We find these often in the Gospel of John. Jesus says something that may be taken simply in a literal, physical way, or He may be indicating more on a spiritual level.

In chapter 9 of this Gospel the Pharisees deal with a man to whom Jesus gave physical sight. But Jesus speaks of spiritual sight in John 9:39: “**For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.**”

So in here in John 1:39 on one level, it could mean simply: *You will see where I am staying*. But in the mind of Jesus and the mind of John this meant: If you will truly come to me, you will see spiritually. You will have spiritual sight. The point is that if you come to Jesus, you see.

That invitation still stands! Have you responded to His invitation for you to “**come and see**”? He is still opening blind eyes. If you will come when He is calling, you too can see.

So they come to Him, and they “**remained with Him that day.**” The next two verses (40–41) show that they have indeed “seen.”

We have considered the claims about Jesus, the call of Jesus and now we will

### **3. Consider the Changes Jesus makes (John 1:39b-42)**

I believe that this day began the day of salvation for these two men. When they met Jesus for themselves, their lives changed forever. Two of those changes are highlighted in these verses.

#### A. They wanted to stay with Jesus v. 39b

John tells us that it was “**about the tenth hour**” when these men followed Jesus to the place where He was staying. This could mean ten o’clock in the morning, if John is using Roman time. Or, it could mean four o’clock in the afternoon, if he is using Jewish time. From the wording of the verse, and John’s use of time in the rest of his Gospel, it seems to me that it was four o’clock in the afternoon. The day was ending and these men were anxious to talk to Jesus. They spent the rest of that day, and probably that night, in His presence.

I believe this also gives us a clue as to the identity of one of these two disciples. Verse 40 tells us that one of them was Andrew. Who was the other? He is unnamed. As I told you in the introduction to this Gospel, John, the writer, never uses his name in his gospel. He prefers to stay in the background, In fact he never even uses his brother James’ name either. But the unnamed disciple here is obviously an eyewitness. He remembers the very hour when he first met Jesus. This has to be John, the apostle and writer of the Gospel.

John never got over the day he met Jesus for himself. He was an old man when he wrote the words we are reading today and he still remembered that it was “**about the tenth hour**”. Jesus saved his soul and changed his life and he wanted to stay with Jesus!

That’s how Jesus affects those He saves. In Mark 5 we find the Gaderene Demoniac. He was a vicious, violent, dangerous man who lived among the dead in the graveyard. Men had even tried to capture him, but he had escaped from their bonds and continued to live his life of terrible torment. He spent his days and nights crying out and cutting himself.

Then one day, Jesus showed up. He spoke to this man, delivered him from his demons and saved his soul. Jesus absolutely changed his life! When Jesus was leaving that place, this delivered man wanted to go with Jesus too (Mark 5:18).

That's just how it is! When you meet Jesus and He changes your life, you will want to stay with Him.

B. They wanted to share Jesus (v. 40-42)

As soon as these men had met Jesus, and believed that He was the Messiah, they wanted to share Him with others. In fact, every time Andrew appears in the Gospel record, he is bringing someone to Jesus. He went first to his brother Simon Peter and brings him to Jesus, v. 41-42. In John 6, Andrew is the one who brought the boy who had the little loaves and fishes to Jesus. In John 12 it is Andrew who helps a group of curious Greeks make contact with Jesus. When Andrew met Jesus Christ a burden was created within his heart to share his Savior with others, beginning with his own family.

That's what Jesus will do for you! He is too good to keep to yourself. When you meet Him, you will want others to meet Him too. There will be a burning desire within your heart to share this great Lord with others.

Again John translates the term, "**Messiah**" (used only here and in 4:25 in the NT) means "Anointed One" in Hebrew; in Greek, Anointed One is "**Christ**." In the Old Testament, "Anointed One" is used of the king of Israel (1 Sam. 6:16; 2 Sam. 1:14), the high priest (Lev. 4:3), and of the patriarchs (Ps. 105:15). Daniel (9:25, 26) refers to "**Messiah the Prince**" in his prophecy of the 70 weeks. It's a title for the one prophesied of in the Old Testament who would be supremely God's anointed prophet, priest, and king.

C. Jesus gives a new identity (v. 42).

Verse 42 says, **Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).**

Giving a name to someone implies much in the Bible. Adam named the animals God created, reflecting the fact that God had appointed him to "rule" over His creation. God renamed a number of people, including Abram (to Abraham), Sarai (to Sarah), and Jacob (to Israel). In each case, it reflects God's sovereignty in that He is going to change the destiny of the one whose name He has changed.

Simon is far from a "rock" when Jesus first meets him. He begins to evidence some rock-like traits at the "great confession" in Matthew 16:15-19 when the Father reveals to him that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the Living God." But it isn't until after the resurrection of our Lord and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost that Peter truly becomes a "rock" and preaches boldly to the world that Jesus is the risen Christ who saves from sin. I don't believe that Jesus just saw "rock" potential in Simon; I believe our Lord purposed to make a rock of Simon, and that He did.

Jesus can change us from the inside out. He knows what He can make us into. You may not see much in yourself, and others may not see much in you, but Jesus can still make much of you. He can turn sinners into saints. He can change a Simon into a Peter. He can change a persecutor of the church named

Saul into the apostle Paul. He can and will change you when you respond to His invitation.

**“Come and see.”** Jesus is still inviting people to consider Him. We are living in a world where people are seeking answers. They are looking for direction, fulfillment and hope. If you are among that number and you are looking for what is missing in your life, you need to know that His invitation to **“Come and see”** still stands.

- You have tried everything else and nothing has scratched the itch within your soul. Come to Jesus!
- You’ve tried church and it didn’t work. Come to Jesus!
- You’ve tried sin, alcohol, drugs, sex and every worldly thing you can imagine, but nothing has worked. Come to Jesus!
- You need help and you can’t seem to find it anywhere. Come to Jesus!
- Maybe you’ve tried Jesus in the past and He didn’t work. The problem was not with Him, it was with you. This time, don’t just **“try”** Him, surrender to Him totally and let Him save you and take control of your life. Let Him change your name. Come to Jesus!