

Meditation: "Come and See Where I Live" John 1:29-51

Good morning. I am a loser. Not in a bad social sense, but in the sense that I am notorious for losing things. Some may say that I'm not organized – or scatter brained. I would say that I've got so much on my mind that I forget where I leave things when I'm thinking about something else.

I always play the key game every-time I leave. I always double check to see if I have my passport – when I go on a trip. One time I thought that I lost my very important Simon and Garfunkel tickets – only to find them in the pocket of my winter jacket. Turns out the concert was cancelled anyway.

But really, I think that I could find so many more things if I would only open my eyes to see. If I would only be present in the moment – instead of thinking about what is coming next.

Sometimes we don't see anything unless it's shown to us by another. I am so grateful that I am no longer the biggest loser in our family. I have now graduated to "Mama can find anything" Sometimes when we look, we're so overwhelmed by everything around us that we can't see what's right in front of our faces. How often have I found stuffies lying in the middle of the hallway, shoes and boots found under beds...marbles on the carpet...things right in front of our eyes.

This is the season of Epiphany. This is the time in the church calendar that we are encouraged to contemplate and experience the mysteries of God - to discover new and enlightening things – to learn about seeing and being – about looking and living - About seeking and finding.

And so, today, let me tell you about an account in the Gospel of John that is FULL of discovery and enlightenment at so many levels. The events in this story take place over three days – following Jesus' baptism.

Let's hear what John 1:29-51 has to tell us.

John 1:29-51

²⁹The next day

John saw Jesus coming toward him and declared,

"Look, here is the Lamb of God

who takes away the sin of the world!

³⁰This is he of whom I said,

'After me comes a man

who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'

³¹ I myself did not know him;

but I came baptizing with water for this reason,
that he might be revealed to Israel."

³² And John testified,

"I **saw** the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove,
and it **remained on** him.

³³ I myself did not know him,

but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me,

'He on whom you **see** the Spirit descend and **remain**
is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

³⁴ And I myself have **seen** and have testified that this is the Son of God."

³⁵ The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples,

³⁶ and as he **watched** Jesus walk by, he exclaimed,

"**Look**, here is the Lamb of God!"

³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this,

and they followed Jesus.

³⁸ When Jesus turned and **saw** them following,

he said to them, "What are you **seeking**?"

They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you **abiding**?"

³⁹ He said to them, "Come and **see**."

They came and **saw** where he was **staying**,

and they **remained** with him that day.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

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

⁴¹ He first **found** his brother Simon and said to him,

"We have **found** the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed).

⁴² He brought Simon to Jesus,

who **looked** at him and said,

"You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee.

He **found** Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida,

the city of Andrew and Peter.

⁴⁵ Philip **found** Nathanael and said to him,

"We have **found** him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote,
Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth."

⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Philip said to him, "Come **and see**."

⁴⁷ When Jesus **saw** Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him,

"Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him,

"**Where** did you get to know me?"

Jesus answered, "I **saw** you under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹ Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

⁵⁰ Jesus answered,

"Do you believe because I told you that I **saw** you under the fig tree?

You will **see** greater things than these."

⁵¹ And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will **see** heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Do you see a pattern? I LOVE patterns! Surely there must be significance to all these words...

²⁹ John **saw** Jesus

²⁹ **Look**, here is the Lamb of God!

³² "I **saw** the Spirit

³³ He on whom you **see** the Spirit

³⁴ And I myself have **seen**

³⁶ and as he **watched**

³⁶ "**Look**, here is the Lamb of God!"

³⁸ When Jesus turned and **saw** them

³⁸ "What are you **seeking**?"

³⁹ "Come and **see**."

³⁹ They came and **saw**

⁴¹ He first **found** his brother

⁴¹ "We have **found** the Messiah"

⁴² who **looked** at him

⁴³ He **found** Philip

⁴⁵ Philip **found** Nathanael

⁴⁵ We have **found** him

⁴⁶ Come and **see**

⁴⁷ When Jesus **saw** Nathanael

⁴⁸ **Where** did you get to know me

⁴⁸ I **saw** you

⁵⁰ I **saw** you

⁵⁰ You will **see**

⁵¹ You will **see**

Look at all the looking and finding verbs! John saw Jesus coming towards him. John said, Look! Here is the Lamb of God! John saw the Spirit! John watched Jesus walk by. Jesus said, "what do you seek?" Jesus said, "Come and see" and they came and saw. Andrew found his brother and Andrew found the Messiah who looked at Simon. Jesus found Philip, Philip found Nathaniel and said, "we found him." Philip said "Come and see." Nathanael said, "where do you get to know me?" Jesus said "I saw you" and "do you believe because I saw you" and "you will see greater things" and "you will see heaven opened."

All this seeing! All this finding. It surely isn't only on the physical level – I think it's also recognizing something within – its interpreting what's going on – its actively observing and then seeking and finding. And always – it is looking at/seeing/seeking and finding something special.

What is this special thing? The reason for this looking and seeing and seeking? I think it has something to do with the other word – found in blue.

The other color – the blue – refers to the Greek word, “μένω” Menno. Really? Menno? Like Menno Mennonite? Probably just a coincidence. This word, *Menno* means to abide, remain, endure, continue, dwell, in the sense of permanence or stability– look how often that verb is used:

John the Baptist recognizes Jesus when the Holy Spirit remains (menno) upon him (John 1:32).

³²the Spirit ...**remained** on him.

³³'He on whom you **see** the Spirit descend and **remain** is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

³⁸where are you **staying**?

³⁹They came and **saw** where he was **staying**, and they **remained** with him that day.

There's some kind of importance of this word *Menno*. This is the Gospel writer's play on words. Abiding happens in two places – on the physical and on the spiritual plain and it's used in other places in John – not just here. After Jesus provides bread enough to satisfy a crowd, with plenty left over, he cautions the people to work not for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures (menno) for eternal life (John 6:27). He promises that he will abide (menno) in those who abide (menno) in him (John 15:4-10).

Wherever Jesus stays (menno), people have the opportunity to believe (John 4:40; 10:40).

The two words: seeing and abiding go together. John the Baptist **Saw** the spirit **Abiding** in Jesus. Every time he saw Jesus, he proclaimed this! Every time he saw Jesus, John the Baptist urged those around him to open their eyes to see what he saw when he looked at Jesus.

Can you guess why John the Baptist's disciples then went to Jesus and asked where he was abiding? It does not seem such a silly question anymore. They were not asking Jesus for the location of his tent, or his address; they wanted to know about the enduring, permanent, eternal, undying dwelling place of this Lamb of God. They wanted to see what John the Baptist could see – and they wanted to be part of that. But they could not see what John saw, and they only had one idea of how to get there.

To their curiosity, Jesus says, "Come and See."

“Come and See” This is the primary message of John – the Gospel Writer’s Gospel. If you want to know the word made flesh, come and see. If you want to know what love is like, come and see. If you want to experience God’s glory, to be filled with bread that never perishes, to quench your thirst with living water, to be born again, to abide in love, to behold the light of the world, to experience the way, the truth, and the life, to enter into life everlasting, . . . if you want to know God, Jesus says, come and see where I live, and what lives in me.

And we know that after abiding with Jesus for the whole day, Andrew went to seek out his brother, Simon. Andrew said to Simon, I have found where the Spirit abides. I want to take you there too. Jesus takes one look at Simon and sees what abides in him. He sees a rock, solid and strong. And he renames him Peter – which means rock.

And Philip, a friend of Andrew and Peter, and one who also is called to follow by Jesus goes to seek out his friend, Nathanael. Philip says to Nathanael, “We have found him and he used to abide in Nazareth.”

Nathanael, somewhat doubtful, says, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” Jesus sees Nathanael before Philip brings him over and already Jesus knows the spirit of truth that abides in him. Nathanael, without prompting immediately names Jesus that Son of God and the king of Israel.

And we follow Jesus. But do we see where he is living? If he asks us what we are seeking – will we be able to answer him?

It is a question worth wrestling. What motivates us? What are we seeking? Surely, we would want to come up with a profound answer, like “I want to know the meaning of life.” or “What’s it all about?” or “What is my purpose” and “I want to know what my future holds.”

But look, really look. What do you really need deep down into the core of our being? If Jesus asks, “What do you seek?” What would you say?

Pause

John the Baptist’s disciples wanted Jesus. They wanted to be where he was, wherever that was. They wanted to follow where he led, even though John’s words about a lamb who takes away sin probably clued them that Jesus would probably lead them down the road to sacrifice. Nevertheless, they wanted Jesus and they wanted to be where he was – physically and spiritually.

Pause

If Jesus were to take one look at us, would he know where we lived? Would he know where we were abiding? Would we let him look inside of us and see what lay in our hearts? What would Jesus name us? Would he name us Trustworthy? Patient? Faithful? Industrious? Truthful? Rock?

As we seek Jesus this coming year, Jesus is also seeking us. Christ asks, "Where is your heart?"
"What do you really want?"

And we, in this new year of seeking may ask of Christ, "Where can we find you? And, "Where shall we go to be with you?"

Take courage friends, in your seeking and finding.

To your questions, Jesus says, "Come and see. Come to my house and see where I live."
May it always be so. On earth, as it is in Heaven. Amen