

## *"Come and See"*

**John 1:29-42**

**First Corinthians 1:26-30**

**January 13, 2008**

The Good News begins to explode among the people who discover that Jesus is the One God had promised to send. John experienced it and began to tell everyone that Jesus "is the Son of God." Upon that news people begin to be Jesus-followers.

Fascinating stuff from John. Things begin to happen fast as Jesus starts His ministry. John points out Jesus and says, "There is the one who takes away the sin of the world." (Not "condemns" the sin of the world, but takes it away! Remember John 3:17? Everyone seems to know John 3:16, but can't remember the next words. "For God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved." My favorite translation reads: "God did not send His son into the world to be its judge, but to be its savior!")

The very next thing John tells us is that Jesus began inviting people to follow him. "Come and see." Wait a minute, John is not done yet. The very next thing is that one of the people Jesus called in turn called another. It happened quick.

I saw a spot in the paper advertising a new church around here somewhere. I'll bet that church will experience quick growth at least at first. Why is it that when something is new we are more excited about talking about it?

Wait a minute, John is not done yet. The very next thing is that John shows us Jesus' style. Jesus declared to Peter the potential He sees in him. "You will be called ...." This is what I see in you! This is why I called you!

Please church, let's sit at Jesus' feet and listen and learn for a moment. This is vitally important stuff.

Catch the difference between John the Baptist, like some of the OT prophets, who screamed and yelled and condemned, and Jesus who stood on a hill overlooking Jerusalem looking down on the city with tears in his eyes saying "O Jerusalem how often would I have gathered you up like a chicken gathers her chicks under her wings." Jesus wept for them.

See Jesus hand picking 12 people that we might not have chosen because of their flaws and weaknesses and short-comings. But he hand selected those people and devoted all the time he had here on earth to gently re-shaping them by teaching them new things and entrusting to them the work he had come here to do. It would all be in their hands.

And so he comes to us today. He spotted in those people the innate traits that would make them great leaders and examples and workers in his new kingdom. And so he does today.

Bill Hybels, in his book titled "Walk Across the Room" (page 73) talks about Mark 3 and Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees over the healing of a man's hand on the Sabbath. He

goes on to do something fun when he tries to imagine what Jesus and the man talked about afterward. After everyone else left. "So, now that your hand is healed what are you going to do? What have you always dreamed of doing if you had a good hand?"

Hybels says, "Jesus somehow saw the godly worshiper clothed as a worn, wearied prostitute. The faithful disciple hiding inside a fisherman named Simon. The hidden philanthropist in the life of a crooked tax collector name Zacchaeus. The risk-taker in a cowardly Jewish ruler named Nicodemus. What a fantastic gift He had for seeing what nobody else could see!" (p.67)

This makes great stuff to remember to start the year. So often people of the Christian faith seem bent only on spotting people doing something wrong, experiencing a moral failure, making a mistake. Jesus was indeed concerned about people's eternal future as well as their living hell. But His focus was because He could see the difference between where they were at and what they could be. Wouldn't it be neat if the church looked at people in that positive vain today?

Just imagine what the difference could be if the church in America today focused more on the potential in people than on the failures of people. What if the church saw people through the eyes of Christ, rather than through eyes of judgment and criticism? What if the focus was on the future rather than on the failure?

The church acts too much like the American press. You know, they only write about what is wrong. How often do you read good news in the paper? I think the church spends way too much time going for the easy stuff – criticizing what is wrong instead of creating what is right!

Think of the kind of people God has called. The kind we wouldn't allow in most churches today. I was raised to believe dancing was a sin. Even before I ever tried it to see how bad I was at it. We seem to think the purpose of church is to attract and create morally perfect people, rather than Jesus followers.

Minneapolis pastor Leith Anderson tells of calling ChemLawn to take care of his suburban weed-infested lawn, only to have them reject his lawn as a client because it was so bad. One member of his church volunteered to totally remove his old lawn and start a new one, an offer he was almost ready to accept when a former farmer gave him some advice: Don't worry so much about getting rid of the weeds. Just grow the grass, and the grass will take care of the weeds.

The Andersons took his prescription and did all they could to grow "the good stuff." After a couple of years, the lawn looked just as good as everyone else's.  
(Anderson, A Church for the 21st Century [Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1992], 125-26).

The Andersons had to ask themselves what would be their primary focus - growing grass or killing weeds? They decided to concentrate on the positive - on growth - instead of pouring their time, energy and resources into killing off weeds.

Taking this tack not only concentrates our energies on the positive, it safeguards us from bad

judgment calls. Sometimes what we would quickly suppose to be weeds turns out to be unexpected flowers in our midst.

Jesus told a parable that intentionally took responsibility for "reaping," for gathering and bundling together true weeds, out of human hands and made this a task for divinely directed angels. Differentiating between weeds and beneficial plants is not a human responsibility.

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Richard Allen Farmer is a professor at Gordon College and a much-sought-after motivational speaker. He tells this story:

"When I was a youngster, probably in my 10th or 11th year, my grandparents bought us a small plastic cartoon projector as a Christmas present. Bringing a couple of reels of black and white cartoons, Pop taught me how to thread the projector. He patiently demonstrated how to bend the film around the sprockets and thread it into the take-up reel. After one demonstration, Pop said, 'Now you try it.' I threaded the projector correctly and I will never forget his words: 'I have the smartest grandson in the world!'

"Years later, I asked Pop if he remembered that incident. He didn't, but I did! For all the years following that day until now, I have thought I was bright, skillful, teachable, quick to catch on. I would probably also have remembered if Pop had said, 'I have the dumbest grandson in the world.' And my life might have demonstrated my belief.

Often-times people become what we expect them to be.

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A Roman Catholic priest described his near-encounter with death after the landing gears on the plane would not lock into position. "As the plane circled the airport, the pilot issued instructions to prepare the passengers for a crash landing. Fire engines lined the runway. The airplane landed ever so lightly. The landing gear held; no one was hurt. As he disembarked from the airplane, the priest's eyes met those of a flight attendant. He felt called upon to say something theologically 'profound' to her to fit the occasion. He said, 'The rest of your life is a gift.'

"She replied, 'Father, I thought life was a gift to begin with.'"

Maybe our job is to help people discover the wonderful gift that God has given them in life itself.