

**Something more. Something great.**  
**January 15, 2023**

In a minute... **[1 Coming Soon]**  
I'm going to show you...  
A preview for a movie.

And I'm going to tell you right now...  
I'm a hypocrite.

I don't like to watch previews for movies...  
I don't like those tv shows...  
At the end of each episode...  
Tell you what's coming next...  
On next week's episode.

I don't want to know...  
I don't want to ruin the story...  
Before I actually choose...  
To watch whatever entertainment...  
I choose to watch.

I like to be surprised.

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I also don't like reviews...  
Like when someone gives their opinion...  
And tells you in advance...  
Whether or not...  
You are going to like something.

I'm not trying to be rude...  
But I don't care about people's opinions...  
On things that I haven't even experienced... yet.  
Just keep it to yourself...  
Don't ruin it.

Because... sometimes...  
I love a movie...  
That has a bad review.  
And sometimes...  
I hate a movie...  
That has critical acclaim.

It all depends.

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So I read some reviews...  
About a movie Janet and I saw on Monday...  
In the theater... which is always fun...

It was A Man Called Otto... **[2 Otto]**  
With Tom Hanks.

And I'm just going to tell you... right now...  
We enjoyed the movie.  
We both read the book...  
Before we saw the movie...

So we knew the story.  
And of course... like most humans...  
We like Tom Hanks.

So... to us... the movie is...  
A beautiful heart-warming story...  
We both had a good experience.

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But just so you know...  
There are some mature themes...  
The movie deals with...  
In particular...  
Death and suicidal ideation.  
So... be warned...  
It's a good movie... but not easy.

Also know... the reviews are pretty bad.  
If you go online... and read what people think...  
Critics didn't like the movie...  
They thought it was formulaic... and schmaltzy...  
Just another grumpy old man movie.

And it was.

It's a story about this guy...  
Grumpy... crabby...  
Cantankerous...  
Curmudgeon...

Well... this is the trailer... **[VIDEO - OTTO]**

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Now the woman who moved in... **[3 Marisol]**  
Across the street from the man named OTTO...  
Was very friendly...  
And worked hard...  
To see the good in this man.

As a matter of fact...  
She saw good in him...  
When no one else would.

And the best scene for me...  
Took place in the hospital...  
When Marisol... the positive neighbor...  
Took Otto to the emergency room...  
And asked the doctor what was wrong with him.

And the doctor said...

Otto had hypertrophic cardiomyopathy...  
And Marisol asked what that was...  
And the doc said...  
His heart is too big.

And Marisol slowly nodded...  
taking it in...

And then she snorted...  
And started to giggle...  
She couldn't stop...  
She laughed out loud...  
And looked at Otto...  
And said with tears in her eyes...  
YOUR heart is too big.

And she burst out laughing.  
It was ironic right...  
Because he was such a crab.

But the truth is... his heart was big.

See... there was something more.  
Something great...  
Inside of this man...

The people around him...  
Would have never known...  
If they didn't come to him...  
If they didn't try to see...  
What was actually there.

If they didn't try...  
To know him.  
And understand.  
They would have missed him.

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So... John the Baptist... **[4 John]**  
Says something weird...  
In the gospel reading...  
We have today.

TWICE he says...  
I myself did not know him.  
He was talking about Jesus.

He didn't know him?  
Well... that's just ridiculous.  
Of course he knew him...

According to the gospel of Luke...  
John the Baptist...

And Jesus of Nazareth...  
Were cousins.

Y'all... Remember the story... **[5 Mary and Elizabeth]**  
How Mary is pregnant with Jesus...  
And she goes to see her cousin Elizabeth...  
Who is pregnant with John...

And the child in Elizabeth's womb...  
Jumps for joy. And wiggles. And moves like crazy...  
The bible says... at that moment...  
Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit...  
And proclaimed to her cousin Mary...

Blessed are you among women,  
And blessed is the fruit of your womb.  
And why has this happened to me,  
That the mother of my Lord comes to me?

For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting,  
The child in my womb leaped for joy.

And that jumping little jackrabbit...  
Would some day become...  
John the Baptist.

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Now that is a good story. **[6 Story]**  
That's a story you tell.  
You know those stories you tell...  
Over and over again in your family...

Like the time Grandma Liz...  
Was eating chili...  
And she laughed so hard...  
That she shot a bean...  
Out her nose.

Or the time... when I was a toddler...  
Sneaked a can of beer...  
Hid behind the kitchen door...  
And drank it.

You can ask my mama...  
And verify... if those stories are true... or not...  
But they are family legends.

Now you can't tell me...  
That Mary... and Elizabeth...  
And everybody else who was there...  
The day John leapt for joy...  
In his mama's belly...  
Because Jesus was near...

You can't tell me...  
That story was not told...  
Over and over again.

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Therefore... it's hard for me to believe...  
That Jesus didn't know John.

Even though he says TWICE...  
I myself did not know him.

But maybe that's not what he meant.  
Maybe he knew him...  
But he didn't understand...  
Who he was...

That there was something more...  
Something great...

Maybe he just saw him...  
As good old cousin Jesus... **[7 Baptism]**  
Until the day...  
When Jesus was baptized...  
And the Holy Spirit descended on him...  
Like a dove...

And all the power...  
All that presence of God...  
Rested on him.

And that was the sign.  
That's what God... told John...  
Was going to happen.

After that event... John says...  
I myself HAVE SEEN...  
And have testified...  
That this is the Son of God.

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See... I think there was a time...  
When John didn't know...  
That Jesus was the Son of God.

I think he knew... he was his cousin...  
He knew... some weird things happened...  
Back when Jesus was born.

Like a choir of angels descended and sang...  
And a star hung over that place for a little too long...  
And the magi brought expensive and bizarre gifts.  
All that happened.

But it wasn't until John saw Jesus...  
It wasn't until he was there with him...

And the Holy Spirit came...  
It wasn't until that moment...  
That he really could see Jesus...  
And really understand... who he was.

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Then... the gospel lesson continues... **[8 John 1]**  
The next day... John is standing there... baptizing again...  
With two of his disciples.

He looks up...  
And there's Jesus walking past again.  
John says...  
You see? Here is the Lamb of God.

The two disciples heard what John said...  
Thought to themselves...  
Why not?

If John thinks this guy is important...  
Why not follow Jesus... for a little bit...  
And hear what he has to say.

So they do.

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But all the sudden...  
Jesus turns... but the greek word...  
Is much more exciting then just turning...

It's a sudden twist...  
180 degrees...  
He whips around...  
Looks at these guys... and says...  
What do you want?  
What are you looking for?

The disciples say... two things.  
Rabbi.... Which means teacher.  
But again... the origin of the word is important.  
In Hebrew... the word Rabbi...  
Comes from the word Rab...  
Which means... GREAT. MORE.

The word Rabbi...  
Was used for religious teachers...  
Because people thought that Rabbis had...  
A great amount of knowledge.  
More knowledge... than most.

But those disciples... what if they were saying...  
We don't know... all we know is...  
You are great. You are more.  
And we want to know you.

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Then they ask the second thing...  
Where are you staying...  
And no... it's not creepy.  
They want to know...  
Where he is going.

Because if you want to really know someone...  
Go where they live.  
Go to their house.  
See for yourself...  
The photos on their walls...  
The art that speaks to their hearts.

Look around... and see...  
The stories... in that place.  
And ask your questions.

Because that teaches you...  
Who they are...  
And what's important to them.

Ask them... to tell their stories.  
Because that's what the disciples want...  
They want to know Jesus.  
They want to know his story.  
They want to know what this is all about...

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So. Jesus invites them.  
Ok. You think I'm great.  
You think there is something more here...

Come on. Find out.  
See for yourself.  
And begin to understand.

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That's the same invitation...  
We receive from Christ.

We know... just like the disciples of John...  
We know... there is something great...  
Powerful and wonderful...  
About Jesus.

And we confess... we say... Rabbi...  
We say... teacher... you are great.  
You are more.

And Jesus says... well... what do you want?

And we answer... We want to know you.  
We want to see where you live.  
We want to understand...  
The more...  
The great...

The wonderful...  
We don't know yet...  
But we want to learn...

And Jesus looks at you...  
Just like he looked at those disciples of John.  
And says... Come on then.  
Come and see.

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There's a sense...  
That if we want to know Jesus more...  
All we have to do...  
Is follow...  
And see.

So the first invitation.... Is for us...  
To say that we want to follow him.  
To confess his greatness.  
To understand there is more...  
And then to ask.

Where are you staying?  
Because where you are...  
I want to be too.

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But there might be a further implication.  
What if we assumed...  
That the Spirit of God...  
The Spirit of Christ...  
Is alive and well...  
In our world today.

In fact... he lives...  
In each one of us.

Well... then... if we want to see Jesus.  
If we want to learn who he is...  
We can read the Bible...  
We can talk about our faith...  
We can go to classes... and learn.

But we can also hear the stories...  
Of the great cloud of witnesses.  
We can go to each other...  
And see where they live.  
Who they are.  
What they believe.

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When I was in high school... **[9 Cross Country]**  
I used to run cross country.  
And yes... that's what I looked like...  
A very long time ago.

At any rate...  
When you ran and competed...  
Against the same schools...  
On a regular basis...  
You got to know the other runners...

There were a brother and sister...  
Who ran for Bellevue High School...  
And to the best of my recollection...  
Their names were Randy and Melissa JUNK.  
I might have her first name wrong...  
It was a very long time ago.

At one cross country meet...  
They came up to me...  
Before the race... and said...  
Hey. We saw your name in the newspaper.  
You were on the honor roll.

I said... yeah.

And they both looked at me and said...  
We were so surprised...  
We thought you were an idiot.

What do you say to that?  
Thank you???

I mean... just because I was a bit...  
Of a wild man... while running...  
In a competition...  
Didn't mean...  
I couldn't possibly be good...  
At the book learning too.

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But that's what happens... **[10 Come and See]**  
When you take the time...  
To come and see...  
Where people live...  
Who they are...  
What they believe...  
What they've been through...

Then you start to understand...  
That there is more...  
Than what you know.

You begin to understand...  
That God has been at work...  
In their lives... just as much...  
As God has been at work...  
In your life.

And then we grow.  
In faith.  
In love.  
In understanding.

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So. Easy peasy message today.  
If you want to know Jesus.  
Then come and see.

If you want to know how God...  
Is working in the lives of your brothers and sisters in Christ...  
Then come and see.

If you want to be closer...  
To the Savior of the World...  
The Lamb of God...  
Who takes away the sin...  
Of the world...

If you know...  
There is something more...  
Something great...  
About this Jesus...

Then come on.  
What are you waiting for.  
Come and see.

He wants us to follow.

Thanks be to God.  
Amen!