

Come and See
John 1:29-42
Rev. Henry Pascual

Prayer: *Holy One, open our ears to the truth of your word. By the power of your Holy Spirit, inspire us to follow where Jesus leads us and to answer his call. Amen*

In the Gospel of John, a recurring heartbeat pulses through every chapter: the concept of testimony. We live in a world of "he-said, she-said," where truth often feels like a moving target. But here, at the dawn of Jesus' ministry, we encounter a different kind of witness.

John the Baptist stands as a bridge between ancient promises and a living reality. His testimony is simple and unwavering: "Look, here is the Lamb of God!"

John had a clarity we might envy. He wasn't guessing; he had seen the Spirit descend and remain. He knew exactly who he was looking for. But then, the focus shifts from the prophet to the seekers. Two disciples hear John's shout and begin to follow Jesus. Jesus turns around and asks them a piercing question—the same question he asks each of us today: "What are you looking for?" (v.38).

The disciples, perhaps caught off guard, answer with a question that sounds strange to us: "Where are you staying?" On the surface, it sounds like they're asking for an address. But in the first century, to ask a Rabbi where he was "staying" was to ask: *"Can I come with you? Can I see how you live? Can I move from being an observer to being a student?"*

Jesus doesn't give them a map, a list of doctrines, or a theological dissertation. He simply gives them an invitation: "Come and see."

There is something fascinating about the order of these words. We often think that discipleship works like this: first, we must understand everything—the Bible, theology, church history—and *then* we can follow.

But Jesus reverses the order. He invites us to follow him *along the path* of discipleship before we have it all figured out. It's a lot like marriage. You don't wait until you understand every DNA strand and every childhood memory of your partner before you say "I do." You get to know each other

better along the way—through the good times and the bad, the sickness and the health. Even after fifty years, you might still be wondering why they squeeze the toothpaste from the top instead of the bottom!

The Christian faith operates on a similar principle: we don't need to "have it all together" to begin. This is because discipleship is rooted in proximity rather than perfection; you cannot truly learn from someone you aren't "staying" with. We discover who Jesus is by walking where he walks—a lifelong journey of observing firsthand how he treats the poor, how he prays, and how he loves. As this proximity reshapes us, our faith shifts from a private lesson into a public invitation. When we then say to others, "Come and see," we aren't imposing a rigid set of rules or a finished product. Instead, we are simply sharing a lived experience, saying: "This is how God has transformed my life, and I want you to experience that same journey for yourself."

"Come and see" is a personal invitation, but it is also a communal one. If a visitor walked through our doors today to "come and see," what would they find? When seekers browse through the church's website, what would they discover? We often hear what draws people to this church. They talk about our "extravagant welcome"—that promise that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. They talk about our commitment to justice and peace, our mission work, the music that lifts our spirits, and even our beautiful sanctuary. And let's be honest, they definitely mention the spacious parking and our legendary lunches!

But here's the secret: those lunches aren't really about the food. They are about the connection that happens when we sit down and break bread together. It's in those moments, catching up on each other's lives, that we experience what the Bible calls *koinonia*.

And there's more. In Greek, *koinonia* means more than just "socializing." It means communion, partnership, and fellowship—a deep spiritual bond in Christ. When we eat together, we aren't just filling our plates; we are witnessing to our identity as a family of faith in Christ.

So, the next time someone asks you what they'll find if they visit us, give them a simple invitation: "Come and see." Or better yet, say, "Come have lunch with us."

It's a powerful witness and invitation because in a world of distractions and numbing agents, people are looking for something real. They aren't looking for an escape; they are looking for community and connection, a place they can call home. And home is where we sit down, where we talk, and where we share our meals together.

If Jesus were to turn to you today and ask, "What are you looking for?" what would your answer be? Are you looking for a miracle, or are you looking for the Master? At the end of the day, this is all about God's work in Jesus. God doesn't choose us as witnesses because we have the perfect resume or the right set of skills. In fact, when we recognize and name what God is doing, it isn't about us at all. It is always about God in Jesus. Just as John pointed away from himself, our witness serves one purpose: to point toward Jesus.

The Gospel of John shows us that *seeing* leads to *being with*, and *being with* leads to *finding*. Today, Jesus, the Lamb of God, is walking by. Don't just watch him pass—follow him home.

Thanks be to God. Amen.