

January 2

Second Sunday of Christmas

John 1:35-51

“Come and See”

1. “Did you find everything OK?” “Did you find what you were looking for?”
 - a. We’re probably asked one of those questions whenever we are at a store
 - i. It’s a simple enough question
 - ii. Maybe it’s the cashier offering us good customer service while processing the items we’re purchasing, wanting to be sure we had a successful shopping experience.
 - iii. Or perhaps we were asked this other question on the way in the store: “May I help you find something?”
 1. If that’s me walking into a hardware store, I’m quick to answer it: Yes, where do you keep lightbulbs or whatever it is I’m searching for.
 2. Or maybe my reply will be a bit evasive, like if I just walked into a small clothing shop: “Just browsing, thanks!”, less articulating my plans and more trying to fend off a long conversation with the salesperson.
 - b. These questions don’t only apply to purchasing merchandise.
 - i. Asked differently, we inquire about larger, more important things
 - ii. If we go on vacation, people don’t exactly ask us if we found what we were looking for, but they may ask us if we had fun, or if it was relaxing, which likely is why we went on vacation.
 - iii. And, again, perhaps we respond with a general answer “Yeah, it was good to get away” maybe not to go into too much detail, I guess.
 - c. Sometimes we find things we didn’t know we needed, things we weren’t actively looking for.
 - i. I wasn’t expecting to find the right gift
 - ii. I didn’t know how much I needed that time away, or how much stress I was carrying
 - iii. That conversation with a colleague made me think of new ideas for work.
 - iv. Sometimes we don’t know what we’re looking for until we find it.
2. The passage from John offers us a story of searching and finding.
 - a. Today’s story is about the beginning of the journey with Jesus and the people who would eventually follow him.
 - i. It starts with people who were already following someone else: John the Baptist
 - ii. But John, as we saw last week and now today, is trying to tell people that the one, the REAL DEAL, whom they needed to look for, was yet to come.
 - iii. And then John sees Jesus and tells his people: That’s the one! The Lamb of God!
 - iv. And so Andrew and an unnamed person start walking behind Jesus, sort of stalking him. They don’t say anything, they just walk behind him.
 - v. Jesus turns around and asks: What are you looking for?
 1. This story begins differently from the other Gospels, in which Jesus directly goes to these people and says to them: follow me! I will make you fish for people!

2. Where are you staying? (it's awkward, isn't?)
 3. But Jesus rolls with it: COME AND SEE.
 4. Which, in a way, ends up being not just come and see where I live, but come and see what God has in store for you, for us.
 5. And I say that because of the way Andrew and then Phillip responded
 6. Andrew goes and gets Simon, and Phillip gets Nathanael, each of them saying, basically: we've found what we've been looking for! We've found the Messiah, the one God has chosen to liberate us!
 7. I say liberate because they were probably not thinking saving them from sin, but saving them from the Romans.
 8. And so began their journey with Jesus.
3. What are you looking for? What have we been looking for?
- a. I suppose there would be as many answers to those questions as there are people in this sanctuary and on streaming.
 - b. Some would turn to big picture areas (about family, or career, or legacy)
 - c. Some would look to the turning points of life (beating an illness, starting a new life after major changes)
 - d. The disciples had no clue where following Jesus would lead. Come and see, he said, and they followed.
 - e. I wonder where Jesus will lead us this brand-new year, burdened as it is with problems we couldn't resolve last year or much, much longer.
 - f. Whatever awaits us, we will seek to follow Jesus together
 - i. Today nine leaders in the church answer the call to ministry as they get ordained or installed as elders and deacons, some feeling the call for the first time, some renewing their commitment to help lead us
 - ii. Today we each receive a star, with a word that will bring into focus an area of growth
 - iii. Today we will invite you during Coffee Hour to a journey of learning with small groups to ponder the legacy of slavery in our country, and to wonder together how we can ponder can be next
 - g. When Jesus asked those two disciples "What are you looking for?" they could have said: oh, never mind. Wrong number...
 - i. But they didn't. They kept walking with Jesus
 - h. I am hoping we keep walking too, together, not trying to back away just because the road ahead looks challenging.
 - i. Walking together, following Jesus as honestly as he is leading us.
 - j. Walking together, learning from each other.
4. Will we find what we're looking for? Maybe. Come and see.

Sources

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/narrative-lectionary/jesus-says-come-and-see/commentary-on-john-135-51-3>