

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #9

John 1:35-42

Did you ever stop to wonder about the logistics as to how we actually got 2000 years into the Church Age, which features N.T. churches all over the world? It all begins right here. It begins with God doing things with individual people, specifically men who would become apostles who would become the foundation of the Church. By the time John wrote this book, God had ended His national program with Israel temporarily and was working with individuals all over the world.

The first natural urge that a newborn baby has is to cry out that he is alive. If a baby is born and does not cry out, there is a very serious concern whether or not that baby is alive. Usually when a baby is born it is patted and begins to cry. This principle is also true when it comes to a newborn child of God.

The moment a person is born into the family of God, there will be a desire to cry out, to witness and to testify of this. I completely agree with something that Donald Grey Barnhouse said in 1973 - the moment a person becomes aware that he has been made alive in Jesus Christ there will be an urge to let someone else know about it (*The Love Life, A Study of the Gospel of John*, p. 11).

If you have never had an urge to tell someone about your faith in Jesus Christ, you have good reason to ask yourself - am I really a healthy child of God? Healthy children cry out. They may not always say just the right thing, but they do speak up and speak out for God.

This text of Scripture in John is designed to show us how the first disciples of Christ became disciples. This section opens in verse 35 on the third day of the sequence. This particular section closes with the famed Apostle Peter coming to Christ and the theme that is communicated is this:

THE FIRST DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST BECAME DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE PERSONALLY BELIEVED IN JESUS CHRIST AND TOLD OTHERS ABOUT IT.

In every one of these accounts, someone is talking to someone else about Jesus Christ. What we find here is that John the Baptist testified concerning Jesus Christ to two of his disciples and those two disciples went and testified to their families and thus the discipleship work began. Others were drawn to commit themselves to Jesus Christ because someone they respected and cared about told them the truth about Jesus Christ.

You and I have the responsibility to be witnesses for Jesus Christ, both to our family and our friends. Tell people what Jesus Christ has done in your life. Tell people how your life has been changed by Him. That is our job. We are to plant and water the seed of God's Word.

Now let us examine this tremendous passage. There are two key testimonies I want to bring to your attention.

TESTIMONY #1 – The testimony of John the Baptist. 1:35-37

Whether or not John and Jesus had ever met prior to His baptism is not actually known, but we don't think so. They were blood relatives through their mothers (Luke 1:36), however, John spent most of his early years in the desert (Luke 1:80), so he would not have had a lot of contact with Jesus, but what we do know is that God did reveal to him who Jesus Christ truly was. John, who was a relative of Jesus Christ, testified of the need for a relationship with Jesus Christ and that impacted his own disciples, who in turn testified to their own families and that impacted them.

John 1:35

In verse 35, we learn that John the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples. Notice the precision of the report in giving the physical status of John - he "was standing." One of the disciples was Andrew (1:40) and the other is not named. It is very probable that the other disciple with John the Baptist was John the Apostle. There are two reasons why we suspect this: 1) John often does not name himself; 2) John is always mentioned and grouped with four key apostles - John, Andrew, Peter and James (Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:14-18; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13). It obviously cannot be Andrew or Peter because they are named in this context and had it been James, we could assume he too would have been named. Therefore it is safe to conclude that the other disciple is John.

John 1:36

These three were standing together and according to verse 36, when John spotted Jesus walking, he said to these two others - "Behold the Lamb of God." The Greek words "looked upon" indicate to look at something with careful consideration. Thomas Whitelaw says this was a very "penetrating glance" (*John*, p. 37). Both John's eyes and his mind were fixed upon Jesus Christ. If you have ever been around a flight animal such as a horse or deer or bird, you know that when there is the slightest bit of movement, those animals fix their attention on it. That is what John did, he fixed his attention upon Jesus. The word "behold" is a demonstrative particle which basically says - "Look and see the lamb of God." John the Baptist is pointing out the Lamb of God to these two disciples. He is saying - "Look, there He is, that's Him. That's God's Lamb."

Now think how many Biblical names for Jesus that John could have selected to identify Him, when he first saw Him. He could have said there is the:

- 1) Last Adam (I Corinthians 15:45);
- 2) Our Advocate (I John 2:1);
- 3) The Faithful and True Witness (Revelation 3:14);
- 4) Our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1);
- 5) The Author and Finisher of our Faith (Hebrews 12:2);
- 6) The Bishop of Our Soul (I Peter 2:25);
- 7) The Bread of God (John 6:33);
- 8) The Captain of our Salvation (Hebrews 2:10);
- 9) The Door of the Sheep (John 10:7);
- 10) Emmanuel (Matthew 1:23);
- 11) The Firstborn of the Dead (Colossians 1:18);
- 12) The Head of Every Man (I Corinthians 11:3);
- 13) The Heir of All Things (Hebrews 1:2);

14) The Image of the Invisible God (Colossians 1:15);

15) The King (Luke 19:38); **but of all of the names John selects he chooses**

16) The Lamb of God. This is the second time he has called Him “the Lamb of the God” because this is the first way people need to see Jesus Christ.

John saw Jesus first as the sin-bearing Lamb of God on His way to Golgotha. He saw Him as foreordained to be slain. The nation Israel knew that Jesus was the One who could take away their sin because John told them. The first deliverance Israel needed was not from Rome, but from her own sin. When John declares Him as God's Lamb, he is saying that He is the One who will be sacrificed for sin and can take away sin. At the baptism there had been the voice from heaven, but after the baptism the emphasis is on the voice from John. As John Calvin said, John used his voice to direct men to Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sin (*Gospel According to John*, Vol. 1, p. 70).

John knew when he told his disciples there is the Lamb of God that it would mean he would have to say goodbye to them. He knew they would leave him to follow the Lamb. That was John's job. That was his assignment. That was his ministry. Godly leaders never grieve or regret about one who is truly following God, but they do grieve and regret about one who follows their own fleshly lusts and desires.

John 1:37

Now notice the impact John's witness had (1:37). Two of his own disciples went to Christ because John pointed them to Christ. When the two disciples heard what John said, they started following Jesus Christ. John's primary ambition was not to get people to follow him; his goal was to get people into a proper relationship with Jesus Christ. It was John's testimony concerning the Truth of Jesus Christ that actually caused those closest to him to turn to Jesus Christ. Keep in mind that these two disciples were already very religious and dedicated. But they still needed to get into a proper relationship with Jesus Christ and that is exactly what John pointed them to. As Richard Lenski observed, when all is said and done, four of John's own disciples (Andrew, Peter, James and John) end up leaving him to believe in and follow Jesus Christ (*Interpretation of Saint John's Gospel*, p. 159).

You may be a leader in your work and you may have people who trust you and look to you for guidance. The greatest thing you can ever do for any people close to you is to tell them about Jesus Christ and point them to Him. They may be loyal people to you, they may be religious people and they may be nice people - but they still need a relationship with Jesus Christ and it is our job to tell them. It is a privilege to be a leader and have people follow you, but at some point they must realize the main goal is to follow Jesus Christ.

TESTIMONY #2 – The testimony of Andrew, Peter's brother. 1:38-42

John 1:38

According to verse 38, Jesus turned and spotted them following Him. He went right to the heart of the matter by asking them – “What do you seek? What are you looking for?” That is a good question to ask any person - what are you looking for in life? Position, power, prosperity, pleasure, popularity? What are you after? Most would have said - we are after a revolutionary leader who can overthrow Rome. But these two give quite an impressive answer - (v.38) “we just want to know you, be with you.”

Questions are very important to this gospel. In fact, one commentator observed there are 161 questions in the Gospel of John because it is a legitimate way to learn. Many of the questions are asked by Jesus because He is leading them to learn. When Christ asked them His question, they responded to Him - "Rabbi (which means Teacher) where are you staying?" The term "Rabbi" was one of great respect, in fact this term is used in John of Jesus at least 9 times. It is a Jewish equivalent to a high ranked, skilled teacher. This term would be used in Jewish arenas to refer to a master teacher or a teacher who was so skilled you could call him doctor.

John 1:39

I don't know what their motive was in asking this question. Perhaps they were going to get John and others once they learned where he was, but regardless of their motive, Christ said, "Come and you will see." They spent that day with Jesus Christ as it was about the tenth hour. It is interesting to me that when they ask Him where are you staying, He doesn't just tell them the location. In order for them to get there, they must follow Him. If we want to get to the place God wants us to ultimately be, we must follow Jesus Christ, which means we must follow the Word of God. We will never arrive to our true goal in life, until we walk close with Jesus Christ.

Think of what is actually happening here, God is letting sinful people get near to Him.

The Apostle John is very specific at times to mention the exact hour, the tenth hour - 1:39; 4:6; 4:52; 19:14. This would be another indication John, himself, is there for he can tell the exact moment these things are happening.

Now there were two ways to calculate time in the New Testament Age: 1) The Jewish way; 2) The Roman way. The Jews started counting at sunrise or 6 a.m. The tenth hour would be 4 p.m. The Romans started counting at midnight or 12 a.m. The tenth hour would be 10 a.m. We think this is written in Jewish time, so when these disciples hooked up with Jesus Christ, it was about 4 p.m. in the afternoon. This was the day and time that these disciples met Jesus Christ. John remembered this moment for all eternity. Martin Luther said he always remembered the hour he nailed his theses to the church door in Wittenberg. Can you remember the hour, or moment that you first met Jesus Christ? If not, why not make it today in the twelfth hour of the day?

John 1:40-41

Now we do not know what was specifically discussed here, but enough was discussed in this time to absolutely prove to these two that Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God and that He was the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One of God for Israel. I am sure their "hearts burned" within them (Luke 24:32). We know this because one of the two disciples at this meeting was Andrew and **the first thing Andrew did was to find his own brother (v. 41)** whose name was Peter and tell him we have found the Messiah, which translated means the Christ. The Greek word "found" (v. 41) is the word from which we get our English word eureka (εὕρισκει, εὕρηκαμεν). Andrew is saying, we have struck it rich, we have hit the jackpot; we have found the treasure of all treasures, the Messiah.

John 1:42

Andrew is a go-getter. As far as we know, he never formally preached any sermon or officially taught. **But the thing that stands out about Andrew is that he was always bringing people to Christ.** 1) He found Peter; 2) He found the lad with the loaves of bread (John 6:5-9); 3) He found the Gentiles/Greeks (John 12:20-22). Andrew (v. 42) brought his own brother to Christ because of his verbal witness and Jesus looked at Peter and said you shall be called "Cephas." This immediately shows Christ's sovereign authority in renaming Peter. How many people would you allow to rename you, when you first meet them? The only Person who has that right is God, which proves Jesus is God. "Cephas" is an Aramaic word which translates into Greek "Petros" or Peter. The word means a "rock" or a "stone." Obviously Jesus Christ had a command of all language because He authored language. Dr. McGee said when Peter first came to Christ, he was as weak as water, but Christ told him he would become a stone man, rock solid. Peter was a long way from being a stable rock, but that is what he eventually would become. **When one comes to Christ, Jesus does not just see what the person is, but he sees what the person may become.** Peter was a Galilean fisherman who would become a rock solid pillar of the church. When Peter first met Jesus, he had no idea what God was going to do with him and neither do we. Jesus Christ would turn Peter into a rock-like man who would defend God's truth and die for it.

Here is the point - Peter came to faith in Christ because of the witness of his brother. Do not ever underestimate the importance of household witnessing. You and I have the responsibility to share truth about Jesus Christ with members of our own families. If your father or mother, if your brothers or sisters, or aunts or uncles or cousins are not believers in Jesus Christ, it is partly your job and responsibility to witness to them and point them to Jesus Christ. Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse said the Lord has given us this story as an indication of the field of witness often overlooked - our own family (*The Love Life, A Study of the Gospel of John*, p. 12). If you saw a house on fire would you tell the people that if they do not get out they will burn? How about a soul on the way to being burned? Will you tell them?

There have been times in the history of missionary work when some foreign missionary went to a field and had some wonderful results. Paul, who was a Jew, took the gospel to Asia, Europe and Greece. Irenaeus, a Greek, was the first to take the gospel to what is now France. In more recent times, Adoniram Judson took the gospel to Burma. Hudson Taylor took the gospel to China. David Livingstone took the gospel to Central Africa. However, as effective as these pioneers were, **there is no doubt that the vast majority of people brought into the family of God were not people won by foreign missionaries, but people won by home missionaries.** People who lived with them, who knew them, who knew the language and who cared enough about them to point them to Jesus Christ. You don't need to be a great orator in a pulpit to witness; you can be a witness in a factory, an office, a hospital, a school and a home. We can tell people about Jesus Christ right where we are, in fact, that is our job.

If you are going to witness to your family, you will have to practice what you preach. I can walk up to a total stranger and witness and they really never know whether I live my faith or not. But when I witness to a family member, they can see whether Jesus Christ has changed my life. They can see whether my speech, my attitudes, my goals, my passions have been transformed. A family member knows all the secrets and idiosyncrasies. He knows when we are real and when we are not. He sees whether or not our commitment to Jesus Christ is real. So to witness to a family member means we must be allowing Jesus Christ to change us.

Let me say this- if you cannot bring a person to Jesus Christ from your own environment, you will never be able to do it on a foreign mission field. Crossing an ocean or a mountain does not make a soul winner out of anyone. Tell the Good News to your neighbors and see what happens.

Nothing will make you happier than knowing your family members have been brought to Christ. Nothing will make you sadder than thinking your family members are burning in hell. Pray for them. Talk to them. Sow the Seed. We must plant and water if God is to give increase.