

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Encounters with Jesus "The Disciples" John 1: 35-51 by Kathy Mathew February 2021

In John 1 we have the account of the first five men called by Jesus to be disciples. After Jesus' encounter with John the Baptist, people were quickly drawn to him. John's testimony was to prepare the hearts of people to receive the Messiah, identifying Jesus as "the Lamb of God" (v.36) and now people came seeking him out. Two of John the Baptist's disciples heard him point to Jesus in identifying him in this way and immediately followed Jesus. One of these disciples was Andrew and we are not told the name of the second person (and almost all scholars agree) was probably John the writer of this gospel. As Andrew and John began to follow Jesus, he turned and saw them and said, "What do you seek?" (V.38) These are the first words of Jesus in the Gospel of John and they are really noteworthy and come in the form of a question. They go right to the heart of those of us who call ourselves Christians and go to the very heart of life. In these words Jesus is asking the most profound question in anyone's life, "What are you looking for?" Do you ever ask yourself, "Why am I here? What do I really want out of life?" That is what Jesus is asking. He is not asking "Whom do you seek?" This would have been a natural question to ask in the circumstances. No, Jesus asked - What are you looking for? What do you really want? These are such important questions for us to answer in our lives too. **Q 1. What are you looking for? Why are you here? What do you really want out of life? Perhaps Lent is a good time to ask yourself these questions.**

Andrew accepted John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus and immediately went to tell his brother, Simon. Jesus saw not only who Simon was but who he would become. That is why he gave him a new name-Peter which means 'rock' (Greek). Peter is not presented as rock solid in the Gospels and failed Jesus miserably but he became a solid rock in the days of the early church (Book of Acts). By following Jesus, he would be gradually shaped and moulded into the person that God wanted him to become. Do we let God teach and disciple us? He will begin with where we are and change us into what he wants us to be. **Q 2. Are you spending consistent time with Jesus getting to know him through Scripture and in prayer? What time do you spend and can you say how much it has changed your life? Do you have a testimony to tell?** **Q 3. If a Christian told you that he tried to spend time each day reading the Bible and praying, but it wasn't doing anything for him, what would you say to him?**

Philip features next and seems to follow Jesus immediately. All we know about Philip (apart from his name in the list of apostles) we learn in this gospel. We don't know if he knew about Jesus before this initial encounter. All we are told is that Jesus commanded Philip to follow him and based on Phillip's excited words to Nathaniel, he obeyed. Nathaniel's response to Philip that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, was not enthusiastic: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" He did not think too highly of the lowly city of Nazareth. Philip convinced him to "come and see." They had a different idea of what Messiah would be and what he would do for them. Jesus instantly shows Nathaniel that he knows him inside and out and knew he was a good man. Nathaniel is the first man in John's Gospel who believed in Jesus and he is the first to receive a promise from Christ. Nathaniel's life changed because he was willing "to come and see". **Q 4. Like Nathaniel, are you willing to journey with Christ through uncertain times? What about times of doubt? How have you moved forward as a Christian and a disciple?** **Q 5. Each of the men in our passage met Jesus and he changed their lives. By knowing him personally he will use and enrich our lives and change them. With this in mind recall the story of Billy Graham. why is it important that being a Christian isn't just knowing about Jesus, but knowing Jesus personally? What are the differences between these two conditions.**

Each of these men had different personalities and gifts. God would use each of them in different ways. These men met Jesus and he changed them.

When we follow Jesus, he will use and change us for his eternal purpose.