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## Come and See

Texts: from Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*; 1Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-50

A few years ago, back when Adam was 2, I heard this from Emily: “Daddy, come and see,” she called out “Come and see what Adam is doing! Daddy, he’s still doing it! Come and see, hurry, Daddy, look!” Adam was standing at the bookshelf on a pile of books that he had pulled out, and was climbing up to pull out still more. The bottom two shelves were almost clean, and only the top shelf remained.

“Daddy, come and see!” It’s what we naturally say when we see something exciting happening. It’s a special moment in time and we know it won’t last long, so we put out the urgent call: “Come, come and see! Hurry!” It’s just so human, this impulse to share. It can be *things* we want to share, like the bright purples and oranges and reds of a spectacular sunset, or it can be the presence of certain people that captures our attention: “Look, it’s the new President! Look, it’s Leighton Meester! Look, it’s Dylan Minette!” I know, most of you older folks are going, “Leighton Who? Dylan What’d-Ya-Call-Him? So how about, “Look, it’s Harrison Ford! Look, it’s Michelle Pfeiffer.” ... And now the younger folks are all going, “Harrison Who? Like Ford the Car Maker? Michelle What? I know Michelle Obama, but who’s Michelle Pfeiffer?”

Never mind. Young or old, when we find something interesting, we want to share it. It happened in our Scripture today. “Look,” says John the Baptist to his disciples, “it’s the Lamb of God!” And at that point, no one did anything. They just looked. So John went on: “This is the one I was talking about. This is God’s Chosen One.” Still, they did nothing. Okay, he let it go. But the next day, perhaps after a stern talking to the previous evening, John says to his disciples *again*, “**Look, it’s the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” And two of John’s disciples heard him say this, and *this time* they want to take a closer look, to see what John was talking about.

And they saw Jesus. And Jesus saw them. And they started to follow Jesus. And Jesus turned around and saw them following him. And I imagine they stared at each other for a little bit until it was uncomfortable, and then Jesus asked them, “Um, what are you looking for?” Now, they don’t actually tell him what they’re looking for. But they do call him teacher, which implies that what they’re looking for is to learn something from him, looking to be his disciples, that is, people who learn from a master, but they don’t actually say. What they do say is, “Where are you staying?,” which is a bit of an odd question really, isn’t it? What are

they, celebrity stalkers or something? “*Where are you staying?*” Really? That’s your go-to line? That’s your best intro? Really?!? If I’d been Jesus I’d have backed slowly away.

But Jesus doesn’t seem to mind. He knows that they are thinking of following him, thinking of attaching themselves to him as their teacher, that they want to know more about him before committing themselves, because, back then, it was a big commitment to become someone’s disciple, it meant leaving home and family and devoting yourself to learning from your master teacher. They knew this because they had, ahem, actually already done something like that when they had become John’s disciples. In fact, at the time someone might have accused them of being somewhat fickle disciples since they were so quick to throw over John for Jesus, if not for the fact that John had pointed them in the direction of Jesus, thrown them at Jesus, really, on two days running with his “Look, it’s the Lamb of God!” comments. They could respond to the charge of fickleness by pointing out that it didn’t take the first time. “Hey, look, it’s the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! He’s the one who’s mightier than me! He’s the Son of God.”

That’s what John said on the first day. But what do our heroes do? Nothing. Nada. Zilch. They just go, “Oh, that, that’s nice.” That’s why John has to try again the next day. “Hey, look, it’s the Lamb of God!” Nudge, nudge, wink, wink. “The Lamb of God, guys, right, the Lamb ... of ... God!” Only then do they go after Jesus. So they’re not really fickle disciples after all. Well, not *that* fickle, anyway. Jesus knows that these guys are not committed to him yet, that they are just checking him out, so when they say, “Where are you staying?” he says, “Well, come and see.”

That’s the invitation that Jesus issues. “Come check it out.” Not his hotel room, of course, not his digs, not literally where he’s staying, that’s not really so important, but what he’s saying is, “Come and hang out with me! Come and see whether my life, my teachings are true or not.” Come and see whether knowing me better makes you believe John’s witness: “Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” So they went and spent the day with him. The text doesn’t tell us what happened, but it must have been pretty good because the next thing we hear is that Andrew, who was one of the two, goes off to find his brother, Peter, and brings him to Jesus. “We’ve found the Messiah,” he says, “Come and see!” The next thing you know, Jesus has found Philip and called him to come along, too, And Philip has found Nathanael, and tells him, “We’ve found the Messiah – it’s Jesus of Nazareth!” And Nathanael says, “Nazareth? That backwater? You want me to believe that the Messiah comes from Nazareth? I don’t think so!” In the face of doubt, and mocking, Philip simply says, “Come and see!” And Nathanael does.

As Nathanael is coming up, Jesus says, “Aha, here is a true Israelite. There’s nothing phony about him.” And Nathanael says, “What the ...? How do you know me?”

“Well,” says Jesus, “I saw you sitting under a fig tree before Philip came and got you.”

“Whoa, dude, you *are* the Messiah, the King of Israel!”

“You believe because of this? Come along and you’ll see better things than that!”

Did you hear it? There it is again, that “Come and see” again! Do you see how the word about Jesus spread? From John to Andrew to Peter. From Philip to Nathanael. From them to us. Always it’s just, “Come and see, come and see. You gotta check this out!” It’s nothing fancy, not a big speech, not a theological declaration, just an invitation to come and see. That’s how the message is supposed to spread. Knowing Jesus, hanging out with Jesus is supposed to be exciting enough that it encourages us to tell others, “You gotta see this. Come and check it out!”

The church’s job is to be the one offering the invitation, and to be the place where people can meet Jesus and come to know him, and check him out. It’s our job is to show people the pictures of Jesus and what he has done that we have collected up over time. That’s what John the Gospel writer did in writing his gospel (Gospel writer John is a different John from John the Baptist). At the end of it, he says, “If I were to write down everything that Jesus said and did, I don’t suppose the whole world would be big enough for all the books that would have to be written. “But I chose to write down what I did so that you would have some pictures of Jesus’ life, so that you would come to believe in him as I have, and through him, you would have eternal life.”

“Come and see,” John says in his gospel, “Come and see; check this guy out! Believe in him and live!” We don’t want people to come to this church because it’s a nice place to be, although we hope it is that. We want people to come to this church because this is a place to meet Jesus. We want people to hear the stories of what Jesus has done, not just long ago, but still today, when we share our answers to prayer. We want people to see who Jesus is, and what being his disciple means as we work for justice, as we feed the hungry, as we welcome the outcast. We want people to be able to see Jesus through us, to be guided in the right direction by being here, as we tell stories about what he means to us, and how he’s changed us for the better.

We want others to meet Jesus here because we have met him here, in the Scriptures we hear, in the sermons we listen to, in the hymns we sing, in the prayers we offer, in the kindnesses we show each other, in the way we reach out to our community with help. We want people to meet Jesus here because Jesus is the one who really knows us, and them, who has seen us while we were still sitting under our own little fig trees daydreaming about what life could be like. Some will be willing to come right away and see. And some won’t do anything with the first invitation, like Andrew and the other disciple of John the Baptist, who needed a second chance

and a broader hint. Others, like Nathaniel, might give a laugh of ridicule when first approached. But no one asked Nathaniel for a commitment; they just asked him to come and see, and *that* he was willing to do.

That's all we ask. Come and see. I'm convinced that the risen Jesus is the one who speaks to each of our hearts even today as he spoke to Nathanael's heart that day long ago, and he's the one who will continue to speak to new hearts as they are introduced to him. Jesus is the one who says to anyone who is wondering about him, not "Make a huge commitment to me now", but simply, "Well, come and see. Check me out and give it a try."

We have come and we have seen, and we know that he is indeed, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the teacher whose word and life are true, the one who brings us all to eternal life. To all who are seeking him, to all who are skeptical, to all who long to know him better, Jesus is still saying, "Come and See!" "Come and See!"

When we reach out to others, we don't have to worry about converting them, about having the right words, or the right anything. We just have to do what disciples of Jesus have always done. We just have to say, "Hey, have you heard about Jesus? Well, come, and see for yourself. He's gonna blow you away!"

And then maybe invite them here. We can let the risen Jesus do the rest.

Amen