

January 18, 2026

John 1:29-42

“What Are You Seeking? ... Come and See!”

Pilgrim Lutheran Church
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

When Jesus turns to the two disciples of John the Baptist and asks: **“What are you seeking?”** it is not to be considered a casual question. This is a question that reaches into the deepest places of the human heart. It is a question that, if we allow it, will stop us in our tracks and force us to examine what we truly desire, what we truly live for, and what we believe will give our lives meaning and purpose.

We live in a restless age. People are constantly seeking - seeking success, comfort, recognition, seeking love, seeking a sense of belonging. Some are seeking escape from pain, others are seeking a purpose that will make sense of their days. We seek security in our finances, stability in our relationships, and even affirmation from all the people around us. And yet, the question that Jesus asks forces us to pause and ask ourselves: Are we seeking the right thing? Are we committed to seeking the only One who can truly satisfy the deepest hunger of our souls?

“What are you seeking?” So, when Jesus asks the two disciples, he is inviting them to reflect on their deepest longing and give an answer. The disciples could have answered in many ways, but their response is with a question of their own: “Rabbi (which means Teacher), where are you staying?” The psychology of answering a question with a question can involve elements of curiosity, deflection, information gathering, and power dynamics. But when they call Jesus “Teacher,” they are in effect saying out loud that their personal desires do not matter. The only thing that matters is what Jesus will teach them to seek. Moreover, they ask “where are you staying?” which means that they were not looking for a quick answer, but are willing to devote themselves to the answer he gives and live it in their lives.

And Jesus says to them, **“Come and you will see.”** So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. The fact that Jesus says “come” points to his divine initiative to make them disciples. When Jesus says “you will see” he promises a personal encounter and perceptible evidence so that they will ultimately know and believe. Jesus’ response - **“Come and you will see”** - is a simple statement and yet life-changing. Jesus is inviting them into his very life and death so that they will see what John the Baptist told them to see when, the next day after his baptism, Jesus walked by and John the Baptist said to these disciples: “Behold [See], the Lamb of God!”

This is the same invitation he extends to you and me today. Whatever you are seeking - whether it is forgiveness for the past that you cannot change, strength for the burdens you carry, or hope for a future that feels uncertain - Jesus says, **“Come and see.”** Notice that Jesus doesn’t promise that when you follow him all will be easy. He doesn’t say, “Come and see, and all your problems will disappear.” But he does promise that in his presence, you will find what you truly need: peace with God, the assurance of his love, his forgiveness, and the hope of everlasting life.

The two disciples of John the Baptist wanted to be with Jesus. They wanted to hear his voice, they wanted to be where he would be, and they wanted to see. In other words, they were not just seeking quick information about Jesus - they were seeking a relationship with him. And that is the heart of discipleship. Christianity is not merely about knowing some general facts about Jesus. Rather, it is about knowing him

and his work for us whereby we embrace his gracious presence through the gospel and sacraments for us personally. Here he shapes who we are and our lives.

The truth is, we often think we know what we're looking for, but our hearts are restless until they rest in Christ who is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! We may seek happiness in possessions, people, or achievements - you name it - but those things fade and cannot save us. They cannot bear the weight of our deepest need. Augustine famously prayed: "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." He was right and that is the reality Jesus is addressing with his question. He knows that every human longing ultimately points back to him as the One who is missing. The desire for true love points to Jesus who is love. The desire for truth points to Jesus who is the truth by which there is true knowing. The desire for true life points to the One who is the Life by which there is forever living. Pastor James Laurence writes:

The question for us is not just what were those first disciples looking for, but what are we looking for? What are we really hoping to get out of life? What gets us out of bed in the morning? What keeps us awake at night? When it comes right down to it, what are we really looking for? And, more specifically, what are we hoping to find in Jesus? If we are looking for anything other than the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, then Jesus will only be another in a long line of disappointments. On the other hand, if this is exactly what we are looking for, then the very next words that Jesus speaks in John's Gospel offer a wonderful invitation to us all: "Come and see."

Yes! We are invited too! And the way in which we can **Come and See** is found in the way in which Jesus himself has provided in the gospel and sacraments. Perhaps we say this so often that it doesn't register as it should. If you really want to **Come and See** Jesus then you need to realize that the only way you can do so is to be connected to his death and resurrection. And this can only happen in law and gospel, dying and rising in baptism, and receiving his body and blood that was offered and shed on the cross - given as our medicine of immortality. In other words, if you really want to meet and receive Jesus, then this can only happen by faith that is created and preserved by the Holy Spirit in the gospel and sacraments. One day we will **Come and See** him as he is without a Bible, water, or bread and wine in the glory of his beautiful face. But for now we have him in the means of grace whereby we pick up our cross in this fallen world and follow him.

At the very end of a famous work about Jesus by Albert Schweitzer, a renowned Lutheran and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, he concluded with these words about Jesus:

He comes to us as one unknown, without a name, as of old by the lakeside, He came to those who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words, 'Follow me!', and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.

Yes. To all who follow him, he will reveal himself in the midst of his cross - his sufferings and death for us, to help us who suffer and die. We will learn who he is. **Come and See!** And we have learned and are even renewed in him. In Jesus the lamb of God who takes away our sin, we find what we are looking for to fill the emptiness. And in him, we live now and forever in rejoicing. With our eyes opened by the Holy Spirit who gave us faith, we have, indeed, found what we are looking for: The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Thanks be to God!

And when Andrew met Jesus, he didn't keep it to himself. He went to his brother Simon and said, "We have found the Messiah (which means Christ)." That's what happens when you truly encounter Christ. You can't help but to say to others "**What Are You Seeking? ... Come and See!**" The joy of finding the One your soul has been seeking overflows into the lives of others. This is why the Christian life is not meant to be lived in isolation. We are called to be witnesses, to invite others to "come and see" the One who has changed our lives. Just as Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, we are called to bring others—not by force, but by the gospel and sacraments.

So today, hear his voice. Lay down the burdens of your restless searching. Follow him. And in his gracious presence in the gospel and sacraments, you will find not only what you were looking for—but far more than you ever imagined! And take what has been given to you and give it to others!

Amen.

Pastor Brock Abbott