

John 1: 35-42

**The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples,
and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed,**

'Look, here is the Lamb of God!'

The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them:

'What are you looking for?'

They said to him, 'Rabbi (which translated means Teacher):

'Where are you staying?

He said to them, 'Come and see.'

**They came saw where he was staying,
and they remained with him that day.**

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

**One of the two who heard John speak
and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.**

He first found his brother Simon and said to him,

'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed).

He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him, and said,

'You are Simon son of John.

You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter).

Meditation:

Tuesday nights are my late night here at The Center...

By the time I clean up and head home it is after 8:30
and I'm not really in the mood to be very productive.
So sometimes, I just turn on the TV to see if I can catch something light...
So I tune into the Food Network...nope, saw that one...
turn to the DYI network...not interested!
I switch to the sports channel and then the regular channels of 2,5,7, 9, or 11...
nothing much there either...
history channel, national geographic channel...nope, nope, nope and nope.
So, one night as I was flipping through all of that and the thought occurred to me...
well, knucklehead: what do you want to watch? what are you looking for?
And it dawned on me: I didn't know.
and since I didn't know I couldn't find it.
even with all those many choices, nothing appealed to me...

and that is exactly the question Jesus poses:
what are you looking for?

In our reading today,

John the Baptist is standing on the side of the road with two of his disciples.

John sees Jesus and exclaims: Look! There is the Lamb of God!

Now you need to understand that this is the Gospel of John...
written almost 70 years after Jesus was crucified.

Much if not most, of the Gospel of John is theology: thoughts, explanations, etc.
that had developed around Jesus.

So for the gospel writer to have John the Baptist call Jesus the lamb of God
is a theological statement...the Baptist would never actually had said that.

So...once John declares Jesus to be the "Lamb of God"

John's 2 disciples take off after Jesus to follow him....

Jesus must have had a funny feeling because he turns around and asks them:

“What are you looking for?”

Their answer: “Rabbi, where are you staying?” isn’t really a question about where he lives but, scholars say, that it really means:

Who are you and what are you about?

Where are you staying is not a question of lodging, but a question of his purpose and intent...

In other words: who are you, Jesus, really?

And Jesus replies: Come and See.

Come and See....

He invites them to journey with him and to find out for themselves....

Which leads me to this question for us:

Why do we gather each week?

What is that we are looking for?

If we don’t know what we are looking for how will we ever find it?

Well, obviously I don’t know what you are looking for,

but I will share with you what I pondered and prayed this week.

At this moment in time... I am seeking the Peace that the world cannot give.

and I’m seeking it not only for myself...but for all of creation....

Now, I didn’t always think this way,...

When I was young, I was taught that following Jesus would get me into heaven.

So, it was salvation that I was taught to seek.

A lot of the rules about how I worshipped and how I practiced my religion...

and a lot of the expectations about what I did,

and who I hung around with...

all centered on the one question:
did it lead me closer to heaven or closer to hell?

But as I have grown older and as I have come to understand and
personally know God's unconditional love...
and as I have come to reject the notion of God's condemnation to an eternal hell...
I have grown to believe that we are all held in the arms of Divine Love
in this life and the next,
warts, failures and all...

and that knowing...God's absolutely unconditional love,
offers me the beginning awareness of that deep, deep Peace that I am looking for.
Do I feel the full depth of that Peace each and every day,
every minute of the day?

Ha! of course not...

but it has taken a lot of the existential anxiety of
not being 'good enough' out of my life...
and it has offered an invitation to freedom as I live in the very messy and
complicated day to day reality of what it means to be human.

When I was young, following Jesus was all about worshipping him
and following the rules of the Church.

Now it is much more trying to live and love as he did.

and That, I have found out is a lot more difficult than simply
not eating meat on Fridays and going to Church once a week
and putting an envelope in the collection basket.

Willing to be open to loving as broadly as he loved is a HUGE challenge.
That means I am invited to see the Holy in EVERYONE:

those I love,
those I like and
those I most deeply struggle with.

That means that I am invited to want no one to be hurt,
and I don't want anyone to be harmed:
not even if they have hurt me or harm me
not even if I think they deserved it ...
even if it is called justice.

That means I am invited to go out of my way to care for the lost and the lonely
even when I am inconvenienced, or feeling tired or lost and lonely myself.

That means I am invited to let my heart to be stretched larger
than I ever thought possible...

That means I am invited to see EVERYTHING...all of creation...
all of her creatures,
all of her environments...the mountains, the deserts, the cities and the farms
the wild lands and the broken down tenement slums
as Holy....

And the funny thing about all of those invitations?

If/when I say yes to the invitations and therefore begin to follow him....
I begin to know more joy, more peace, more hope,
and of course more love each and every day. Now.
In this life. I don't have to wait for the next one.

So there is but one more question to ask this day:

Do you know what you are looking for?

Amen.