

Come and See!  
John 1:29-42

In his gospel, John recorded for us 3 personal testimonies of John the Baptist about his knowledge of Jesus Christ. You might remember that the primary mission of John the Baptist was to prepare the world for the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. What an exciting opportunity! He delivered the good news firsthand that the Lamb of God, the Son of God, indeed the long-awaited Messiah Jesus Christ was in their midst. The mission of John the Baptist, to prepare the world for the coming of Christ, is also our mission as we seek to bring glory to God.

We glorify God in so many ways. **We glorify God by our praise, by our prayers and by proclaiming who He is.** We glorify God with our presence, our gifts and our obedience to His word. We glorify God when we put spiritual growth ahead of personal preferences and seek unity rather than division in His church. But the great preacher Charles Spurgeon said it best - "Our great object of glorifying God is to be mainly achieved by the winning of souls". The interesting thing is that he is known as a British Reformed Baptist, yet his own soul was saved in a Methodist church at the age of 15. Spurgeon was right Each of us were created and placed here on this earth to bring glory to God, and that is accomplished primarily by winning souls for Jesus Christ. We glorify God by telling others who He is. **We bring glory to God when we tell others of Jesus Christ-** who He is, why He came, how He has changed our life and how He can make a difference in theirs.

Even though he lost his life in the process, John the Baptist was quite successful in his mission. With the benefit of perfect hindsight, we can look through the Scriptures and see how, in the words of the prophet Isaiah he was the "voice of one crying in the wilderness: make straight the way of the Lord. He boldly proclaimed that people needed to repent and prepare for the Messiah, the Lord was finally here. He boldly proclaimed that judgment was coming. He brought glory to God by telling others that Jesus was here. We are here this morning because John faithfully carried out his mission.

The post-modern church, on the other hand has fallen short of the mark. Listen to some statistics from the Barna Research Group. Nearly 90% of American adults, nine out of ten, cannot accurately define the “great commission”. 70% have no idea what John 3:16 is or what it means. Barely 31% of all adults know the meaning of the expression “the Gospel”. The most telling is this- only 53% of Christians, those whom John describes as born-again, feel a sense of responsibility to tell others about their faith. That percentage is not the number of those who actually share their faith, but just those who understand that we are commanded by God to do it.

I am glad that John the Baptist believed it was necessary, and my hope is that each of us here are counted in that number or someday will be. Is it any wonder that the streets of America are filled with violence? Is it any wonder that we still judge people according to the color of their skin, their sexual orientation or their political persuasion? If you need evidence turn on the so-called news stations or log in to Twitter or Facebook. The reality is that the Scripture teaches that there are only two groups of people- those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and are reborn in the Spirit of God, and those who haven't (Gal 3:28). God has commanded those of us who know Him, His spiritual children, to reach out to those who don't and tell them to come and see. Come and see how they too can be reborn, how they too can live again in eternity with Jesus.

To be fair, John the Baptist did a great advantage. He witnessed firsthand the beginning of Jesus' ministry as the Spirit of God descended and remained upon Him (1:32-34). We have not. There are those who ask how can we testify if we have not seen Him? In this age of video cameras, DNA testing and forensic science, people have come to expect proof beyond a shadow of a doubt when a witness testifies in court. However, sometimes those things are not available, and even in a court of law we must rely on something else- circumstantial evidence. In the eyes of the law, physical evidence such as eyewitness testimony and circumstantial evidence are enough to determine guilt or innocence. For example, there is not a person alive today who witnessed the assassination of Abraham Lincoln or spoke with someone who did. Yet we know the exact date, time and name of the person who murdered him. We have written and reliable eyewitness accounts that allow us to confidently say that on Good Friday, April 14, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theatre in Washington by John Wilkes Booth.

It is much the same with Jesus Christ. We have reliable written eyewitness accounts, testimonies of his life, death and resurrection. The 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of the Gospel of John contains three personal testimonies from John the Baptist. The first is found in verses 19-28, where it was given to clear up any misconceptions that John was the Christ. They had not understood his mission and were confused by the baptisms he performed. John clearly states that he is not the Christ, but the one that Isaiah foretold would come before Him.

The second one is found in this mornings' Scripture text in verses 29-31. John again finds himself among the Levites and Jewish priests, when Jesus approaches him. John quickly identified Jesus for them as the Son of God, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The gospel writer doesn't record the details of their response, but you can imagine that a few eyebrows were raised. People today might have the same reaction when they first hear the news.

The following day John testifies the third time, this time to his own disciples (35-36). I am glad to see that John was unselfish enough to point his followers to Christ. There is a lesson in there somewhere for church leaders that count members as their own. The Scripture says that two of John the Baptists disciples followed Jesus. As they followed him, Jesus turned and asked Andrew and his companion a question- "what do you seek?"

I believe that they were seeking the same thing that people today are seeking- the truth. Whether it is in the courtroom or the church room, the objective is the same- find the truth. Andrew and his companion, perhaps the author of John's gospel both desired to know more about this Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Once they met Him their lives were never the same. Isn't that what we want as well? A sinless world in which to live is almost too great to comprehend. We glorify God when we seek the truth.

The open invitation Jesus gave to them and to all who seek Him still stands today. "Come and See" It is my prayer this morning that we extend that same invitation to those we meet. Come and see what is happening in this church, and more importantly come and see what Jesus Christ promises to those who seek him. He promises a perfect home in a perfect place- a sinless world in which to live. Come and see the glory of God. Amen