

Wednesday with the Word

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What Does It Mean to Be a Disciple of Jesus Christ?

John is Clear and he is Trying Help them Get Clarity: John 1:19-28

¹⁹ This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”

²⁰ He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.”

²¹ And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.”

²² Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³ He said,

“I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ ”

as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴ Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.

²⁵ They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?”

²⁶ John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one **whom you do not know**, ²⁷ the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.”

²⁸ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Question:

Why do you think they don't know who Jesus is or who John is? - could it be that they are spiritually blind?

John as a Witness: John 1:29-34

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and ***declared, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”***

³⁰ This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’

³¹ I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.”

³² And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.

³³ I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

³⁴ ***And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.***

³⁵ ***The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!"***

³⁷ ***The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.***

The interesting thing is that John had disciples, he had people who were following him.

You see the essence of his approach to ministry in that he hands his disciples off to Jesus.

John says, I am not the one, this is the one, this is the one we are to follow.

John had to have a sense of humility and he knew his assignment.

John had to know and accept that he was not the one but he was making a way for the one!

John knew his assignment, accomplished his assignment and then made way for Jesus. He knew when he had done his JOB! Every job has a start and an end. He knew!

Question:

- What is your assignment?
- When do you know you have completed your assignment?
- Do you know when it is time to handoff to someone else?

While these questions appear to be perfunctory, I would argue they are central to the life and death process of the church.

We have too many leaders who stay too long and they end up being in the way of what is next.

You have to know when it is time to point people to what is next.

“Seeing, Finding, Following and Knowing”: John 1:38-42

³⁸ 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?”

³⁹ He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon.

⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.

⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed).

⁴² 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).

John 1:43-51

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”

⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, **Jesus** son of Joseph from Nazareth.” ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!”

⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him, “Where did you get to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

⁴⁹ **Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”** ⁵⁰ Jesus answered, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.”

⁵¹ And he said to him, “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

Disciples: What are four the traits of disciples of Jesus Christ?

Seeing - in this story the disciples see Jesus for who is he is. They recognize his work and what he has called them do as followers of his. They see with spiritual eyes what the spirit of God would have them to see.

- Do you see the Lord and what the Lord is doing in the church, the world and in your life?
- Have you developed your spiritual eyesight? Is it 20 - 20 or something else? Can you see what God is doing?
- What do you see?

Finding -it is clear that they have been searching for the Lord. Ironically you will find what you are looking for!

They have been waiting for the Lord. When the Lord shows up they announce that they have found him.

They don't hesitate but rather they are on it.

Questions:

Why do you think they "knew" they had found the Lord?

Do you know when God is in something?

Do you know when you hear the voice of God?

What gets in the way of our knowing (and seeing)?

- People
- Doubt
- Who we allow to speak into our lives / who we listen to / tolerate and celebrate
- Lack of a prayer life
- Lack of spiritual disciplines
- Lack of an inward faith (our faith is sometimes expressed more outwardly than inwardly)
 - Outward: public worship, attendance at "stuff" (rehearsal, meetings, outings), service, public prayer, public study, reading of the word, etc...
 - Inward: silence, solitude, fasting, prayer, read of God's word, meditation, retreat(s), meditating on God's word,

Following - they immediately followed the Lord! There is the dialogue with Nathanael, but he still comes, sees and immediately follows.

They knew what they were looking for, they saw it, they followed it and left all behind for sake of what was ahead.

We struggle to leave the past for the future.

Our inability (or unwillingness) to trust God enough to let go holds us hostage. In their case they let go and literally followed God.

We sometimes wrestle with God when God tells us to let go. But if you don't let go you can't follow God.

God is taking you somewhere, but if you don't let go, you can't go!

We have to be willing to lose our lives as we know it to be what God would have us to become.

Matthew 10:37-39

³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ ***Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.***

Everyone in this text gave up life as they knew it to act on what God had promised.

- What does God want from you?
- What is God calling you from?
- What is God calling you too?
- What do you have to let go of to get what God has for you?

Knowing- they KNEW! John knew and all those who answered the call to follow Jesus knew. They knew who he was, they were sure, they didn't doubt!

Why did they know?

How do you think they had prepared themselves for what was to come?

If you look back over your life with spiritual eyes you will see what is next.

What came before has prepared your or what is ahead.

We like to say, "I am not ready." If you have been following God all along, you are ready for whatever God has put before you.

Matter of fact, if you look back over your life with spiritual eyes, you will see that what you been through has prepared you for your present.

God always pre-pares you.

John was prepared to baptize Jesus.

All of these disciples were ready, they were pre-pared!

What happens to us we get so caught and become intimidated by what is on the table we forget that God prepared a table for us in the presence of our enemies.

God prepared the table and God prepared us to handle the table set before us.

When we look back we will see what God was doing and that lets us know we are doing the right thing NOW!

What do you see in your past that is an indication of what God has prepared you for in your present?