

*Prayer: Faithful and loving God, hear us this day as we hear your word and reply with our questions. Listen to our curiosity, our unknowing and our wants. Understand us and show your way among us. Invite us home. Amen.*

What do you want? Jesus calls out. Are we listening? What is it we really **want** and are we prepared to risk everything we know, feel, think in order to 'come and see'? These three little words hold enough power to shatter all the 'wants' in the world. CV

The Gospel verses today record from John's perspective the handing over of God's purpose from John *the Baptist* to Jesus. God is calling the next batter into the line-up. John has had his innings and now it is Jesus turn – but. But how would you know? How could you trust that he is worthy? How can you tell he is the right one?? What is God calling? What do we want? cV

John, in his Gospel always has a lot happening with a multitude of meanings and layers, Bill Loader\* tells us. But there is a clear theme that emerges from the Gospel writer, John: "It is in this Jesus that we encounter the being of God in invitation to us **to belong**. That belonging is not something static but a relationship *with an* agenda: 'that they might have life and have it in abundance'. Its obverse is also clear: taking away, getting rid of, confronting, disempowering the sin of the world. 'The sin' by definition is what destroys life and relationship."\*

John of the Gospel says 'Relationship and Belonging' is what Jesus offers **and came** to take away anything, **everything** that works against establishing life in abundance for those who come, see and follow. It would seem for both 'John's' –relationship, life and belonging happen because Jesus was the 'lamb of God' who took away the sin of the world, when you came, saw and stayed. Cv

John the Baptist is the second witness, first 'human' witness to what is being revealed in Jesus. The first was the dove / voice experience of Jesus baptism: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am pleased..." *last week's* reflections. And now John the B testifies that Jesus is the Son, the Lamb of God for those around. His testimony was enough for two of *his* disciples to want a closer look. So they did, and Jesus asked them – what do you want?

What do we want? I wonder when most of us realised that one of our deepest "want's" is to belong in relationships. In faith what we believe is that it is the relationship with Jesus that is our primary one. And that in its wake it brings life in abundance and cleanses us from our stupidity, our mistakes, and our sin, that's what we want. It doesn't stop the mistakes etc, nor the consequences and only Jesus can take the poison away and bring health to mind, body and soul. Cv

Today, two of John the B's disciples hear his testimony about Jesus and start following Him. Jesus spots them and asks them: "What do you want?" They reply: "Rabbi, (which means teacher) – where are you staying? 'Come,'" Jesus said, "and see". This is no 3 hour evangelistic outreach sermon! This is crystal clear very straight forward: "Come and see." Jesus reply rephrased and lengthened could have been: "If you want to know more, come and see who I am, by where and how I live." cv

The location of where he is staying is not the answer they want – the **who** he is, as seen in *where he lives* is what they want. Simple, truthful evangelism that is so easy – right? 'Come home, and see where I live, so that you may believe who I am, so that you believe what I say.

Complete side track maybe.... When we moved into one of our homes, and we had one of those home opening parties – a friend from Germany who was in NZ at the time brought what was for her a traditional gift for these occasions: freshly baked bread and a gift of salt. The sharing of bread and salt was an acknowledgment of welcome, of family, of belong.

When we open our homes, we open our hearts and reveal who we really are – right? When Jesus had two of John the B’s disciples following him and wanting to know more they ask where he lives. A physical address? I don’t think so. They want to know more than just where he lived and Jesus gave an open invitation – come and see. A call, an invitation and promise of what will be if they stay.

I offer an insight from the blog of a St African minister called Peter: “Two disciples of John then decide to follow Jesus, meet him and enquire about where he lives. This question is far deeper than merely an inquiry after an address. Amongst the [Xhosa people](#) of Southern Africa, there is a form of introduction which means *“Where do you come from?”* In the customs of the Xhosas, the appropriate answer to the question is not to give an address, but to declare your clan heritage. The answer is self revelatory far beyond geography. The question is one of identity not of location. I believe the question of the disciples, *“Where are you staying?”* has similar dimensions.”

Jesus said: “come and see”. There is a power in these three little words that maybe we and the church would do well to recognise and tap into. For the two seekers, (Jesus 1st disciples,) **when** he invited them ‘home’, to come close enough to **see for themselves** if his words matched his lifestyle, his teachings rang true, he walked the talk, **he answered their question and met their wants.**\* (\*Charles Campbell)

(The Lectionary Commentary: The Gospels.)

As the Jesus – questioner got to know each other ‘where he lived’ they understood who he was, and that their relationship with him would – had changed their lives. I believe we can see this change in the very limited conversation exchange: vs38 ‘Rabbi, where are you staying?’ vs**41** The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “**We have found the Messiah**” (that is, the Christ).” From a ‘teacher’ to “The Messiah” – being at home with Jesus transformed their lives.

The disciples found that living with Jesus was what made the difference to them and it had such an impact they wanted to tell others about the good things that they saw, heard, knew and so tradition tells us, Cephas-Peter was called, because of their fledgling testimony... Lest we move too far into memory and forget reality our scriptures warn us that hearing and following the calling of the Lord is not a life of ease and comfort and wealth and absolution of responsibility etc...

An unknown quote goes: "God doesn't call the qualified; God qualifies the called." It seemed to me this was an offering from our Isaiah text this morning. The words come from the second of 4 'Servant Songs' in Isaiah. Scholars agree the song seems to refer to both an individual and to the nation of Israel. Either way it is understood that God has called and for those who hear and respond there is a task to be accomplished. However, achieving this will be hard work and lead to mockery and rejection and..., but the promise inseparably tied to it is that **God will make God's servant a light to the nations** and will ultimately bring the servant praise and recognition.

The servant's work will be to bring about a reversal of Israel's experience, indeed of earthly ways, power and structures. The servant's role is to undo of all that controls and keeps individual lives captive and seeks to destroy the life-giving ways of God. Hear the echoes and see why Christians draw strength from these words? We see Christ in them – as we live with them, we come to understand more and more who Jesus was and what he wanted.

Do we want what he did? Are we seeking him or??? \*Campbell claims: "In the power of the Spirit, which Jesus has breathed upon us, we offer our fragile and vulnerable testimony to Jesus, backed up by the faithfulness and integrity of our life together.

At a time when the church is tempted to become just another appealing commodity for middle-class consumers, the text from John poses a significant challenge to our communities of faith. Do our words and deeds bear witness to Jesus? And when we invite people to 'come,' will they be able to 'see' Jesus in our congregations?" Cv Are we listening? Amen