

Meeting Jesus, by Daniel H. Kuhn, Jr. E2080120
Isaiah 49:1-7 and John 1:29-42
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Have you ever been curious to see where someone lived? Some of us are obsessed with wanting to know what another's home looks like, and, to be honest, a home visit will often tell us much about an individual. When John the Baptizer saw Jesus and said, "Look, here is the lamb of God," two of John's disciples began following Jesus.

Jesus turned and noticed they were following him, and he asked them, "What are you looking for?"

They responded by asking, "Where are you staying?" That's like asking, "Where do you live?" Jesus asked them the profoundest of questions, and they responded by asking for his house number! This is typical of what appears to be the cluelessness of the disciples throughout the gospels.

"What are you looking for?" Jesus asked the two disciples. That is a crucial question. What you are looking for determines in large part what you will find. If you are looking for the number of mistakes an individual will make, you're bound to find many. If you are looking for lost money on the sidewalk, the chances are you will not find the beauty of the buds on the trees above you.

So, what are you looking for when it comes to Jesus? The church is made up of people who look to Jesus in different ways. Jesus is many things to many people. The church should be big enough to encompass those different people who look to Jesus in different ways. The two disciples preceded their question with the title "Rabbi," which means teacher. That is just one of the titles for Jesus that we find in this passage from John. Others are Lamb of God (who takes away the sin of the world), the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, Son of God, Rabbi, and Messiah (meaning the anointed or Christ).

Those titles reflect some of the different ways people look to Jesus. Some are looking for a savior who will take their sin away and make them spotless. The doctrine of atonement is important to them: a sacrificial substitute. They need a lamb of God who takes away their sin.

Some are looking for a savior who will give them a spiritual charge. They need the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

Some are looking for a savior in the form of a person who is divine, really more of a God. They need the Son of God.

Some are looking for a savior who is a teacher: someone who will make them think and learn, one who will teach God's ways. They need a rabbi.

Some are looking for a savior who is anointed, set aside, sanctified, and consecrated. They need a Messiah. Jesus is all of these and more.

What are you looking for? I am interested in what Jesus called himself. Just a few verses later, in John 1:51, Jesus called himself "Son of Man." This is an apocalyptic title used extensively throughout the gospel of Matthew. Jesus uses this title for himself more than any other.

In using this title, I wonder if Jesus saw himself as a human individual in whose footsteps we can follow. He may not have been perfect, but he was faithful. As Son of Man, if Jesus lived a faithful life, then you and I can live an equally faithful life.

The two disciples may not have been clueless. When Jesus asked, "What are you looking

for?" their response, "Where are you staying?" could imply that they were not sure what they were looking for.

"If we know where you're staying, perhaps we can sit and talk."

"We can get to know you better."

"We can begin a relationship with you."

Relationship is so important. We may dislike someone until we form a relationship and can begin to understand that person.

People are doing a lot of looking today. Many do not know exactly what they're looking for—something. Something to give them hope in a world that doesn't have many signs of hope. Something to give them a sense of self-worth in a culture that uses and abuses others. Something to give them spiritual meaning in a world of materialism. Something to challenge their thinking and help them grow in their faith. In their looking, people may jump from church to church, the same way the two disciples jumped from John the Baptizer to Jesus, seeking the perfect mixture of sermon, music, architecture, and membership. Or, they may not want to try any organized church at all, having been hurt by the manipulations of a preacher, or the gossip of individuals. Can we help these folks in their looking?

Where is Jesus staying? Where does he reside? He has to reside in our hearts for him to do us any good. He has to reside at the center of our church's life if we are to keep from flying into fractious factions. If Jesus resides at the center of our fellowship, others will come and see; they will sense and stay.

Jesus' answer to the two disciples, when they asked "Where are you staying," was, "Come and see." This was an open invitation, reflecting hospitality.

"What is Jesus like? I can't really explain it to you, it is better for you to experience it yourself."

"Come and see" is the perfect statement of an evangelistic ministry. It is a perfect way to share the good news with someone else. It is the perfect way to invite a person to your church.

"What's your minister like?"

"Well, he's a little weird, but why don't you come and see!"

"What does your church teach?"

"It's difficult to explain fully, why don't you come and see!"

Jesus said to Phillip, "Come and see," and he did. Then, Phillip got Nathaniel interested in becoming a disciple of Jesus. When Nathaniel became skeptical about Phillip's enthusiasm, Phillip said, "Come and see!"

See for yourself. Is this what you've been looking for? Come and see. Perhaps this isn't exactly what you've been looking for, but when you get here, something might happen. You might get into a relationship with Jesus, into a relationship with a church, or into a relationship with other followers of Jesus and you might be transformed.

Despair might be transformed into hope.

Worthlessness might be transformed into a sense of self worth.

Sorrow might be transformed into joy.