

## We Have Found the Messiah

John1:29-42

Let us pray: Father God, through today's Word, bring about new creation within us. Help us to discern the mission you have ordained for us, and pour into us the faith to receive and embrace it. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the founder and perfecter of our faith. Amen.

Brothers and sisters, the Gospel of John begins in a very distinctive way. Unlike the other Gospels, it does not start with the story of Jesus' birth, nor does it move directly into an account of his public ministry. Instead, the Gospel of John begins by declaring who Jesus is.

Yet if we look closely at today's passage, we see that John chapter 1 does not merely explain who Jesus is. It tells how a person's life is transformed by encountering Jesus.

The Gospel of John asks this question: "Who is Jesus?" And at the same time, it shows us this truth: "When people meet this Jesus, how are they changed?"

When John the Baptist sees Jesus, he bears witness with these words: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (v. 30). This confession is one of the most significant declarations that runs throughout the entire Gospel of John. John the Baptist calls Jesus the Lamb of God, an image that would have been very familiar to the Jewish people.

This phrase contains two important images. The first is the Passover lamb in Exodus, whose blood spared Israel from death and delivered them from slavery. Jesus is the true and ultimate fulfillment of that Passover lamb. The second is the suffering servant in Isaiah 53. He is the servant of God who bears our iniquity, like a lamb led silently to the slaughter.

John points to Jesus and declares him to be "the one who takes away the sin of the world," the one who removes sin (Matt 1:21). The sin spoken of here is not merely a few wrong actions or moral failures. Sin is the posture of life that assumes we can live without God. It is the very way of being that refuses to acknowledge God as Lord. Jesus is the one who takes upon himself that very sin. That is why his name means "the one who will save his people from their sins."

John the Baptist gives another testimony: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him." This scene clearly reveals the identity of Jesus. He is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament, God had promised this long ago. Through Ezekiel, God said, "I will put a new spirit within you" (Ezek 36:26-27). Through Joel, God declared, "I will pour out my Spirit

on all flesh" (Joel 2:28). John the Baptist now testifies that these promises are being fulfilled in Jesus.

The role of the Holy Spirit is clear. The Holy Spirit enables us to know that Jesus is the Christ and leads us to live under his lordship. Therefore, being filled with the Holy Spirit does not simply mean having special emotions or momentary spiritual experiences. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to know Jesus, to believe in him, and to follow him in daily life. To be filled with the Word is to be filled with the Spirit, and to live according to the Word is to live a life guided by the Spirit.

After hearing the testimony of John the Baptist, two of his disciples begin to follow Jesus. They ask him, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" (John 1:38). This question is not merely a request for information; it is an invitation to begin a relationship. In the cultural context of that time, it was a way of asking a teacher, "Which community or tradition do you belong to?" and also, "May we take part in your life and teaching?"

At this point, the disciples do not yet fully know who Jesus is. They call him "Rabbi," that is, teacher. They are still in a stage of searching rather than firmly convinced that he is the one they must follow.

Jesus responds to their question with these words: "Come and see" (v. 39). He does not lay out conditions, nor does he try to persuade them with explanations. Instead, he invites them into a place of abiding with him, because faith is not a transaction but the beginning of a shared journey.

One of these two disciples, as we see in verse 40, is Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. The other is most likely the apostle John himself.

The passage tells us that they spent time with Jesus beginning at about four o'clock in the afternoon. In this brief sentence are contained many conversations, questions, and moments of silence. They went and saw where he was staying, and as they remained with him for about a day, they received the grace of having their entire understanding transformed. That is why John never forgot that exact hour. John was over eighty years old when he wrote this Gospel, but he was only about twenty when he first met Jesus. A person who has encountered the Messiah never forgets that awe-filled moment.

Faith grows in this way—through time spent abiding with Jesus, listening, and asking questions. This is why we remain in the Word, in prayer, and in the place of worship. We come to believe as much as we know, and we are able to obey as much as we believe. Time spent abiding with Jesus deepens our faith.

The next day, one of those disciples, Andrew, goes to find his brother Simon and says to him, “We have found the Messiah” (v. 41). This confession was not a belief that appeared suddenly overnight. Andrew and Simon were people who had long been waiting for the Messiah. They had shared the Scriptures, asked questions, and wrestled with their hopes and doubts. And Andrew did not keep Jesus to himself. He brought his brother to Jesus.

Here an important point emerges. Neither John nor Andrew sought to make people their own disciples. Instead, they led people to become disciples of Jesus. We are witnesses, not masters. We are channels through which people are led to Jesus.

When Jesus looks at Simon, he says, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (v. 42). In Scripture, a change of name carries profound significance. To change a name is to declare a change of ownership and to call someone into a new life. God changed Abram’s name to Abraham, and Jacob’s name to Israel. When Jesus changes Simon’s name, he is declaring that he is now Simon’s Lord and that he is calling him into a new way of life.

Even today, Jesus calls to us and says, “You are not who you once were.” In the new name *Christian*, there is grace, and there is also a mission.

Last week, as we reflected on the Gospel of Matthew, we heard that God speaks to us, saying, “You are my beloved, with whom I am well pleased” (Matt 3:17). We said that God does not look at us merely as we are in the present, but sees what God will do through us in Christ. That is what we call mission.

God the Father rejoiced as he looked ahead to what his Son, Jesus, would accomplish. Jesus bore the mission of being the Christ who would deal with the problem of sin. Therefore, the words “I am well pleased” mean that there is a mission entrusted to us.

Just as Christ revealed the Father, so we have been given the mission to reveal Christ to the world. To those who meet Jesus Christ as the Messiah, God brings about a new creation and awakens them to a new calling.

There was a university professor whose testimony helps us see that God is still carrying out His work of new creation today. As a hobby, he studied architecture and enjoyed building houses with his own hands. One day, while constructing a house with wooden materials, he was involved in an accident that caused his intestines to rupture. During the course of several surgeries, he also suffered from medical malpractice, and due to the side effects of medication used to raise his blood pressure, blood could not circulate properly to his hands and feet. As a result, he faced the grave possibility of having both his wrists and ankles amputated.

He ultimately lost his left wrist, but as a result of the prayers of many, he only lost his fingers on his right hand and his toes on his feet.

In the midst of such suffering, he was drawn closer to the Lord. Although he had come to faith in Jesus at the age of sixteen, he had lived at a distance from Scripture for many years. After becoming disabled at 60, however, he began to open the Bible and read it. Turning the pages with his blunt right hand was extremely difficult. Yet in that very struggle, he came to realize that the Word of God was, just as his mother had once told him, sweeter than honey. The Scriptures began to come alive to him.

He repented of having devoted himself only to worldly learning while neglecting God's Word, and of having merely gone in and out of church on Sundays without a deeper life of faith. He began to learn the patience of Job. Wanting to read the Scriptures more effectively, he used a laptop so that he would not need to turn pages. He edited the text format so that he could view an entire page at once and read the Bible, using only the page-up and page-down buttons.

Though he does not fully understand why God allowed his disability, he testifies that through it, he has become a person who praises the Lord aloud every day, and he gives thanks to the good God. Today, he serves as an elder in his church, works as a meditation teacher, and leads a Bible reading group.

Beloved brothers and sisters, through today's passage from the Gospel of John, we have seen how a person's life is transformed when they encounter Jesus. It is a story of hearing the testimony of Jesus, coming and abiding with him, being changed, and then living as someone who leads others to Jesus.

Even today, Jesus calls to us and says, "Come and see." In response to this invitation, may we all live lives of abiding with Jesus and bearing witness to the Jesus we have encountered. In the name of the Lord, I bless you all. Amen.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, who ended the old creation and began the new through the work of the cross, thank you for meeting us in this worship. Lead us to stay with you, walk with you, eat with you, and work with you, not only in this service, but in every part of our lives, so that you may be revealed to this world. In your marvelous name we pray. Amen.