

Jesus Doesn't Offer Answers or a Formula, But a Simple Invitation: "Come and See"—Relationship with Him

When Andrew and another disciple of John turned to follow Jesus and he asked what they wanted, they in turn asked where he was staying—which was a question of

who Jesus is and what he is all about, the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his second-Sunday-after-Epiphany sermon. They were essentially asking what Jesus' motivation was, Pastor Thelander said.

"And in response to our questions Jesus does an amazing thing. He says, 'Come, and see.' This is so amazing to me. Jesus does not try to 'prove' himself or legitimize himself. If I'd have been Jesus, I'd have grabbed John the Baptist and recorded a 30-minute infomercial, complete with testimonials about how I was the real deal. Not Jesus. What Jesus offers is not a set of answers, not a formula for success, but a simple invitation: Come and see.

"Why is this? Why is it that when we need answers to the deep questions of life, Jesus says, 'Come and see'? Maybe it's because the deepest longings of life often begin to come into focus with the realization that what we need is not answers, but relationship—relationship with our Creator, relationship with one another. Sometimes in life answers aren't enough, because what we need is not merely the facts, but the relational context which gives the facts their meaning. That context is found in the *process* that takes shape through relationships. . . .

"Amazingly, one of the places we often encounter Jesus' invitation to us to 'come and see' is at the Lord's Table, for it is at the Table where Jesus himself gives us his grace, not just answers our questions."

The Secret of Life Is Not in Finding Anything, But in Being Found

When the Gospel lesson says that James, John, Andrew and Peter were called by Jesus to follow him and "immediately" and "at once" did so, "the problem, for me, is not so much what the text says as it is what it *doesn't* say," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his third-Sunday-after-Epiphany sermon.

"Surely, I am missing something. How can these four men so quickly and willingly leave what they are doing to follow Jesus? . . . What could possess these men to abruptly leave the life they knew in order to follow someone they did not know?"

When persons wanted to follow a respected teacher at that time, it was custom for them to seek the teacher and ask permission, Pastor Thelander said, but in this (p. 2→)



"As the men watched, Jesus' appearance changed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothing became dazzling white." So we will hear in the Gospel lesson Sunday, as here illustrated by Carl Bloch (1834-1890).

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Sundays

10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service
11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation
11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion

6:00 p.m.: (First Sundays only) Evensong, tea & refreshments

Tues., Feb. 5, 6:00 p.m.: Shrove Tuesday pancake/sausage supper, party

Wednesday, Feb. 6, 7:00 p.m.: Ash Wednesday service, with imposition

Thursday, Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m.: First Lenten Evening Prayers

Readings, 2/3, 10 a.m.: Ex. 24:12-18; Ps. 99; Phil. 3:7-14; Mt. 17:1-9. **2/3, 6 p.m.:** Ps. 24 (sung); Gen. 18:16-33; Gal. 5:13-23. **Ash Wed.:** Joel 2:1-17; Ps. 103:8-14; 2 Cor. 5:20—6:10; Mt. 6:1-21. **2/10:** Gen. 2:4-9, 15-17, 25—3:7; Ps. 51:1-13; Rom. 5:12-21; Mt. 4:1-11.

Prayer Emphases: Marshall Islands; Lutheran Church in Canada; St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, New York City, and the Rev. Wm. McDonald Tully; Athletes in Action; parishioners on Bruins Circle.

(Sermon, cont'd.) case, "these men don't seek Jesus. Jesus seeks them. In a world where people constantly seek to *find* meaning in life, . . . maybe these men saw something in Jesus. Maybe it was easy for them to lay everything aside, because . . . they understood that the secret of life is not in finding anything, but in being found. . . . They could lay it all aside and follow this man, because standing in front of them was proof that God loves people . . . more than anything. . . . *They* mattered to God. And *you* also matter to God." So, "what could possess us *not* to" lay everything aside and heed that call?