

“The First Disciples”
John 1:35-42
(Preached at Trinity, November 30, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. These verses record the calling of the first disciples of Christ. Since **Verse 19** the focus has been upon the testimony or witness of John.
John 1:19 NAU - "This is the testimony of John"
The same word is used in **Verse 7**
John 1:6-7 NAU - "There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him."
2. John's purpose was to prepare the way for Christ.
John 1:23 NAS - "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."
His job was to declare the arrival of the Messiah; to announce the Kingdom of God; to preach repentance.
Matthew 3:1-2 NAU - "Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
3. John was humbled by the greatness of Christ.
John 1:27 NAU - "*It is* He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."
John 3:30 NAU - "He must increase, but I must decrease."
4. As John began his ministry of preaching and baptizing many began to follow him. His outward demeanor displayed a detachment from this world. He was charismatic in his speaking. He spoke with boldness and fearlessness.
Matthew 3:7-9 NAS - "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ "Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance; ⁹ and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham."
5. When Christ arrived, however, John quickly directed their attention to the Savior.
John 1:36 NAU - "Behold, the Lamb of God!"
As we've seen before, there was a great Messianic expectation during this time. This is why the Pharisees send representatives investigating the identity of John the Baptist. Could he be the one? John quickly dispelled any possibility that he was the one.
John 1:20 NAU - "And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."
In **Verse 36** John is basically saying, "There He is! This is the one!"

6. In **Verse 37** we read, **John 1:37 NAU** - "The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."
- A. Some are troubled by this account of the call of Peter and Andrew as it's compared with the account in the Synoptic Gospels.
Mark 1:16-18 NAU - "As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸ Immediately they left their nets and followed Him."
- B. There is no conflict between John and Mark. Mark's Gospel describes the call of Peter and Andrew as Apostles. John is describing their call to discipleship. In other words, this account is describing their Christian conversion.
7. Tonight I want us to look at John's description of the first disciples and see some of the marks of the call to discipleship—what it means to be a follower of Christ; what it means to be a Christian.
- I. Discipleship demands receiving the claims of the Gospel
- A. John commanded his disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God."
1. He uses the imperative form of ὁράω which means "to look"
 The form is also an interjection – an exclamation – "Behold!"
 2. John is commanding them to look wo Christ
 - a. He says, "Behold the Lamb of God."
 We saw before that this says some particular things about Jesus
 - b. It points to the sacrifice of substitutionary atonement. It points to their sin and forgiveness of sin. It points to Jesus as the only way of salvation
Verse 29 - "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
 3. They looked and they believed. They received John's words about Jesus
 - a. The idea of "heard" implies an effectual hearing. It was far more than just simply hearing the sound of John's words with their physical ears. They heard in the sense of comprehending and receiving.
 - b. Jesus frequently used the expression, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." John's disciples had ears to hear. John declared, "This is the Lamb of God.
 - c. They believed Jesus to be the Christ, the Anointed One. John the Baptist was essentially saying, "This is the Messiah." "This is the One!" And they believed.
John 1:41 NAU - "Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah " (which translated means Christ)."
 Μεσσίας is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ (mashiyach) which in Greek is Χριστός

- B. Christianity demands saving faith
1. It demand believing the claims of the Gospel—that you have sinned and are justly condemned; that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation.
 2. This is the consistent teaching of the New Testament – there is no other way of salvation
Acts 4:12 NAU - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."
 Philippian Jailor:
Acts 16:30-31 NAU - "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"³¹
 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

II. Discipleship demands following Christ absolutely

- A. To embrace the Lamb is to follow Him. The call to discipleship is a call to be a follower of Christ.
John 1:37 - "The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."
1. The verb for "followed" is in the aorist tense which shows point in time action
 Leon Morris writes: "The verb "followed" is in the tense appropriate for once-for-all action, which may indicate that they cast in their lot with Jesus. They did not mean to make a tentative inquiry but to give themselves to him. We should also notice that the verb has both a general sense of "follow" and a more specific sense of "follow as a disciple." In this place both senses may be in mind. They walked down the path after Jesus and thus followed. But they also symbolically committed themselves to him."¹
 2. In this way we can see a similarity between their call to salvation and their call as Apostles. Jesus came to the Sea of Galilee and found Peter and Andrew fishing. He charged them:
 "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed Him" (**Matthew 4:19-20**).
 - a. There was no hesitation. They were prepared to leave all and follow Him.
 - b. We see it again with James and John
 "Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him" (**Matthew 4:22**)
 3. Notice they wanted to be where Jesus was
John 1:38 NAU - "where are You staying?"
 1. Jesus asked them the most important question of life-
 "What do you seek?"

¹ Morris, L. (1995). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 137). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

- a. Some say they answered in a way expressing confusion as to what to say. Rather, they knew exactly what they were saying. In essence they were saying, "We want to be wherever you are.
 - b. This is at the heart of saving faith. We have a hunger for Christ. We want to be where He is.
2. We find Jesus in prayer and in His Word. We find Him in worship.
Psalm 27:4 NAU - "One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple."
3. This is the glory of our eternal rest. Jesus will be there!
John 14:2-3 NAU - "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also."
4. Many offered excuses when Jesus laid claim to their life
Matthew 8:19-22 NAU - "Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." ²⁰ Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." ²¹ Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." ²² But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."
5. For some, earthly affections keep them from following Christ.
Luke 14:26 NAU - "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."
6. For still others, the love of earthly goods keep them from following Christ.
Matthew 13:22 NAU - "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."
To the "Rich Young Ruler"
Matthew 19:21-22 NAU - "If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ²² But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property."
7. Following Christ in salvation demands death to self
Matthew 16:24 NAU - "Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."

- B. We must never forget both the demands of the Gospel as well as the simplicity of the Gospel.
1. The demand is clear. We must repent and follow Christ.
 2. But sometimes we can set the bar of the Gospel so high that none dare reach for it. This is the great danger as we deal with our children. In the interest of looking for a genuine conversion we can make demands that Christ Himself doesn't make.
 3. Look at the simplicity of the Gospel in this text
John tells his disciples, "Behold the Lamb." He is stating that Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice for sin. He is telling them that Jesus is the Messiah. They believe and they follow. How sweet is that! If a person sees their sin and Christ as Savior and desire to turn from their sin and follow Christ what more should we ask?
- III. Discipleship always results in displaying Christ to others
- A. Discipleship always results in telling others about Christ
1. The first thing Andrew did was tell his brother, Peter
John 1:40-42 NAU - "One of the two who heard John *speak* and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah " (which translated means Christ). ⁴² He brought him to Jesus."
 2. We see this consistently
John 1:43 NAU - "The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me."
John 1:45 NAU - "Philip found Nathanael . . ."
 3. The woman at the well:
John 4:28-30 NAU - "So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, ²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?" ³⁰ They went out of the city, and were coming to Him."
- B. This is the Great Commission to us
Matthew 28:19 NAU - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations"
1. Notice, they first went and told those who were close to them.
Andrew first told his brother.
 2. We can also see this in **Acts 1**
Acts 1:8 NAU - "you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."
 3. God has put you in particular places and in relationship with particular people. As a follower of Christ tell them about your Savior.

Conclusion:

1. One more note. Who was the other disciple? In all likelihood it was none other than the Apostle John. John is speaking of his own conversion. It was so transforming that he remembered the very hour.
John 1:39 NAU - "So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour."
You don't have to remember the exact time of your conversion, but it was transforming, none the less.
2. What a wonderful text of the nature of discipleship. They heard, they followed, they told. May this be the model of the Gospel in our church.