

COMMENTARY ON JOHN

LESSON 15

“JOHN 1:38 *“Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto Him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest Thou? ³⁹ He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.”* John 1:38-39)

COME AND SEE

INTRODUCTION

When Jesus is properly introduced, He draws the attention of the one who hears and believes. He really has little or no lasting appeal to anyone else. He is never introduced in Scripture as the great Resolver of human dilemmas. The real problem is defined –sin, and the real purpose of Jesus is clearly declared –He is the Savior from sin. He has not been provided to teach us how to be successful in this world, but rather, how to prepare to face God, and be *“ever with the Lord.”* The whole matter of coming to Christ is designed in this manner. The Father draws the people to Christ, doing so through a message that properly introduces Him, accenting His true objective, and the willingness of both God and Christ to deliver men from the guilt and power of sin. Any “Jesus” that is not introduced through the Gospel is *“another Jesus”* – a spurious one who cannot do what Jesus was sent to do. Our text provides us a example of someone who heard the correct message, actually saw the Christ, and, having seen Him, pursued Him. All of heaven was engaged in the process. The Father drew them to Jesus. The Holy Spirit convicted them of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come. And, the holy angels ministered to them to ensure they were not hindered in their quest to know the Christ. This kind of activity is behind every conversion, and every advance in the Lord as well. In every sense, *“salvation is of the Lord”* (Jonah 2:9), and it is therefore ascribed to Him by the discerning ones (Rev 7:10; 12:10; 19:2). We should notice the absence of a marketing approach to the matter of coming to Christ. When Christ is preached in truth, the power of God comes into the matter. As is demonstrated in this text, all that remains is to point out who Jesus is, and the pursuit will begin. That also is what happened on the day of Pentecost. Once the message was preached, it was the people who inquired, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* (Acts 2:37). The same was true with the Philippian jailor who was on the initiative: *“What must I do to be saved?”* (Acts 16:30). In Scripture there is not a single example of a person responding to the Gospel who balked at any commandment given. The reason? Faith doesn’t balk at what the Lord says, and the Holy Spirit always works through the truth of the Gospel. This, of course, is something that cannot be systematized. A system, as men consider it, is only necessary when the way is not clear.

COME AND SEE

“JOHN 1:38a *“Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?
...”*

In Scripture, Jesus is always depicted as being alert, and knowing what is going on all

about Him. He is never caught off guard, or not watching, or unaware of the intentions of men.

It is the **uniqueness** of Jesus that draws men to Him. That uniqueness is found in His absolute separateness from all other men. No other man in all of history has been sent to resolve the crisis created by sin – the alienation of men from the God who made them. That is precisely why John prepared the way for the Lamb of God by demanding that men repent of their sin. If Jesus is not fundamentally a Savior from sin, He is only a mere novelty of which men will quickly tire. Thus Andrew and, we believe, John, were drawn to Jesus when they heard He was *“the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29).

THEN JESUS TURNED. Other versions read, *“turning around,”* ^{NIV} *“looked around,”* ^{NLT} *“having turned,”* ^{ABP} and *“Jesus looked over his shoulder.”* ^{MESSAGE} This is the second time Scripture says Jesus *“turned.”* The first time it was to see who touched him – the woman with the issue of blood (Matt 9:22). The second time was when he *“turned”* to the woman who had washed His feet with her tears, and rebuked Simon, who had invited him into his house, for not ministering to Him (Lk 7:44). The third time is when He turned to James and John who had asked if He wanted them to call down fire on certain who did not want to receive Him, saying, *“Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of”* (Lk 9:55). The fourth time is when He turned to the seventy whom He had sent out, and said to them *“Blessed are the eyes which see the things ye have seen”* (Lk 10:23). The fifth time is when He *“turned”* to Peter and said, *“Get thee behind Me Satan”* (Matt 16:23).

HE SAW THEM FOLLOWING. The point is that **Jesus is always aware of His surroundings, and of those who are looking to Him, seeking Him, or addressing Him.** In the world, famous people are not like this. They are protected from the multitudes, and rarely address any of them personally. But it is not so with the Lord. Once, when he was journeying, he took the time to speak to, and heal, Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52). Another time, he stopped to speak to a woman who was healed when she touched the hem of His garment (Lk 8:43-48). Then, there was the Syrophenician woman (Mk 7:24-30), Jairus (Mk 5:22-24), and the rich young ruler (Lk 18:18-23), and others. **We gather from this that any person who draws near to Jesus will by no means be ignored.** For a short time, it may seem the person is being ignored, but Jesus will respond to them.

It may seem trite to say that Jesus is always alert, but that truth can escape human perception, and needs to be declared. The word of God still stands true, *“I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right”* (Isa 45:19). It is also written, *“Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you”* (James 4:8).

WHAT SEEK YE? Other versions read, *“What do you want?”* ^{NIV} *“What are you looking for?”* ^{NRSV} *“What is your wish?”* ^{WEYMOUTH} What a probing question! He asked two blind men something similar: *“What will ye that I shall do unto you?”* (Matt 20:32). He said to the mother of James and John, *“What wilt thou?”* or, *“What is it that you want?”* ^{NIV} (Matt 20:21). Mark says He asked James and John, *“What would ye that I should do for you?”* (Mk 10:36). He did not always grant what was desired of Him, turning down the mother of James and John, James and John themselves, and an inquiring young a as well (Lk 12:13-14).

It is fitting that we examine our own hearts when we are seeking the Lord. *“What do I desire?”* *“What do I want Jesus to do for me?”* Is it the kind of thing a Savior would be inclined to do? Would it bring any glory to God if He would do what you want? Are you seeking for mere convenience, or is the blessing of God what you desire? How does the will of God fit into your request? When the blind men asked to receive their sight, they must have known that this was the kind of work Jesus was noted for doing. When Jairus sought the healing of his daughter, he knew this was the kind of work Jesus was doing (Acts 10:38). The Syrophenician woman had obviously

heard of the compassion of Jesus, and how He was healing people.

But there is something else to be seen here also. Jesus has a desire to do good to the people – He went about *“doing good”* (Acts 10:38). Once, when a leper came to Jesus worshiping Him and said, *“ Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean,”* Jesus *“ put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I WILL; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed”* (Matt 8:3). When a certain centurion came to Jesus he plead with Him, *“saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented”* (Matt 8:6). Jesus replied, *“I will come and heal him”* (Matt 8:7). Before He died, Jesus said to His disciples, *“If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it”* (John 14:14). That parallels John’s statement, *“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him”* (1 John 5:14-15). Having been delivered from self-centeredness, we are free to ask the Lord to do what we know He delights to do. He will hear us!

WHERE DWELLEST THOU

“ 38b-39a . . . They said unto Him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest Thou? 39 He saith unto them, Come and see. . . ”

RABBI . . . MASTER. Other versions read, *“Rabbi (which translated means Teacher).”* ^{NASB} Nathaniel also addressed Jesus as *“Rabbi.”* or *“Teacher”* (John 1:49). Nicodemus did also (John 3:2). When the multitudes whom Jesus fed found Him again, they also addressed Him as *“Rabbi,”* or *“Teacher”* (John 6:25). This is at the beginning of His ministry, and already the Lord Jesus is noted for being a *“Teacher.”* Fifty-two times in the Gospels He is called *“Master,”* which means *“Instructor,”* or *“Teacher.”* ^{STRONG’S} Nicodemus referred to Him as *“a Teacher come from God”* (John 3:2). Eleven times Jesus is said to have been *“teaching”* (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 21:23; 26:55; Mk 6:6; 14:49; Lk 5:17; 13:10,22; 21:37; 23:5). Twenty-four times Jesus is said to have *“taught.”* Jesus called people to *“learn”* from Him (Matt 11:29). In this day of salvation, He is depicted as giving us *“an understanding”* (1 John 5:20), and those who are in Him are said to be *“taught by Him”* (Eph 4:20-21). And notice what Jesus teaches: (1) Put off the old man, Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, Put on the new man (Eph 4:22-24).

When the enemies of Jesus sought to trap Him, they dealt with what He taught, not what He did: *“And they asked Him, saying, **Master,** we know that Thou sayest and **teachest** rightly, neither acceptest Thou the person of any, but **teachest** the way of God truly. “Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?”* (Luke 20:21-22).

Yet, today few people think of Jesus as a Teacher. In fact, you will rarely hear anyone speak of Him in such a manner. Yet, in this text, with only the ministry of John the Baptist preceding Him, He is known as *“Rabbi”* – a Teacher. Under incompetent leaders, this aspect of Jesus has all but disappeared from the vocabulary of the church. In fact, some, among whom I myself once trafficked, affirm that what Jesus taught was under the Law, and is no longer relevant. Perhaps we ought to stress that Jesus will not be a Savior to those who refuse to be taught by Him. His teaching is integral to salvation itself.

WHERE DWELLEST THOU? Other versions read, *“Where are you staying?”* ^{NKJV} *“where abideth thou?”* ^{ASV} *“where are you living?”* ^{BBE} *“where do you live?”* ^{NJB} *“where remainest thou?”* ^{YLT} Notice, they did not ask where He was going, but where He was staying. If they knew this, they must have reasoned they would have more frequent and sure access to Him there.

We are appized by Matthew that Jesus *“leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: “That it might*

be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, *The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles*" (Matt 4:13-15). Mark 2:1 suggests that He had a house there. That move took place **after** Jesus' temptation (Matt 4:1-11). It also took place after John had been imprisoned, which had not yet occurred (Matt 4:12). He was, then, either staying at Nazareth, or some other temporary location. The text suggests it was closer to where John was baptizing than Nazareth.

COME AND SEE. Other versions read, *"Come, and you will see."*^{NASB} He did not tell them where He was staying. They would have to go with Him if they were to know. It seems to me that this also is a Divine manner. **To know anything essential about Jesus, you have to be where He is.** There is no "long-distance" learning program in Christ Jesus. The ultimate identity of Jesus with those belonging to Him is the standard for the here and now: *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"* (John 14:3). In the end, when all things have been fulfilled that were spoken by the holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:21), and the present heavens and earth have passed away (2 Pet 3:10-12), Jesus will say to the Father, *"Behold I and the children which God hath given Me"* (Heb 2:13). Until then, Jesus is saying to every earnest inquirer, *"Come and see!"*

The heart of those who have really perceived Jesus is seen in Andrew and John – wanting to know where Jesus **resides**. He said His real residence was *"in the bosom of the Father"* (John 1:18). Therefore, the closer one is to Jesus, the closer he is to God the Father. If a great distance exists between the individual and Jesus, so far as access is concerned, an even greater distance exists between them and God. On a practical basis, Jesus is where *"two or three"* are gathered together in His name. By saying they are gathered *"in His name,"* they, like Andrew and John, have actually joined the Lord. That is why Jesus said *"There am I,"* rather than *"there I will be."*

These two disciples are a sterling conformation of the effectiveness of the ministry of John the Baptist. He prepared the way of the Lord, making the pathway straight, as compared to the ambiguous teachings of the scribes and Pharisees. He got the people ready by leading them to repent of their sin and obtain remission. He also prepared them to recognize Jesus when He was revealed. When He said, *"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29), his disciples did not ask what that meant. So it is today, an effective minister of God prepares the people to recognize and follow Jesus.

THEY ABODE WITH HIM THAT DAY

"^{39b} . . . They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour."

THEY CAME. Jesus said *"Come,"* and *"they came."* Other versions read, *"They came therefore,"*^{NASB} *"So they went,"*^{NIV} *"They went with him then,"*^{BBE} and *"So they went with him."*^{LIVING} I cannot imagine them walking with Jesus without having an insightful conversation with Him – perhaps something like the experience of Cleophas and his companion on the road to Emmaus. The experience was no doubt like that described by David, *"We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company"* (Psa 55:14).

THEY SAW WHERE HE DWELT. They did more than see a residence, a building, or perhaps a tent or a cave. It was not the residence itself that they wanted to see, but the place where Jesus could be found. It was the Person of Jesus that had captured their hearts and minds. John had introduced Him as *"the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world"* John 1:29(), the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (Lk 3:16), the one whose purging fan is in His hand, who will gather His wheat into the garner, and will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt 3:12). He was *"preferred"* over John, and existed before him (John 1:27). He was *"mightier"* than John, who

was mightier than anyone before him (Lk 3:16). John said of Jesus, *"I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him"* (John 1:32). These two disciples believed what John had said about Jesus, and were therefore compelled to go with Him to the place in which He was staying.

It is no different today. The people who believe the truth that is declared about Jesus will do anything to follow Him and be where He is. They will not find other things to do when Jesus is near, but will, like Mary, sit at Jesus' feet and hear His word (Lk 10:39). I am suspicious of any professed believer who does not have a compelling interest in Jesus.

Jesus sanctifies the place; the place does not sanctify Jesus. There really is no place to be more desired than the place where Jesus is residing, or dwelling. With the prominence of architecture in religion, there is a tendency for people to think the place is what sanctifies – but it is not. Others who have private interpretations of praise think that praise sanctifies, clearing the way for the Lord to come among those praises. But it is the Lord who sanctifies. That is why Jesus is referred to as *"He that sanctifieth"* (Heb 2:11). Although at that time, these two disciples might not have realized all of the ramifications of this, they were beholding the prophesied *"Sun"* rising to prominence among the people (Mal 4:2).

THEY ABODE WITH HIM THAT DAY. The trio apparently arrived at the place where Jesus was staying at 4:00 PM – the *"tenth hour of the day,"* the first hour being 6:00 AM. These men remained with Jesus the rest of the day. Some make an unnecessary issue of the time, posing the possibility that John could be referring to Roman time, which began the day at midnight. That would make the tenth hour 10:00 in the morning. However, in view of Jesus' words that there are twelve hours in a day, and that at the creation the morning and the evening were separate from one another, I see no valid alternative to this being a twelve hour day, making the time 4:00 PM. Considering they had walked a considerable time together, these men were still desirous to remain for some time with Jesus. They may even have spent the night, we do not know. At any rate, the whole incident bears a great deal of similarity to the experience of the two on the road to Emmaus.

In this incident we learn that time spent with Jesus by those who believe on Him is not monotonous. It is rather invigorating to the soul, causing the hearts of those with Jesus to *"burn"* within them as He speaks to them, and opens Kingdom mysteries to them.

There is also a unity that is realized when two or more are willingly in the presence of Jesus. This is seen in the expression of Cleopas and his companion: *"Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way"* (Luke 24:32). Notice that the expression is in the singular, even though it involved two people – *"our heart."* Several more modern versions incorrectly read *"hearts"* (NASB, NIV, NRSV, RSV, BBE, CEB, CJB, CSB, ESV, GENEVA, NJB, NLT, PNT, LIVING, ISV, CEV, GOODSPEED, AMPLIFIED). Versions reading *"heart"* include: KJV, NKJV, ASV, DARBY, DOUAY, ERV, MRD, RWB, WEB, YLT, ABP, EMTV, JUB, LITV. The Greek word is in the singular: *"kardia."*

This singular *"heart"* reflects the very nature of faith, and especially as it is in Christ Jesus. The promise of God was that in the Christ men would be given *"one heart"* (Ezek 11:19). This was actually realized with the commencement of the church, in which *"the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul"* (Acts 4:32). The secret to genuine unity is not consensus, and it is not achieved by discussion among the constituents. It is rather realized in the presence of Jesus, when the people are absorbed with Him, enthralled by His Word, and delighting in His Presence. We have, in fact, realized a measure of this experience among ourselves. As we are more and more enamored with Jesus, and more thoroughly mortify the deeds of the body, and the mind of the flesh, we will find ourselves growing closer and closer to one another, having *"one heart"* and *"one soul"* that are not only in synch with one another, but with the Father, Son, and Spirit as well.

