

We have seen the Messiah
John 1: 35-42
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Today we conclude our short series on Evangelism. Over the past couple of years, we have been talking about how it is that we share the story of God, the good news of the gospel, in a world which so misunderstands what this gospel is. In the last two weeks Tim and Monica have encouraged us to share the Gospel with those we are in contact with. Monica admonished us to not be ashamed to mention the name Jesus to friends and neighbors, and Tim encouraged us to share the Gospel with those around us because they need it. He reminded us that the Gospel, the royal announcement that the crucified and risen Jesus, who died for our sins and rose again according to the Scriptures, and has been enthroned as the true Lord of the world, is the power that has the potential to change the world. It is so easy to narrow our vision of the gospel when the gospel is about how God is bringing hope and new possibilities into every area of life through the risen Christ and by his Spirit.

When we encounter the risen Christ, hope and new possibilities, dawn on every area of our lives. Our lives are made new. Christ opens up to us possibilities never known to us before. We are enabled to live as sons and daughters of the Almighty God. More importantly, encountering the risen Christ delivers us from self-centeredness; we begin to reach out to others, sharing what we've received from Christ in the first place.

Therefore, the question is not "Am I able to evangelize?" But "Have I met with Christ?" Or "Am I open to meet with him today?"

There is a tradition I find beautiful in the West. When someone moves into a new house and you visit them, they often take you to a tour of the house. With a smile on their face, they make you visit each room of the house, making sure that you notice the best part of the house. What I still need to know is if messy people follow this tradition.

In the passage we are looking at today I found a remarkable example of how a very ordinary person can use ordinary means to lead someone to Christ

when he is passionate about showing him who Jesus is, just like people here are passionate about showing others their home.

The story is in the Gospel of John 1: 35-42.

John and his disciples

Luke tells us that the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. As it happened to ancient prophets, the word of God came to John and commissioned him to preach and baptize people, preparing them for the coming of the Messiah. His preaching was so powerful and his message poignant. So many came and asked him what to do. He told them to turn from their evil ways and return to God. He told them to act as a people of God by taking on practices of generosity (sharing food and clothing), and to those in power to use it justly. A few people of goodwill followed him and became his disciples.

But the people of Israel were expecting something bigger than John the Baptist. God had promised to visit them. Prophets had foretold that the Christ would come, the Anointed One who would set them free. So, people asked John, "Are you the Christ?" And John said no! He said there is someone who will come after me, he is so powerful that I am not even worthy of untying the thongs of his sandals." John here confirms the supremacy of Christ. And this we see in the verse 35.

He was with two of his disciples and Jesus passed by. Without any hesitation, John points Jesus to his disciples: "Look the Lamb of God!" Your hope is here now. The one I was telling you about has come. The one the entire nation of Israel was expecting, Christ, the hope of the world is here. John points Jesus to his disciples.

After hearing this, the two disciples left John and followed Jesus, the real thing. And you can read a conversation that goes between the three:

Jesus: What do you want?

Disciples: Rabbi? Where are you staying?

Jesus: Come and see!

The two disciples went with Jesus and stayed the whole day with him.

After this day-long encounter with Jesus, the two disciples went home with a renewed hope. One of them was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. After this encounter with Jesus, the first thing Andrew did was to go to his brother and tell him the news, “We have seen the Messiah” and he took him to Jesus.

In our Evangelism team, we attempted to define what evangelism is. What does it mean to be an evangelist? What does it mean to bring the good news to others? One of us came up with a definition that I find fitting with this passage. To be an evangelist is to be signpost. Can you point people to Christ? Can I point someone to Christ?

John became a signpost for his two disciples. And Andrew became a signpost to his brother Simon Peter.

Look the Lamb of God!
We have seen the Messiah!

Jesus does give his disciples the commission to share this good news with all the nations. But if we come at evangelism as a duty, as a heavy burden that we carry, we will probably always struggle to share it. What this story calls us to is an encounter with Jesus, an encounter that leaves us changed, an encounter that will inevitably spill over in our lives and our conversations and our commitments. Pointing people to Christ becomes easier if we have encountered Christ ourselves. Have you encountered Christ? If you haven't, this story itself is an invitation to encounter Jesus. As the risen Lord, he comes to encounter each of us. This isn't something for a select few. This encounter is available to you, to me, to all of us.

And something happens when we encounter Christ. We not only begin to name the work of Jesus in our lives, we begin to see and name his work in other people's lives, the possibilities that he can bring into their lives, indeed, into the whole of the world.

What happens when a person encounters Christ?

It was moving to hear the story about Kin brace last Sunday. 12 years ago, a few people in this community met to dream about what they could do to live out the kingdom of God in a concrete and tangible way. Their dream was to have a place where new comers to Canada, the hidden homeless population as Loren told us last Sunday, would be welcomed. Everyone contributed

what they could. Howard and Shirley provided the funds, and the dream became a reality. Kin brace House was borne.

Few years after the birth of Kin brace, Paco and Adriana came to Canada from Mexico to find a safe place, far from the reach of drug cartels who wanted to harm Paco's life. Paco and Adriana were warmly welcomed at Kin brace House. After they experienced such a touching welcome, they felt compelled to extend the same welcome they received to other new comers. And that's what they have committed their lives to doing now, there at Kin brace House.

You see the pattern there – they came, they experienced, they named the experience, and they invited others into this same gift.

And this pattern of encountering God and offering to others what was received from God in the first place keeps coming back. We have, for example among us people whose lives God has spoken into through prayer. Last Sunday, these same people offered this gift to people in our neighborhood at the Commercial Drive car free festival. And many received it. One of the touching stories was one person who, for the first time, experienced the fatherly love of God. He was in tears as he shared what happened to him as they prayed for him. I do not doubt that this person will be an encouragement to many.

Is there any sign of encounter with Christ in your life? In our community? As we think about all the ways that people have encountered Christ and his kingdom in the initiatives, programs of our church, Salsbury, the many homes people have been welcomed into – there are so many signs of encounter with Christ.

Even in your own life. If you think more about it you may identify ways in which you have encountered Christ. Can you identify one or two examples? Speak them out loud!

Being an evangelist, the one who shares the Good News, is letting our encounters with the risen Christ shine around us. You and I are signposts that point the world to Christ. I encourage you to desire, and seek encountering Christ so that, like Andrew you may be able to tell those around you, "I have seen the Messiah, the giver of hope and the opener of new possibilities in life." Let's pray!