January 26th, 2019

Springfield Presbyterian Church

Epiphany 2

10:30am

What Are You Looking For?

I. What are you looking for?

In reading this text afresh this week, I focused upon the first interactions we have of the first disciples we see. We’ve taken a huge leap in these last few weeks, from birth, to magi, to baptism, and now we are watching the first disciples committing themselves to follow Jesus. The men here have this revolutionary moment, this moment of awe and delight and repeatedly acknowledge that Jesus is the “Lamb of God!”

This language, while more unfamiliar to our own context, was incredibly important in that very moment. The lamb was historically a part of sacrifice, the lamb and the lion laid down together, the lamb was a part of prophecy and so built into what these men would have understood in their lives to be prophecy revealed. This is a pivotal moment. This is everything the faithful have been waiting for and here he is, right before them, talking amongst them, as a human alike them.

As a sidebar – there’s this interesting exchange that is meant for another sermon, but worth a note here. We see that once the disciples commit to following, to coming and seeing what Jesus is up to – there’s a name change. We sometimes see name changes in the Catholic church when you are confirmed – you add a saint name. It’s curious if the name change signifies a change of who and whose you are. We also find out it is four o’clock in the afternoon. Which, at first read is just weird – why would you tell us the time? Yet, the number four holds important value in the Bible. The fourth day was when all the material items were formed on the earth in the Creation story. There are four Gospel. There are four ends to a cross. There are many conclusions one could draw, and we won’t here, but this is a teaser to say that numbers play an important part of understanding Scripture and different numbers hold different values. Now, that aside being over...

What I find particularly wonderful about this moment is that Jesus doesn’t really seem to be all that excited about their epiphany moment. I mean, he’s glad, but he isn’t stepping onto a podium and saying, “That’s right! That’s me! The Son of God! Your sacrificial lamb ready to save the world!” Jesus seems totally not phased by the men proclaiming this good news of the centuries, he doesn’t even really acknowledge it in this passage or affirm it. It’s not that it isn’t important, but Jesus wasn’t there for the celebrity status. Jesus knows that he is the Lamb of God and he’s already on to the bigger questions for the men who want to follow him. He asks that pivotal question, for them, and today, for us: “What are you looking for?”

II. What good is this to you?

Jesus wants to know why these men care so deeply that he is the Lamb of God. Yes, it is prophecy revealed, but how will this knowing change them? What will it do in their lives? What does it mean to follow him? What are you looking for? And is it important enough to leave your life behind?

I find this question as hauntingly relevant to those men as it is to us today. So I ask you and I ask myself, “What am I looking for?” For me, it’s changed throughout the years and I suspect that my answer will change in the years to come. When I was a child, I was looking for comfort, for the answers to some of my biggest questions, I was looking for hope in a sea of uncertainty in my teenage life. I would say that those desires have remained, but in adulthood, they’ve taken on different form, they’ve become more nuanced, and as I have learned more about the world around me, the biggest questions have changed.

It’s still a question I have to continue to ask myself, up at the pulpit and in the pews – what am I looking for? Why do I follow Christ? Sometimes I don’t know, sometimes I just trust what I feel and what I’ve known, and I roll with it. Sometimes the answer is as clear as day, every morning the sun comes up, every day a new opportunity, we can’t be alone in this world – there’s something more, there’s someone more who has put this all into motion and I am called to love and serve the Creator. Sometimes it’s clear, sometimes it’s not.

III. Then What?

After the disciples are asked the question, “What are you looking for?” they respond, “Rabbi! Where are you staying?” Which, frankly, does not seem like the answer that Jesus was looking for, but they are on a journey. And Jesus, humbly look at them and says, “Come and see.” Come and see – my life is open for yours, follow and find out what you’re looking for, see what this is all about. Maybe you don’t know what you are looking for, maybe you just have to follow me and see what happens.

Maybe that’s what faith looks like – when you don’t know what you are looking for, but you know there’s something, and you come and see anyway. You can’t put words to it, you can’t acknowledge or pinpoint why or what you need, but you know intuitively that you need it, and so you follow, you follow and trust.

Maybe some would call that blind faith – but I don’t think it is. It’s blind in the sense that you might be lost in the wandering, but you don’t believe just for the sake of believing. You have faith because of the Scriptures, you have faith because of your experiences, and all are evidence-proof acknowledgement that there’s something more in this world than we can perceive. Faith is trusting in the not knowing the details, but knowing that if we come and see, we might find out more than we could have ever imagined.

IV. What are you looking for? Come and see.

Maybe you can concretely put to words today what you are looking for, because if you are in this building this morning, it’s safe to presume you are looking for something. Maybe you are looking for comfort, peace, hope, joy, love, a sense of community with depth. Maybe you have no idea what you are looking for, you just know that you need to be here. And whether you know or you don’t know what you are looking for, both are equally valid reasons to be here on a Sunday morning. Heck, the disciples didn’t give Jesus a straight forward answer to what they needed – so you’re in good company. Sometimes you can put what you need into words, sometimes you can’t – and ultimately, God fills in the blank spaces.

So, since you are looking for something – just like the disciples were looking for something more, come and see. Come and trust. Come and have faith that singing and praying and reading and being together will move you to more than you can fathom. Come and see what God is doing, within you, within me, within this community and beyond. Come and be part of the story, a story that started from the beginning of days, a story that we are privileged to be a part of. Come, come and see – maybe you’ll find what you never knew you were looking for.