

Time Change Next Week

Over the next 4 weeks- we're turning up the intensity on Spiritual Renewal in 2 ways.

The first way is through our fast-

FASTING SLIDE-

Guide- on the app, scan the card, Playlist as something running behind you reminding you of the desperation you feel when your sin lets you down, the humility involved in confession and repentance, the strengthening you get from the body of Christ as a family, and the absolutely humble boldness that comes from walking with Jesus.

So as you listen over and over to the playlist- you are hearing stages of renewal. The painful and beautiful.

Then- We want you to have specific times of fasting- trading out at least one meal a week for prayer. Let me just say- this is not a weight loss plan- this is to put aside a meal- and press into prayer. When you normally eat- pray instead- for one meal a week..or more.

Church open Tuesday-Thursday, from noon-2 & 6-8 pm.

So that's one part...our fast.

The second is the short sermon series that's gonna lead us into Easter.

But first, a quick story that goes back some 12 years, to our launch team. Before our church was even open to the Public.

I had asked all the men to meet up once a week at IHOP. I was 33 years old, and still had 20/20 vision...and I was trying to let all the dads put their kids to bed- Which at that time was probably just Me, Dustin and Anthony- so I set the time for 10 pm.

Well, one of the guys on our launch team, who was the only guy that was an empty nester- he was a grandfather- somewhere nearing 60 years old.

And I noticed he wasn't showing up to these 10 pm IHOP meetings.

So, I followed up with him- asked him why he wasn't coming. I told him these meetings are important for us to bond as the men on this church planting team.

And he sent a message in return- that to this day- is one of the most honest, clear, and revealing responses I've ever received. It is City Church legend... and is often quoted among our leadership.

When I asked him why he wasn't coming to IHOP at 10 pm- He replied "Trevor- its not that I can't- Its that I don't want to."

Series Slide (IHOP)

I'm calling this sermon series IHOP. Its cheesy...or maybe syrupy...but I hope you'll remember it.

Spiritual Renewal isn't something that we just lay back and hope for. No- just like when God created humanity- he called humans into a partnership. To be fruitful, multiply.

He calls us to pray and ask him for things- not because he doesn't already know what we need, but because he wants a relationship with us.

Likewise- Spiritual revival- which is just the plural form of Renewal- its when renewal spreads...when its not just one domino falling over- but the whole chain is knocked over.

Revival is more likely to happen as we give ourselves to actually delivering the good news about Jesus to people- people who are in those desperate places. The prodigals in the pig sty...and the older brothers with hard hearts that think they deserve something else.

So- with this fast, we're gonna pray.

And we're also going to act.

Because the Holy Spirit likes to pour himself over and into the human instruments of God. Not unlike maple syrup on onto a short stack.

These next four sermons are meant to both inspire and challenge you to actually speak the gospel to people. TO invite people that you know...or maybe that you just met...to know and follow Jesus.

Title Slide- "Invitation: How Being Seen by Jesus Changes Us"- John 1:29-51

When we do this- we give the Holy Spirit something to work with. Imagine God looking to pour out his Spirit- but finding no one willing to receive it. That's some of what it means to quench the Spirit.

See most of us want to treat this IHOP- the same way that original member of our launch team treated IHOP 12 years ago.

When it comes to sharing the good news about Jesus with people- if we were honest- we're telling God "Its not that I can't. Its that I don't want to."

And then we look at God and say, "If you're so powerful, why don't you just do this without me."
And his reply is...

"Its not that I can't. Its that I don't want to."

So- I'm trusting that the Holy Spirit is doing a work here..and I'm gonna lay the path out- and let you decide whether or not you'll get on board. To be a conduit for the Holy Spirit to speak through you to someone else.

The four "Pancakes" we're going to cover will help you ease into this.

They are "Invitation, Hospitality, Obedience, Proclamation"

Today is about invitation.

John 1:29-51

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I told you about: 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.' 31 I didn't know him, but I came baptizing with water so he might be revealed to Israel." 32 And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he rested on him. 33 I didn't know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The one you see the Spirit descending and resting on — he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

35 The next day, John was standing with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God! "

37 The two disciples heard him say this and followed Jesus. 38 When Jesus turned and noticed them following him, he asked them, "What are you looking for? "

They said to him, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

39 "Come and you'll see," he replied. So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed him. 41 He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated "the Christ"),

42 and he brought Simon to Jesus. When Jesus saw him, he said, "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which is translated "Peter")

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and told him, "Follow me."

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law (and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth."

46 "Can anything good come out of Nazareth? " Nathanael asked him.

"Come and see," Philip answered.

47 Then Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

48 "How do you know me? " Nathanael asked.

"Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you," Jesus answered.

49 "Rabbi," Nathanael replied, "You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel! "

50 Jesus responded to him, "Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." 51 Then he said, "Truly I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Transition: 3 points today- here's the first one.

- 1) **An invitation to "Come & See" Jesus is an invitation to "Come & Be Seen"**

This first chapter of John is packed with both invitations "Come & See"

V 29

When John introduces Jesus...He says "Look"- That is an invitation. Come and See. Turn your attention to Jesus. Let me introduce you to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

At least 5 more times in this story of Jesus' baptism, John writes about Jesus being "Seen" and "Known".

- **V 36**
- The next story, John the Baptist is standing with two of his own disciples and Jesus passes by and John writes that he LOOKED at Jesus and told his disciples to LOOK at Jesus.
- **V38-39a (end at Come and See)**
- Then Jesus sees them, asks them "what are you looking for?" and then invites them to Come and SEE.
- **V 41-42**
- When Andrew begins following Jesus, he goes on a search for others to see Jesus.
- He first FOUND his brother Simon.
- And he brings Simon so he can see that Jesus is the Christ.
- Notice though-
- when Simon SEES Jesus, JESUS Actually SEES SIMON.
- And he gives him an identity. You aren't Simon anymore...you will be known as the ROCK, CEPHAS PETER.
- It's a statement of changed identity. Simon thought he was finding Jesus, but Jesus was finding him. Jesus SAW HIM and FOUND HIM.
- **V 43**
- Jesus FOUND Philip
- And makes a very clear invitation. FOLLOW ME.
- **V 45**
- After Jesus finds Philip, And just like after Andrew started following Jesus- he went and found Simon Peter and invited him to come and see...Philip goes and finds Nathanael and tells him "we have FOUND the Messiah that Moses and the prophets told us to look for.
- And he tells Nathanael that Jesus is from Nazareth.
- Now, look at Nathanael's response
- **V 46**
- He says "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" in other words, Nazareth doesn't produce Messianic candidates. It produces people who's greatest achievement in life is belching the alphabet and crushing beer cans on their forehead.
- And Philip invites him to "Come and see"

- **V 47**
- The next verse says that Jesus SEES Nathanael.
- In a literal sense, he sees him coming...but in a figurative sense...he SEES NATHANAEL.
- Jesus says "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."
- Now, this is a throwback reference to Jewish ancestry. Particularly to a guy from the book of Genesis named "Jacob". Jacob...whose name means "deceiver", met God in the wilderness...at his lowest point...all alone...all of his lies and deceit had caught up with him...and he wrestles with God...and God gives him a new name. ISRAEL. Which means "to Struggle with God"
- So Jesus references something from Genesis where God met with someone and was seen...and in that encounter changed that persons' identity.
- It's a very poetic statement.
- **V 48**
- So Nathanael- feeling pegged by Jesus asks "How do you know me?"
- And Jesus answers, "Before Phillip called you, when you were under that fig tree, I saw you."
- What Jesus means here is not merely that he had a vision of Nathanael sitting under a fig tree...though that may be the case.
- He means he SAW Nathanael on a deeper level. In fact, something about this Fig Tree is very revealing.
- It was said at this time in Rabbinic tradition that Rabbi's would study the law underneath a Fig Tree (NAC). So basically, Jesus caught Nathanael reading his Bible. Jesus SAW NATHANAEL when he was SEEING GOD through the WORD.
- Jesus is saying, "Nathanael, you were looking at God's word. Well, now the WORD of GOD is looking at you."
- **V 49**
- So Nathanael suddenly SEES Jesus for who he is "Rabbi! You are the Son of God! The KING of ISRAEL!"
- **V 50-51**
- Jesus says, "that impressed you?" Literally, "you ain't SEEN nothing yet."

- Jesus says “truly, I tell you” which in the book of John when Jesus says this its like him saying- “Don’t miss this...here’s the point”
- And he says that you will **see** heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”
- This is a double throwback reference to the Hebrew Scriptures. Something that Nathanael...a man who seems to have dedicated himself to studying those Scriptures, knows very well.
- First, the angels ascending and descending are a reference back once again to Jacob. On a different night when Jacob was out in the wilderness alone, running for his life because of his deceit...God sent him a vision of a staircase that led up into heaven on which angels were climbing up and down.
- **Gen 28:16 & Daniel 7:13**
- When Jacob awoke from that dream he said “Surely the LORD is here, and I didn’t KNOW IT”
- Again, Jacob was sleeping...and though he couldn’t SEE GOD there, God saw him.
- **The other reference** to the Son of Man is reference to the OT prophetic book of Daniel.
- Daniel sees this one called the son of Man, who comes on the clouds and is set up as a King.
- Two different VISIONS of God, where God surprised someone by showing up.
- One that redefined the identity of Jacob- when GOD SEES JACOB... the other that gave Daniel an expectation of what it would be like to SEE GOD.

Back to 1)

- Listen, All of us want to be found.
- We all want the answer to the question “Who am I? Really, who AM I? And why does it matter that I’m here?”

- We want the kinds of experiences that Simon Peter and Nathanael have here. We want the kind of experience Jacob had. Where God shows up and says, "THIS IS WHO YOU ARE. I KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND THIS IS YOUR FUTURE."
- But, at the same time, we don't really want to be seen. I Sure, we want to be noticed. We post pictures of ourselves...on Social Media. But those are all intended for us to be noticed...not really seen.
- We're terrified of being seen. We're terrified of confession of sin. Terrified of letting others in to the deep places of our minds and hearts.
- Its incredibly scary to have someone know you. Especially someone that you don't know very well.
- But, you cannot be known, without being seen.
- You cannot be found, until somebody sees how lost you are.
- Until you're exposed...you can't really be loved.
- See, if someone loves you, but they don't really KNOW you...they haven't really SEEN who you are yet...then that love is cheap. Its shallow. Its superficial.
- And so, we're left with this quandary in all of our relationships...
- We want to be loved and accepted. We want to be known... But we don't want to be SEEN.
- Then in comes Jesus. And he's just walking up to people saying, I've seen everything you've ever done. Everything you've ever thought. And then he commits to give them a brand new identity. Then he says, "Follow Me".
- Jesus comes in saying, "If you will look at me. If you will behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. If you will follow me, watch me...I'll show you what I see when I look at you."
- I turned the deceptive Jacob into faithful Israel.
- I turned the fearful Simon into a steady Rock.
- I take Nathanael who was just reading the word but couldn't see me....and now...he is walking with the me...the very WORD of God.
- Jesus comes saying, "I see you. I love you. I know you. I found you."

- Listen, if you don't define your identity through GOD, there are only 2 other ways to do it. There are only 2 other ways to "FIND YOURSELF"
- One, is you can define yourself through the way other people see you.
- This is a traditional understanding of identity. You are sort of the roles you play in your community. You are primarily a mother, a father, a brother, a sister. A Friend.
- Your identity is your job. You are a policeman, or a stock broker, or a carpenter, or an IT guy.
- Therefore, being a good person...a person of value... is determined by how well you perform these roles in your community. It comes from your social standing in the eyes of the people that see you.
- The problem with defining yourself through your roles in the community is that at some point, your kids leave home...and you don't really feel like a Mom anymore.
- At some point, you have to retire from the force, and you don't really feel like a policeman anymore.
- Most retired people will tell you, there is a sense that when you stop doing the thing that for so long defined your identity...it sort of feels like no one sees you anymore. You lose a sense of meaning and importance because for the better part of your life, you understood WHO YOU WERE by HOW others saw you.
- The other way to "find yourself" is the modern western way.
- That is you sort of decide for yourself who you are. It doesn't matter what other people think. If you think you are a rock star...it doesn't matter that you can't sing...don't let people hate on you. Chase your dreams.
- You find yourself not by looking to the community outside you... instead you tell the community who you are. Which mainly comes from how you feel deep down on the inside.
- The problem with this approach is that we deeply need all of our identities to be verified by someone outside of us.
- No one is ever content just defining themselves. When you yell from the mountaintop, "I'm smart. Or I'm cool. Or I'm trendy. I'm funny." That will never be enough for you. You will always have to prove it...and then have it affirmed.

- You need somebody to hear that voice. You need somebody to yell back, "YASSS QUEEN!" or "YOU GO BOY!" or "YOU DO YOU".
- We aren't ok just screaming our identity into a void...we've got to have someone echo back- "YES! I AFFIRM YOU!"
- The idea that we don't care what people say about us is simply false. That's where all our self-appointed identities fall apart. Ultimately...we always end up craving someone saying, "I see you. I Know you. And I agree...you are who you say you are."
- The only other way to define yourself, is to have God define who you are. To have Jesus see you.
- Like Jesus comes in looking at Simon, and says "I see you...do you see me? You're not a fisherman...you're a rock....and upon this rock I'm going to build my church."
- He goes to Nathanael and says, "Nathanael, I know you get a lot of pride from being a true Israelite who studies the Scripture...but I'm telling you...You ain't seen nothin' yet. If you aren't seeing me through your Bible- you are wasting your time. Come and See. You are about to enter into a relationship with the very word you've been reading about. And THEN...then you'll figure out who you really are."
- Its only a God-defined identity...it is only by being seen and seeing Jesus that we get an identity that's bullet proof. One that no matter what happens to us...even if the world doesn't echo back "YOU GO BOY"....even if everyone of our community deserts us...when God defines your identity...you have something eternal.

Transition: One of the kindest things you can do for a person is invite them to church. Because what we're doing here every week is opening up the Scripture to see Jesus- and in turn- he's telling us who we are. Do you know the number of times some of you have said to me, "It was like you were preaching right to me. Did you know what I was going through?" The answer most times is that I had no idea- but Jesus does. So when we open the word of God- when you sit under the authority of the Scripture that reveals Jesus- Jesus will reveal to you his own invitation. He'll show you who you are- He'll show you the Rock he wants to make you...and he'll say "Come and See. Follow me."

2) An Invitation to "Come & See" Jesus is an invitation to become the person you've always wanted to be.

- In this IHOP paradigm, when we're encouraging you to invite- we mean "Invite people to Church". Its a small simple step. Now- ultimately- we're working our way to you inviting people to follow Jesus- That's why the P is proclamation- actually speaking the truth about who Jesus is and what he has done for people. But- an invitation to church is a good start.

And while there are people who will be intimidated for feel anxious about an invitation to church- the truth is that most people have thought recently, or will think sometime soon something like, "I really need a change in my life. I'm not the person now that I want to be. I need som help." And that's a good instinct. Its a very good instinct to recognize- my way of doing things isn't working. So...again...you can meet people right where they are by taking the risk and saying- "Would you like to come to church with me?" Because when you are doing that, you are inviting them not only to hear the WORD of GOD- but you are inviting them to begin a journey of becoming the person they want to be. Here's what i mean.

- **V 21-22**
- Just before the passage we read- John the Baptist is asked 5 times who he is...notice that he just keeps saying who he ISN'T.
- Is he the messiah? Is he the Elijah figure the OT predicted? Who does this guy think he is?
- John keeps sort of minimizing himself. Finally when these priests ask him "What can you tell us about yourself?"
- **V 23**
- He answers back with a quote from the prophet Isaiah.
- I am a voice crying out in the wilderness; Make straight the way of the Lord.
- John has reduced his life down to being a voice. His purpose to being a voice that announces Jesus.
- This is very interesting, because even Jesus sees him a little differently.
- **Matt 11:11a (End at "appeared")**

- Jesus himself says that John the Baptist is the greatest human being that has ever lived.
- But when John is asked, he doesn't see himself like that.
- He simply sees himself as a voice, announcing Jesus' arrival.
- **V 27**
- He says that no one should be wasting their time trying to figure who John is, rather, they should spend their time trying to see Jesus is.
- John says that he is not fit to unstrap Jesus' sandal.
- This is a cultural statement.
- One of the lowest things, only the most lowly servant could do was to take off his master's shoe.
- In other words, most people were TOO FIT. TOO IMPORTANT. TOO HONORED. To take off someone's sandal.
- John the Baptist says, "I'm not even fit for that job, when it comes to Jesus."
- Listen, don't confuse John's humble statements with low self-esteem.
- See, even having low self-esteem...is still focused on self. Its not humility...its looking at yourself and thinking about your self. Sure, negatively, but its still self-focused self-pity.
- That's not what is happening with John.
- **V 32-33**
- John is looking at Jesus.
- John isn't wandering around looking for his own self-identity. He has forgotten himself, because he has seen God the Father's identity statement about Jesus.
- He recounts Jesus' baptism here, where a dove descended on Jesus...and Jesus' own identity was revealed from outside of himself. The Father said 'This is my son with whom I'm well-pleased. God the Father told John that Jesus was the one who would transform people with the Holy Spirit."
- And this is what made John so Bold.
- I mean, he's incredibly humble, but at that same time, ridiculously bold.

- **V 24-25**
- You know, the whole reason why these Priests and Levites are out here in the desert asking John the Baptist what he's doing, is because they had been sent by the Pharisees.
- The Pharisees were very concerned about what John the Baptist was doing, because it was extremely bold.
- See, in the Jewish faith at this time, the only people who needed baptism were Gentiles who were taking up the Jewish faith. If you were a Jew by ethnicity, you didn't baptize. Because it was a cleansing ritual.
- And the Pharisees were VERY HIGH on themselves...for being distinct from Gentiles.
- But John was baptizing EVERYBODY. Jews AND Gentiles. John's baptism was saying, "Everybody needs cleansing. Everybody needs washing."
- This was a statement even to the high-on-their-horse religious Pharisees...you have to be washed just like the Gentiles...you have sin that needs cleansing. You aren't any better than anyone else.
- John's boldness continues all the way to his death. When he is thrown in prison and eventually beheaded because he tells King Herod to his face that it's not right for him to marry his brother's wife.
- So here's the question. What is it that John the Baptist saw about Jesus that makes him on one hand...completely forget himself... on the other hand...this bold voice that just continually exalts Jesus and confronts evil- Speaking truth to power. Unafraid. All the way to the guillotine.
- **V 29**
- Well, it's not just THAT he sees Jesus...it's HOW he sees Jesus.
- There are 7 names that are given to Jesus in this narrative section of chapter 1. There are 7 statements of his identity.
- **Son of God**
- **Rabbi**
- **Messiah**
- **Son of Man**
- **King of Israel**

- **Jesus of Nazareth**
- All of those are good names. True statements of Jesus' identity. From Rabbi-Teacher...to Son of God...or Anointed one.
- There are titles of power and majesty, like the Son of Man from Daniel coming in clouds. Or the Royal title of King of Israel. Or the anointed one, Messiah. Son of God...titles that emphasize his divinity.
- There are simple titles like Rabbi (or teacher) and Jesus of Nazareth...that emphasize his humanity.
- But only John the Baptist recognizes Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World.
- And that's important.
- See if Jesus is only divine...only powerful...he stands only as judge over us. He is only different and better than us.
- If Jesus is just a teacher or a man from Nazareth... then he is just a sort of better version than us...but really can't do anything about our spiritual blindness.
- He can't guarantee that when we stand before God fully exposed... that we won't fall over dead...ashamed and embarrassed.
- But, because John saw him as the Lamb of God that takes away sin...he became this self-forgetful...but JESUS focused...humble and bold VOICE.
- Do you know what that means...that Jesus is the Lamb of God. And that you should look at him like that?
- It's a reference to the Passover that the Jews celebrated.
- In the book of Exodus, there's a story about the Hebrew people being led out of Egyptian slavery by Moses.
- Moses, acting as a voice for God, goes to pharaoh 10 times and says, "Let my people go!" But 9 times, Pharaoh reneges on his promise to let them go, so God sends a plague on Egypt.
- But, the final plague, the one that finally gets Pharaoh to release God's children...God says that the angel of death will sweep through Egypt...and that the Angel of Death will kill every firstborn son.

- And the angel would do this indiscriminately. Sort of like John's baptism. It didn't matter whether you were Jew or Gentile...the Angel of Death would come for everyone's firstborn.
- The only hope to save your firstborn son, was to kill a lamb, and paint his blood on the frame of your door.
- So it happened. And Pharaoh, in sorrow and anger, releases God's children out of slavery. So, it was said, they were saved from death by the blood of the lamb.
- When John realizes that Jesus is God's Son, headed to his death for the sins of the world....it totally humbles him and emboldens him all the way to his own death...staking everything he has on Jesus being the Lamb of God.
- And its different for the rest of these disciples. Because they don't quite get it yet.
- Sure, they see him as Messiah, as Rabbi, even as the Son of God.
- But its not until the cross of Jesus...and the resurrection of Jesus that they become like John the Baptist. Totally losing themselves in humility...but unafraid- completely bold voice in the face of evil and opposition...just read the book of Acts.
- After they see the Lamb of God, slain in front of their eyes. ...after they realize that Jesus was dying FOR THEM...that God's son was dying so they could be re-born into a new identity...the children of God...it wasn't until then that they changed...and became a voice saying to the nations "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD"

Let me say something to Christians in the room first. Especially to Covenant members of City Church. If your relationship with Jesus isn't making you increasingly humble and bold at the same time, you might be kind of like Nathanael under the fig tree. You might be running your eyes over the words of Scripture- but not really seeing Jesus.

Because sometimes we confuse our fear of offending others with something as simple as an invitation to church as humility. But its not. Its prideful self-preservation that is unwilling to risk because we're afraid of embarrassment.

And then other times, Christians are all bold and no humble. You are a keyboard warrior dropping bombs on social media. Telling everybody where they're wrong. But you're not bold. You too are afraid. Its bravado. Because you aren't willing to have a conversation with someone- to hear someone else- maybe to find out- like Nathanael- you are missing something crucial in whatever crusade you are on in the name of Jesus.

There is no humility to receive correction or rebuke...or to look at other people as image bearers of God, equal in value and worth no matter their political position or current perceived sin.

So you appear bold- but its a cover up- its not really Holy Spirit boldness- its bravado that hides your insecurity.

See- when you've seen Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world- you must be humbled. Because you finally understand...all that guilt- all that shame- where deep down you know you are wrong....and you've hurt yourself and others...you finally see the whole time you were offending God. And instead of punish you, he put on flesh and was nailed to a cross- so death would passover you. He took the punishment for your sins. So there is absolutely no room to boast or brag.

You are humbled to the dirt.

And yet...at the same time...you know that on the Cross- the lamb of God was defeating death. He was giving you an eternal quality and quantity of life because he resurrected and said, Come and See!

He invited us in to the Kingdom of God- which means- if you are following Jesus- transformed by his gracious invitation- you're indestructible. Not even death can stop you. And because you've been humbled- like JtB- you don't use that indestructible status to make a name for yourself- but even in the face of opposition or threat- you can love your enemies. You can proclaim Jesus is Lord- not to win some political election- rather- to make a way for more people to know Jesus as the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.

Back to 2)

Isn't that what everyone wants to be?

Humble- so sure of who you are and your purpose that the anxiety about making a name for yourself dissipates into a non-anxious presence.

And Bold- unafraid in the face of the worst suffering of life- unfazed by death and living your life to invite people into life with you.

That is a very honorable and likable person. In fact- those are the kinds of people that everyone wants to become.

Listen- when you invite someone- very simply- to come to church with you... you are inviting them to take a step of becoming the person they already want to be. They just might not know the only way to become that person- is to take Jesus up on his invitation to Come and See...and Come and be SEEN.

Finally...

3) Accepting the invitation to "Come & See" Jesus- turns you into an inviter.

After Jesus resurrects- he appears to his disciples. Peter, Andrew, Nathanael...the whole lot of them. And the last thing he says is this.

Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

He is telling them- there is no following me- without become an inviter.

There is no looking at my baptism- without being baptized yourself- and then going and baptizing others.

You know what the word "baptize" means?

It literally means "immerse". Completely surround.

Notice that Jesus' command here is to make disciples- which note- how did Jesus make disciples? He invited people to come and see.

AND he says "BAPTIZE IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER SON AND HOLY SPIRIT"

Now- by this- there is certainly a reference to the ritual act of baptism. The one we do here. Fully immersing people under the water. But- that baptism is a symbol of something. Its a symbol of being fully immersed in the Trinitarian love and identity of Father son and Holy Spirit.

Back to 3)

You know the places where that happens? Well, primarily 2. One is under the fig tree. It happens when you read the Bible. You are reading the REVELATION of God. Or the unveiling. God REVEALS himself to us in the Scripture. ITS where we see God...and suddenly realize- "wow. God actually sees me".

The other place is in the Church- The church is called the "Body of Christ". We are people who are indwell with the Holy Spirit. So to invite someone to church is to bring them into a physical space where they are immersed in the Father son and spirit.

Jesus doesn't just invite us for us. He invites us to invite others. God is a sharing God. An overflowing God. Which means when you see Jesus, and know that he sees you...when he's given you a new identity as a ROCK a humble and bold child of God...you don't keep that to yourself.

So Invite. Invite someone to read the Bible with you that doesn't know Jesus.

Invite someone to church with you...that doesn't know Jesus.

Jesus has made you into an inviter. So help others immerse themselves in him...and our prayer is one day- when they have seen Jesus as the Lamb of God who not only takes away the sins of the world generically- but specifically takes away their own personal sin- they will stand up here on this platform in a horse trough of water and proclaim.

I've seen Jesus. And he sees me.

NOTE:Inviter cards. Easter.

Maybe today- you are ready to say yes to the Invitation to come and SEE.