

## John 1:35-42 Lessons in Making Disciples

Let me begin with a very important question this morning? What is the mission of the church? (our mission as Christians). You may answer “*It is my mission to love God with my heart, soul, and strength.*” You may answer, “*It is my mission to be godly and follow the commands of God in Scripture.*” You may answer, “*It is my mission to love people in this world and do good to them.*” These are all good answers; and they are necessary as we live in this world as Christians. BUT, these answers do not capture the specific mission of the Church. So, what is our specific answer as we consider the mission of the church? (You know the answer!) In Matt. 28:18-20 Jesus, in his last words, before ascending to the Father, tells his disciples (and us): “**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.**” Our mission is to make disciples! Our text today is about making disciples. And it is very practical! Therefore, we need this text! I want to highlight 3 lessons that will help us make disciples in this world: 1) A Lesson of Recognition; 2) A Lesson of Proclamation; and 3) A Lesson in Abiding.

1. A Lesson of Recognition. In our text we see the two examples of two different men who recognize and acknowledge Jesus. The first example is with John the Baptist in vv. 35-36: “**The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”** Here, we find John the Baptist with two of his disciples. And AGAIN, he recognizes Jesus, calling him the “Lamb of God,” which he had already done the previous day as he saw the Spirit of God descend from heaven and remain on Jesus. The second example is found with Andrew, one of John the Baptist’s disciples, and as we will see, the brother of Peter. In vv. 40-41 we read: “**One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means Christ).**”

As I’ve noted often, the Book of John is full of chiasms (explain). And in this text, the two sides (two bookends) are the confessions of these two men as John the Baptist recognizes Jesus as the “**Lamb of God**” and as Andrew recognizes Jesus as the “**Messiah**.” I believe in John’s mind, the “Lamb of God” and the “Messiah” are one in the same. As we saw two weeks ago, the OT picture of God’s Lamb points to Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah. The “Lamb of God” gives us a number of pictures from the OT, He is gentle. He is meek. He is humble. He is God’s servant. And from his humility, he will conquer and subdue the enemies of God. In the picture of the Lamb, as John says, He is the One who “*takes away the sin of the world*” as God’s scapegoat, as the “*ram caught in the thicket*” with Abraham and Isaac.

Now, I do not know exactly how much John the Baptist or Andrew understood. But, Andrew’s point is the same as his mentor: HE IS THE long-awaited MESSIAH (v. 41) which is translated in the Greek as “**Christ**,” the “Lord,” as John the Apostle explains to his Gentile audience. As I

think about applying this truth, I consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:13-16: **“Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** Brothers and sisters, John the Baptist, Andrew, the disciples, at that time recognized Jesus as the Messiah, though they did not know what we know until after the resurrection and Pentecost. But the application is still the same. **“Who do you say Jesus is?” I think of Heb. 11:6: “And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”**

As we consider our marching orders as a church, we begin by recognizing the Messiah, the Lamb of God. And we recognize him in ALL that He is as the “Word” who became flesh, as the ONE who gives life, as the ONE who gives light, as the ONLY Son filled with the SAME glory as the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1-1-18) Today, who do you say that He is? If you are a Christian, at the end of the day, no matter what is going on in this world, no matter what is happening in your life, you know this to be true: **“Jesus is Lord!”** And, in him, because of the cross, your sins are forgiven, the wrath of God has been taken away, you have been given the Holy Spirit and newness of life, you know where He sits (the right hand of God, in heaven), and He has you in his possession, leading you through this life as you wait for ALL God’s promises to be fulfilled in Him! We know that as we go out into this world to make disciples, **“ALL AUTHORITY”** has been given to him!

2. A Lesson of Proclamation. In this text, we see that those who recognize Jesus as Lord also proclaim him as Lord. In this passage we see this with John the Baptist and with Andrew. In their context they tell others about the ONE they recognize as Lord. In v. 35 John the Apostle tells us that John the Baptist is hanging with his disciples and when he sees Jesus walk by, he says, **“Behold, the Lamb of God.”** In other words, **“this is the ONE”** to whom you must seek. We’ve already seen this in 1:19-28 as John tells his disciples and those who come to be baptized, **“I am not the Christ.” “I am (only) a voice of one crying out in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.” “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know . . . of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” “He ranks before me, because he was before me.” “I stand before you to day as a witness to Israel.” “It is Him I proclaim!”** (vv. 29-31) We see the same with Andrew in v. 41 we read **“He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah!”**

Do you remember the Apostle Paul? He was following the orders of the Jewish religious leaders and carrying out the desires of his heart . . . to persecute the followers of Jesus all over the region. And on the way to Damascus, Jesus appeared and spoke to him! He was radically converted . . . He CERTAINLY recognized the risen Jesus as Lord! And Acts 9: 20 says to us, **“Immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”** And

we also read that **“Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ”** (v. 22).

Brothers and sisters, we do not preach ourselves, but Christ as Lord. This means we do not preach methods or gimmicks or speak to people in difficult language. We do not invent ways to build numbers in churches. We do not tickle the ears of our hearers with countless stories about ourselves. We do not invent new revelations with “new” words from God. We do not preach the works of men, explaining how our own deeds can get us to heaven. We do not preach good books and the ideas and thoughts of men. **WE PREACH CHRIST!** In Jesus’ command to his church, we go and we make disciples, teaching them to obey . . . **THE WORDS OF CHRIST!** This is what we do! And we must do it! **“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”** (Rom. 10:14-15)

Brothers and sisters, this is what we do as disciples . . . we tell others about Jesus, who He is and what He has done! Why? Because He is the Lord! He is the Lord of heaven and earth! And in him alone can anyone find what we are meant to have in this life and the life to come.

3. A lesson on Abiding. I think this is the central point of this text. Here, in a very practical way, John introduces one of his favorite themes: abiding with Christ. We see this theme in 8:31 as Jesus says, to the Jews who had believed him: **“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples . . .”** And then in 15:4 Jesus says, **“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”** Now, you may say, *“How do I get this truth from these verses?”* Well, in John 1:32 we read: **“And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.”** The word for “remained” means to “live” or “abide,” and it is the same word used in v. 38 and 39. Look there with me: **“Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.”** Here, these two disciples of John come to Jesus and address him as Rabbi, giving him great honor. And they ask, **“Teacher, where do you live (abide)?** And he says, **“Come and you will see”** where I live (abide).

Now, in this passage, we are not told WHERE Jesus spent the night. Yet, he tells them to COME AND SEE where He abides. Why do you think John does not emphasize the “WHERE” in this passage? When I speak practically as a person and I ask you where you live, it may affect whether I come with you or not. You may live in Kansas City; I’m not going with you, at least not today. You may live in a tent in the woods somewhere; I’m not sure I’m going with you. Or, you may live in a 10 bedroom house with lots of rooms and an indoor pool; I’m coming with

you. But, John's point is NOT the physical dwelling of Jesus in places like tents or wooden homes. In other words, it is not important WHERE he lays his head. So what is John's point? John's point is this: JESUS IS the dwelling place of God. In a manner of speaking, "*God abides in Jesus.*" Where Jesus is, this is where God is! . . . **"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"** (John 1:14).

So Come and See! I believe John is thinking back to the Garden/Temple of Eden as God walked with Adam and Eve. His presence was with them. But, in the fall, in their sin, they lost this presence. And Israel and much of mankind has been trying to get back there somehow. Yet, God is merciful! God is gracious! He promises to send a deliverer, ONE in whom all the fullness of God will dwell. Again, **"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."** This is why Jesus says to these first disciples **"Come and See."** He was inviting them to Himself! I imagine John the Apostle was considering the words of Isaiah as God says, **"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David** (Is. 55:1-3).

This is why, when we make disciples, we teach people to "obey the commands of Jesus," who says things like, **"Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest"** (Matt. 11:28). **"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink"** (John 7:37). I think of Jesus prayer in John 17:24-26 as he says, **"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."** This text is full of this truth! Abide in Jesus!

Let me continue this thought with some applications in closing.

Application: The exclusivity of Jesus. Jesus is the ONLY way to God. This truth is by FAR the most important truth for mankind. As Paul says, **"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth"** (1 Tim. 2:5-7). In this text we see the Apostle Paul as one who recognizes and knows that Jesus is Lord. Therefore, He proclaims Him as such knowing that ONLY in HIM do we find the abiding place of God. This was his mission. This is our mission!

Application: Count the cost of following Jesus! In v. 39 we see that it was not convenient for these two men to follow Jesus. John tells us it was “about the tenth hour.” This was late in the day and their travel was on foot; it would have been ease for them to say, “Can we do this tomorrow.” But, they did not care what time, nor did they care WHERE he lived. In the same way WE/You mustn’t care where Jesus is! If He is the place where God dwells, then we come to HIM. AND we must do whatever it takes to get to him! If Jesus says to the rich man, “*give up your goods*” you must give them up. If Jesus says to the athletic man, “*stop working out and become a weakling*,” you must do it. If Jesus says “*stop growing green beans in China Grove and move to Northern Iraq*,” where you will have no garden, then you must make plans. Jesus says: “*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. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple*” (Luke 14:26-27).

This means that we also must tell people to count the cost. Jesus says, “*If they persecute me, they will also persecute you.*” (John the Baptist: What happened to him? Andrew: What happened to him? The Apostle John: What happened to him? The Apostle Peter: What happened to him? Paul: What happened to him?) Brothers and sisters, “It was not convenient!” Let me ask, “*With what heart attitude do you follow him?*”

Application: Christianity is REAL. It is life on life. Jesus says “*come and see.*” Come and see my life. Come and see where I live. Come and see where I go. Come and see how I treat others. Come and see how I live my life. I think the majority of those who meet in churches never do this. Much of what we see about those who go to church buildings is the “good” Sunday dress and the “good” Sunday attitude and the “good” Sunday vocabulary. And YES, we must invite people to come to church so they can also “come and see” how we meet and how we worship and how we preach and how we treat one another. BUT, Making disciples is as messy as your life. You must be willing for folks to enter your world. This is all about hospitality. This is all about transparency. What you see is what you get! And we are not sinless like our Lord. But, we have been forgiven for our sins and we lead people to the ONE who can forgive their sins. We invite people into our lives, into our homes, to show and teach HOW the Lord Jesus has changed our lives, even in our weakness, in our failings, in our messiness.

Application: There seems to be an eagerness and an urgency to John the Baptist and Andrew’s proclamation. In both cases they immediately tell their friends and family members. Brothers and sisters, this means WE must be eager to show hospitality to others. WE must bring others into our lives . . . WE must say to the lost, “Come and see.” Woe to us if we do not, after having been fully enlightened with the grace of God in Christ to do our best to give Christ to others!

Application: Our desire must be to abide with Jesus. It seems to me that these men were not content with a mere “passing” look when they saw Jesus. Their desire was to be with HIM. Why do people in this world “come and see.” Well, in the beginning it may be just to see. But, for all

who recognize him for who he is and follow him from the heart, their desire is Jesus Himself . . . not what Jesus can do for them, not what Jesus can give them, but Jesus.

So, what is our mission? We are to make disciples of this lost and dying world! We recognize and know that WHO Jesus is and What He has done. We preach the Lord Jesus. And when we do, we lead people to the very dwelling place of God (by the Spirit – more on this later).