

John 1:29-42
What Are You Looking For?
Sunday January 15th, 2017

There is a song by a band named U 2 called “But I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For.” So of course, in it, we keep hearing the refrain, “But I still haven’t found what I’m looking for.”

Let’s listen to this song.

I have climbed the highest mountains
I have run through the fields
Only to be with you
Only to be with you.

I have run, I have crawled
I have scaled these city walls
These city walls
Only to be with you.

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

I have kissed honey lips
Felt the healing in her finger tips
It burned like fire
A burning desire.

I have spoke with the tongue of angels
I have held the hand of a devil
It was warm in the night
I was cold as a stone.

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

I believe in the Kingdom Come
Then all the colours will bleed into one
Bleed into one.
But yes, I'm still running.

You broke the bonds
And you loosed the chains
Carried the cross of my shame
Oh my shame, you know I believe it.

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

I believe this modern day ballad reveals the searching of the human heart for God down through the ages. Some have even compared this to a hymn, or a psalm, but sadly, in contrast to the Psalms it ends with a word of doubt rather than faith.

I'm not sure the writers knew what they were looking for is God, but it is. It seems the writers have belief as you read the words, the last verse even ends with, "You know I believe it." But the intangible of faith is missing. You can have all the right beliefs; you can have all the right knowledge about Jesus and still not have faith. The faith that says in the deepest part of your heart and soul I have found what I am looking for. **I have found God and in finding God I found me.**

The mystery of the search for God is that we don't find God no matter how hard we search. Though in fact, we are told to search for God. In the end we don't find God, God is revealed to us.

In our scripture today Jesus asks the question that all human hearts must ask and answer and that is, "What are you looking for?" In verse 38 the two unnamed disciples that are asked that question reply "Rabbi".

These two unnamed disciples were deliberately unnamed, so that those who read these scriptures in any age (you and I) can step in and be the two disciples who stand before Jesus and hear the same question: "What are you looking for?"

What would be your response? What are you looking for in life, in God? What revelation do you seek?

Starting in verse 29 we have a series of revelations.

1st, John reveals Jesus to be, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."

2nd, John reveals that Jesus was the "Pre-existent One."

John also reveals that the only reason he knows that was that it was **revealed to him in Jesus' baptism**.

Then John reveals Jesus will **baptize with the Holy Spirit**.

And finally, in verse 34, John goes on to “testify” or “witness” that Jesus is **“the Son of God.”**

John witnesses or testifies only because the knowledge he possesses has been **revealed to him**.

I can't emphasize enough the importance of revelation in these scriptures. John only knew who Jesus was because it was revealed to him.

The disciples only knew who Jesus was at first, because John revealed Jesus to them and then when they met Jesus as Rabbi, they had it revealed to them that He was **the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One**. He was the one chosen and appointed by God.

The names Messiah and Christ mean the same thing: the One who is anointed by God. “Messiah” is a Hebrew term. “Christ” is the Greek translation. Jesus' last name is not Christ. Christ is his title. We actually should say, “Jesus the Christ” not just Jesus Christ.

But in the end the Disciples had their own selves revealed to them. To truly meet and know Jesus is to come to know ourselves. This we see when Jesus declares to **Cephas that he is now to be known as Peter - the rock**.

I want you to note the many names that Jesus is addressed by in our scripture each one revealing a little more of who Jesus is!

Lamb of God - who takes away the sins of the world.

Pre-existent God - earlier on in John the **“Creative Word.”**

Baptizer by the Holy Spirit.
Son of God.

Rabbi - teacher.

Messiah - Christ - the Anointed One.

Namer of us - gives us our purpose.

In the Bible you become what you are named. **Jesus: God saves.**
Emmanuel: God with us. **Peter: the rock, a foundation stone.** And still to this day we become what we are called.

In the verses that fill out this chapter Jesus is also revealed as:

- **Fulfiller of prophecy**
- **King of Israel**
- **And Son of Man**

Each of these names reveals a little more of the beauty and brilliance of Jesus like each individual facet of diamond reveals more of the whole brilliance of the stone.

Each name speaks differently to our heart, or mind, or soul.

Each of us have a favorite name or names for Jesus for each of us answer Jesus' question, "What are you looking for?" in a different manner.

Each of us have different needs, wants and life experiences. Each of us have different hurts and scars; so each name can either speak to our heart and have great meaning or leave us cold and empty, or simply untouched.

There are many ways Jesus is revealed to us in the New Testament. Many names are used in the Bible to reveal to us who Jesus is.

They see their revelation of Jesus as the only valid one and often discount, and in self-righteousness diminish, and attack others. Or with a sense of self-righteousness they walk away.

At one church I was at they did a survey on preferred worship style. I saw this clearly in a handful of the worship surveys we got back as to what some believed was the only relevant form of worship, and it cut both ways. Some said it was only contemporary worship and others said only traditional.

But those of Christian maturity simply said whatever is best for the whole Church and that was the vast majority of responses.

In our World we see various groupings of people and Jesus has been revealed to them in one way or another. Some churches refer only to the Christ, (a high Christology) others only Jesus and some mention most either the Holy Spirit, or God the Father. By doing this some become Unitarians and not Trinitarians and the richness of the personality of God is lost.

The secret here my friends in this Scripture is that Jesus meets us in our need. The two disciples first needed a Rabbi, a teacher and that's where Jesus met them.

He then revealed himself as Messiah, the Christ, and then **truly met their need by revealing who they were to themselves**, the most notable one being Cephas or Peter - the Rock.

My friends as we seek to witness to others and reveal Jesus to them, please realize one size does not fit all! Realize each of us have different needs and have heard and answered Jesus' question differently. And no one has given a wrong answer.

Realize that Jesus is attempting to meet people in their needs and reveal himself to them. And the majesty of God is actually beyond all our ability to tell and put to words much less simple names.



The story is told of a group of blind men who wanted to know what an elephant was like so a guide brought them to an elephant.

One grabbed a leg and said, "An elephant is just like a big strong tree." Another grabbed the ear and said, "No, it's like a large leathery disk."

The last grabbed the trunk and said, "No, you're all wrong, it's like a big fat snake." And they all soon got to arguing about what an elephant was really like.

My friends our God is larger than any of our individual revelations of Him, or any single name used for him from the Bible

We need to take each individual name for God in Jesus Christ and realize that each one is simply one facet in the jewel, the precious jewel, of the majesty, which is our God.

Though some names and understandings from Scripture speak more to our hearts don't discount other people's revelations and understandings. In fact abide with these other people to understand their needs, and what revelation, what name of Jesus, or God they need to hear and use to connect to God. Your own revelation of Jesus Christ will then be deepened.

I've known women who could not address God as Father, because their earthly father fell so far short. So, they address God as mother and used the female images of God in the Bible like Jesus referring to himself as a mother hen as he mourned over Jerusalem. The happiest of these women who did this simply used the name most comfortable to them and let others use whatever they would; not forcing their life experience and name as the only way.

To do this we need to Stay -Abide - with people as the disciples stayed or abided with Jesus.

In verse 39 Jesus invites the two disciples to follow and stay with him for the day. In this abiding with Jesus it was revealed to them that he is the Messiah.

Today we can abide with Jesus in prayer, scripture study, and sermons, which is the more intellectual approach many take. But we also find Jesus in Christian service and in the body of Christ- the fellowship of the Church.

And for me - how and where Jesus has been most revealed is within the body of Christ - the fellowship of believers, the Church Family.

That's why I preach and teach and emphasize the importance of Christian fellowship and loyalty to the local Church. Along with service, it's in relationship with others that I find and experience God best.

As I often quote, "where two or three are gathered together, Jesus is present."

And when we find Jesus we find ourselves. That is what most people are actually looking for. Who am I and what is my God given purpose in life?

Vista Church is a unique place to see through many of the facets of life and faith experience of the people here to see God. We are a church made up of people from almost everywhere else. We are about 320 in number and come from almost every State in America and several foreign countries. We represent all the major denominations in America and many minor ones too. As we abide with one another, we find God through varied people from so many places.

It's what I encourage all to do as we as United Methodists recognize Human Relations Day on this Martin Luther King weekend.

And so you've heard this quote before, "our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." Peter found himself when he found Jesus.

May you find what you're looking for in Him!

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, amen.

My friends if today you're tired of searching and want to find your peace in Jesus I invite you to offer yourself to God to be found. I invite you to join me in this prayer and either speak with our Stephen Minister Lila Homan after this service, or speak to me.

Let us pray: Dear God in this Sanctuary there are some who are very restless and searching and the words of the U2 song we played are their words today. They have all the right beliefs and knowledge but they lack a heartfelt experience of you.

I pray that as they search for you that you send your Holy Spirit to find them. Reveal yourself to them, so that they may find their rest in you. In their commitment to search for you in Jesus Christ may they be found.

In His Name, Amen.