

2nd Sunday of the Epiphany

John 1:29-42

What are you looking for?

In today's Gospel passage, we hear the very first words spoken by Jesus in John's account. They aren't a grand declaration, not an impressive command, not even a memorable teaching. They are a simple question: *"What are you looking for?"*

John the Baptist had just pointed Jesus out to two of his own disciples, saying: *"Look, here is the Lamb of God!"* Immediately, these two men begin to follow Jesus. When Jesus notices them trailing behind, he turns – not with a casual greeting, not with an offer of help – but with a question: *"What are you looking for?"* Or, *"What are you seeking?"*

It sounds simple, but it's a profoundly searching question – perhaps even life-changing. And it's a question worth wrestling with – not only as individuals but as a community of faith, because our answer will shape the journey we take.

What are we seeking? What do we truly desire – not just on the surface, but deep down in the core of our being?

For those two disciples, the question was deeply relevant. Were they hoping for a political liberator to free them from Rome's oppression? A teacher who could give them rules for living? A miracle-worker who could fill their stomachs with bread? Or were they simply ordinary people longing for light on the road ahead?

And what about us? What gets us out of bed in the morning? What keeps us awake at night? What do we hope to find in Jesus? Our answers may change over time – but the question remains. It's the question beneath all questions: What do I truly desire?

The two men respond to Jesus' question with a question of their own:

"Rabbi, where are you staying?"

It may sound like a strange reply, yet it's deeply insightful. They aren't asking for an address. They are asking where they can abide – where they can dwell in his presence. In John's Gospel, this theme of runs deep: *"Abide in me, and I in you."*

Discipleship begins not with doing, but with dwelling – remaining with Jesus, learning his voice, sharing his life – being with him. And Jesus responds with an invitation: *"Come and see."* Not a lecture. Not a list of rules. An invitation to relationship; to experience, to presence.

This phrase echoes throughout John's Gospel:

If you want to know God, *come and see Jesus*.

If you want to know what love looks like, *come and see Jesus*.

If you want life in all its fullness, *come and see Jesus*.

If you want bread that never perishes, water that quenches every thirst, light that scatters darkness, grace that never ends – *come and see Jesus*.

As the church, we can do and be many things. But if this isn't at the heart of who we are and what we offer, then we've lost touch with our calling. Our mission is first and foremost about *presence*. It's about *relationship*. It's about creating space for people to encounter Jesus – to abide with him.

"Come and see." That's the invitation we extend to all. Not that we will see everything at once. We will still have our questions – so many questions. Faith doesn't remove mystery; it opens our eyes to it – the mystery and wonder of a world created by God and redeemed by God's Son, the Lamb of God.

Following Jesus is a journey – a journey of having our eyes opened to grace and mercy and love that have always been there, right in front of us.

So, as we look to the future – what does it mean for us as a Cathedral community? What do we have to offer? What is the essence of our call? It's not frantic activity. Not countless programmes. But space for people to be with Jesus. Space to listen, to learn, to abide. Because everything else flows from that.

First, there is *presence*.

First, there is *love*.

First, there is *being with Jesus*.

This Gospel passage is often called the "call of the first disciples." And notice how their calling began: not with much activity, but simply being with Jesus – listening, watching, waiting, spending time with him.

As we look ahead, our calling is the same: to offer others the opportunity and space to be with Jesus. To learn his voice, share his life, see his ways. For everything else flows from that.

Jesus still asks:

"What are you looking for?"

And he still invites:

"Come and see."

May we, as individuals and as a faith community, accept that invitation – and in doing so, discover the One who is our deepest desire.

Lord Jesus, you ask us the question that searches our hearts:

"What are you looking for?"

Help us to seek you above all else.

Draw us into your presence,

that we may abide with you and learn your ways.

Make our Cathedral a place of welcome and grace,

where all may hear your invitation: *"Come and see."*

And as we follow you,

open our eyes to the wonder of your love

and the fullness of your life. Amen.

Alister Hendery

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