

Trinity Presbyterian Church - Carp - July 25, 2021

**TO EXALT CHRIST;
TO EQUIP, ENCOURAGE, EXHORT, EDIFY GOD'S ELECT**

The Christ Who Leads - John 1:35-51

The Redeemer - The Rabbi - The Recruiter - The Revealed

Over the past three weeks we have been systematically going through chapter one of the gospel of John. It is a unique gospel, a different account of the life & ministry of Christ. We began with *The Christ Who Is Heavenly and Human*, verses 1-18. There we saw the divine & the human natures perfectly joined in the one person of Jesus Christ. No conflict or confusion in order to accomplish the eternal redemption of the elect of God.

In the second week we were in verses 19-28 where we saw *The Christ Who Follows*. This dealt with the clarification of who John the Baptist was in relation to Jesus Christ. John the Baptist preceded Jesus in birth order but that was because he was to precede him in order to prepare the way for Christ as prophesied. He was to give people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins. John came with a message of repentance for the kingdom of heaven was near and he baptized with water for repentance. So Christ followed John but that was the plan of God.

Last week in John 1:29-34 we looked at *The Christ Who Is Known*. We commented that verse 14 summed up the process of the incarnation, Jesus taking on our humanity whereas verse 29 summed up the purpose of his incarnation. That purpose as John the Baptist said was for Christ, as the Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world. The Holy Spirit came and affirmed the identity and role of Christ as that Lamb, but also that this Lamb was/is the Son of God which also affirms his absolute ability to take away sin.

That brings us to the last in our series as we look at John 1:35-51. John chapter one has taken us from eternity past in which Christ dwelt with the Father before creation, to that of the incarnation with a view of one's salvation by redemption.

The Redeemer - 1:35-36

Here we see a lane change. John the Baptist has been in the lead, going ahead of Christ to prepare the way for him by preaching a gospel of repentance. Now we see John willing to give up the lead and allow Christ to pass him and assume the lead from here to Gethsemane and the

cross of Calvary. In verse 35 John the Baptist was with two of his disciples. He sees Jesus and says, "[Look, the Lamb of God.](#)" The day before he had said the same thing but with the additional phrase, "[who takes away the sin of the world.](#)" (29).

John captured the name of the redeemer when he called him the 'Lamb of God' but he also captured the need for a redeemer as he spoke of taking away sin. Sin calls for sacrifice as it first did in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve sinned, Animals were sacrificed, life was taken to cover and atone for their sin. The Passover lamb of Exodus 12:21 became the Passover Lamb of God in Christ at Calvary and the first Easter. Thomas Watson, 1620-1686, a Puritan preacher and writer, in his book, *A Body of Divinity*, wrote, "*Great was the work of creation, but greater the work of redemption; it cost more to redeem us; in the one there was but the speaking of a word, in the other the shedding of blood.*"

John the Baptist shows us precisely the reason Jesus came as the incarnate Son of God. Likewise Paul in Romans 3:23-25 gives us the same reason when he wrote "[for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood.](#)"

The glory of God, symbolized by brilliant light, actualizes, makes real, the sum of all his perfections. In Christ we have the perfect redeemer and so our redemption is perfect. Nothing more needed to be done by Christ. We receive it by grace and believe it by the gift of faith. That same faith also justifies us as God sees us clothed in the righteousness of Christ and declares us holy and blameless in his sight. In Ephesians 1:7 Paul stated, "[In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.](#)" Christ the redeemer.

The Rabbi - 1:37-39

In verses 37-39 two of John the Baptist's disciples follow Jesus because John had said, "[Look, the Lamb of God.](#)" and the day before, as we pointed out, had said, "[who takes away the sin of the world.](#)" That attracted them to Jesus. Remember Isaiah 53:2 where Isaiah prophesied - "[He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.](#)"

Jesus had not even spoken yet. It was on the testimony of John alone that they followed Christ because of what he said about him. They subsequently spent the day with him and would

spend the remainder of their earthly lives and on into eternity with him. He had no outward beauty or majesty to him but what he did have was the ability to take away sin. That sounded good to two sinners.

One of those was Andrew, as we shall see. Andrew was pulling into the lane to follow Jesus on the gospel road. They called him Rabbi or teacher. They followed him prepared to learn from him. John Calvin comments - *"By this example we are taught that from the first rudiments of the Church we ought to draw such a relish for Christ as will excite our desire to profit."* Relish is not just a condiment for a burger or a hot dog. In this instance with regard to Christ, it is a great anticipatory desire to learn from Christ, about Christ and his work to redeem us and take away sin. Andrew was the first to sign up for this discipleship-training course.

The Recruiter - 1:40-46

Andrew was a learner, but also a recruiter. In verses 41-42 we read - *"The first thing Andrew did was find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus."* Jesus changed his name to Cephas, Peter in the Greek, thereby predicting that he would remake, remold him.

The next day Jesus recruits and he calls Philip. Philip in turn recruits Nathanael. However Nathanael is skeptical. He said, *"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?"* Philip wisely answered, *"Come and see."*

Here we see the effect of encountering Jesus. John spoke about Jesus. Andrew followed Jesus. Then he tells Peter. Jesus then spoke to Philip and Philip follows him. Philip then speaks to Nathanael and Nathanael will end up following Jesus. Eventually 11 of the 12 disciples would, as Acts 1:7,8 states, *"receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."* That is God's recruitment plan and power and it still works.

John Calvin observes, ***"For Andrew stretches out the hand to his brother, but at the same time he has this object in view, but he may become a fellow-disciple with him in the school of Christ."***

Recruiter follows recruiter in the life-altering effect of encountering Christ. We are all products of that encounter. When the Holy Spirit came he became the recruiter of souls and disciples for Jesus Christ. Your faith is no accident. Your salvation is not a random bit of chance, In 1 Peter 1:20 Peter testified of Christ, *"He was chosen before the creation of the world, but*

was revealed in these last times for your sake." In Ephesians 1:4 Paul wrote concerning us - *"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight."* Peter and Paul tell us that Christ and we were chosen before the creation of the world - one to be the redeemer and us to be the redeemed. No chance, but definitely choice on God's part. Electing & predestining grace. God in Christ by the Holy Spirit is still recruiting souls for salvation

The Revealed - 1:47-51

Nathanael was skeptical about anything good coming out of Nazareth, but Philip said, *"Come and see."* So he goes and sees and hears Jesus say that Nathanael is *"a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false."* He is won over. So in verse 49 Nathanael testifies about Christ, *"Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel."* That was because Jesus said he saw him sitting under a fig tree. This encounter reveals much about Jesus. First, it reveals what John spoke of at the beginning of his gospel, namely, the divine nature of Jesus. Only Christ in his divinity could know about Nathanael. Matthew Henry, 1662-1714, Puritan preacher wrote -- *"Christ has knowledge of us before we have any knowledge of him."* That is because he has known us from before creation.

Second, this encounter reveals what John the Baptist had previously declared in verse 34 that Christ is the Son of God but Nathanael adds, *"you are the King of Israel."* As the Son of God Jesus said he will do greater things than display his divine knowledge, such as taking away sin and rising from the dead. They will also see *"heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."* (51).

Son of God, Son of Man, angels ascending and descending - all are ways Christ is revealed. In that revealing, people are affirmed in their faith and their acquired knowledge of him and the Father and the Holy Spirit. John's gospel is grace revealed in Jesus Christ as John Calvin said. *Soli Deo Gloria.* Amen.