

## **John 1: 29-42 'Come and See' 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2026**

Lord I pray that we will behold you this morning and see that you indeed are the Son of God. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

'Come and see' I will call to the family as I see an amazing sunset or rainbow or dolphins or a beautiful flower.

'Come and see' the child will excitedly plead to their parents when they discover something new and amazing to them...it may be a slater bug in the back garden...

'Come and see' says John the Baptist to his disciples...'behold' or 'look' the lamb of God.

'Come and see' says Jesus to John's disciples when they ask him a question.

'Come and see' says the first disciples to their family and friends...'we have found the Messiah!'

Come and see is what we say to people when we want to share something that excites us, something of value to us with others – so that they will see and experience it too.

Come and see is what we hear in the Gospel reading of John today.

If you were here last week you may be forgiven for thinking that you were hearing a repeat of the Gospel. Last week we also read about Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist – but that was from the gospel of Matthew. Today we get John's version. He writes in retrospect assuming that we already know the story. He sees Jesus and testifies that he was the one that he saw the Spirit descend on like a dove and that he is the Son of God. In Matthew we read that it was after Jesus was baptized by John that the Spirit descended and then God's voice was heard saying 'This is my Son in whom I am well pleased'. John now testifies to this. He also tells his disciples that Jesus is the one in whom he said was greater than he – in this version he says that Jesus 'has surpassed me because he was before me'.

In human terms John was born before Jesus – just by a matter of months. Remember he is Jesus' cousin – born to Elizabeth who was 6 months pregnant when Mary was told by the Angel that she was going to be the mother of Jesus.

But John seems to know that Jesus was not just human – and that indeed he did come a long time before him. John's gospel is written in quite a different fashion to the other gospels – some people love its drama and poetry – others find it not so easy to understand.

If we go to the beginning of Chapter one, we will see there is no ‘nativity’ story as such – but it does tell us of Jesus becoming human. And it certainly spells out, once you understand what he is saying, that yes, Jesus did come before John. And it certainly points out that this Jesus ranks far ahead of any one of us. How does John put it?....

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.*

Pretty amazing words and lovely poetic writing and when we grasp who the ‘word’ is then we know that Jesus was around at the beginning of all things – in fact he is our Creator. A little bit later John writes that this *Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us ...and John the Baptist testifies to this.*

That is our intro to today’s reading. John the Baptist testifies that this Jesus, whom he baptised, is the Word, the Creator, The Son of God.

He points him out and says ‘come and see’ behold, look – the lamb of God.

John wants to make sure that everyone who has been following him knows that he is not the Messiah... John says ‘Don’t look at me- look at him!’

As I said last week John knew that when Jesus arrived on the scene that his work was done – that he was to decrease so Jesus could increase.

John did not get caught up on a power trip...he encouraged his disciples to leave him to follow Jesus. He pointed Jesus out. That is what all prophets and preachers should be doing...pointing out Jesus. When I stand here to preach God’s word my hope is always that you will not just be seeing me and hearing my words but that you will be drawn to see Jesus more clearly and hear his words and desire to follow him more nearly. That reminds me of a song from Godspell... Those of you who know the musical will remember John the Baptist’s song ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord’. And then my favourite song would have to be ‘Day by Day’ ‘oh dear Lord three things I pray...to see thee more clearly, to love thee more dearly, to follow thee more nearly...day by day’

That’s what John the Baptist wanted, and John the gospel writer and that’s my desire also.

The gospel of John is written so that Jesus will be revealed to us. If we skip to the back of the book to Chapter 20 verse 30 and 31 we read...

*Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

John wants us to encounter and believe in Jesus as we read the gospel. I pray you encounter Jesus as you read. I pray that God will reveal himself to you, that you may have life and hope in him.

I hope some of you picked up my new year challenge to read the bible every day if you are not already doing so – and then, not just read it but seek to live by it. I'm taking a funeral tomorrow and the two sons didn't want the usual readings like John 14 where Jesus comforts his disciples around his coming death, saying he is going to prepare a place for them, or Revelation 21 reflecting on the time when there will be no more tears and pain. The sons said they really wanted something to reflect and celebrate their mother's life – she was kind and caring and committed to social justice and was a Christian. So, I suggested the Beatitudes; blessed are the peacemakers, the merciful, those who thirst for righteousness, and Micah 6, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God. My role tomorrow, while celebrating Alberta's life is to point those that gather to Jesus...the one she modelled her life on, and invite them to follow Jesus.

When we read God's word and meet God's Word – Jesus- and are filled with his Spirit, (as John said, Jesus baptises us with the Holy Spirit); then our lives should show it.

Do we read the word and get excited by God being revealed to us, if so, then perhaps we would be more like John the Baptist and his disciples and be saying to our friends and family 'Come and see' the Messiah...for I know that he is the Son of God who brings life and light and hope to me and to our world and he can bring hope to you!

After John points out Jesus to his disciples, they go to see him, and he says to them 'What are you seeking?' What do you think they were seeking? Were they seeking the truth – the way and the life? Did they just want be near the lamb of God, were they in awe of him? I think so, though their response to Jesus' question, '*What do you want?*' very strangely was to ask him a question, '*Where are you staying?*' and Jesus says...'*Come and see*'. They go with him, they choose to stay and follow, to hang out with him. They 'behold' Jesus their Lord and Saviour. They can't contain themselves and – they need to share what they have discovered. Andrew goes to his brother Simon... "*We have found the Messiah*". They had been waiting a long time for the Messiah, no wonder they were excited! Simon, who Jesus names Cephas or Peter, becomes a close disciple of Jesus, and he became a follower because his brother invited him to 'Come and see the Messiah'.

If we were to read the last bit of Chapter one in John, we read that Jesus calls Phillip to follow him, and Phillip finds Nathaniel and tells him about Jesus of Nazareth...Nathaniel responds, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?'. And what does Phillip say to him.

“Come and See!” And when he goes to see he declares “Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel!”

We need to be inviting people to come and see the Lord. People are seeking hope in this life. Invite them to read the scriptures and pray that the Holy Spirit will be working in their hearts to reveal Jesus to them. As Paul writes in Romans 10 ‘how can they believe in the one they have not heard?’ So many in today’s generation have not heard about Jesus. Brothers and sisters it is up to us...not just me. You are the ones with the friends and family and work colleagues, or in art and craft groups or playing golf with others. They may not be ready to come to Church ...though you can invite them...but it starts by sharing the love and grace of Jesus. You are to live that grace and when they say...hey what is it about you, you’ve got peace and joy...like John the Baptist you can say...Don’t look at me...Look at him...Behold the Jesus Christ – our Lord and Saviour.

Our lives speak volumes. And as I’ve said, if someone is sick or feeling down you can offer to pray for them. Most people even if they don’t believe in God will appreciate this as it shows your love and care for them...and in praying you are saying that God loves and cares for them.

I want to encourage you this morning. To come and behold Jesus, the one who was in the beginning, who created all things, who became flesh and lived among us. Who brought hope and healing, love and light, who took on all our sins on the cross and died for us – who offers forgiveness to all who turn to him. Who rose again that we might live and sent his Holy Spirit to live in us.

And when you have beheld him; then worship him, honour him, read his word and pray. But then point him out to others...Say ‘Come and see’ what I have found – nothing compares to Jesus my Saviour.

Let us pray...Lord we want to thank you for coming to us and dwelling among us. For bringing us light and life. Forgive us when we have ignored you and looked away. I pray we will daily see you more clearly, love you more dearly and follow you more nearly. And that Lord we will desire to point others to you that they also may behold you and believe in you and know abundant life in this life and for all eternity. In the precious name of Jesus. Amen.