

HC Q & A 21

Q. What is true faith?

A. True faith is not only a sure knowledge by which I hold as true all that God has revealed to us in Scripture; it is also a wholehearted trust, which the Holy Spirit creates in me by the gospel, that God has freely granted, not only to others but to me also, forgiveness of sins, eternal righteousness, and salvation. These are gifts of sheer grace, granted solely by Christ's merit.

I love how they answer his question with a question of their own.

"What are you looking for?" Jesus asked these two curious not-yet-disciples.

-We know that John the Baptizer had already pointed them to Jesus.

-We know that John had called him the "Lamb of God."

-We know that these two are intrigued, maybe even fascinated.

And yet, there is a huge difference between knowing Jesus and simply knowing about Jesus.

At this point, they knew a little **about Jesus**, but they certainly didn't **know Jesus**.

There was no relationship. No earned trust. No credibility built. No loyalty established.

There is a huge difference between knowing Jesus and simply knowing about Jesus.

So they size him up a little before anything else.

"Teacher, where are you staying?" they asked.

"Where do you abide?" "Where do you live?" "Where are you from?"

I see this question as an initial screening process.

We're good at quickly stereotyping and working off of preconceived bias and prejudice.

You're from Zeeland-- you must be narrow minded.

You read the NY Times-- you must be liberal.

You cheer for the Cubs-- you must be into self-punishment.

You're from Nazareth-- you must be a hick.

You believe in the resurrection-- you must be naive.

Where are you from?

What church did you grow up in?

What car do you drive?

What was your ACT score?

What hymn book do you prefer?

What candidate did you vote for?

We can so quickly dismiss someone or assume something by these types of screening processes.

We think we can easily nail people down and know them without taking the time to know them.

It is easier this way, right?

We don't need to put in the time listening or learning. We don't need to risk much. We don't need to have our own minds and hearts stretched.

Quick screening tests allow us to know what we want to know without all of the messiness and work of love or growth.

When my sister got engaged, my brother and I sat our future brother-in-law down at our dining room and gave him a quick test to determine his compatibility with the family.

The test was something like this:

Yankees or Red Sox, we quickly asked.

He choose the Yankees (Wrong!).

Bird or Magic. Magic (Wrong!).

Patriots or Lions.. Lions (Wrong!).

In less than one minute we knew all that we needed to know about him, almost to the point of asking my sister to give back the ring (Wrong!).

“Rabbi, where are you from?” “Come and See.”

What an amazing answer: “Come and See.”

They were trying to size him up and figure him out without investing much time or effort. *And yet, Jesus didn't take the bait.*

Following him wasn't going to be like ordering a burger from *Hot and Now*-- something quick and easy; something transactional without being transformative.

No, Jesus answers them by inviting them to go deeper.

You want to know **about** me then you also need to know me: To trust me. To learn the sound of my voice. To feel the passion that burns in my heart. To stretch. To grow. To fear me. To obey me. To love me. To be still and find peace in my very presence.

I don't just want your mind, I want your heart, Jesus is saying.

--Not just an hour on Sunday morning, but your whole life.

--Not just your respect, by your very devotion.

The invitation to, “Come and See” is that basic invitation Christ continues to extend for us to not only hear about God's marvelous deeds, but to see ourselves in the middle of such marvel-- to experience the fuller delight of this marvel.

--The Lamb of God has taken away the sins of the world-- including our own.

--The Lamb of God is not only sacrifice but also justice.

--The Lamb of God not only shares love **for** us, but also **with** us.

Come and See...

Come and Experience...

Head, Heart, Mind and Soul

Come and be Transformed..

Back to verse 39.

They accepted his offer and went and saw Jesus.

They likely stayed the whole day and even the night with Jesus.

Scripture doesn't tell us exactly what they did during their time together.

We only know that after returning, Andrew was ready to tell his brother that they had found the Messiah-- the Anointed One.

So, obviously something happened.

--Maybe he was able to tell them the story of God's love for this world like he would do on the walk to Emmaus where hearts were warmed by his presence.

--Maybe it was the meal they shared, like in Emmaus, where these two realized that they weren't just dining with the Lamb of God, but tasting a foretaste of his ultimate sacrifice.

--Maybe it was his vulnerability-- his ability to be honest and authentic which allowed them to do and be the same.

--Maybe they simply felt through his presence a profound sense of purpose and belonging.

We only know that something remarkable happened in their time together; we know that their life would never be the same from this day on, as they not only grew in their knowledge *about Jesus*, but also their knowledge *of Jesus*.

The Heidelberg Catechism uses the language of wholehearted trust to talk about what this knowledge of Jesus looks like.

I find this helpful.

Unlike the two disciples-to-be that day, Jesus isn't in our presence in the same way. We cannot create a relationship with him in the same way the disciples and followers were able to do during his public ministry.

--We cannot sip a pint of root beer with him at New Holland Brewery.

--We cannot talk about Hope basketball with him at the round tables of Frank's Restaurant.

--We cannot invite him over for tea this afternoon or give him a quiz to see if he prefers Brady over Manning (likely, Brady).

In typical relationships we have the ability to foster commitment over face-to-face interaction-- we grow in such relationships through demonstrated behavior over time. In the case of Jesus it is a different.

Sure, we can learn **about** Jesus through scripture, tradition, good liturgy, preaching, the sacraments, artists like John August Swanson and the like-- but it also takes an **earnest vulnerability to know him on that more intimate level**-- to allow our heart and mind to fall in love with him.

Faith is not only a sure knowledge but it is also a trust.

-A trust in Christ's willingness to be our Good Physician when we are lying on the operating table.

-A trust in Christ's promise to be our Good Shepherd when the storms of life destroy all other comforts.

-A trust in Christ's commitment to find us when lost;

to rescue us when in trouble;

to join us when in grief;

to welcome us back when we rebel;

to resurrect us when we die;

to share life and love with us both now and always.

Trust is the foundation of relationships.

Come and See, Christ continues to invite.

We cannot love or experience true love without trust-- Christ certainly wants us to enjoy being loved unconditionally.

Come and See.

We cannot forgive or experience the depths of forgiveness if we aren't willing to trust-- Christ certainly wants us to know in our heart and soul that we have been thoroughly

washed in the blood of the lamb.

Come and See.

We certainly cannot enjoy the fullness and abundance of what God desires in our life if we are willing to trust-- Christ certainly wants us to join him in the full beauty of God's Kingdom, a beauty filled with relationships that are redeemed; a creation that is restored; and life that will be resurrected.

Come and See.

Come and experience true love.

Come and find healing and wholeness.

Come and be filled with God's hunger for justice and peace.

Come and Taste the cup of Salvation.

Come and find purpose and meaning through the One who became one with us so that we could become one with him.

Indeed, Christ doesn't just want us to know about him but to know him-- to trust him-- to join him in a future filled with the mysteries and profundities of salvation itself.

Best yet, this isn't just an one time event; no this invitation speaks to God's ongoing commitment to us.

Come and See.

And so they did-- making them the very first disciples in John's gospel.

Not just disciples, but apostles as well, since the more they knew the liberating joy of Jesus, the more they wanted every square inch of creation to also experience this joy, as well.

May it be so with us today and every day.

Come and See.

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Please excuse any typos or editorial errors and please feel free to contact Pastor Voskuil for further questions about the content of this sermon.