

Today we are looking at John 1:35 thru 2:25, these passages contain a few varied topics which I will attempt to cover because each are compelling as is all of God's Word. The three topics are, the calling of disciples, the first miracle of Jesus and the cleansing of the temple. After time spent in this passage, I've pictured the topics as scenes since John writes in successive days, we'll see him say the next day or on the third day. These specific references show him to be an eyewitness.

So, we begin with scene one occurring the day after J the B declared Jesus was the Son of God. Ellen described well the role of J the B in preaching and preparing the way for the Messiah. V35 tells us J the B was walking with two of his followers when he saw Jesus and said "Look, the Lamb of God!" The disciples heard this, and they followed Jesus. Andrew is identified and the other is assumed by many to be John the evangelist, the writer of this Gospel. Notice they didn't have to approach Jesus, he turned to them and the first words of Jesus to the two followers in are, "What do you want?" or "What are you seeking?" How typical of Jesus to get to the heart of the matter! He does not ask *who* they are looking for, but *what* they are looking for.

He knows *us*, he knows what *we* seek to satisfy is usually *something*, not *someone* like Jesus. Whether it's comfort, security, our hopes and dreams, *all* we long for, are found in him, not in things of the world. Desiring comfort instead of sacrifice is a battle we must all face. When we commit to follow Jesus wholeheartedly, he will put opportunities in front of us to serve others, whether w/our time, talents, or finances, most likely it will mean sacrifice, as the disciples found out. But the blessings of giving or doing in his name are immeasurable.

Back to A & J, their answer to Jesus' question was, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" This made me smile a little...imagine the scenario, they just heard J th B the day before say, "I have seen and testify, this man is the Son of God." Were they at a loss for words? Is that all they could come up with, where are you staying? But Jesus replied, maybe to their surprise, "Come and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon. V39(another eyewitness detail)

Theologian DA Carson describes the disciples' answer to Jesus' question this way, "Their immediate answer may show their hesitancy to ask deep theological ques, so they ask where are you staying? Or they maybe they just wanted to learn and be *with* Jesus. Jesus is always willing to receive those who want to spend time at his feet, learning from him." This reminded me of Martha and Mary in Luke 10 where Martha complains that Mary is not helping her because she was sitting at the Lord's feet listening to him, so Jesus said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But only one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Sisters, is this what we seek, to spend time learning from Jesus? What does it look like for you to sit at his feet? Taking time for personal reflection, to slow down and ask, "What am I searching for?" "What do I *want* from Jesus?" Does it come back to comfort, security, freedom from worry, prestige or just to be known as no other can know us? If we are seeking for ourselves only, there will not be much change. But if we are seeking *Jesus* only, we will be changed in ways we cannot even grasp, we will become more like him.

The reply of Jesus, "Come and you will see" had meaning more than just where he was staying but come and gain from him an insight into the mind and purpose of God himself. Listen to the words of Jesus in John 7:16 "My teaching is not mine, but they come from him who sent me." For these two disciples, this is the beginning of learning that discipleship means abiding with Jesus forever. Acc to one commentator, the disciples' question, "Where are you staying?" or as in the KJ version, "where dwellest thou?" has a double meaning as Jesus has no permanent place of shelter but continually *dwells or abides* with His heavenly Father. And that is what he invites all of us to do as we choose to follow him. He wants us to abide with him. I thought about that day Andrew and John spent with Jesus, can you imagine the conversation? The how, the when, and what ques they wanted to know from him. Jesus knew they couldn't take it all in at once, as he often said, you will know later or you will not yet understand ...So, take heart sisters, the same applies to us today,

when we want to know his will, his plan, it may not be now, we *may* know later, or we will not *yet* understand.

In V40-45 we read the various ways of bringing others to Jesus, the essence of evangelism, simply telling others what we have found in Jesus and inviting them to meet with him for themselves. John Stott reminds us, as we all have probably heard at some point, personal witness and friendship continue to be the primary means by which people are brought to Christ. I'm thankful for the friend who introduced my husband and me to Jesus years ago. At the time, at least I thought I was a true Christian, but true discipleship was missing as well as an understanding of the bible. This friend not only told us about her newfound faith but invited us to church, to come and meet Jesus. We did and it changed our lives, not all at once but as we know, Jesus is patient with us. All we need to do is read how the disciples' understanding came over time.

Isn't it notable how important it was that the disciples were students of the OT, because, more than once Scripture resonated with them. They were introduced to Jesus as the Savior, the Lamb of God, and the realization of OT prophecy was now found in him. Wouldn't it be a worthy goal that *we* might be students of the Word of God? That his word would resonate as we hide it in *our* hearts, Ps 119:11 says, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

John tells of the excitement of sharing good news and the individual responses to hearing. We see family first; Andrew goes to his brother Simon saying, "We have found the Messiah" and then he took him to Jesus. I love that image of a brother caring and excited to not only talk about Jesus, but he took his brother to see and *meet* the Messiah, who just looks at Simon and *knows* him. Jesus says, "You are Simon, son of John. You shall be called Cephas(Aramaic), which means Peter(Greek). Given a new name by Jesus was significant, JC Ryle states, "he who knows what is in a man, knows that Simon had the affection, the loyalty and enthusiasm, which after he had been disciplined by the experience of failure and disappointment, will one day make him a man of granite." And as you probably know, the names Peter and Cephas mean rock, *although* impulsive Peter didn't always act like a

rock. Jesus didn't choose perfect people but real people who could be changed by his love and then communicate that to others. Simon's whole identity and destiny would now be shaped by Jesus. This new name doesn't take effect until we see in Mt 16:18 where Simon Peter had a confession of faith to the identity of Christ as the Messiah.

V43 John lets us know the next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee and 'found' Philip, we see Jesus was the initiator and *invited* Philip to follow him, nobody else told him, but Jesus sought him out. How beautiful to think that whatever Jesus knew about Philip he knew the best way was to go directly to him. We may not know how, but Jesus has ways of finding us, or those we care about, to bring in followers. Question for you, is he seeking to use you in someone's life or how is he seeking you? God's ways are creative, and unique to all of us, our individual stories will attest to this.

Philip then tells Nathanael, and we see another way of spreading the good news, by telling friends. But we hear a very different response from Nathanael, his skepticism emerges in v46 stating "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" or from the Message Bible, "You've got to be kidding". This sounds a little harsh but apparently, Nazareth was looked down upon by the Jews as a predominately Gentile town, Nathanael wasn't expecting anything important to happen in or come from Nazareth. Except of course it was where Jesus spent his childhood!

Philip's reply to Nathanael's hesitation was "Come and see," just as Jesus said to Andrew and John. JC Ryle states: "Wiser counsel than this would be impossible to conceive. Few are ever moved by reasoning and argument. Still fewer are frightened into repentance." He goes on, "The one who does most good to souls is often the believer who says to his friends, "I have found a Savior; come and see him." Is this how we tell people about Jesus? Do we let others in on what he is doing in our lives? Or speak of how thankful we are to have surety of eternal life? Even with other believers, it can be uplifting to our souls to speak of these things together.

Jesus had seen and *known* Nathanael before Philip called him. In v47 Jesus saw him approaching and said, "Here is a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit" Some versions

read “A genuine son of Abraham, a man of integrity.” Jesus *knows* what is in man, his divine insight can be unsettling or reassuring. How is it for you to be known by God, unsettling or reassuring?

Nathanael asked, “How do *you know* me?” Jesus speaks of seeing him under the fig tree which offers no explanation to the reader but seemed to be a private meaning to Nathanael only. Matthew Henry says, “sitting under a fig tree denotes quietness of spirit which welcomes communion with God.” Nathanael could have been thinking about the coming Messiah. There are many references to a fig tree in Scripture. Listen to Micah 4:4 where it speaks of the last days when God will reign over his kingdom. It says, “Each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one to make them afraid, For the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.”

This statement of Jesus caused Nathanael to immediately proclaim, “Rabbi, *you* are the Son of God; the King of Israel.” John Piper explains the fig tree reference, “It is not evident what Jesus was referring to, but it clearly displays a miraculous knowledge of Nathanael’s innermost thoughts and evokes his profession of faith.” Others suggest that maybe Nathanael was recalling the story of Jacob from Gen 28 whose name btw means deceitful, the opposite of what Jesus calls Nathanael. The ESV Bible notes, Jesus will be a greater way of access to God than the heavenly ladder on which angels traveled between God and Jacob.

As we look at v50, “You shall see greater things than that”, we see every word that comes out of the mouth of Jesus has meaning and significance and causes the hearer to believe or not, trust or not, and Nathanael believed.

On the third day chap 2 places us in scene two, at a wedding, the site of the first miracle of Jesus, which is rich in spiritual lessons. Commentators point out that just the fact Jesus was invited to a wedding shows he was known to enjoy people and gatherings, having fun and celebrating, especially the covenant of marriage, all of this was important to him. Marriage celebrations in this culture could go on for days even a week and included people from all over to celebrate.

The financial responsibility lay with the groom so not having enough food and drink had cultural stigma and would result in embarrassment and shame. Someone messed up and the mother of Jesus was aware they ran out of wine and told Jesus. It's believed Joseph had died years before and Mary had been a widow for quite a while, therefore she was used to turning to her firstborn son, for every problem he had the perfect solution, after all, Mary had the perfect son.

We see from Jesus' response to his mother in v4 that he did not approve of what she said. "Not only does he address her as "Woman" but says in effect, what has this to do with me, or why do you involve me and what business is it of yours and mine?? He adds, "My time (or my hour) has not yet come."

Saying this to his mother sounds rude and disrespectful to us although it should not be understood this way. Jesus is the only perfect sinless being, therefore he is not capable of being inconsiderate or rude. Rather, it is the beginning of defining his relationship with his mother different from what it was. Instead of calling her mother, he says woman as he did when hanging on the cross and entrusted her care to the John of this gospel. This way of addressing Mary signifies the end of the mother-son relationship and establishes the *father*-son relationship whereby Jesus is only committed to do the will of his father and no one else, no family member or friend.

DA Carson says it this way; "By rebuking or correcting his mother, however courteously, Jesus declares the beginning of his ministry, his utter freedom from any kind of human service, agenda or manipulation. He has embarked on his ministry, the purpose of his coming- to do his Father's will. This must have been extremely difficult for Mary, she gave birth to Jesus, taught and raised him and now must give him over to the purpose for which he came. Everything, including family ties, had to be subordinated to his divine mission. Jesus was an obedient son to his earthly parents while they were raising him but now, he is an obedient son to his Father in heaven. Piper states he had to work against the assumption of his day that his family had an inside track of influence and blessing. Jesus

levels the playing field with all of us, no one has an inside track due to rank, position, performance or family relations. Everyone comes to Jesus by believing on his name.

Essentially, it wasn't Mary's place to direct his ministry. By saying "My hour has not yet come", Jesus was saying my time to be revealed as the Messiah has not yet come, he wanted people to believe who he was without signs and wonders, not to be known as only a miracle worker. In fact, many times, after a healing Jesus often told others, "Do not tell anyone." (Mt 8&9)

At first glance it appears not a huge life altering miracle, we're not told of any action Jesus took; without a word from his lips, without a touch from his hand, Jesus simply wills the water to become wine. It wasn't even known to many people, only the servants and the disciples were aware. It was neither a healing nor a sermon, but a moment of *joy*. The master of the banquet or head waiter told the bridegroom, everyone usually brings out the choice wine first, but you have saved the best for now. I'm sure no one ever tasted wine as good as this, the wine of Jesus' making. Sisters, we can experience the best now by following Jesus, believing and trusting him and serving in his name.

Jesus gives us His best *now* -not later! Listen to Rom 8:32, "He who did not spare his own Son...how will He not also...graciously give us all things?"

So, what was the purpose of this miracle besides helping some friends avoid social embarrassment or shame and showing kindness and compassion for Mary? Well for one, by using the stone jars normally used for ceremonial cleansing or purification and not drinking, Jesus was pointing to Himself being our ultimate means of purification for sin. He will be the vessel from which blood will flow on Calvary and be the purification for our sins. He is doing away with the old purification rituals to the only way to be clean before God, that is to turn to Jesus and accept his death for our sins.

Jesus does everything with purpose and he shows us his abundant provisions and grace. The amount of wine Jesus provided was approx. 150 gallons, 6 jars at 20-30 gal each!

Remember John 1:16 “For from his fulness we have all received grace upon grace.” We cannot exhaust God’s grace!

Another purpose is in v11, the glory of Jesus was revealed for the first time and his disciples *believed* in him or put their faith in him. As John states in 20:31 “These things are written that you may believe”.

One more thing we can glean from this passage; to quote one author “We also can’t miss the example of Mary; she asks for help *from* Jesus and then she submits the matter *and* herself to Jesus (2:5) “Do whatever he tells you”. She may come and ask, but Christ is not under any obligation to do what she asks. She has the ear of Christ, but so do we. She submits herself to the will of Christ and so must we. Obedience plays a big part in how God works through his people; for example, w/o knowing much about Jesus, the servants obeyed him, and blessing came to the wedding guests, the bride and groom.

So then, for every need of ours, whether illness, heartache, loss, or disappointment, Christ *will* show his glory, but it is not for us to tell him how or when but trust and obey.

Our last scene finds us in Jerusalem, which most say was on the seventh day. Passover celebrations occurred at the temple in Jerusalem and Jewish families from all over made the pilgrimage during this time. Numbers have been estimated to be in the 100’s of thousands. Try to imagine the scene in the outer courts of the temple which was reserved for Gentile worship, there was chaos and gross irreverence, maybe a million or more people and merchants with enough sheep, cattle and doves to sell to this number of people and money changers enough to serve these crowds. There were dishonest business practices and exorbitant exchange rates for all those who traveled. This combination and their presence in the temple caused the righteous anger of Jesus and the disciples remembered Psalm 69:9, it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.” Jesus’ anger was also directed to the religious leaders, they allowed this commotion that inhibited the people, esp the Gentiles, from worship, the main reason for coming to the temple. Divine fury from Jesus was a judgment on a system of religion. A sober reminder for us to think about how we enter worship for the Lord, whether on a Sunday or otherwise, are we casual



or do we show the reverence He deserves? Do we prepare our hearts for sincerity and truth in worship which the Father desires, and how do we separate ourselves from so many distractions?

On no other occasion in our Lord's earthly ministry do we see him exhibiting such righteous indignation as clearing the temple. God hates all sin, but we see his unusually harsh actions against the merchants and money changers in the temple area because this flagrant behavior was against his Father and the desecration of his Father's house. Jesus represents the very character of God, (Heb1:3) "He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact likeness of his being, and he holds everything together by his powerful word." Therefore, Jesus represents the Father's *passions* more than anyone could.

A side note here, you may have heard some people use this passage as a green light for their 'righteous' anger. But anger can be a powerful and dangerous emotion. Rage and anger are very different and should not be correlated to Jesus' anger presented here. Even the whip which he took time to make was not used as a weapon to harm but to drive the animals out.

The Jews asked Jesus in v18 "By what authority do you have the right to do these things?". They must have recognized he was acting righteously or even divinely instead of just chasing him out as would be expected, because remember, at this point, they did not know who he was but saw he was able to powerfully drive out merchants and animals, as if they obeyed him.

Jesus speaks symbolically to the Jews, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up", the meaning of his words is lost on the people. They had no idea at this time they were speaking to the Son of God, and that a resurrection from his death would take place. And ironically, they would be responsible for his death. Then they replied literally saying, it took 46 yrs to build and you can rebuild in 3 days? His answer to the Jews was cryptic but John gives the answer they could not have known at the time, that is, the temple he had spoken of was his body, which would be destroyed by the Jews themselves, and in three days he would rise again. Jesus is saying that the sign that would prove his authority would be His

resurrection. Again, we see a purpose fulfilled in the actions of Jesus in v22 “After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they *believed* the Scripture and the words that he had spoken.” It was the beginning of abolishing the old sacrificial system with the perfect sacrifice of the perfect life of Jesus. And what does God want from us today? Ps 51:17 tell us, “The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.

John tells us Jesus performed many miracles while in Jerusalem during the Passover celebration and many believed in his name. *But* Jesus knew the superficial faith of those who believed was only because of the signs they saw. He knew how fickle man’s faith could be, some of these very people would be among those crying “Crucify him.” Jer 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can understand it?” Look at v24-25, *Jesus can understand our hearts*, he did not place trust in humans because he knows human nature, what mankind is really like, yet he came to die for them, and us.

How does it affect you to know Jesus knows all about you? As we witnessed earlier in chap 1, the disciples were *known* before coming to Jesus, as he knows all of us. It means there are no secrets in your life, there is always one person who knows your heart perfectly, knows it better than you do, you are fully known by one person, so who else would you go to but Jesus Christ? Ps 139:23 “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

In closing, we saw the first acts of our Lord’s ministry to attend a marriage feast and cleanse the temple from desecration and mockery, will be among his first acts when he comes again; he will purify the whole visible church and hold a marriage feast. Hear John’s words in Rev 19:9, Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

We saw the actions and words of Jesus always had meaning and significance. We saw it’s not always clear what he is doing, but that should lead us stay in his word, go deeper

and see what Jesus will show and teach us, and we will appreciate the power, purpose and glory of Jesus!

Tim Keller summarizes it this way; "If Jesus comes into your life, he will sometimes fill your table with a feast and joy, other times, he will turn your table over and spill everything on the ground. These passages show us the authority of who he is, they show us the purpose of what he does, and then they show us the glory of what he brings."