

What are you looking for?
Psalms 40:4-8(1-11); John 1: 29-42
January 16, 2011

“What are you looking for?” Now I know most of you are not like me when I go from one room of my house to the next and when I get there I find myself asking the question, “What are you looking for?” In those brief seconds of going from one space to another, my brain becomes an empty slate. It is as if walking from one room to the next is like someone shaking an etch a sketch and the image of what I was looking for is erased. It's only after **standing there for a few seconds that I usually see what it is that I was looking for** and can move forward with what I needed to do. In today's reading we have John the Baptizer moving forward with what God had called him to do. He was spreading the message of repentance and identifying to those present the Messiah, Jesus, the “Lamb of God.”

John the Baptizer not only refers to Jesus as the “Lamb of God,” but also as the one who will take away the sins of the world. (Jn. 1:29) Perhaps some of you have taken note of how the gospel of John's **description of Jesus' baptism differs from that of the gospel of Matthew** as was read last week. Not only does John identify Jesus as the “Lamb of God” here, but we have the disciples first as followers of John the Baptist and then of Jesus. Andrew hears John's comment, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” (Jn. 1:36) It is then that Andrew and another unnamed disciple choose to follow Jesus. There is no prompting by Jesus or by John, they are **simply compelled to follow. What would prove to be foretelling** is that Jesus turns and asks them, “What are you looking for?” and their response is not what we might think, such as “we are looking to follow the Messiah” or “we are seeking to be faithful to God.” No, in true we are sometimes a little **dense disciple fashion, their response is, “Where are you staying?”** and Jesus replies, “Come and see.” (Jn. 1:35-39) It was when the disciples responded to Jesus' command, “Come and see,” that they made the decision to continue to follow him and Andrew even goes back to get his brother, Simon, known to us as Simon Peter.

“What are you looking for,” is the question that Jesus asks us today. In the wake of the funerals that took place this past week for those killed in Arizona, in the wake of continued elevated unemployment rates, in the wake of those you know and love who have been **diagnosed with cancer, in the wake of your own life, “What are you looking for?”** What are we missing and what revelation should we be praying for? “In our lives, day in and day out, what are you looking for? Perhaps Jesus always meets us with this question. It is the starting

point and though we may not yet have an answer, Jesus does want to know. And he will let us stay all day trying to find the answer – until four in the afternoon or four in the morning... or a lifetime. **And Jesus will let us begin where we are, with little things, if that's easiest.** ...Jesus will also tolerate silence, probably more than we can, and he'll let us talk about ourselves.”¹ Perhaps, this is the place where prayer begins for some.

In wrestling with this question “What are you looking for,” put it in the context of your own life. As one who claims to be a follower of Jesus Christ, what have you done with your life, what have you **failed to do, who are you and who do you wish you were**, who are the people that you choose to love and who are the people that you choose to avoid? When is God needed in your life and when do you choose to follow false gods in your life? What are the things that matter most to you in this life and how do they compare with the teachings of Jesus? The answer to these questions are found in Jesus command to us to **“Come and see.”** Come to the cross and come to Jesus, the Lamb of God.

“The answer will be shaped within our own skin, but it will be connected to the One who is beyond our own skin. Our small words will be heard and come to rest in the One who is the eternal Word.”² As people of faith we often look for the burning bush message or for the sky to part and a booming voice from God to speak directly to us. While we wait for such Divine messages we often miss the myriad of ways that God is still speaking to us today. **Today's message from the gospel of John “illustrates the call of the followers of Jesus to listen carefully, live faithfully, and tell the story of what God has done in the midst of [our] own transformed lives.”**³

Although yesterday was the actual birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, he would have been 82, most of the country will honor his birthday on tomorrow. A man who undeniably was transformed **by his faith and a man who sought to transform our nation and the world**, to live more like children of God. Dr. King was a presence for equality and justice and he spoke often of the importance of transformation in this country so that all people could be seen by the content of their character and not the color of their skin. One's value and one's worth were **to come from our mutual claim as children of God.** **Dr. King wrote**, on November 4, 1956, “Paul's Letter to American Christians.” Hear now excerpts from Dr. King

¹Rev. Barbara Lundblad. “What are you looking for?” John 1:29-41 www.goodpreacher.com

²Ibid, Lundblad

³Rev. Kathryn Huey . Reflection on John 1:29-42. UCC SAMUEL

through the eyes of Paul speaking to us today:

*Americans, I must remind you, as I have said to so many others, that the church is the Body of Christ. So when the church is true to its nature it knows neither division nor disunity... Your poet Thoreau used to talk about 'improved means to an unimproved end.' How often this is true. You have allowed the material means by which you live to outdistance the spiritual ends for which you live. You have allowed your mentality to outrun your morality. You have allowed your civilization to outdistance your culture. Through your scientific genius you have made of the world a neighborhood, but through your moral and spiritual genius you have failed to make of it a brotherhood. ...I am impelled to write you concerning the responsibilities laid upon you to live as Christians in the midst of an unChristian world. ...'Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.'*⁴

As the people of Peace UCC, it is time to be transformed and it is time for you to renew your **commitment to God. A house divided cannot stand. (Mk 3:25) It is time** to look at the future of the church. What are you looking for, as you look forward? Membership in the church means taking off your bib and putting on an apron. It means working together as the Body of Christ. It means lifting in prayer daily the life and mission of the church. It means lifting in **prayer those who sit on the various committees and your Pastor. It means** lifting in prayer not only the prayer concerns that are raised on Sunday morning, but also those needs that go unspoken. To be in service is to be present for worship. To be in service is to give financially to meet the needs of the church as we seek to live into our mission and God's mission.

As we look to God and seek to be faithful in our walk, we are reminded of the question, **“What are you looking for?” Jesus tells us to, “come.”** Come to the bread of life and be renewed. Come to the cup of salvation and find forgiveness of your sins. Come to the fount of living water and thirst no more. Come those who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. **Come and see that God has provided more than enough for us to share.** Come and see that God is faithful in being present with us and for us. It is not enough to simply ask the question, Jesus bids us to come. Amen.

⁴www.mlkonline.net/christians.html