

January 19, 2020

**“Come and See”**

**By Edgar Solís**

**Intro: How much power is there in an invitation?** A friend of mine was walking on the streets of a big city and someone handed him a flyer. It was an invitation to attend a Bible study and participate in a faith community. After following up on the invitation, the man is now a missionary in Italy. I was a teenager when my parents received an invitation, a simple invitation to attend a Christmas activity, where my parents received the good news of Jesus Christ. That one-hour conversation transformed my family’s history forever because we found hope and a supportive faith community. I was a teenager when someone invited me to a summer camp. I accepted the invitation and my life was changed forever. Later a friend of mine invited me to spend two weeks in southeast Iowa, doing mission, preaching and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Those two weeks have been the longest two weeks of my life as I am still in Iowa! How many times in our lives has a simple invitation been the thing that transformed the path of our journey?

**Scripture:**

Matthew Myer Boulton’s commentary on today’s passage can help us better understand the important principle of God’s invitation to come, see and participate of Jesus’ work. In the second part of the passage, *John’s story of Jesus calling the first disciples underlines the idea that discipleship arises from various circumstances, in various ways, among people with various needs and temperaments.* Andrew decides to follow Jesus after both John the Baptizer’s endorsement and spending a day with Jesus at his residence. The word translated “remained”

here is *meno*, meaning “abide,” a key verb repeated more than 40 times in the Gospel of John.

**Simon, for his part, decides to follow Jesus based on Andrew’s recommendation and,**

perhaps, Jesus’ startling recognition and welcome. Strikingly, in all of these encounters Jesus makes no explicit arguments, no “pitches” about the benefits of following him. Rather, he asks a question, “What are you looking for?” and offers an invitation “Come and see” - a phrase later echoed by Philip. The power of an invitation, hospitality and experience seem to supersede debate and rationale. For Jesus, “come and see” is his signature mode of spreading the good news and recruiting disciples. Now I wonder, what’s our method of sharing the good news? We have a great model to follow. We have God, we have Jesus, we have the persistent presence of the Holy Spirit always and everywhere calling and inviting people from all around the world, embracing the poor and the needy, reaching out with tenderness, love and compassion to all people, opening doors for everyone, everywhere. **We have a loving God that continually invites and asks us to participate with him in doing something important, relevant and transformative in the world!** The divine is inviting us; sometimes smiling, sometimes extending hands of mercy, sometimes offering care and healing for the soul, and sometimes silently or loudly crying out...come! Come and see how much I love you! Come and see the wonders and the purpose that I have for you. Come with me and help me transform this violent world into a world full of compassion, peace and security. How will we respond to Jesus’ invitation?

**Takeaways:**

1) Be open to Jesus’ invitation, but be aware that there **is plenty of room for different responses to the invitation.** Stories of “calling” and discipleship take many forms. Andrew gets a trusted recommendation and a day with Jesus. Others like Philip jump on board right away.

Nathanael engages in skeptical debate. In short, there's no one right way to receive and respond to God's call and there's plenty of room under the tent; room for those ready to take the plunge, room for those who'd rather put a toe in first - and room for those who doubt they're up to it at all.

2) Let's remember Jesus' words "Come and see" and let them be a challenge to us this week. For both Andrew and Nathanael, and for many of us, second-hand reports just won't do. We want to come and see for ourselves. For John, this is the primary mode of spreading the good news and growing the community of disciples and we are wise to do the same.

Think about this. If you were to invite a friend to experience the best of your life and say "come and see", to what specifically would you invite them? A worship service, a meal, a service project, a prayer meeting, a vigil, a rally? Where and when do we most vividly and experientially embody the Gospel we proclaim? What in particular might someone "come and see" in our church that might cause them to decide to step more fully into God's mission of transformation, love, compassion and joy?

We have a God that always and everywhere is inviting us to come and see who the divine is and what the divine is doing! **If you plan a party, a celebration or a reunion, you define the nature of the event, then you invite people.** What do you want them to experience? The outcome is the result of your planning!

This morning, God is calling us to get excited about Jesus' invitation. Let's have a church that reflects our good heart and our intention that all people attending experience Jesus' presence, God's love and the transformational power of the Holy Spirit. Like Jesus, let's say "come and see!" This is the year of our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Let's pray, plan and happily participate in inviting

many to experience Jesus' presence in our church. Let's invite them to come not just to learn about our church history, but to experience God in their lives! Amen!