

JOHN 1:35-42—WHO ARE WE?

INTRO. Let me begin by asking us a Q: *What kind of things are people looking for to give us a good & happy & fulfilling life?*

- Talk to your neighbor

Those are all good things—BUT, I’ve noticed something: Most people, even when they got those things, are *still dissatisfied*:

- We have money—but we want more
- We have a bicycle—but we want a motorbike
- We have a motorbike—but we want a car
- We have a car—but we want a bigger car

It’s like we are always seeking and never quite finding

- OR when we find it, it slips through our grasp
- OR when we find what we were seeking and get it, the satisfaction & fulfillment & peace we thought would be our goes away after awhile
- AND THEN we start pursuing something else—IS THIS NOT SO?

Is there something which will give us LASTING satisfaction, fulfillment, & peace?

- Is there anything that—if we have it—will enable us to stop worrying and searching for something else EVEN WHEN WE FACE HARD TIMES IN OUR LIVES?

Today’s passage in the Bible—**John 1:35-42**—points us to the answer to these questions [**READ**]

So what is the answer?—What does this passage tell us?

PROPOSITION: This passage is telling us: WE BECOME WHAT WE SEEK.

ORG. SENTENCE: (1) The 1st part of the passage (**vv.35-38a**) raises the issue that all of us face: *What do we seek?* (2) The 2nd part of the passage (**vv.38b-42**) encourages us to seek the One who is the fulfillment of all we are looking for—and who will turn us into beings—more wonderful than we could ever dream possible.

I. Verses 35-38a raise the Q. that confronts us all: What do we seek?

A. v. 35—“Disciples” = Learners/students/apprentices—someone who attaches himself to someone else so that he can b/c like that person.

B. vv. 36-37.

1. John the Baptist realized that he was called as the forerunner of Jesus (see, **Matt 3:3, 11; John 3:25-30**)—so, later on when some of John’s other disciples said that “everyone is going over to Jesus,” John said (**John 3:28, 30**): “*I told you I’m not the Christ—I was sent ahead of him—He must increase, but I must decrease.*” The b/g of that is occurring right here.

2. This is apparently the 1st meeting btw. Jesus and the men who would b/c his disciples. **Matt 4/Mark 1** describe when Jesus formally called Andrew & Peter & James & John to be his disciples—the fact that Jesus had met them here, helps to explain why, in **Matt 4**, they so readily left their fishing nets when he called them.

C. Which leads to Jesus’ big Q. in v. 38 when 2 of John’s disciples began to follow after Jesus: “WHAT DO YOU SEEK?”—*That is the Q. that confronts all of us with respect to our lives*—B/c what we seek determines the direction we will go, which determines what we will become.

1. Some motivational speakers—and some of the so-called “Prosperity Gospel” people—think of this too simplistically: They say “You just have to visualize what you want, and ‘name it and claim it’ and it will be yours.” Such people generally focus on getting *money and things*.

2. Now, having goals, plans, and strategies—whether for obtaining money or anything else—are important—but we are talking about not just What We Have, but about WHO WE ARE, and what is the MOTIVATING PASSION OF OUR LIFE. For example:

a. **If your motivating passion is seeking riches:** you may NOT b/c wealthy—but your

character will b/c avaricious.

b. If your motivating passion is seeking power: you may never achieve it—but your character will b/c manipulative.

c. If your motivating passion is seeking fame: you may never get it—but your character will b/c vainglorious.

d. Similar things could be said regardless of what is the motivating passion of your life—whether it is the search for Love; Peace; Security; Significance; Meaning; Purpose; Truth; or anything else.

3. The ans. all depends on WHERE or IN WHAT or IN WHOM we seek these things.

a. Greg Beale, talking about our nature and character: “We resemble what we revere—either for our ruin or restoration.” In other words—WE BECOME WHAT WE SEEK

b. Here’s the problem: Having Money; Love; Peace; Security; Significance; Meaning; Purpose; Truth; are all good things. **BUT—NONE OF THEM** is Big enough, or Deep enough, or Fulfilling enough to *satisfy the longing and the needs of the human soul*.

c. There is only one thing—or one Person—who is Big enough, and Deep enough, and Fulfilling enough to *satisfy the longing and the needs of the human soul*—and that is Jesus Christ himself—and we talked about WHY that is true last week—b/c JESUS IS UNIQUE: He is both fully human and fully God at the same time (LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE).

D. That’s why Jesus asked Andrew and the other disciple when they started to follow him: “WHAT DO YOU SEEK?”—B/c he knows that people will turn *even to him* for a variety of reasons—or out of mixed motives.

- Jesus knows that—b/c of who he is—only he alone is Big enough, and Deep enough, and Fulfilling enough to *satisfy the longing and the needs of the human soul*. But he also knows that some people come to him—and use his name—NOT for him, himself—but in order to get something else that they are *REALLY* seeking.

- When that happens, then Jesus will NOT satisfy the longing and needs of the human soul, b/c the person really won’t have HIM, but something else. For ex., in our text today:

1. Maybe the Andrew and the other person were just seeking an *easier life* than they had following John the Baptist: **Matt 3:1, 4—he lived in the wilderness; wore camel’s hair robe; and ate locusts & wild honey. Most of us would like an easy, or easier, life. So Jesus asks us: “*Is that most imp. to you? Is that what you’re seeking?*”**

2. Later on Jesus healed people and miraculously fed them—but then in **John 6:53-58 he said: “*You have to eat MY flesh and drink MY blood.*” Many people had been following him—but were really only looking for a way to get *material things for free*. So it says in **John 6** that they started grumbling about that, and stopped following him. Most all of us want material things. So Jesus asks us: “*Is that most imp. to you? Is that what you’re seeking?*”**

3. Luke 9:57-58—Someone said to him “*I will follow you wherever you go.*” But instead of saying “Great, glad to have you with me,” Jesus said: “**The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.**” i.e., *it may not be easy. Do you know what you are getting yourself into?*

4. Later on, in **Luke 14:25-35,** when “*large crowds were going along with him*” Jesus again said—using VERY POINTED LANGUAGE—“*Count the Cost*” if you really want to follow me.

E. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book “The Cost of Discipleship” understood this, when he discussed the difference btw. what he called “Cheap grace” vs. “costly grace”:

Cheap Grace

“Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Grace alone does everything, they say, and so everything can remain as it was before. . . .

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, (it is) baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.” (pp. 45-47)

(True) Costly Grace

“Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price, to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. . . . Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is *grace* because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and

grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son . . . and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is *grace* because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. . .

Grace is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him; it is grace because Jesus says: "my yoke is easy and my burden light." (pp. 47-48)

II. The rest of this passage shows us that those early disciples—although they had just begun their journey and did not yet fully understand the cost of discipleship—were headed in the right direction—AND IT SHOWS US WHY WE SHOULD SEEK WHAT THEY FOUND.

A. When Jesus asked “What do you seek?” and the disciples ans’d by saying “Rabbi, where are you staying?”—they were actually demonstrating their seriousness.

1. By addressing him as “Rabbi,” they were acknowledging him as someone from whom they could gain knowledge and wisdom. By asking where he was staying, they were enabled to seek him out in private at greater length.

2. They showed that they were serious when Jesus said “Come, and you will see”—They didn’t hem and haw; they didn’t say, “Oh, we’re busy now”—Instead, *they followed him*. AND THEY STAYED WITH HIM.

- There is a lesson there for us: Do we follow-up? If God is calling you—AND HE IS—*What are you doing about it?* If you are not yet Christ’s disciple: *Become one*. If you already are Christ’s disciple, but you know that he is calling you to make changes in your life: *Make them*.
- Let me challenge you right now: *What is the 1 thing God is telling you to change in your life?*
 - *Everybody has something—b/c if you don’t then that means you already are just like Jesus Christ himself: Maybe it’s*
 - Stop looking at pornography
 - Tell your wife you love her
 - Tell your husband you respect him
 - You come to church—what is your *commitment* to the church? Do you just TAKE, or how can you SERVE?
 - Apologize to someone for what you did
 - Forgive someone for what they did to you
 - *This week—DO IT. Just 1 thing.* You know what it is. God has been speaking to you, but you’ve drowned him out. Stop covering your ears to the voice of God. Everyone can do one thing. Who knows: if you do one thing this week, you can do another thing next week. But you have to make one change this week.
- 3. Andrew did more—He went and told his brother: “We have found HIM!”—The one we have been seeking all along—He’s not what we expected—but Jesus is the One!
- 4. So Peter acted—He didn’t just say, “No, you must be mistaken—if Jesus was really the Messiah I’d have read about it in the paper; he’d be in Jerusalem or even Rome—not in this backwater part of the country.” No: *he went where the evidence took him—He followed where his brother led him.*
 - **What about you?** Jesus calls us—he calls you—he calls me—to follow him.

B. And in v. 42 Jesus confirmed for Peter, and those early disciples—and for us—that HE IS THE ONLY REAL AND FINAL ANS. TO THE Q: “What do you seek?” WHY IS THAT?—[READ v. 42]

1. What is Jesus doing?—He is showing that he knows *the end from the beginning—Peter’s end from his beginning—and OUR END from OUR BEGINNING*.

2. He is showing us that he knows what we are like INSIDE—and he knows what we can BECOME.

3. How can that be? How can he know that? He can know that b/c, JESUS IS UNIQUE—he is fully God and fully man at the same time. In fact, elsewhere the Bible tells us that: Jesus made us—he holds us together—he loves us—and he has a plan for us (**Heb 1:2-3; Eph 2:10; John 10:10**).

- The book of Revelation describes what Jesus is like. Rev 1:14 and 19:12 both dx. him as having “**Eyes like flames of fire.**” What this tells us is that *Jesus sees us—he knows us—he sees us down to the root—inside and out—he knows what we think—he knows our motives—he knows what we are really like—AND HE KNOWS WHAT WE CAN BECOME.*

4. So, for example, with Simon: Jesus didn’t just tell him, “Simon, you’re going to be a decent fisherman all your life.” No, he said, “Simon, you’re going to be called Cephas [Aramaic] or Peter [Greek= *Petros* = a rock or stone]”: i.e., “*Simon, you’re going to be called the Rock.*”

- a. And in **Matt 16:13-18** Simon got his new name—When? [**READ Matt 16:13-18**]
- b. Thereafter, was Simon this perfect, strong, Rock-like champion? Not at all. *But he b/c one.* AND SO CAN YOU—AND SO CAN I—if we attach ourselves, with the *motivating passion of our lives*—to Jesus Christ.
- c. And Jesus himself confirms that. Again—just like Simon Peter—in **Rev 2:17** Jesus says: “**To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, AND A NEW NAME WRITTEN ON THE STONE WHICH NO ONE KNOWS BUT HE WHO RECEIVES IT.**”

APPLICATIONS:

I. Jesus knows you—he knows you inside-out—he knows your end from your beginning—and he is the only one in the entire universe who can make you what he designed you to be—he alone can fulfill you and fulfill you destiny.

- Remember: WE BECOME WHAT WE SEEK. So the Bible tells us that our fulfillment and destiny is to b/c like Jesus—or, as **Rom 8:29** says, to “*be conformed to the image*” of Christ..

II. This requires that we be his DISCIPLES—that he be the *motivating passion of your life*—that you *seek* and *ask* and *knock* for him—and when you have found him, that you *submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him in all areas of your life.*

- We show we are serious by making that one change in our life that Christ is calling us to make.
- Remember: Jesus assures us, “my yoke is easy and my burden light.”

III. Peter’s dad was a fisherman. Peter was a fisherman. And he probably expected to live his whole life and die as a fisherman—But Jesus led him in ways Peter probably never had dreamed of. But he never regretted it.

A. Life with Jesus is an ADVENTURE. I never dreamed—even when I began pursuing my theological education—that I would be spending several months each year in East Africa. My wife never dreamed that she would be teaching people with dyslexia how to read—Everyone who follows Jesus has a story to tell. It’s not boring. It’s GREAT!—B/c he alone has the depth to make your life deep.

B. Peter never regretted it even though he died a martyr’s death—death by crucifixion: one of the most cruel, humiliating, and painful modes of execution ever devised. But Peter knew that he had found real life THAT ONLY CHRIST CAN GIVE US. And so even in death he asked his executioners to crucify him upside down, because he said he wasn’t worthy to be executed in the same manner as Jesus had been.

C. Why could Peter face death like that? B/c Peter knew what we all can know—that Christ holds the key of life and death. In fact, Jesus said: “**I AM the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me will live even if he dies**” (**John 11:25**).

1. In John 21:18-19 Jesus told Peter *decades in advance* the manner in which Peter was going to die. And after telling Peter that he was going to die by crucifixion, it says this: **And when Jesus had spoken this, he said to him: “Follow me.”**

2. What did that tell peter? And what does it tell us? It told Peter that Peter didn’t have to worry about anything—regardless of his circumstances—even his death—because he knew that Jesus had him, and his circumstances, right in the palm of his hand.

- So Peter could be free to follow Jesus with *confidence*, knowing that nothing that would happen to him would be a surprise to Jesus. Jesus knows it all in advance, *and is in charge.*

D. We can know that same thing, too. Some of us face difficult circumstances: financial stress; marriage or relational problems; health problems; other problems—*although none of us faces crucifixion.* **Turn to Jesus in all things.** Hear what he says in **John 16:33**: “**These things I have spoken to you, so that IN ME—not apart from Christ, or on your own, but IN ME—you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world**”

1. In him—AND ONLY IN HIM—we can overcome the world, too.

2. Seek him—Follow him—B/c his disciple—and make the changes in your life that he wants you to make—Begin TODAY.