In the passage that we read earlier from the Gospel of John, Jesus encountered two of John the Baptist’s disciples who have been curiously following Jesus since the day of his baptism. These disciples were there witnessing Jesus’s baptism right before their eyes. They saw the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and a heavenly voice declaring Christ as God’s beloved Son. They heard John’s proclamation “*Here’s the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world!”* But somehow they were still not convinced. They still wanted more proof and affirmation that Jesus was the One whom God had sent.

Jesus invited these curious followers to ***“Come and See”*** for themselves. In essence Jesus was saying, *“Here, check me out! If you really want to get to know me in person, spend some quality time with me.* ***Don’t just listen to what others are saying about me, see it and believe it for yourself!”* Jesus’s personal invitation resulted in a deeper relationship and a commitment to follow.** It’s not enough to just **know about Christ** but to **know Christ** personally. That required a much deeper commitment and greater personal sacrifice.

These disciples’ commitment to Christ ultimately gave them courage and faith to lead others to Christ as well. In the case of Andrew, as we read ealier, the moment that he was finally convinced that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, he immediately went out to look for his brother Simon. One after another simply by the word of mouth through personal invitation, this news spread like wildfire. But before that, many of the disciples still had doubts. They were still searching for answers.

But ***what exactly were the disciples looking for in Jesus, anyway****?* Did they want more signs and miracles in order for them to believe? Did they want to see another Epiphany moment like what they just saw at his baptism?What else would it take in order for them to be fully convinced?

What about us? What are WE looking for in Jesus when we say YES to Christ, whether that was many years ago or still a burning question looming on our mind today?

To different people, that could mean different things. Somemay be looking for a deeper sense of spiritual belonging or a protector or a comforter especially during times of trails in life. Some of us may still be searching and may have wandered off about own faith, not quite sure of what we believe. Some of us may have our journey of faith stalled and reached a spiritual plateau or perhaps have gradually declined over the years. **Everyone’s spiritual needs and journey of faith are different, but the same and only true Messiah fulfills us all.**

When Jesus called upon his followers to *“****Come and See****”,* He was calling his disciples and us today for a **lifelong commitment to follow him and to see for ourselves of who He really is.** He was calling us also don’t just scratch the surface and accept what others are claiming to be as the truth.

As you know, these days there have been many claims of “fake news” and “rumors” that are being widespread all across the media like wildfires. We are not quite sure honestly of what and who we should believe in. Who is telling the truth and who is not? Things that may look so real may turned out to be false.

Unfortunately, this phenomenon of false prophesy and accusations have also influenced our faith. There are many distorted views of theologies out there that are quite problematic and troublesome. Some may even be considered as heresy. Many of them would exclusively offer certain views and perspectives, of what people want to hear to satisfy people’s needs, while withholding the honest truth that many may not want to hear or feel comfortable addressing.

We need to be more vigilant and careful about what we believe in and not be swayed by various false prophesy, teaching, and fallacy. Don’t just accept what others are saying as truth. God has given to us a Spirit of Discernment. 1 John 4:1 “*Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world.[[1]](#footnote-1)*

**Like the early disciples, we ought to do a little fact-checking investigative work ourselves, just like the early disciples. Ask a lot of questions if we’re not 100% sure, especially those questions that might make us feel uncomfortable at times. Avoidance and denial would only offer us a disillusion of the truth.**

Like the Wise Men who were led by the star to “come and see” this Christ-child during the first Epiphany, all of us have been called to check Jesus out and in turn we’ve been commissioned to go back out to the field to proclaim what we saw…but taking a completely different route that we came with. In the same way, the disciples who came and witnessed the Epiphany of Christ’s baptism, they were transformed and equipped with boldness and courage after they had seen the Messiah.

Christ signified this life-transforming moment by giving Simon a new name “Peter” also known as the Rock. No longer was he Peter the fisherman but now he was Peter the disciple of Christ, a fisher of men. Simon was given a new identity in Christ because of his personal encounter and relationship with Christ.

In the same way, in our reading today, we came across three different names and titles for Jesus - **Lamb of God** (v36), **Rabbi**, which means Teacher(v38), **Messiah**, which means the **Annointed One** (v41). But this was not all….if we had read on, He was being referred to as **Son of Joseph from Nazareth** (v45), **Son of God** (v49), and **King of Israel** (v49). All these names and title references were relevant and worthy of describing who Jesus was and what He would become.

By referencing all these names and titles, the gospel writer John was illustrating to us the multifaceted dimensions of who this Christ was and what He meant for different people. He was “**All of the Above**” and for ALL of God’s people. No matter what we refer Jesus to be, he is the Son of God, the One and Only Messiah for ALL.

Are we really going to fully know who this Jesus is? Probably not...but at the very least by professing our faith in Christ, we’ve taken our initial step in narrowing the gap that separates us from God. As Jesus said, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him [my Father]."[[2]](#footnote-2)*

But Christ didn’t really want to be known for by these titles. He simply wanted to be known **by what He did, His mission and message of hope and salvation.**

When those disciples recognized that Jesus was as the true Messiah, they immediately dropped everything and followed Him. This by no means was disrespectful to John…because John had given them permission to go and follow the true Messiah. Even John distanced himself from the anointed Christ[[3]](#footnote-3). There was a smooth transition of power right there as well from John to Jesus. **John must step aside by becoming less, in order that Christ would step up by becoming more.** It was truly the work of the Holy Spirit that convicted the hearts of those disciples by dropping everything in order to follow Christ.

In the same way, that same Spirit is still actively at work among us today. The Spirit gave us courage and boldness to overcome our own personal fear and even doubts for the sake of proclaiming the Gospel for Christ.

When it comes to our spiritual journey, we all have been invited to this heavenly banquet, to see for ourselves of what God has planned for us. God has entrusted us with degrees of freedom to choose even knowing that at times we might make the wrong choices and fall short of God’s glory and expectation. That’s exactly why Christ was sent to us, meeting us “half-way” and serving as God’s mediator and ambassador to us. In the same way, we have been commissioned by Christ to be the mediators and ambassadors to others.

**Through our coming and seeing of the incarnated Christ, we have been called to be agents of transformation and hope all around us.** We are to be the “**Salt and Light**” of the world.[[4]](#footnote-4) Just as Christ gave Simon a new name to signify a new beginning and a renewed vision as Christ’s called disciple. **The life of Christ shall be made visible through OUR words proclaimed, the life we lived, and the legacy that we planted of our future.**

Earlier this week, in his farewell address to the American people, the outgoing President Obama challenged every American citizen to take actions in making a difference to develop new relationships with others, even those whom we may have shared our differences with in opinions and perspectives, regardless of who may be in power or authority. *"If you're tired of arguing with strangers on the Internet, try speaking with them in person." "If you see a problem, then lace up your shoes and organize." "If you disagree with an elected official, then grab a clipboard, gather signatures, and run for office."*  We must strive to build bridges and not walls.

As Christ’s called disciples, we have certain responsibilities to uphold Christ’s teachings and values all around us. God has placed His trust in us and through our own baptism, we have pledged our allegiance to our sovereign God who is firmly in control of all things.  **Each of us have our own cross to bear, our own footsteps to follow, and our own disciplines to honor.**

Furthermore, through our baptism, Christ has reminded us that we are all gifted individuals with capacities to serve and to love…not only in our churches, but in our society by exercising our gifts energy, intelligence, imagination, and love in order to make a difference and to see God’s glory manifested.

So let us challenge one another like the first disciples, by asking each other “hard questions” - questions that demand the most honest and heartfelt responses. Hard questions that might make us feel anxious and uneasy at times because they stir our human curiosity, open up possibilities and potentials, stimulate personal growth and ultimately lead us to actions.

Let us not only just **“Come and See” who this Christ is at the manger**, we must **“Go and Tell” who this Christ is** beyond the manger, in all that we do, and in all that we proclaim throughout our lives.

In closing, in honor of the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. this weekend, I leave with you this profound quote from Dr. King calling on our discipline and service to others and to our society, ***“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?”*** **Come and See, Go and Tell. Serve the Lord and Serve Others** in the name of God the F, God the S, and God the HS, Amen.

1. *1 John 4:1* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *John 14:6-7* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *John 1:31* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Matthew 5:13-16* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)