

We have found the Messiah

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[0:00] Let us now turn to the passage that we read, the Gospel according to John, chapter 1, and we may read again at verse 40.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, we have found the Messiah, which means Christ.

And I'd like just to look at these words, we have found the Messiah. Just a word about the background. John in his Gospel tells us how John the Baptist in his ministry witnessed for Christ.

In this particular narrative, John tells us how John the Baptist spoke to a group of people who had been sent from Jerusalem to seek verification of the identity of this preacher.

Who is this man was the question to which they sought an answer. John the Baptist's reputation had spread widely as a consequence of the ministry he exercised.

[1:22] Mark tells us in his Gospel, John appeared baptizing in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. And so you have this group of priests and Levites sent by the Jewish authorities to find out exactly who this man was, to whom the people were flocking.

And from the series of questions asked, it appears that these people were so impressed by the lifestyle and character of this preacher.

And although the best of men are but men at best, they were obviously questioning whether this might possibly be a promised figure spoken of in the Old Testament.

His lifestyle and character obviously raised this series of questions in their minds.

[2:39] They were prepared to concede that he might even be the awaited Messiah. Who are you? They asked. And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, I am not the Christ or the Messiah.

And so they go on to ask him, are you Elijah? And he said, I am not. Why do they ask the question, are you Elijah?

And the answer we get is that this is based on what we find in the prophecy of Malachi. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

And so you can see how the wheels of their minds were turning. If he is not the promised Messiah, could he possibly be Elijah because they believed that Elijah would arise and be a forerunner of Christ.

His appearance, his dress, his lifestyle and manner were similar to those of Elijah.

[3:51] His denunciation of sin, his living in the wilderness all seemed to point to another Elijah. But again, the negative response dashes any hopes that might have been raised.

And so they ask a further question, are you the prophet? And he answered, no. And this question seems to be based on the words spoken by the Lord through Moses.

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers and I will put my words in his mouth. He shall speak to them all that I command him.

And he answered, no. And it seems obvious from the line of questioning that is being pursued that at the very least they were looking for a deliverer figure.

And the ministry of John the Baptist appears to have encouraged and fed this hope. It is also, I think, very revealing in the way in which he continued to answer their questioning, who are you?

[4:57] They were obviously keen to bring a report back to those who had sent them. We need, they say, to give an answer to those who sent us, what do you say about yourself?

And the response he gives tells us much about the humility of this man. He did not want in any way that they consider him to be a deliverer or a savior.

He was a witness to the savior. He did not wish them to focus their admiration on him or even the gifts he possessed.

And that is a very real danger and to be avoided at all costs. He wanted them to focus entirely on Christ.

And so he responds, I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness. And you see, I am just a voice. Beautiful.

[5:57] Beautiful. The humility of this man that shines through the way that he deals with those who are questioning. See, at the beginning of John's gospel, John takes us right back into the eternal realm.

His approach is so different from the synoptic writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In the beginning, it says John was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

The word is Christ. And you cannot fail but notice the contrast that has been made. Christ is the word, but John the Baptist is but the voice.

A voice is the vehicle by which the word is made known. It is through our voices and our lives that we present the word Jesus Christ to the world.

And the evident humility of this preacher is further emphasized in chapter 3 of the gospel when he says, He must increase, but I must decrease.

[7:01] And there is something very attractive about the grace of humility. We can never have too much of it.

John the Baptist is not just any voice though. He is not Christ or Elijah or the prophet, but he is the voice spoken of by the prophet Isaiah.

I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord. So when these men didn't receive the desired response, they asked him, Then why are you baptizing if you are neither the Christ nor Elijah nor the prophet?

See, what authority do you have to baptize? And what I read into that is that they had formed the impression, based on their knowledge of the Old Testament, that the coming of this figure spoken of in the Old Testament involved cleansing.

In the prophecy of Zechariah, On that day there shall be a fountain open for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

[8:15] And yet despite such extensive apparent knowledge of the scripture, they were blind to the identity of Christ when he moved among them.

And it seems to me that is very alarming, that we can have tremendous knowledge and insight through the teaching we receive in the home and Sunday school or under the ministry of the gospel and yet be strangers to the Lord Jesus Christ.

His John the Baptist authority to baptize has been questioned. And he assures them that he has divine authorization. Nothing to do with his personal qualifications.

And so he again directs them to Christ and away from himself. Among you, he says, stands one you do not know. Even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.

What a strange reply. You see, what do you say? Not only does he say that it was not beneath him to perform such a menial task, but that it was above him.

[9 : 34] So great is the glory of Christ. He saw it as such a tremendous privilege to serve Jesus, to serve such a glorious Lord.

We have to ask ourselves today, do we share in that sense of privilege in serving the Lord Jesus Christ?

John the Baptist was overwhelmed with the privilege of giving even the lowliest witness to so great a Lord as Jesus, God's true Son and Messiah.

It was then John the Baptist made the proclamation, Behold the Lamb of God. It was a great historical moment when the last of the prophets stood face to face with the fulfillment of all prophecy.

And the two disciples, we are told, who had been standing with John the Baptist, heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. We are told that one of these two is Andrew.

[10 : 41] Many think that the other was the Apostle John himself. We have found the Messiah. Well, the first thought I'd like to highlight is this.

Where did they find the Messiah? And the second thought, the evidence and support of finding the Messiah. Thirdly, the profession that they make.

And fourthly, their enthusiasm to share this message. Where did they find the Messiah? Well, would we answer in the locality where John was preaching, Bethany across the Jordan?

Some might say so. But I would beg to disagree. That's not where they found the Messiah. But you're telling me that's where John was preaching.

Where then did they find the Messiah? They found him, I would suggest, in the proclamation of the truth. We read in verses 35 and 36, the next day again, John was standing with two of his disciples.

[11 : 56] He looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, Behold the Lamb of God. We're not told in the context here of John the Baptist, expanded on the proclamation that he made.

We know that on the previous day, he had added to the proclamation, Behold the Lamb of God, and he expanded it, who takes away the sin of the world. And you could say, with good reason, that in itself is an exegesis and interpretation of the proclamation.

But what could these two disciples, of whom Andrew was one, understand from the proclamation, Behold the Lamb of God? They could cast their minds back, with their knowledge of the Old Testament, to the incident that took place on Mount Moriah, when Abraham and his son Isaac were together ascending the mount.

Remember how Isaac spoke to his father Abraham, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering? This was a key question. And you remember the staggering reply of faith, given by Abraham.

God will provide for himself the lamb, for a burnt offering, my son. God will provide for himself the lamb. It's a reply that has echoed down through history, and certainly through the pages of ecclesiastical history.

- [13:27] God's provision, seen in symbolic form, in the shape of the ram on Mount Moriah. But now here is the real deal, no longer in symbol, but in reality.

And John the Baptist at that moment, when he cried, Behold the Lamb of God, there's no doubt in his mind, as to the identity of this figure.

Yes, questioning arose in the mind of John the Baptist later. But this says John the Baptist is indeed God's provision, that the faith of Abraham spoke of so many years before.

Where did God find this lamb? Oh, not in any thicket. He found the lamb in the mysterious depths of his own being. There is none other.

This is none other than the only begotten son of God, in true human nature, God's provision. So they could reflect on this. They could reflect also on the Paschal Lamb that was slain, the Paschal Lamb without blemish or spot, on the night prior to bringing Israel out of Egypt.

- [14:43] Deliverance through the shedding of blood. Protection and shelter under the shed blood. And there are many references to this in the New Testament between Christ and the Paschal Lamb.

And you remember in this very Gospel, it was the day of the preparation of the Passover, about the sixth hour. The very hour when the Paschal Lamb would be slain, it was the time when Christ was put to death.

It could remind them of the daily sacrifice. When two lambs were offered, one in the morning and one in the evening, this is what you shall offer on the altar.

Two lambs a year old by day regularly, one lamb you shall offer in the morning and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. It set before them on a daily basis the need of forgiveness and how that cannot be granted without the shedding of blood.

And death, without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission of sins. And again, it may have reminded them of the great fourth servant song in the prophecy of Isaiah, where the prophet Isaiah speaks of the level of suffering in the life of the servant of Jehovah.

- [16:08] And he speaks of us, all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way. Then he goes on to speak of how God made provision.

The Lord has laid on him, on who? On the suffering servant, the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet he opened on his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, like a sheep that before its shearers is silent.

So he opened not his mouth. And so as they heard the message, behold the Lamb of God, they could have reflected on these Old Testament truths, and now the surety and certainty that this is indeed the great sacrifice for sin.

And it is, in my view, that the message made such a huge impression on the minds of these two.

Where did they find the Messiah? They found him in the Word. And that's where you and I must find him too, in the scriptures that God has given us.

- [17:18] Now, secondly, the evidence in support of this. The proclamation had an effect. How do we know that it had an effect? Because we read, the two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

The proclamation compelled them to follow Jesus. And the language choice here is interesting, I believe. Notice what it says, they followed Jesus.

They didn't follow the preacher. But Jesus, they had been disciples of John the Baptist, but now they followed Jesus. You know, the gift of oratory can sway many people so that they will go a long way with what a gifted orator proclaims, even to the point of idolizing such a person.

But that's not how it was here. Yes, they heard the eloquent proclamation, but they followed Jesus. Jesus became the focus of their affections and not the proclaimer of the message.

And if I understand scripture or right to follow, you have to be led. The mysterious chords of the insistent call of the truth had gone around them and they were being drawn by the word.

[18:51] Well, ask yourself, has that happened to you? You can be sure that if it has, it will be tested. That's what happened to you.

You might have thought that Jesus would encourage them to follow. But note what he does. He makes them pause for reflection to question their motives.

What are you seeking? You see, some people think that by following Christ, it can save them from difficulties and trials and tribulation in life. They're seeking protection like an insurance policy from the trials of life.

But if you are here today thinking that you are going to be bitterly disappointed it is often when you begin to follow Christ that you become aware of trial and tribulation in life.

Many, says the psalmist, are the afflictions of the righteous. And you remember how Christ, how he took the disciples right into the storm on the Sea of Galilee.

[20:03] It doesn't keep them out of the storm. But what is very interesting is he goes with them into the storm and is with them in the storm in order to protect them in the storm, in order to silence the wind and the waves so that there is a calm and it may be, my friend, that it is an eternity that you will experience the fulfillment of this.

I won't be so bold as to say that you'll experience it in this life. But I know on the basis of the word of God that in the eternal realm if you are in Christ there is no doubt but that you will experience that calm and that serenity.

when you are in possession of that true rest throughout the endless ages of eternity and you go into that, let me put it, that sabbatic rest when all the waves and the winds have been put to an end.

You remember how the psalmist puts it, stardom is changed into a calm to his command and will so that the waves which raged before now quiet are and still.

When is that? Are they glad because at rest and now quiet they be so to the heaven he then brings which they desire to see.

[21:52] In the eternal realm is that most truly experienced. Some believe that in following Christ that it may lead to riches and so on but what Christ says and he dissuades people from thinking along these lines if anyone would come after me let him deny himself take up his cross daily and follow me for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life on my sake will save it.

Now some others think that by following Christ that there will be peace in their life. Well it's true that there is peace in the life of the believer and there is joy in the life of the believer because the Bible says that great peace of those who love your law nothing can make them stumble.

So the question for you and me today is just as it was addressed to these men what are you seeking? Is it just some of the privileges?

Or are we seeking to follow him whatever the cost? Because those who follow him in truth they confess their sins daily.

they trust in Jesus alone for salvation. They're not looking to anything they do for a hope of salvation. And if you are today seeking forgiveness you will find that in Christ.

[23 : 34] If you are looking for peace he will give you peace. If you are looking for cleansing he will remove your sin. He will give you a new heart.

and a right spirit within. What are you seeking? And look at the reply that these men gave.

And that's part I believe of the effect of the proclamation. They wanted to be in fellowship with Christ. And what do I base that?

Well on this. When the question was asked what are you seeking? They said Rabbi which means teacher where are you staying? And what I read into that is this. That they wanted to learn more about this Christ in his company.

There was a deep joy on their hearts and minds to Christ. You see when God blesses his truth in the life of a man or a woman or a boy or a girl he awakens a hunger and a thirst to learn more of him.

[24 : 58] And it seems to me that ought to be the focus of every believer's life. And it ought to be evidenced in our attendance on the means of grace. Whether on the Lord's day or on the week day.

because we are gathering with fellow believers to hear about Christ. I remember when early on I started following the Lord.

And that would be in the late 1960s. And there was a group of men who used to be then at communion services.

and if you could get into that company for us on those days it was like heaven on earth. There were a group of men that were from Carloway. They had been in the revival in Carloway pre-Second World War.

That was going back a long time. Pre-Second World War. And to be in their fellowship for me at that point in my life it was like heaven on earth.

[26 : 05] Just to hear them discuss the truth and their experiences in relation to the truth. And we are told in the scriptures in the book of the Acts of the Apostles of the early church they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship.

They were desirous of learning more of the teaching of scripture. And it seems to me where the church is weak in the world.

It is through ignorance of the truth that leaves the church weak in the world. There is nothing, it doesn't matter how attractive it might be to the human mind, there is nothing that you can put in place or as a substitute for the word of God and the exposition of the word of God for growing in grace and in knowledge.

it is his own word that God promised to bless in the world and that is why it is, it is, it is, it ought to weigh upon all our minds and hearts that we are there when services are held within old communities.

you see, this is the food that God has promised to bless, his own word, not just that it goes, that our intellect grasps the truth, but that it goes down and deep into our emotions and into the very core of our being.

[27 : 52] because that is surely what will promote obedience in our lives. Well, this is what was true of them.

And the Bible tells us that where that is true, the person of whom this is true is like the person who builds on the rock. Everyone who hears says, Jesus, these words are mine, and does them, not just who hears them, but who does them, will be like a wise man who builds his house on the rock.

We can hear and not do, and be like the foolish man who builds on the sand. These men were desirous, have been under the tuition of Christ.

They were desirous of being in the fellowship of Christ. And notice what John says, they stayed with him that day for it was about the tenth hour.

And you notice how John lays emphasis in his gospel later on on the necessity of abiding. They stayed with him, they abode with him, it's the same word, abide in me.

[29:07] And you find how often in his gospel John puts emphasis on the need of abiding in Christ. Christ. Well, someone once put it like this, not a brief glance I beg, a passing word, but as thou dwellest with thy disciples, Lord, familiar, condescending, patient, free, come not to sojourn, but abide with me.

Oh, is that your own prayer, and mine today? Abide with me. That's, no, how can you do that?

Well, one way of doing it is by spending time in prayer with him. Abiding with him. In spending time reflecting on the truth, abiding with him.

Well, Andrew, and John, if it was John, were taught at this time. They were taught by Christ, and we all need this teaching.

No matter how long we've gone on the path, or how short we've been on the path, we need to be taught, and we need to be spending time in prayer, if we are to be strong in the faith.

[30:41] Well, they were desirous of being in his fellowship. And then that third point, their profession. Their profession followed on from the proclamation made, and their ensuing time of fellowship, we have found the Messiah.

What do we understand? By the word Messiah, of whom does it speak? well, the word literally means an anointed one. Someone who has been set apart for a particular office through the anointing of oil.

And the oil is symbolic, it represented prosperity, plenty, and abundance. The oil was a symbol of riches, and of plenty.

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of plenty and abundance. It's the promise of God to Israel in the Old Testament.

Oil represented power, ability, and efficiency. You remember David mourned the fact that Saul's shield was no longer rubbed with oil, the shield of Saul not anointed with oil.

[31:56] But he rejoiced that oil had been poured on him. Thou with fresh oil anoint me also shot. Oil was again a source of light in the tabernacle, in the lampstand, served as a base for some foods, as an enriching ingredient.

It represented health and beauty. It was a prescribed element in sacrifice. It represented a source of joy and gladness. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows.

Oil represented the best of every aspect of life. In a real sense, it represented life full, rich, strong, vibrant, active, useful, and beneficial.

It represented the incomparable good, the clean, the pure, the pleasing, and the enabling power of God. David was anointed with oil. The oil is a symbol in the Bible of the Holy Spirit.

And David's son, according to the flesh, has been anointed. Your God, therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.

[33:06] God's and so, the word Messiah literally means God's anointed one. Who is God's anointed one?

One who is God and man. And the book of Psalms particularly speaks of this person. We sung about it in the first psalm today.

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, the rulers, to counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed.

And it is in the book of Psalms in particular that we have it set before us as God's anointed one. Psalm 110 speaks of the sovereign reigning power of God's anointed one as he takes his seat at God's right hand.

And so it seems to me that particularly it focuses upon the office of kingship. The parable of the tenants recorded in the synoptic gospels and everything in that parable conspires to emphasize the greatness of the rejected Messiah.

[34 : 36] Remember, he was the last to be sent. He is a son and not a servant. He is the beloved son, he is the only son, and he is the heir. And it's because of his greatness that the consequences of rejecting and murdering him are so momentous.

And you remember when Jesus posed the question, when therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants? And you remember the kind of indifferent reply.

Oh, he will put those righteous to miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits of their seasons. And the answer assumes that nothing more radical would follow than a change of administration.

And Caiaphas and his fellow rulers, because he was the high priest, then would be destroyed and other rulers would be put in their place. Things go on as before. And you remember in the eyes of Christ how that answer came so far, far short.

Therefore I tell you, says Jesus, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, given to a people producing its fruits. And it's not just the greatness of the office that he occupies as Messiah.

[36 : 01] And rejected in that office that is so, so solemn. But it's the fact that his Messiahship is based on his sonship.

He was a son before he was sent. And you remember how in the parable they will respect my son. Oh, they didn't.

So, ask yourself the question, what place does the son, God's anointed, have in your life today? Is this king who has been anointed without measure, does he reign over your heart?

God's heart? And whatever the means God has used to awaken a desire in your life, whether it was through the preaching of a service or through someone praying with you or through someone speaking a word in season, yes, you look perhaps with affection upon that person, but they didn't save you.

you have to trace your new birth to its super human origin. It's the Lord who saved you and the Lord alone who worked the wondrous miracle of regeneration.

[37 : 33] You were dead in the trespasses and sins. If you have found Christ, praise him. If you have found Christ, don't part with him.

If you have found Christ, tell others about him. And you see, that is it from a human perspective. We have found the Messiah, but he found you first.

He passed by that way in order that they would find him. And that brings to the final point, and the time is gone, the enthusiasm to share.

We have found the Messiah. You know, it's difficult to pick up the level of excitement, excitement, the sheer exuberance, the absolute delight that is couched in these few words.

We have found the Messiah. Here is a man who was amongst the first four of the disciples. He's not as, he's not as, as, doesn't have such a high profile as, as the first three.

[38 : 40] But in the scriptures, it's interesting to note, this is how he is most frequently depicted in bringing people to Christ.

He was the one who took the boy to Jesus before the five thousand were fed. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brothers, there is a boy here who has five barley loaves, two fish.

Shortly before Christ was crucified, along with Philip, he brought certain Greeks to Christ. It's almost as if he was behind the scenes.

And even although he was behind the scenes, there was a zeal in his heart and in his life that others would share in what he himself had tasted of.

And so, John tells us here, he brought him to Jesus. He brought Peter to Jesus. It was the personal witness of Andrew that was the means God used of Peter coming to Christ.

[39 : 51] Now, we must never think that personal witness supplants or substitutes the truth. But God uses it and God blesses it.

God blesses it and it is to me, seems to me, a wonderful testimony and tribute to this man. He brought him to Jesus.

Oh, man, do you remember what, what, what, oh, Father Ford used to say, if but one soul, from Anworth, where in Emmanuel's land, my heaven would be two heavens.

Such was the value that he placed on the salvation of a soul. Andrew brought him to Jesus. Where then did they find the Messiah?

in the word. The evidence of support of this, they followed Jesus. They were desirers of fellowship and communion with Christ.

[41 : 01] The profession they made, we have found the Messiah. We have found God's anointed and the enthusiasm to share, bringing others to Christ.

Oh, may God grant that we today be not strangers to the enthusiasm of their profession, or to the veracity of their profession, or to their desire to spend time on fellowship with Christ and with Christ alone as those who are fed by the word of God.

Let us pray. Amen. Amen.