

## **“Where Are You Staying”**

by Greg Smith-Young (Elora-Bethany Pastoral Charge)  
*First in a series on “Come and See”s in the Gospel of John*

John 1:35-39

September 9, 2018

---

Read the Scripture by clicking [here](#).

---

They were following John the Baptizer. John was a star, a spiritual celebrity! That did not matter to John. John pointed them at Jesus. They left John and followed.

Jesus turned and asked them, “What are you looking for?”

“Where are you staying?” they asked.

“Come and see.”

“Come and see.” Jesus invites you and me, us in community together, and many others.  
“Come and see where I am staying.”

Being people of Jesus means going where he is going, and staying where he is staying.

Hear that again. Being people of Jesus is about going where he is going, and staying where he is staying.

To get this, we need to understand a couple things. We need to see that Jesus is here. Then, we need to see that, when we are with him, Jesus does something to us.

### II

Jesus is here.

I hear the stories of Jesus, like this one today. How amazing it must have been to actually walk with Jesus, and talk with Jesus. To hear his voice with your own ears. To see him in action with your own eyes. To put your feet in the prints his sandals were leaving. What a privilege they had, to have Jesus with them.

The truth is, Jesus is as much with us now. In fact, even more.

We started our worship today hearing the first lines of John’s Gospel.

*In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God. . . .*

*And the Word became flesh  
and made his home among us.<sup>1</sup>*

God came to us in Jesus.

Here's the thing: Jesus has not left! He is still with us.

Jesus is of one being with God whom he called Father.<sup>2</sup> Together with the Holy Spirit, Jesus and his Father are God with us. Everywhere God is, Jesus is. That's everywhere!

Jesus manifests himself, shows himself, expresses himself, and gives us particular ways to experience him.

For instance, when we pray, the Holy Spirit brings us into that intimate relationship of the Father and the Son. In prayer, Jesus is with us!

When we are gathered together, even just two or three, he is with us. So much so that, in the Bible, our community together is called his Body. He is with us!

When we enter into the Bible . . . when we hear and wrestle with it in community together, and in community with others, and in community through the centuries, we learn what it is like to be with him, because all of Scripture is about him. Jesus is with us!

When we come together to his Table, Jesus hosts us. He gives himself. He is with us!

Through these ways and other ways, Jesus gives us his real presence. He wants to be with us.<sup>3</sup>

#### IV

When we are with him, Jesus does something to us. That's the second thing we need to understand. Jesus changes us. We learn Jesus.

We think of learning facts, information and wisdom, skills, abilities and understanding. But in the Bible reading, when they asked Jesus where he was staying, then went and stayed with him, they had a different way of learning in mind.

When someone followed a rabbi, they didn't just go to the rabbi's classroom for lessons, and then go away to do homework. They went with their rabbi. Everywhere. They devoured their rabbi's every word. They stayed at their rabbi's house. They saw how their rabbi ate,

---

<sup>1</sup> John 1:1,14.

<sup>2</sup> From the Nicene Creed.

<sup>3</sup> David Fitch describes these and more in Faithful Presence: Seven Disciplines that Shape the Church for Mission (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2016).

walked, talked with people, prayed, cooked food, wore clothes. Today it would be how my rabbi drives, brushes their teeth, texts and Tweets.

Teaching was about shaping and forming. Your rabbi gave you a way of life. You became like your rabbi.

When they asked Jesus to be their rabbi, that's what they were expecting. That's what Jesus gave them. They went with Jesus, stayed with him, to be shaped like him.

## V

Jesus is here now. He is inviting you to be with him, so he can shape you like him.

"Come and see," Jesus says. Come and see what he sees. Learn to do what he does. Begin to recognize where he is at work, and then work with him.

I gave some ways he is with us: in prayer, in the church community, in the Bible, at his supper table. There are others too. Not just inside his church, or in "churchy" activities. This is like our Rabbi Jesus' home and classroom. Here, he is teaching us how to be with him. When the bell rings and the blessing is sung, we leave with our Rabbi Jesus. We keep learning to be with him. We keep being shaped and formed by him, in all those places where Jesus is present.

When you leave, Jesus is rushing out ahead of you. "Come and see," he's saying.

We keep on asking, "Jesus, where are you staying." He keeps on inviting, "Come and see!"

## VI

I got a picture in my mind of a park bench. (That explains the front of your bulletin.) A park bench is a great place to come, sit, talk or be quiet, and look at things together.

Think of all those places where you will be this week. Imagine in each of those places has a park bench. It doesn't have to be in a park. It can be anywhere, outside or inside. You're imagining! Anywhere you are going to be, sits a bench.

I picture Jesus, already sitting on that bench. Inviting you to sit beside him. "Come over here, sit down. And see!" "See what I see," says Jesus. "See who I am seeing," says Jesus. "See them how I am seeing them." "See this place as I am seeing this place."

In here together, we start learning to see with Jesus. So we are better at seeing with Jesus out there. Everywhere. On those benches. Beside him.

Jesus is your Rabbi, so he gets to decide where he will take you. What he will show you. Even who else you will be sitting beside.

Jesus might take you to beautiful places, so you can see delight with him. “Come and see.”

He might take you to places of disaster and destruction, so you can see through tears with him. “Come and see.”

He might show you things from perspectives that are new to you. “Come and see.”

Imagine the two of you – you and Jesus – sitting beside Albert Einstein,<sup>4</sup> as Jesus shows you wonders and perplexities of science and technology. “Come and see.”

Or Northrop Frye,<sup>5</sup> to see truth in literature, art or music. “Come and see.”

Or a couple holding each other,<sup>6</sup> to see love in relationships of many forms and families. “Come and see.”

It might just be Jesus himself. You might not recognize him. He’s lying down, covered with a raggy blanket. Feet bare and torn, though at first you don’t see the nail holes through them. He smells of neglect. He is ignored, dismissed, taunted, condemned, feared. He is among the least of this world.<sup>7</sup>

“Come and see.”

See where Jesus is staying.

And learn to see with him.

---

<sup>4</sup> From the Albert Einstein Memorial at the National Academy of Sciences, in Washington DC.

<sup>5</sup> At Victoria College, part of the University of Toronto.

<sup>6</sup> A statue on a bench in Decatur, Georgia.

<sup>7</sup> By sculptor Timothy Schmalz. Copies have been installed in many locations. The one I showed was outside Christchurch Cathedral in Dublin, Ireland.