

Trinity 1 - Discipleship 2

18/06/17 08:00

This is the second week of our sermon series on Discipleship. If you were at the 9.30 or Evensong service last week, you would have heard me introduce this series, and inviting us to think through our own discipleship of Christ, and how we grow that so that we can help others in their walk with Christ, and see Christ in the world. Last week we particularly reflected on how Jesus invites the disciple to get out of the boat of their lives and walk with him, even when that seems seemingly impossible.

Today we hear the words of Jesus, echoed late in the same reading by Philip, "Come and see". The call to come and see lies at the start of the process of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ, and at the heart of the life of the disciple. In other Gospels Jesus is repeatedly heard to urge his followers to "Follow me". But John doesn't record Jesus saying that. Instead "Come and see" is his equivalent. Come and see is an invitation to make a response which makes us witnesses to the presence of Jesus.

The order of the words is important. When many of us think of discipleship, we tend to think that we must believe in Jesus and know who he is (see) before we can follow (come). But here the order is reversed. First we follow Jesus along the path of discipleship, and then on the way, we come more fully to understand and to see who he is. We are invited to go on a journey with Jesus, in order to discover who Jesus is. So we are reminded that following Christ really is a faith - it is stepping out not fully knowing who this Christ is, or what might happen on the journey.

The invitation to come and see is for those who don't know Jesus, and those who have been following him for many years. So we are reminded that as a church our great calling is to nurture one another's faith, so that we might be confident to live Christ like lives in a world that does not know Jesus.

As disciples of Christ, when we hear Jesus words to come and see, we should feel invited once again to come to Jesus, in order that our faith might grow. At this communion table each week those words Come and See are effectively uttered. Come to this table to meet the living Christ in bread and wine. It is at this table that we will See Christ, and be transformed by him for our discipleship in the world. Might we learn each day to come and see Jesus?

But the call to come is so that we might learn to see of God in the world. For the work and wonders of God is not our private property as the Church. God is at work in the world, and everywhere in the world. We understand that from the beginning of scripture when God creates all that is - and it was good. So come and see asks of us to come to God that we might see where God is in the world. Where do we notice God at work? He will be there in all places - even though many do not know him, and we might not be used to seeing him. The disciple is the one who learns to see God in the world, and name him.

But finally, we are invited to come and see, that we might recognise in each other something of the face of Christ. We're here to understand that without each other we are all impoverished, even though we may sometimes find each other something of a pain and an irritation. In a world of deep pain and confusion, the message of the Christian Church that God loves each one of us, and therefore we need one another, has not been more needed. When we look into the face of the stranger, we need to see Christ. For he is there. When we meet the person that really annoys us, or the person we try to avoid, Christ is there. Think of the end of each of Paul's letters - he usually has a list of names of disciples. The unsung heroes and heroines of his mission, the people who travelled with him, who gave him a bed for the night; the people he kept up until the

early hours talking; the people he borrowed clothes from. Christ was in each one of them. We believe God call every one of us - not just those of here in church who have responded to his call. We are to be a witnessing community encouraging others to see the Christ who lives in them.

In seeing Jesus, the disciples asked where he was staying. "Come and see" was his response. Might we once again hear those words, and come to our Lord to see who he is and what he has in store for us? Like Philip, having come to Jesus and seen, might we then be the ones who speak to the Nathaniel's of our time, who doubt of anything good can come out of the Nazareth's of our place - might we pass on the message of the follower of Christ. "Come and see"