

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jan 18th 2015

The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus.

Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, “What are you looking for?”

They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?”

He said to them, “Come and you will see.”

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they staying with him that day.

When people begin the study of biblical Greek, the first text from the Bible they read is usually the Gospel of John. The sample printed above from today’s reading from John tells you why: the Fourth Gospel is written in very simple Greek. And the sentences are simple and straightforward in structure.

“What are you looking for?”

“Where are you staying?”

“Come and see.”

What could be simpler? The exchange is apparently so ordinary, you may wonder why John included it—especially when these words are the first ones we readers hear Jesus speak in this gospel. Well, read the exchange once again, slowly. What sounds at first like a person annoyed by apparent stalkers, and then a request for a street address, and then a surprising but matter-of-fact invitation is really a quite profound exchange. This usually escapes the first-time reader; but once one has read the whole gospel, one comes to realize that John’s simple language is much deeper than it sounds at first.

“What are you looking for?” Is actually one of the deepest question one person can ask another. To paraphrase, “What—really, down deep—are you seeking as your life your life? Power? Pleasure? Wealth? Relief from loneliness? Relief from pain, hunger? Knowledge? Truth? Love?” How do you answer this question right now?

“Where are you staying?”--when asked by persons who are curious about or attracted to Jesus—is a question that is really asking, “Where do you come from, Master? What is the source of your life?”

Who—really, down deep—are you?” For the word translated “stay,” menein, means something deeper than what is your address. In the Gospel of John this word refer to a person’s source of being and ultimate purpose.

And Jesus’ response--“Come and see” –really, when you know the whole story, means, “Follow me as a committed disciple and you will come to really see (understand and believe) in a whole new way.”

This is a great time, at this point in the Church Year, to pick the Gospel of John and come and see who Jesus is and from where he derives his existence. It really will be an awakening from blindness, a way of seeing that leads to a whole new way of being. Try it.

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