

## **Sermon on John chapter 1 verses 35-42**

**17<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

Can you recall the first time you heard the name 'Jesus'? For many, including myself, it is difficult to pin down, but I know it must have been at about the age of 5; which was when the family moved from London to Middlesex. I have clear memories of the move, particularly the responsibility I was given to look after my train set; at that time my most precious possession. I was a tomboy!

We had moved to an area where a new, small, daughter church was being built to cater for members of a growing congregation at one end of a large diocese. I remember the foundations being laid; the building of the structure and its dedication to St Martin. This was where I grew up; attending church services, social events and then helping with Sunday School and learning to play the organ. And this was where I found my faith and understood who Jesus really was: not the pictures in a children's Bible but Jesus the Saviour.

When was the first time you understood who Jesus was? This may be easy for some but much more difficult for others. In John's gospel we can follow the ways in which the disciples came to know Jesus through the witness of John the Baptist. (It is a bit confusing that the name 'John' seems to be so popular at this time.)

In the gospel, we read of John the Baptist's own testimony and in today's reading we see how the community of faith; in other words, the church, began.

But, earlier, in verses 35-42, we learn of the very beginning of John's ministry. We read how John the Baptist was with two of his followers when Jesus passed by. John the Baptist explained to them that Jesus was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. Jesus asked them, "What do you want?" They replied, "Rabbi or Teacher, where are you staying?" Not exactly an answer to the question. Jesus' reply was, "Come and you will see." An invitation to find out more. So Andrew and the other disciple went to where he was staying and spent that day with him.

Jesus didn't ask 'Who are you looking for, he asked a broader question, "What do you want ." He didn't force himself on them but left them to make their own decisions.

After they had spent time with Jesus, an afternoon and an evening, Andrew goes off to find his brother, Simon. It is apparent that he knows exactly who he has been talking to because he says to Simon, "We have found the Messiah." He uses the Hebrew word, which can be translated as the Greek, 'Christ', which means the anointed one.

When Jesus meets Andrew's brother he looks at him and says, "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas, which means the same in Aramaic as the Greek word, Petros, which is

translated as Peter and means ‘a rock’.” This may seem a bit complicated.

We are reading this account in John’s gospel and John wrote this for both Jews and Gentiles. So, in this account we read translations of words from the Aramaic or Hebrew language into Greek so that it might be more widely read.

The word “anointed” can mean “Christ” or “King,” so Jesus Messiah means the same as “Jesus Christ” and “King Jesus.”

It’s not as complicated as it can sometimes appear! (Though there are two many John’s!)

After this first meeting with Jesus, the brothers had many more meetings with him. They were called from their fishing to follow him, and that is what they did. In the future, Jesus would meet the rest of the disciples in the home of Simon Peter and Andrew and also heal there (Mark 1:29).

As we continue to read the gospels, we can see how these first two, Andrew and Simon Peter, grew into faithful disciples and leaders. Indeed, Simon Peter was the first disciple to call Jesus, “Messiah” and became ‘the rock’ upon which the church was founded. Not bad for a simple fisherman!

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