

**JOHN 1: 29-42**  
**THIS IS THE ONE!**

At first blush

we could be excused if we thought that the pictured painted for us  
seems so ordinary.

We could be forgiven if with our own mind's eye

we looked upon this text and saw John the Baptist and his disciples  
standing on the street corner

– or perhaps sitting in the food court in the mall –

and John, seeing Jesus,

and declaring

“Look! Over there!

That's him!

That is the one we have been waiting for.

This is the one!”

Except we know that John is never ordinary.

John is always a little more oblique.

While Luke uses angels and shepherds to tell the story of Jesus birth,

and Matthew uses wisemen following a star,

John uses a great swirling poem

about light and life.

And so we might see this reading from John's gospel this morning

as a story of identification – and to some extent it is –

this reading is also the account of Jesus' baptism in the Gospel of John.

Listen again to these words:

*This is he of whom I said,*

*"After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me*

*because he was before me.'*

*I myself did not know him;*

*but I came baptizing with water for this reason,*

*that he might be revealed to Israel."*

*And John testified,*

*"I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove,*

*and it remained on him.*

*I myself did not know him,  
but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me,  
"He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain  
is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'  
And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."*

The baptism of Jesus  
and the identification of Jesus as God's anointed  
is not given in narrative form in John's Gospel  
with heavenly voices declaring Jesus as Lord,  
but rather the story is relayed by the Baptist  
who identifies Jesus by the fulfilment of God's promise:  
*but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me,  
"He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain  
is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'*

Throughout this story there is the repetition of the word "remain";  
this detail is obscured in our English translations  
because the alternate between the words "remain" and "stay",  
but in the original Greek texts it is the root verb *meinen*  
and its derivatives.

This would have stood out to the original readers of the New Testament.

- ! "John says: I saw the Spirit descending and staying him."
- ! God's promise *"He on whom you see the Spirit descend and stay  
is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'*
- ! The two disciples respond to Jesus question "what are you looking for?"  
with the words: Teacher, where are you staying?
- ! And finally the Gospel says The disciples came and saw where he was staying,  
and they stayed with him that day.

The implication throughout this text  
is that none of these relationship are fleeting ones.

That in Jesus Christ

God's love for the creation is manifest.

That the promised one who would lead the people  
is not just God-inspired

as a one time event,

but that God is present with Jesus as Jesus moves forward in ministry;

and the disciples of Jesus,  
those who seek to follow him  
and learn from him what it means to be children of God  
are connected to Jesus;  
they stay with him  
and learn his teachings.

And in response to all this,  
they in turn go out to testify about the person of Jesus.

The passage today begins with John's testimony:

*"Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

and ends with Andrew going out to share the good news about Jesus  
with Simon Peter his brother:

Peter declares *"We have found the Messiah"*

*And He brought Simon to Jesus.*

In Jesus Christ

we have been invited into a relationship with our God  
that will last.

Christ is God's promise that he will stay with us;  
that God will stick with God's people  
and redeem them;

Will re-establish a relationship with them

– will re-establish a relationship with us.

And we will be changed!

God's promise that God will stay with us

is the promise that God will do whatever it take to maintain this relationship,  
even going so far as to send Jesus - God's only Son -  
and to sacrifice his perfect life upon the cross for us.

And face with such overwhelming love,  
we cannot help but be changed.

As Jesus taught those first disciples about the meaning of God's love  
they heard something in his teaching  
that spoke to their very souls.

They heard something so profound

that Andrew immediately went out to find his brother

and said to him: "This is something you have to hear."

Each of us have heard that same thing.

And each of us has been touched to the very core of our being.  
In our loneliness God whispers I am here.  
In our grief God weeps beside us.  
In our despair, God sends a thin ray of hope.

And as we have received this great gift of hope  
    so we are called to share it with the world.  
Like Peter we are called to share God's good news  
    and to invite others to experience it for themselves.

May others see in us the joy and the love of God  
    filling our lives and enlivening our souls  
    that their souls may yearn for what they see in us.

The good news for us this day,  
    is that God has come into our world  
    in Jesus of Nazareth,  
And that God will stay with us forever.