

*John 1:35–44 (CEB)*

<sup>35</sup>The next day John was standing again with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup>When he saw Jesus walking along he said, “Look! The Lamb of God!” <sup>37</sup>The two disciples heard what he said, and they followed Jesus.

<sup>38</sup>When Jesus turned and saw them following, he asked, “What are you looking for?”

They said, “Rabbi (which is translated *Teacher*), where are you staying?”

<sup>39</sup>He replied, “Come and see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon.

<sup>40</sup>One of the two disciples who heard what John said and followed Jesus was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. <sup>41</sup>He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated *Christ*). <sup>42</sup>He led him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which is translated *Peter*).

<sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus wanted to go into Galilee, and he found Philip. Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” <sup>44</sup>Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter.

*We are a family. It is that simple. It is that profound.*

We are one church and we are one part of one body, Christ’s body. We are one fellowship formed and sustained by the Holy Spirit. God calls us to the relational life; a life lived with others in love and grace. That is who we are and who we are called to be. From the very first days of Jesus’ public ministry we see him and his first followers reaching out to others, telling them what God was doing in and through Jesus and inviting them to join them in changing their hearts and lives. They would walk a new path . . . together.

### *The Lamb of God*

It was about 27AD, and a man named John had gone out to the Jordan River preaching the coming of God’s kingdom and urging his fellow Jews to come out to the river to be washed in the river’s water, symbolizing their repentance of sin and their cleansing of its stain. Since the time of Joshua, more than a millennium before, the Jordan River had been a potent symbol of Israel’s freedom and the people’s allegiance to the LORD God.

Not surprisingly, John attracted a lot of attention. So much so that the High Priest sent some representatives out to see him. John willingly told them that he was neither the Messiah nor Elijah. Rather, he was the one spoken of in the scroll of Isaiah, the one who would prepare the way for the coming of the Lord (see Isaiah 40:1-11). John told his questioners that he was not even worthy to tie the sandals of the one who was coming. The next day, John saw Jesus of Nazareth coming to him. John stopped what he was doing, pointed directly at Jesus and said for all to hear:

“Behold. The Lamb of God,<sup>1</sup> who takes away the sin<sup>2</sup> of the world.”

How did John know that Jesus, a relative of John’s, was the “Lamb of God”?

Apparently, John had baptized Jesus in the Jordan River some time earlier; for John went on to tell the crowd what he saw when he had baptized Jesus. John told them that this man, Jesus, was the reason John had called people out to the river. John had seen

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<sup>1</sup>The phrase, “Lamb of God” is found only twice in the Bible, here and in 1:36. John probably intends it to refer to both the sacrificial lamb and the triumphant lamb depicted in Revelation 5.

<sup>2</sup>Notice that “sin” here is singular not plural. “Sin” here is not just the individual transgressions nor even their sum, but the dark beast that imprisons us, holding us in bondage.

the Spirit descend on Jesus in the Jordan River and remain on him. Further, God had revealed to John that Jesus was “God’s Chosen One.”

### *Jesus calls his first disciples*

To this point in John’s gospel we’ve heard the testimony of John, the gospel writer, that Jesus is the Word-in-the-flesh, the creator and source of life. We’ve also heard John the Baptizer proclaim Jesus to be the Lamb of God. We’ve even met a few of the Jewish authorities who were sent to check out the work of the wild John. But now, we begin to meet some people with whom we can really identify. Ordinary people, like you and me.

Right there at the Jordan River, Jesus is gathering disciples. “Come and see” he says. Andrew and the other disciple (probably John the gospel writer) may think they are looking for Jesus, but, in truth, it is Jesus who finds them. At this point the pair know only what they have learned from John the Baptizer. But they are drawn to this man from Galilee and they go to spend the rest of the day with him.

What’s the first thing Andrew does after meeting Jesus? He runs to get his brother, Simon, excitedly telling him that they have found the Messiah. It is “go and get” so Simon can “come and see” for himself. Imagine if all of us were as excited about sharing the Good News as Andrew was.

The next day, Jesus heads for Galilee, presumably with Andrew, Simon Peter, and the other disciple alongside him. Jesus finds a man named Philip and tells him too, “Follow me.” Philip’s hometown was that of Andrew and Peter, Bethsaida, though Peter was living in Capernaum at the time of Jesus’ public ministry. Philip then approaches a friend, Nathanael, telling him that he’s found the one long promised in the Hebrew Scriptures. Of course, when Philip says that “the one” is from Nazareth, Nathanael scoffs. How could the great Messiah come from a dump like Nazareth?! But Andrew persists, telling Nathanael to just “come and see.” And when Nathanael meets Jesus, he proclaims Jesus as Messiah and Son of God, though he doesn’t grasp Jesus’ full identity. Still, Nathanael enthusiastically responds to the invitation.

### *A family is born*

Just this brief glance into those first days reveals that the Good News about Jesus is to be told and retold, shared with all who will listen. And those disciples were the beginning of the family that we are part of today. It is a family of Jesus-folk that is to grow without ceasing. Perhaps inviting others to join us is as simple as Andrew’s “come and see.” Andrew doesn’t pass out tracts or stand on street corners. He doesn’t grab folks by the collar and drag them into some place they’d rather not be. Instead, he simply tells his brother what Jesus told him, “Come and see.” For his part, Philip is confident that Nathanael’s encounter with Jesus will be as profound and life-changing as his own. Just a simple “come and see.” So we invite and we greet and we embrace, as we welcome all to be a part of this family of faith.

## **Questions for Discussion and Reflection**

1. This week’s study focuses on Jesus’ call of his first disciples. These are ordinary men, Galilean Jews of no particular note. Yet they all find themselves drawn to this man from Nazareth. One, Nathanael, proclaims “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.” Likewise, Andrew has told his brother, Simon Peter, that Jesus is the Messiah.
  - a. Andrew and John, presumably, are the first two disciples. They hear John the baptizer’s own testimony about Jesus’ identity. But what is it about Jesus that draws them to him and makes them stay? Why do you think Andrew is so willing to accept Jesus as Israel’s Messiah?
  - b. Why are these men ready to drop everything and follow Jesus?

2. Were you ever invited to meet Jesus, to “come and see” for yourself? If so, how would you describe your experience? How did you first get to St. Andrew? Were you invited? How did you feel when you were invited? Have you ever invited someone to come with you to St. Andrew? You might share some of the inviting stories. What are some of the various ways we invite? How could we all become better inviters?

## Daily Bible Readings

*This week: Spreading the word*

**Monday, Isaiah 2:2-4** Out of Jerusalem will come the word of the Lord.

**Tuesday, Isaiah 42:5-6 & 49:6** Israel (the people of God) is to be the light to the world.

**Wednesday, Matthew 28:16-20** Jesus gives his disciples the Great Commission.

**Thursday, Acts 2** The Day of Pentecost and the growth of the first church.

**Friday, Acts 10** The conversion of Cornelius, a Roman Centurion; Paul invites Gentiles into the family of God

**Saturday, Ephesians 5:6-20** We are children of the light and we are to live accordingly.

## Scott Engle’s Weekday Bible Classes

Join us whenever you can. Each week’s lesson stands on its own.

This is very “drop-in.” Bring something to eat if you like. Bring a study Bible.

On occasion Scott has to cancel class, so if you are coming for the first time, you can check [www.scottengle.org](http://www.scottengle.org) to make sure the class is meeting.

### **Monday Evening Class**

We have just begun a study of Paul’s letter, 1 Thessalonians.

Meets from 7:00 to 8:15 in Piro Hall

### **Tuesday Lunchtime Class**

We have just begun the story of Esther.

Meets from 11:45 to 1:00 in Piro Hall

## Scott’s 10:50 Sunday Class in Festival Hall

This is a large, lecture-oriented class open to all ages.

**Beginning April 30: *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The Kings of Israel***