

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“FOLLOWING JESUS”

For individual study or group discussion

It has been said that the first ninety seconds of a speech are often the most important, with the first twenty-five words being crucial. A speaker may have thirty minutes to keep an audience engaged, but only a minute and a half to capture their attention. In John 1:35-42, John the Baptist quickly captures the attention of his listeners by succinctly stating, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” With those four words, the Baptist encapsulates his ministry. By directing his two disciples away from himself and toward Jesus, the Baptist teaches us that **following Jesus** begins with seeing him rightly, which then leads to a life radically changed by his call.

Followers of Jesus are those who are *beholding the Lamb*. (vv. 35-37)

In verse 36, John the Baptist restates what he declared earlier in verse 29: “Behold, the Lamb of God!” But there are subtle differences according to theologian Edward Klink: “First, in v. 29, the Baptist’s announcement was before the public of Israel, but here the announcement is before John’s own disciples. Second, in v. 29 the Baptist saw Jesus ‘coming toward him’ but here the Baptist saw Jesus ‘as he walked by.’ Jesus was now acting on his own; he had begun his ministry. Prophecy and promise now wore flesh.”¹

- The concept of seeing is a central theme in the Gospel of John. Reread today’s passage. How many different words for “seeing” are present in the text? Beyond physical sight, what do the “seeing” words seem to mean in this passage?

Followers of Jesus are those who are *beckoned by Jesus*. (vv. 38-39)

The first words Jesus speaks in the Gospel of John are “What are you seeking?” Instead of answering, the disciples respond to Jesus’ question with a question, “Rabbi, where are you staying?” Their question demonstrates their desire to be with him and spend time with him. Jesus beckons them to “Come and you will see.” Rather than give them the answers they are looking for, Jesus bids them to come and find the answers for themselves.

- Read Jeremiah 29:13. What does wholehearted seeking look like in your own life? In what ways might Jesus be inviting you to move from simply asking questions about him to spending time with him?

Followers of Jesus are those who are *brought to Jesus*. (vv. 40-42a)

In verses 40-42a, we are introduced to “Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother” who eagerly declares, “We have found the Messiah!” By the time John pens his gospel for the nascent Christian church, both Christians and non-Christians alike would have been more familiar with Peter than Andrew. Despite being relegated to the historical shadow of his more spirited brother, the Gospel of John reveals Andrew quietly bringing others to Jesus. (cf. John 6:8-9; 12:22)

- The term “Messiah” is a transliteration of a Hebrew word *mashiach* meaning, “anointed one.” F. F. Bruce writes, “While the messianic expectation at the outset of the Christian era took a predominantly royal form, in actual fulfillment Jesus proved himself to be Messiah par excellence in all three roles: prophet, priest, and king.”² Read 1 Samuel 16:6, Leviticus 4:3, and Psalm 105:15. Discuss how the roles of prophet, priest, and king in these passages point to Christ as the Messiah.

Followers of Jesus are those who are *bestowed with new identity*. (v. 42b)

In the OT, the giving of a new name often marked a decisive act of God, signaling transformation (e.g., Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel). Likewise, Jesus’ renaming of Simon signifies a gracious redefinition of identity. Jesus renames Simon “Cephas” according to what he will become by God’s grace. (cf. Matthew 16:18; Galatians 2:9)

- Those who follow Jesus receive their identity from him. How then should we live? See 2 Corinthians 5:17-19; Romans 6:5-11; Ephesians 2:10; Galatians 2:20; and Colossians 3:1-3.

DATE: January 11, 2026

SPEAKER: Brian/Frank

SERIES: The Gospel of John

PASSAGE: John 1:35-42

Family Dinner Table

The Invisible Gorilla

In 1999 a famous psychology experiment took place at Harvard University. Conducted by Daniel Simons and Christopher Chabris, a video was made of a group of six people divided into two teams (designated by black shirts and white shirts) throwing a ball from one teammate to another. Participants were told to watch the video and count how many times the ball was thrown by the white shirts as the two teams moved around the room. Surprisingly, at the end of the experiment, the scientists asked the question: “Did you see the gorilla?” More than half of the observers did not see it.³

Jesus’ question, “What are you seeking?” is probing because what we seek determines what we see. Like the famous experiment where people counting ball passes miss the gorilla in the room, our focus can blind us to really seeing Jesus. When we fix our eyes on lesser, even good, things, we may overlook the pearl of great price right before us.

- In *The Invisible Gorilla* experiment, people miss what is plainly in front of them because their attention is fixed on something else. What “good things” might distract you from truly seeing and following Jesus?
- Jesus does not turn away those who seek imperfectly, but he does lovingly redirect them. In light of v. 38, how might Jesus’ question be an invitation not to shame, but to reorient our hearts toward seeking him fully?
- Watch *The Invisible Gorilla* video [here](#).

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

RUF at Carson Newman,
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PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

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¹ Klink, Edward W. *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. 2016. Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan. 144, 148

² Bruce, F. F. *The Gospel & Epistles of John*. 2004. Grand Rapids, MI. William B. Eerdmans Publishing. 57

³ NPR. (2010, May 19). *Bet You Didn’t Notice “The Invisible Gorilla.”* NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2010/05/19/126977945/bet-you-didnt-notice-the-invisible-gorilla>