**“Come and See”**

Psalm 40:1-11

Isaiah 49:1-7

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

John 1:29-42a

Epiphany 2

“That second paragraph of the Gospel reading: “The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked by and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God!’ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, ‘What are you seeking?’ And they said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which means Teacher), “where are You staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and you will see.’ So they came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andres, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

When I was roughly 35 years old, my pastor (Pastor William Parsons who some of you may know or have met) taught me that **while God was** **everywhere**, **He was not everywhere** **the same**. Before that, I’d certainly known Him to **be everywhere**, but not anyplace **in particular**, so ascribed to Him just a spiritual existence (except for the time of the earthly years with Jesus) and imagined Him **everywhere but unseen … and not located-specially … and fully so present**. While there is truth to the **everywhere part**, what I’d missed was **God in Christ’s** **logistical locatedness (Him promising His nearness)**. Isaiah 55’s, then, “Seek the Lord while He may **be found** and call upon Him while He **is near**” never had **connotations logistically** before that to me (other than the **incarnation in history**). But then that “Behold, I am **with you** always, to the end of the age” after that (now with this new concept to me of His presence) makes me look always for **“how that is”** … and why it might be with “**me**” … and, again, how assuming I’m part of the “you” that Jesus made that promise to?

**Text**

Looking back, I (maybe) wasn’t as astute-in-that as were the many faithful of the Children of Israel at the time of our Gospel reading. “**Seeking**” **to see the Messiah** **(the Christ)** was, seemingly, the **forefront of what people had on their minds then** and a “**The Lamb of God** who’d take away the sin of the world” was what got **taught to anticipate by all the prophets, then John the Baptist**, so “**seeking**” **Him** would have beena **quest** of the faithful.

And those listening got **trained-well to look for God in a special location where He’d be for them**. **The Christ would literally be Immanuel**, and they’d known that having had a **burning bush in their history** and a **cloud by day of Him** and **pillar of fire by night of Him** and a **tabernacle with Him there** and a **Holy City (Jerusalem) with Him there** and a **Temple with His face there** and a **Holy of Holies where He’d be** and a **Mercy Seat where He (God) promised to sit especially beyond His general presence everywhere (filling all things)**. John **recognized God in close proximity within an adjoining womb of a woman** and Simeon and Anna **beheld Him** (**held Him even Simeon did**. **God did come near**.

But after that of (most especially) two thousand years ago, He the ascended (after His Sacrifice on a cross and resurrection from death for sin); and some might think (and I probably once did) that He’d become then **unseen** and **only vaguely everywhere**. Though taught, I did hardly imagined that He’d truly be “**taste-able** and **consumable** and **gainable by the audible sounds of His Words**” … veiled and, yet, really yet **seeable** under wine and bread and **present** within the soundwaves of particularly His Words spoken **in the proximity of my ears hearing them**.

No different case (in cosmic reality) was the event that happened with two of John’s disciples … and with John himself. John had already **been exposed (in multiple ways)**. John’s duty was to **prepare people for that nearness of God**. He’d even helped that nearness to then become intimacy in a baptism of watery connection to people, so “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” John had, himself, **seen** the dove and **heard** the voice of the Father, and as he said: “I have **seen** and have **borne witness** that this Jesus is the Son of God” …

… and, so, a couple of men who he **told that to** (**pointing Him out)** changed courses because they were **shown Him** … they **followed Him to be near to Him**. “What are you seeking?” Jesus asked. And they responded: “Where are **YOU STAYING?**” And (with that) Jesus was happy to **draw them** **near and show them**. “**Come** and **you** **will see**”, and the things that they would **SEE** and **HELP US SEE** would be the **THINGS THAT CHANGE OF EVERYTHING through Him who was God near for us and at work to save mankind by the satisfactory death and resurrection of the Son**.

For disciples, they **confessed** Jesus as “**Rabbi** (which means Teacher)” knowing themselves as **students under Him** and Him as “Messiah (which means Christ)” the **anointed Savior of them**. **They** went and “**stayed with Him** that day”, and then Andrew **“found” (and “first”) his “brother Simon” (with an evangelism energy that made him do that)** and he **told Him where The “Rabbi” and “Messiah” was at** (Andrew a **faithful and accurate witness of Him who was near**).

That **nearness of God in Christ Jesus** had, though, to draw near to Andrew **again to keep him close**. In next week’s Gospel account the same two weren’t found, yet, **lock-step behind Jesus and closely following His footsteps**, rather fishing but still, no doubt, talking about Him. **Jesus returned for them (as I’ll tell you He does for us)** …

**Application**

… because “Behold, I am **with you** always, to the end of the age” He said **to ALL called to be His disciples (baptized into Him and, that way connected, then believing and following)**. Jesus promised (even though ascending) a **special nearness**, the benefits of which are doled-out upon ones who’d “seek **where He’s promising that He’s at still**, calling upon Him **where He promises to work still … locatably near**”. It’s in that nearness with God (even after the Lord’s ascension) the original disciples sustained their walk all the way to the end of their earthly (and even challenging) lives.

**Jesus “with His people”** describes a **Mystery (or Sacramentality as that Mystery’s called) that’s OF His divine Word (which IS Him / not, just, ABOUT Him)**. “**Real Presence**” (**Immanuel even today / on this day and in this building because of what we’re hearing and given to taste and see with even our own eyes by God’s Promise and witnesses)**, God **(**in the resurrected and ascended Jesus Christ) **draws near (is there)** where **His Word is properly listened to when spoken aloud** and delivered **through, also, wine and bread that’s Promised to be also victorious life-blood and the risen and perfected body of Jesus here and local to us and capable of being visible to us by Means and sight, sound, and taste**. ….

It's fun teaching that through, even, the design of Faith’s building in Thompson’s Station. We broke ground first (our first shovel full, still having that shovel from a ceremony that we had to remember this) was under where the Chalice now sits upon the altar during a Divine Service (there the “Mercy Seat” of God’s intense presence in Christ here for us in Thompson’s Station). That chalice spot upon the altar was designed to be the high point of our entire construction project initially (and over it there is, both, our hanging cross and the steeple and steeple cross), this on the east end of the building where we’re teaching ourselves to look for the Lord’s obvious return like the “Morning Star”, the building cockeyed on the land just a little to face us, in our pews, east). West of us (in the distance) is Super Kroger’s parking lot (and God in Christ is certainly there in a every pebble in that parking lot yet not in any pebble there like He is on our altar on Sunday mornings). Our parking lot knows us, there, closer to His Promise than Kroger’s parking lot, but entering the west (main) entrance begins our steps God’s Sacramental direction. We deliberately journey to get there drawn through our educational space (learning how to enter God’s presence) then we sit (as does any from the whole world who are all invited there) in pews to hear His voice and passing the baptismal font (after baptismal instruction to do so) on the way to a rail that’s only arms-length from Jesus’ seat upon the altar.

**We have** **“drawn near”** as **“Christ has Promised to drawn near”**. And disciples of all times have **had that gift** whether Old Testament “Seed” or His Face Promised in Temple space or as a baby in Bethlehem or a man in Judea and Galilee or hanging from a cross or by the Promise of Word and Sacrament.

Disciples asked in this Gospel account **for us** “**Where are you staying?**” and I’d say God in Christ Jesus has always **answered that question quite well**, thanks be to God In Jesus’ name. Amen.