

# “Come and See”

*The Rev. S. Shane Nanney – January 15, 2023*

*John 1:29-42*

Pick a destination.

After deciding how you are going to get there, you then need to decide where you’re going to stay.

If you spend less than \$100 per night at a hotel, you are probably staying at a dump or a low-budget chain motel.

Today, however, a traveler has options not available 20 years ago. In the sharing economy, we can find online platforms that connect us with people willing to share a room or an entire house, and usually at a price far below a commercial facility.

The leading disrupter of the hospitality industry is Airbnb. The company was conceived after its founders put an air mattress in their living room to offset the high cost of rent in San Francisco, effectively turning their apartment into a bed and breakfast.

In response to the question, “Where are you staying?” Jesus says, “Come and see.”

Jesus extends an invitation to his new friends to check out where he is staying! That’s sort of shocking! Wow!

So, what does Jesus’ guest house look like? It certainly is not his own house. Indications are that he was like many millennials today. He lived with his parents until he was 30.

Perhaps he rented an *Airbnb* in Capernaum, and it is to this house that he invites his new friends. Or, maybe Mary and Joseph had a rental down by the sea. Probably not.

This is an unusual situation in which Jesus is the host. Other times, he is the guest, or he is inviting himself to someone's house (Zacchaeus). In Revelation, he is knocking on the door, trying to wrangle a dinner invitation (3:20).

Here, as the host, he extends the invitation to "*come and see.*" So, how would we behave if we were in Jesus' house.

But first — before we think about being a guest in Jesus' house — let us imagine that Jesus is a guest in our house. What would that look like? First, there is no problem with the wine. If we have a nice bottle of Perrier or Evian, Jesus can take care of the rest. But we would need to make sure there's bread. And what about furniture? Do we eat on the floor? Foot-washing? And we'd want to find Grandma's Bible, and dust it off and have it lying around casually on a table ... with a bookmark in it, maybe even opened to John 3.

Put up a cross? Maybe. Could be touchy ... bad taste?

What to eat? Oh, you have some leftover fish (2?) and five slices of bread. Perfect! Figs. Crackers and hummus. Falafel?

And would you pray? You do not want to sound like Sister Clarissa in *Sister Act*. "Bless us, oh Lord, and these thy gifts ... and, yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of no food, I shall fear no hunger. We want you to give us this day our daily bread ... and to the republic for which it stands ... by the power vested in me, I now pronounce us, ready to eat. Amen."

But now how would we act if we were invited as a guest into Jesus' home?

In the gospels, Jesus is a host three times. The first time is in this text before us today. He tells two of his future disciples to "*come and see*" where he's staying.

The next time is when he gathers his disciples together for what we now call the Last Supper. On this second occasion, the disciples asked Jesus what they were going to do about Passover. Jesus said to Peter and John, *"Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it."* (Luke 22:8)

And finally, there is a post-resurrection scene in Galilee in which Jesus hosts a fish breakfast: *"Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord."* (John 21:12).

So, Jesus is the host three times.

- First hosting experience (Capernaum): Key words: **"Come and see."**
- Second hosting experience (Last Supper): Key words: **"Go and prepare."**
- Third hosting experience (Galilee): Key words: **"Come and dine."**

Jesus wants to be our host. Will we accept his invitation *to "come and see," "go and prepare" and "come and dine?"* It is a fabulous invitation, and the experience is empowering and enriching.

## **Come and See**

When Jesus says to Peter and Andrew, *"Come and see,"* he establishes a motif for our ministry as Christians, and the message for the work of the church. It is an essentially inviting and welcoming ministry.

This is what the church does. It invites and it welcomes.  
This is who Christians are. They are inviting and welcoming.  
We don't coerce; we commend.  
We don't impose; we invite.  
We don't wrestle and wrangle; we welcome.  
We don't threaten; we tempt and tease.  
We don't lampoon; we love.

The mission of the church and our responsibility as followers of Jesus is —

not to explain the Apostles' Creed or the Augsburg Confession;

not to ask people if they know they are going to heaven;

not to ask people to make a pledge;

not to judge them according to race, gender, political allegiances, sexual orientation, their taste in tattoos or music or what team they're rooting for in the Super Bowl

Jesus encourages us to follow his example as a host: Be inviting and welcoming. Three words. "Come and see."

This is all that we need to say to those who are seeking a deeper, more meaningful experience of life.

### **Go and Prepare**

In Luke, his specific instructions are, "*Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it*" (22:8). In other words, not only are we to welcome others to the meal, we are asked to prepare the meal itself!

Jesus is the host. But we're in the kitchen.

Jesus has done the shopping. But we're doing the cooking.

We have the ingredients, but we must prepare the meal.

Jesus asks us to "*Go and prepare.*" This is an invitation to thoughtful consideration of what our guests will need and appreciate.

## **Come and Dine**

Jesus invites us to have a meal with him. Not just the meal we know as the Eucharistic Meal. The meal we have with Jesus is, of course, a figurative one. It is to enter an experience of closeness and union with the Lord so that we know his will for us and are strengthened to do it.

Jesus is more than an Airbnb host, of course. But no doubt when we invite people to come and see, go and prepare, and come and dine, they are going to check the reviews. What are other people saying?

Five stars? Three stars? Or no stars?

As the host, Jesus shows us how to be welcoming and how to prepare the meal. Church, we are all called to invite others to meet Christ. They will want to come and see if we invite them. If we prepare this place to be a welcoming and loving place where all feel at home, they will stay for the hors d'oeuvres. But when it comes to really meeting and embracing the Christ in their lives, dinner will be served. All will be fed. And all of God's children, new and experienced will come to know Jesus and worship Him. Amen.