



ST. ANDREW'S IN THE PINES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Sermon by Pastor Jami Anderson, Jan. 16, 2011

- I. Have you ever come upon a spouse, child, friend – searching wildly for something. You ask, “What are you looking for?” “keys, car title, gloves, chocolate!” And then if you’re really good, you find it for them. And they both appreciate and resent you! Because you have found what they were looking for. We have helped but we have also disrupted their search. They were doing the looking.
- II. I see the same dynamic working here with Jesus and those disciples. It is interesting that those are the first words spoken by Jesus in book of John – “What are you looking for?” How would you answer that question? Write your answer on the sticky note found stuck to pew.
- III. Disciples answered with a question back – “Where are you staying?” Not peace, freedom, all knowledge, safety, whatever you wrote on your sticky note. “Where are you staying?”
- IV. Do you think they want to know what house he is staying at? Or what his travel plans are? Or if there is room for them at the inn or house? Actually, their question might include at little of that last question – is there room for me? For the Greek word used for staying, as in where are you staying – is meno. That word has already been used two other times at the start of the gospel of John. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and it remained on him” The Spirit abided with Him, it remained on Him. And the Word became flesh and tabernacled, or tented, or dwelt with us. God came and lived with US! That begins to capture what Andrew and his friend might have been asking with their question – where do you abide, where do you dwell, where do you live, where do you remain? Where can we be with You?
- V. Perhaps their question to Jesus really did lead to an answer for the question Jesus asked, “What are you looking for?” Because when he told them to come and see, we are told that “They came and saw where he was staying and they remained with him...” They remained with Jesus – again it is the same word used - meno. They stayed with, dwelt with, abided with Jesus. They had found a presence that they could remain with and He would remain with them.
- VI. Maybe that is the best answer that anyone could hope for. Just think – what do you suppose Jared Loughner would have said if he’d been asked, “What are you looking for?” last week before he shot and killed so many people. Do you think that if he could dig deep enough into his tangled emotions and think it through, he would have answered, “I want a safe place to dwell, a place I can abide in – that is filled with healing and care of

me.” What about the homeless man, Dan, who stayed at our church last week. What might he have answered if asked what he was looking for? A place to live, a place in which to dwell? And if we had answered either of them, “Come and see?” – would that have been enough? An answer to their answer?

- VII. One thing to consider with that answer is that it works a couple of ways. Jesus says to come with him and you will have a place. But Jesus also comes and dwells with us, right where we are. So, we go to Jesus and Jesus comes to us. It is a similar way as the working of the Holy Spirit. There is dwelling with and indwelling. Later in the book of John Jesus tells us all to abide in Him and He will abide in us.”Abide in me and I in you.”
- VIII. Some of you may have seen a painting that has a representation of Jesus standing at a door and knocking. In most instances he is holding a lantern in his hand, sometimes the glow of light is surrounding Him. The door he is knocking on has no handle on it and often the front of the door has weeds, undergrowth coming up around it. The painting is a visual for the verse in the Bible, found in the book of Revelation, that says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone would open to me, I would come in and abide with them” or eat with them, or be with them.” A significant element of that painting is the door lacking a handle – we have to be the one to invite Jesus in, to make a place for Him to dwell. It has to be the end of our own search of what we were looking for.
- IX. That is the kind of staying with or abiding with presence that Jesus is offering to us. That is what he offers when he answers, “Come and see.” Come with me, live with me and I will live with you. So, maybe yes, Jared Loughner or Dan inviting Jesus to dwell with them and following Jesus may indeed have been all of the answer they would ever need. Maybe it is all of the answer any of us need. It is the epiphany moment – God is here to dwell with us!
- X. One of our older hymns found at the back of our Hymnal is called, “Abide With Me.” In it are the lines, “Abide with me, fast falls the eventide, the darkness deepens, Lord with me abide: when other helpers fail and comforts flee, help of the helpless, O abide with me.”
- XI. Andrew and his friend declare that they have found the Messiah. Jesus says, “Come and see.” I say, Thanks be to God.