

“Come and See”

John 1:35-51

Today we are stepping out of our march through the Pentecost season and our journey through Luke’s Gospel as we normally use the lessons of the three year series. Today, we are recognizing the work of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League with the theme; “Come and See.”

I almost stayed with the appointed lessons for the 20th Sunday after Pentecost, because the regular appointed Gospel reading for today, from Luke 17, is Jesus’ words to His disciples telling them about the true nature of a servant. Servants do the work the Master gives them to do, completes their work, does not expect gratification for the work that is done, but simply says, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.”

This understanding of service to their Master sums up the work of the LWML so well. They do so much behind the scenes. I see it continually. Things just get done. For those of you who are not familiar with the work of the LWML, the ladies offer you an invitation to “Come and See.”

But inviting you to participate and be a part of their organization is not the focus of the theme “Come and See.” Those words are from Scripture, and those words are the reason that I altered the appointed readings for

today. In Isaiah, the Lord says, “They shall come and they shall see my glory.” These words are spoken against those who have rejected the Lord. The Lord says, “I know their work and their thoughts.” The previous verses leading up to our Old Testament reading contain some very harsh words of judgment from the Lord.

And He says of those sitting under His judgment, “They shall come and they shall see my glory.” What is glorious in the sight of God? Isaiah tells us. He rescues the survivors, the faithful remnant out of all the nations. His glory is to rescue you, to bring you and all of His children from the farthest reaches of the earth to Himself – to bring you out of the “great tribulation.”

To wash you in the blood of the Lamb; to rescue you out of the horrible conditions that Isaiah and all the prophets talk about where the destruction and desperation of the exile of the Israelites is a microcosm of the desperate days leading up to the end. We see in the news how cities in Syria don’t even have a source of fresh water. We see in Venezuela that people are starving. Scripture is filled with warnings of the end that the devastation will be so complete that even Jesus says the people who don’t have children will consider themselves blessed. And people will be forced to eat things that would never be served at an LWML sponsored event.

But rather, our Lord says of these who have come out of the great tribulation, “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore.” The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is your Shepherd who will guide

you to springs of living water and God will wipe away every tear from your eye. Our Lord says, "Come and See."

Just as Philip says to Nathanael, "Come and See." Philip had come to see that this man, Jesus of Nazareth, was the One written of in Moses and the prophets. Like we saw last week with the Rich Man and Lazarus, the rich man wanted Lazarus to go back to earth and warn his five brothers of the torments of hell, but Abraham says, "They have Moses and the prophets . . . and if they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not listen even if someone should rise from the dead."

Why did Philip recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed One of God? Because, he was looking for Him in the right place. It is in His Word and His Word alone that God permits Himself to be found. The Word of Moses and the prophets and the words of Jesus had done their work. When Jesus comes along and says, "Follow Me," John indicates in his Gospel that this isn't the first encounter Philip had with Jesus or His message.

John tells us of Jesus on the banks of the Jordan River when John the Baptist cries out, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter was a disciple of John the Baptist. He spends the day with Jesus. It can be implied that Andrew had been present the day before when John baptized Jesus and the voice of God the Father thundered down from heaven, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased."

Andrew tells Peter, “We have found the Messiah.” Then we are told that Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip did not blindly follow a stranger. Even if this was the first time Philip had physically seen Jesus, he had been told about Him and he recognized Him as the One spoken of through Moses and the prophets. So Philip confidently tells Nathanael, “Come and see.”

Our message to the world is the same message handed down by Moses and the prophets. The work of the LWML, the work of these Lutheran Women in Mission is to provide opportunity for the Word of God to be heard. Come and see the glory of the Lord revealed as He rescues the survivors out of the great tribulation. We are the survivors of the nations. We are the ones of whom the prophet Isaiah speaks.

We have seen the glory of the Lord revealed as Christ has come to us, the One of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. He has come to us and He continues to come as we gather with angels, arch-angels, and all the company of heaven. There will come a day when we “shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore.” Until that day, we get a fore-taste of the feast to come in the broken body and shed blood of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Our Lord invites you to come and see. Amen.