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Sunday January 18th 2026

What We Seek

Behold, the Lamb of God

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! **30** This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ **31** I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” **32** And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. **33** I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ **34** And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, **36** and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” **37** The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. **38** 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?” **39** 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. **40** One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. **41** He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). **42** He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter). (John 1:29-42 ESV)

Grace, Mercy and Peace unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

As the days go on, I often realize I really do not need a lot. I have pretty much all that I need. And that can make it difficult when you are asked what would you like on your birthday or Christmas. I remember in July on my birthday my family asked me what would I like and honestly, I could not think of anything. We decided to go to the Laurel caverns and then to Ohiopyle and on the way

we pass this one lot. And I go: Oh, I know what I want for my birthday. My family replied: What? Can I get a backhoe? Sadly, it did not happen at that time. But I asked again for Christmas and I got one. Want to see? It's a toy backhoe my mom got me for Christmas. Really it is that idea. Do I really need it? No. But I am human, I am a sinner as we all are.

We have this natural desire for useless things. Vehicles for example, often people prefer the luxury. But really is it any different than a basic car? A luxury car gets you to point A to point B. A basic car gets you to point A to point B. One is not greater than the other ultimately. Same with houses, clothes we wear. We like to shop. We like to focus our attention on useless things. We are humans, we are sinners, this is who we are. Do I need a backhoe? No. Do I want one? Yes. I enjoy useless things as we all do. And maybe I have been reading Ecclesiastes a little to much.

King Solomon writes, "Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?" (Ecclesiastes 1:2-3) This is King Solomon who had absolutely everything. He had many wives, all the money in the world, a huge and luxurious place to sleep in, the finest food and drinks and yet He proclaims, that life has no meaning. And I bring this up because I do want to connect those couple verse with our Gospel reading this morning.

In our Gospel reading this morning, we read that the disciples are coming to Jesus. Jesus sees this happening and gives an interesting response. As we read, "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?" (John 1:38 ESV) Jesus replies, "What are you seeking?" Not even a Shalom (meaning hello). He does not ask, who are you seeking. That would be my response. They are coming towards me. I am a who, not a what. No, he does not ask who are you seeking but rather he asked the disciples coming towards him and replies to them with a question saying, "What are you seeking?" What am I seeking. Do I not have something? And if I do not have it, what is it? Is it just a nice introduction conversation, like a nice hello? I want Jesus to say hello to me. How are you? Is it a hug? Money? Maybe a nice crispy High-five? What is it that we seek? What was it that these disciples were seeking from Jesus? Or maybe I should word the question as, "What is it that Christ knows we need?" Can a Sinner like myself answer such a question?

I like useless things. I wanted a Backhoe for my birthday. I am a human sinner. This is why I quoted the verse from Ecclesiastes before. In that book of the Old Testament king Solomon proclaims how worthless life is but at the end he tells us what the meaning of life is actually about. And maybe they actually answer it with their response. "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 ESV) That is the meaning of life. It is about God. The one actual meaningful thing that we have.

The disciples in our Gospel don't really reply with, I need this. No, they reply with the question: Where are you staying? What do I need? What do Sinners need? I need to be saved. I need help. I

need pardoned. I am a Sinner as we all are. I deserve death and eternal hell. I need my God. I need my Savior.

When I go and meet people, I often do not introduce myself as pastor or reverend. I do have people say, you need to start doing that more but I don't. I often like to quote Paul where he says, and I the worst Sinner. Because its true. I am not religious. I am not in any way deserving of God's forgiveness. I curse him, I disobey him as we all do. No one here is religious. No one here is obedient to God's Word. I like to focus on useless things. And if you think you are, my friend, you may want to think again. We cannot satisfy the Law.

One of the saddest things I hear from Christians is an idea of salvation that comes from themselves. I remember one person told me, "I need to stop sinning" and my response was, "you can't" or "good luck with that" and they responded, "well I never really tried." Listen close, my friends. There is no salvation without Christ. You can call yourselves saved and please do, because you are. But realize you are saved through grace alone. Meaning our salvation is only by the amazing and wonderful work of Christ Jesus our Lord. It is not by our work. We are sinners. I cannot satisfy the Law by myself. And realize also if you somehow think you can fulfill the Law, that you could just magically stop sinning.

I want you to read this written by Paul to the church in Galatia. "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose." (Galatians 2:21 ESV) To believe that you can save yourself, to believe you can just stop sinning. You are ultimately saying, Jesus came for no reason, His death, His suffering, and His Resurrection are worthless. But my friends, Christ's amazing work has meaning. The works of Christ mean everything for us. His death, His suffering, His resurrection means everything. And because His works mean everything your sins mean nothing. For we have been saved through the grace of God and through the grace of God alone. So what is it I seek? What is it we seek? I seek the amazing Grace that Christ continually gives to me and to all sinners who trust and have faith in Him. That same grace that the disciples were seeking from him.

Maybe that is why the disciples ask Jesus in verse thirty-eight. "Where are you staying?" They give their answer in a form of a question. They wished to be with Him. They wanted His saving works. His saving works that Christ Jesus bestows upon each and everyone of us who have faith in him. Christ, our one desire, that truly has meaning. I understand again we are sinners, we like material things, but a nice car that does not save me and I cannot take it into heaven. Same with a house, money, even family member, as bad as that sounds, they can not save me. Jesus. His work, His grace bestowed upon us is our only way to salvation. This is why we seek Him. This is why all who believe in trust in Him seek Him.

We worship this morning in what we call Epiphany. That if you did not know is a Greek word that means, To reveal. Christ revealed who he was to his disciples. He reveals who He is to us. He is the one, the only one who came down from heaven. Who came down from a comfy throne. Was made flesh. And through His faith in you. He suffered, was crucified, died and buried, on the third

day He rose from the dead for you. Our Savior who made us His top priority. Our Savior who reveals himself as our humble who did not wish death for us but rather He wished eternal life for each and everyone of us. This is our king, Our Gracious king. Christ our Lord. Amen.