

Come and See

Week 1 Bring Someone! Because Someone Brought You

By Pastor Kathrine

Well, good morning everyone. It's a joy to be with you guys. Hi. Hi. I would love to start off with a word of prayer. Let's pray. God, we thank you that you are with us always. You show up in our lives in so many amazing ways and help us to sense today the ways that you're speaking to us here in this place.

It's in your name we pray. Amen.

Well, I want to start off today with an experiment. I know we've got some kids in the room today. Kids. I'm going to ask if you're willing, if you can stand up where you're at. I'm not going to make you come up or do anything embarrassing. I wanted to try a game of Follow the Leader.

You guys know this game? Yeah. Okay, good. I figured you did. Okay, so whatever I do, you do, right? Let's try it. I'm watching. Okay, good. I don't think I can do this. I can't. You're supposed to be rubbing your belly and patting your head. Okay, what about this? Okay, what about.

Okay. You guys are doing great. Who thinks they could win that game? Like they could do it the most perfectly. Raise your hand if you think you could be the winner. Okay. Right. Oh, we got confidence in the front row. I love it in a couple in the back. Yes. Okay, so now, because you said you're going to win and you're so good.

I'm really going to give you a challenge round. Okay? Are you ready? So I want you to go ahead and turn and face the back of the room. All right. Now just stay that way and do what I'm doing. Oh, what is going on there? There's some cheating happening.

You guys aren't doing so well this time. I don't. What went wrong? Okay, I want you guys to sit down. Obviously, I started that way just to get you guys moving, but because it is way too hard to follow when you can't see someone. And that's today what our message is about. I'm going to start with our scripture for the day.

And it's actually from first John. Take a listen to this.

The next day John, this is John the Baptist was there with his disciples when he saw Jesus passing by. He said, look, the Lamb of God. When the two disciples heard him say this, they follow Jesus, turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, what do you want?

They said, Rabbi, which means teacher, where are you staying? Come, he replied, and you will see. So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John what John had said and followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, we have found the Messiah.

That is the Christ, and he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, You're Simon, son of John. You will be called surface, which is translated Peter. The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, follow me. Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathaniel and told him, we have found the one Moses wrote about in the law, and about whom the prophets also wrote Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Nazareth. Can anything good come from there? Nathaniel asked. Come and see, said Philip. Okay, so since it's a family service today, what I wanted to do is do a little Bible. 101 training. Raise your hand if when you read the Bible, sometimes you feel confused.

Okay. Oh, I love this church. That's all of us. We're all confused together.

I was talking to Mandy this morning, and I said, is it okay if I say that you're confused sometimes to. Because as pastors were often confused.

And this passage, it's not too complicated, but it's still confused me. And so here are a few things I do when I'm reading the Bible that help me. First, it's okay if the first time, second time, and 50th time you read it, you still feel a little confused.

This happens a lot, so read through it a bunch of times and if you're stuck, leave your Bible or your phone and go do something else and see if your juices get flowing. Don't be afraid to look up different translations. And also, sometimes it's helpful to just make guesses about what it means. What's that going to hurt?

Another important thing is to talk to people about the Bible passages that you read. Ask a family member or a friend, or even someone who's not a Christian, to guess what they think it might mean. They might have insights that are really cool. So I read this passage out loud to my husband, who's also a pastor, and to my boys who are six and eight.

And I said, guys, I got nothing. Can you help me out? And my son cracked me up because after I read it, he goes,

I don't know, I'm confused too. You're going to have to figure this one out. And this morning when I woke up, he said, mom, do you have a sermon? So he was

he was caring for me.

But this book that we have, the Bible, is supposed to be read in community. Catherine by herself. I'm not supposed to get it. I really don't think that. I think it takes different opinions for us, actually, to get what the Bible means in a four way. And another reason I use my kids when I'm reading the Bible is because sometimes it's more simple than my brain tries to make it.

My kids are really smart, but sometimes, you know, Jesus talks about kids getting it. Sometimes kids, teenagers, young adults, they get it more than I do. And don't forget your pastors. Mandy and I, we love doing pastoral care and we love putting out fires. But we really, really, really love getting stumped with Bible questions. We're both likely to say, I actually don't know either, but then to get to go do some research and that's actually what we're here for.

So don't be afraid to ask us. Another important thing is to read the passage, which is just the words in context. So if you just read one sentence of a book, it doesn't make a lot of sense. You have to read what comes before and what comes after it. And we'll apply that in just a few seconds.

But get curious also about why was this written? When was it written? Who wrote it? And you can be fancy and use a Bible commentary. Or you can also use Google. Now if you're a fancy person out there, don't judge. But Wikipedia knows something. So you can search the Bible character or the time the book was written. And there's lots of different opinions out there that can be helpful.

And the final thing, and I think maybe this is really important, is to spend time wondering and praying, wonder and pray about what a passage means. Sometimes it's when we're asking questions that we actually find answers that we're looking for. So I tried that with this passage. And we're going to take another look at it through some of these techniques.

So one of the first things that confused me is who are these two people that the story's talking about? John says he brings two people to meet Jesus. And then later somebody says the first disciples, Andrew and Peter, are called. And I'm like, are these the same people, different people I didn't know. Also, for those of you who really know your Bible, this is the book of John.

But in Luke and Matthew and Mark, Andrew and Peter, they weren't hanging out with John when they got called to follow Jesus. Does anyone know what they were doing in those books?

Fishing. You're right. So even in the Bible here, we have two kind of differences. And I thought, why is that happening? That's one of the reasons that I was confused.

The reality is we don't really know where they both fishers and people that were with John. I don't know, but some people think that actually Andrew and Peter were already waiting for Jesus. We're already waiting for the Messiah. In following John, they were disciples of John. John would have the crazy John the Baptist guy who wore, animal cloths and who ate honey and locust and everyone thought was kind of a lunatic.

He also had followers. Many of them were Jewish people who are waiting for Messiah. And it's potential that potentially a possibility that these two guys were actually already looking for Jesus. And that spoke to me because I think in our world, there's a lot of people who are already out there looking for the light, but maybe not in the right places.

Does that make sense? How many people have you met that it seems like you're really interested in faith or spirituality, or this idea that there's something more but would never enter a church? I wonder maybe if Andrew and Peter were out there looking and not sure where to look either. Sometimes I felt that way. I also wondered why John the Baptist is kind of a footnote in this story.

We hear at the beginning of the passage that John introduces these two random guys to Jesus, and that's pretty much all we hear about John. The rest of the story. But one thing we know about John is that he's careful to say, it's not about me. It's about Jesus. And so actually, all we hear about John the Baptist in the book of John is that John the Baptist baptizes Jesus and helps point disciples to Jesus, and then actually pretty much disappears from the story.

John the Baptist is a big deal. So what does it mean that he's not in this story? What if our job is not to be the star of the show, but to help people take a right turn to get closer to Jesus? What if we're supposed to be more like John in that way? And then another big question I had was, why is this phrase.

And maybe you guys picked up on it. Maybe you didn't come and see used so often in this passage. Right. And even when those exact words aren't said, we kind of hear the tone of come and see, right? John says to Andrew and Peter, come and see Android Peter, go and see Jesus. And then after that encounter they go to fill up and say, come and see.

And after that Philip goes to Nathaniel and says, come and see. What are they seeing? Right? I thought this was really interesting. Jesus has a way of answering our questions, sometimes with riddles. Some find it annoying. I find it cool. But actually, Jesus here doesn't answer the disciples questions. Who are you? Why are you doing? He says, come and see.

I think that can teach us something. But as to the question, what are they seeing? I think we need to look at what happens before this passage. You guys might remember this because

we read it on candlelight Christmas Eve. John, chapter one, and you'll see some words on the screen. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him. Yet the world did not know him. And the word became flesh and lived among us. And we have seen his glory, the glory of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. All this talk about light that happens right before this big introduction with John and all of these new disciples, really made this passage click for me.

Things started falling into place. I think this scripture has to do with the idea of seeing the light. Which is why I challenged our kids to try to follow me when they can't see. Starting off in this sermon, the people in this story, they didn't. Andrew, Peter, Nathaniel, Philip, John, none of them taught people about Jesus by preaching.

None of them taught people about Jesus by proving their theological points. Instead, they literally invited people to come and see the light. That's really important for us to hear. This led me to notice in John and other places, when Jesus doesn't give direct answers, you know what he does. Jesus says, come experience something. Come discover something. I don't know about you guys, but if you've ever tried to change someone's mind, it doesn't really work.

But if you have an experience or offer someone an experience, it's powerful. Am I right? I had plenty of people telling me about Jesus in my life and I thought, okay, but when I experience Jesus in my heart when I was a teenager, that's when things began to make sense. Jesus could have given the disciples a clear answer about who he was.

There's no doubt he could have done that. But instead he said, come and see. Now, do you think it's because Jesus wanted to show the barrows his new flat screen? He's like, come on back to my crib. I got no. This is not what was happening. Why does Jesus bother to invite these two random men to hang out?

I was thinking about this. I wonder what did they do during this time? What would it be like if Jesus came to you and said, come and see? What were they seeing? I don't know. I thought about this for a while, and it reminded me of an experience I had. And this is another tip. When you're reading the Bible, bring your life experiences into it, because Jesus might show you something in that type of reading.

Now, my son Theo will remember this with me, but once I was in Texas and we were somewhere along the shore down by Galveston in a very small town where the mosquitoes were torturous. These are the memories I have. And while we were there, we needed some supplies. It was such a small town that the only option was the classic Dollar General.

And so we headed into the Dollar General. It was my husband, my kids and I and all of my in-laws. And while we were in the store, we met this lady. She had a little booth set up in the Dollar General because apparently you can do that when you're in the middle of nowhere. Texas. And at her booth, she was inviting people to buy her pies.

Okay, well, first of all, I don't buy pies from random strangers. Just doesn't seem like a good practice. And I also generally don't talk to random strangers. I know you think I'm outgoing, but, like, that's not me. You should meet my husband, and he is very outgoing. So I and my family, all of us, decide to walk past the lady in the pies as you do.

You guys know what I'm talking about. Hi. Okay, bye. My husband's starts talking to the pie lady, and he learns that she maybe makes a famous custard pie. Milk pie? I don't know, I'm not from the South. It sounded gross to me. I didn't really like it, but that's not the point of the story. And so my husband finds out that she's selling pies for her church, and he goes, well, I would just love to buy one.

He would have paid \$300 for that pie. That's how he is. I said, okay, you can buy the pie. It's fine. But then that story gets weirder. Because you know what this pie lady does? She goes, well, I would love for you to buy my pie, but you have to come to my house. Oh, thanks. You can just keep the money. Good luck with your ministry.

My husband goes, let's go. So we get in our cars, including all of my in-laws, who, like me, are going. And my husband. Why are we doing this? And we proceed to drive to this random lady's house when we get there. Not only does she not offer us the pie, she invites us to come in and see her house.

We walk in and when I walked in, so many things about this woman began to make sense. She told me a little bit about her life. She told me that she had recently lost her husband. She told me about other pains that she had. She showed me the kitchen where she made her pies. And why making pie matters and.

And why her church mattered to her. She opened her life to us. She showed me the pictures of the wall on the wall of people that she loved. She told me what she believed in. I don't know about you, but sometimes I'm not willing. When people invite me to come and see, to go look. I'm too busy.

I feel awkward. It's just strange. But I wonder if we're more willing to accept that invitation to come and see other people's lives, if that might not be an important part of how God works in the world. I know that it's when people have invited me to come and see the light that is Jesus. Whether that was youth group or a Bible study, or even just a meaningful conversation around coffee.

That I've been changed by God. But sometimes I'm afraid to either invite people to come and see, or to accept their invitation to come and see the world from their point of view. But I think that might be a huge part of what this story is actually about. Because when we come and see, we actually get to know someone.

The disciples that day, I think they actually got to know Jesus in a way that they wouldn't have otherwise. We can know a lot of things in our brains, but when we are willing to immerse ourselves to have an experience, that's when we know things in our hearts. That's when we're changed. This happens to so many characters in the Bible.

I think the Bible is kind of just a massive collection of stories who see of people who see the light and who are changed by it and begin to live differently. And this happened to so many people in the book of John. But even in John chapter one, so many people have an experience of Jesus, of the light, and so many people experience Jesus differently.

And I want to pause there for a second. Listen to all the names that people give Jesus just in the first chapter of John. Lamb of God, son of God. Rabbi. Messiah. He who knows Moses in the law and the prophets. King of Israel, son of man. I wonder today what experience would you give Jesus, or what name would you give Jesus based on the experience you've had of him?

What name would you give Jesus based on the experience you've had of him? If I asked all the kids in the room to draw a picture of Jesus or write a word that reminds them of Jesus, if I invited all the adults to do that, I imagine we might have as many words as we have people in this room.

And I think that's really, really cool. And I think at different seasons of our lives, we give Jesus different names to. In my own life, I struggle with anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder. And so to me, Jesus is peace. In other times in my life, I've struggled with my health. I have Crohn's disease, and so to me, Jesus was a healer.

Who's Jesus to you? When you've experienced that light, what name do you end up calling it? We can't limit Jesus when people come and see that light, when they experience it. We don't know what they'll call it. We don't know how they'll testify. People give Jesus a lot of different names. And so I want to challenge horizons today.

Any time an individual Christian or a church acts like we understand and what someone's testimony should look like, or we know how someone should label Jesus, I think we should be very leery, because I don't want to miss the way that Jesus is calling people now. When these kids experience the light, what do they call Jesus? When these teenagers experience the light, what do they call it?

My friends, we have a whole world of people that need to come and see the light.

I want you guys to be thinking about that idea while we watch this Ikea commercial. After it's over, kids, youth. I'm going to ask you guys to discuss it with each other, so be paying attention. Your job right now is to be paying attention for these things.

how many people are stuck in a rut in their lives? Sometimes it's us, right? We don't even know that there's something out there to come and see. I felt that way before. I felt that way without Jesus. What would have happened if this man would have been offered an invitation to come and see by another person in this story?

The person who is actually discipling this man is the chair. But you have to understand that what that chair represents, right? There is so much to come and see. And it's not just this beautiful, amazing world we've been given. It's the light that truly offers us life. It's Jesus. The truth is, we all have a little bit of that old man on the bench in us right?

We all get stuck. And so here's what I want us to think about today. I've got a few questions

I want you guys to try to figure out which question is the question you need to reflect on most this week. Do you need to come and see Jesus anew in this season of life?

I'm not assuming that everyone in this room has experienced the light. Maybe you keep coming, but you just can't quite get there. Today I pray for you and Mandy prays for you. We all pray for you. Not because we think you're inadequate or anything like that, but because we know the light is awesome. And so maybe today you need to come and see what Jesus has to offer.

And that's not my work. That's God's work. But if that's you, let's, let's see what God can do there. Another question I want us to ask is there an area in your heart, mind or life that you need Jesus to come and see? Does that question make sense to any of you guys? There are some places where I don't want to invite Jesus to come and see.

But if Jesus came and saw them and brought that light, maybe I would be changed. Is there a part of your story that you need to let someone in your church family come and see? Some of us might be open with God and open with ourselves, but we're private people. We're not willing to be vulnerable. But if we would invite someone to come and see our life story, God might do something amazing.

There. And then the last question, and we especially want to have this on our minds right now with Vacation Bible School coming up is who can you come and who can you invite to come and see horizons and hopes that they would experience the light in a new way? This week I was thankful to experience the light in many ways and for my families in the room.

One thing we like to do at our house is highs, lows and buffaloes over dinner. But another way you could do this, if you want to incorporate faith into your family time together is ask where did you see the light this week? It's a simple question, but it brings God into things. It's acknowledging that those good things, those highs are us recognizing the lights, the ways that God has popped up.

Okay, so I saw the light in several ways, but one of my favorite ways was an interaction that I saw between my friends at Connection Point and a couple of the youth at Horizon House. I have a picture for you guys, but this week, I had Jude and Katie, Thomas come to connection point, and I walked to them and I said, hey, you want to start something new with me right now?

And they're like, so come and see. And they so courageously followed me for no good reason. And I said, so we're going to start doing snacks and crafts every Tuesday in the summer because we have like 20 random kids showing up. I said they might not speak any English. Your job is just to smile, show them the example, and just offer love.

And they were willing to come and see what that was about. I saw the light in that. I also saw the light and the fact that the kids that we had coming at this table, there are kids from the Ukraine, there are kids, that speak Spanish from all around the world, Cuba, etc. and they're all just experiencing community and even cooler than that.

I had the chance to invite some of these kids afterwards to come and see Vacation Bible School. Actually, at Horizons. And a couple of the kids in this picture said, yeah, we want to come and see. God's light is always at work in our world and God wants us to experience. God wants us to come and see. On your seats.

You found a piece, a triangle, a piece of paper. And what I want you guys to do is to take a second to write someone that is on your heart or mind that you want to invite to come and see. Now, kids and teenagers, I want you to invite someone who can either come and see Vacation Bible School.

Who could you invite to come and see Vacation Bible School? Or who could you invite to come and see a youth group or a mission trip? I don't know where you're at in your cycle with everything in the summer, but something specific here. Adults. I don't think we invite people to church enough. I often go, oh, they go there, they go there.

They don't want to go anywhere. You never know. Like you really never know if one invitation is going to be the one where someone is able to experience the light. So I challenge you to invite someone to church if that's not what you feel specifically called to. I challenge you to write down maybe a coworker or a friend, or someone that you could do coffee with, or have an intentional interaction around, a faith or life, or just listening.

And when we come up to communion today, part of our offering to God and we place here is going to be these people that we want to come and see. And as we're inviting them to come and see, we also want to be praying for them, because again, this is a reminder, just like John the Baptist, not my work, not Mandy's work, not your work, God's work.

We just get to be a part of the inviting. So after all my Bible study this week, I came out thankful about a few things. I'm thankful for the people in my life who invited me to come and see. There are people who I will never forget. I am thankful for Jesus's love and that Jesus invites us to experience him in real ways so that we can get it here, not just here, and change our lives for the better.

And I'm thankful that I don't have to have Christianity, or the Bibles or life questions perfectly figured out to be able to point people to the light. Whether Jesus is showing up in a little tiny flame, or whether Jesus is showing up in fireworks, Jesus is showing up. The light is here. It's our job simply to say, you want to come and see.

May we have a sense of courage as we offer people the invitation to come and see. God, we thank you for Jesus.

We thank you that you invite us time and time again to come and see. We thank you for the ways that you have put people in our lives up to this point, to invite us to come and see the light of Christ. We thank you for the ways that that light has changed us. God, we ask right now for your courage. And your discernment to know who we need to invite to come and see. God, you're so good to us. Help us to live each day with the belief that your light surrounds us, and to celebrate it whenever we may see it. Amen.