

## **St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS**

### **Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz Epiphany 2 January 16, 2011 John 1:35-40**



#### **Jesus' First Disciples**

<sup>35</sup> The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" <sup>37</sup> When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" <sup>39</sup> "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. <sup>40</sup> Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. <sup>41</sup> The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Teachers...I tried to figure out how many I have had in my life. Teachers – Mrs. Mieser in Kindergarten – my first teacher – who would read to us – while we curled up on rugs the size of carpet samples. Mrs. Lemke for 1<sup>st</sup> Grade – Fun with Dick and Jane – the wonder of reading a book to yourself! Miss Bier for 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade – the wonder of her beatles and butterflies on sheets of cotton. We moved during 3<sup>rd</sup> grade – to a small town with a day school. That's why we moved there – because they had a Lutheran Grade School. I have had a lot of teachers in my life. More than I can count! I had more than 20 teachers in High School – Mr. Grubbs the wiry gym teacher who ran backward faster than we could chase him. We had Mr. Holcumb – American History-- with his quote for the week, "Don't be so humble. You aren't that great!" Golda Meier. "A dog is just a dog unless he's facing you. Then he's *Mr. Dog*." Hatian farmer. I had some 20 teachers at Northwestern College and I had teachers at the Seminary. I have a picture with all my classmates all around the outside – and all the men who taught me in a group in the middle! Teaching is an awesome responsibility! You can in fact literally change a life – by being a teacher. You can inspire and encourage someone to attain great things. You can say something sarcastic – trying to be *funny* – and leave a scar inside a person – that will literally last a lifetime!

I will never forget – long ago and far away – a little grandma – literally on her death bed – with only hours to live – who said – when she was little her teacher told her – you can't sing. So *don't*. Move your mouth if you must – but don't sing because you sound terrible. She said – I want to sing *Jesus Love Me!* And I'm going to sing it now! Today God's Word talks about Jesus – the ultimate teacher. It is by grace alone that we can say:

#### **We Are Jesus' Disciples**

- 1. We are His students**
- 2. We are His followers**
- 3. We are His imitators**

We have said before – the Lutheran Church is a liturgical Church. We have a path of worship – a plan for worship every service. We confess our sins and pronounce absolution. We read God's Word and apply it to daily life. We bring our thank offerings. We pray for ourselves

and for one another! We sing hymns of thanks and praise. We receive with believing hearts the benediction! We pay attention to the season of the Church year. Right now we are in Epiphany – to shine or show forth. Epiphany Day is always January 6<sup>th</sup>. Easter is always the first Sunday after the First Monday after the Vernal Equinox. That means this year 8 Sundays after Epiphany plus Transfiguration Sunday – the last Sunday after Epiphany. Then March 9<sup>th</sup> is Ash Wednesday and Easter is the last Sunday in April – the first Sunday in May will be Confirmation. All this depends on Jesus' permission. In a moment Jesus could change everything! We know that! Epiphany – means to shine or show forth. The Bible Readings – today from John – then all the rest of Epiphany from the Gospel of the Tax Collector Matthew will show Jesus' power and authority and glory as the very Son of God made flesh. We will hear about the miracles Jesus performed – powerful miracles – that suspend the very laws of nature – miracles that even Jesus' most ardent enemies had to admit Jesus couldn't possible do unless God was with Him!

Last week – as Jesus' public ministry began – Pastor Gartner preached about how Jesus was baptized – anointed prophet, priest and king! Jesus was baptized – the Lamb of God – who takes away the sins of the world was baptized by John. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. Remember John's message – through Advent – into Epiphany – **“Repent! The Kingdom of God is at hand!”** John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. What sins did Jesus have to repent of? On his own – Jesus had none! But Jesus the sacrificial Lamb – Jesus the Scapegoat – had the sins of the world upon his shoulders. Jesus was carrying the sins of the world! <sup>35</sup> **The next day John was there again with two of his disciples.** <sup>36</sup> **When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”** <sup>37</sup> **When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.** <sup>38</sup> **Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”** Jesus is our Rabbi – our Teacher. The world has known many famous teachers. There was Socrates – who died some 399 years before the Christ-child was born. Socrates taught you can learn by remembering. That wisdom was to be found by asking the right questions! That makes sense – doesn't it? Asking the right questions to understand what is **pious** and what is **impious** – what is God pleasing and what isn't! There is a famous Socrates quote about young people. *“The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, they show disrespect to their elders.... They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and are tyrants over their teachers.”* Gandhi was a very wise person. He said things like *I cannot teach you violence, as I do not myself believe in it. It can only teach you to bow your head before anyone, even at the cost of your life.* Or again, *“I object to violence because it appears to do good – the good is only temporary – the evil it does is permanent.”* It was Gandhi who is credited with saying, *“Hate the sin – love the sinner.”* Lots of ink has been spilled discussing those few words! Speaking of practical insight and understanding there's a teacher named Robert Fulgum. He's the guy who wrote, All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten! How about that for clear thinking? Down through the ages there have been many wise teachers. But none wiser than King Solomon. None wiser than the Lord Jesus who came to take away the sins of the whole wide world – so whenever we die – however we die – we will come home to Heaven! That's the wisdom and insight that will matter one moment after Judgment Day begins!

<sup>38</sup> **Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”** <sup>39</sup> **“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. The tenth hour.** Jewish time – 4 in the afternoon. Roman time – 10

in the morning. Since John wrote for Gentile believers – and they spent the *day* with Jesus – it was probably Roman time – 10 in the morning. It doesn't make a big difference – or God's Word would say – Jewish time or Roman time – so there could be no mistake. Perhaps the main point is – John himself was there! He was an eye witness to this!

Spend the day with Jesus and it will change everything. Spend the day with Jesus and it will change your whole life. Stay with Jesus and it will change eternity! Part of being Jesus' disciple means being a student – being a *follower!* To follow Jesus means you need to be where he is. Jesus is everywhere at once. God's Word says: <sup>1</sup> **You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.** <sup>2</sup> **You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.** <sup>3</sup> **You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.** <sup>4</sup> **Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.** <sup>5</sup> **You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.** <sup>6</sup> **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.** <sup>7</sup> **Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?** <sup>8</sup> **If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.** <sup>9</sup> **If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,** <sup>10</sup> **even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.** <sup>11</sup> **If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"** <sup>12</sup> **even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.** Psalm 139 Jesus is everywhere – omnipresent – always with you. Having said that – we can draw near to Him – when we read our Bible – when we come to Church – to His Father's House of Prayer. This New Year – we can by the power of the Holy Spirit – come to Church with ever increasing faithfulness – hearing the Gospel – studying God's Word in Bible Class – coming to Lord's Supper – to receive Jesus' body and blood – sacrificed to forgive us!

<sup>40</sup> **Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.** <sup>41</sup> **The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ)." We have found the Messiah – the Christ – the Promised One – the Anointed One.** We have found our Savior. Part of being Jesus' disciples is being his Imitators. Pastors, teachers, staff ministers, called workers are sinful people – just like everyone else. But they need to try with all the help the Holy Spirit provides – to imitate Jesus. God's Word says, **Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.** Hebrews 13:7 Be like Jesus. John in his epistles – his letters says again and again, **"God is love!"** To imitate Jesus means to **love one another.** That means an end to grudges – to hard feelings – to harboring hatred! Sometimes when someone hurts us badly – if the cut is deep – it can leave a scar. Scars can heal – over time. If you don't let it heal – if you keep picking and scratching it open again and again – finally it will become infected – even cancerous – causing our self more and more harm! Jesus prayed, **"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!"** Jesus prayed for the people who were crucifying him. It is only Jesus' forgiving love that can make us strong enough in this new year to forgive those who have sinned against us – even as Jesus has completely forgiven us!

**"We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ)." When Jesus fills your heart it changes everything. When Jesus' forgiving love fills your heart – it will color how you live one day at a time – reflecting Jesus' love in how you treat one another. In one of the most practical and powerful verses in all of God's Word – in Ephesians chapter 5 it talks about marriage – husbands and wives – roles and responsibilities. It says, **"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ love the church and gave himself up for her – to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church,****

without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hates his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.” Ephesians 5:25-30 Dorwin Stoddard and his wife Mavy were at a political doings in Tucson when gunfire rang out. Dorwin was hit by a bullet. He realized his wife was in mortal danger. So Dorwin pushed her to the floor and covered her body with his—to shield her from harm and danger. Dorwin willingly gave up his life—to save his wife. This again—makes perfect sense. Dorwin loved his wife Mavy more than life itself. Not just with mushy cards from Hallmark—but with actions—with laying down his life for her. Husbands love your wife like Christ loved the Church! Jesus’ forgiving love means we will show our wife and show our children what it means to love and to forgive! Everyone will know we are Jesus’ disciples—his students and followers and imitators when by the power of the Gospel we love one another. Amen!

**To God alone all glory!**



*Rsv. Anthony E. Schuttz*