

Statistics say that 80 percent of United Methodists in the United States were born into a family that was also United Methodist. That was true for me. I wonder if it was true for you not only within our denomination but across denominations. That's often the case that if you are following after Jesus today or an active part of a congregation that that was part of your life from when you were growing up.

Now that's certainly not not the entire case for it for everyone here but for many it's a familiar environment and even for those that are new to the church or are who've been away for a long time some of these ideas are familiar. This person of Jesus is someone that maybe we've heard about.

But this was not the case at all when Jesus was actually here when he was walking here on Earth. No one had heard of him before. They were waiting for somebody else.

They were waiting for somebody else.

That's certainly the case in the path is today John the Baptist and Peter and Andrew they were looking for someone who had been promised for a long time especially those of the Jewish faith that that time they were looking for someone called the Messiah and they believe that part of the way that God was at work in the world was that God would send someone who would save them who would come to make things right. Who would come to bring God's kingdom here on earth as it was in heaven.

And they were waiting and waiting and waiting.

Are trying to figure out how are we going to live into this. Well what's the purpose for me. And what's the purpose for our people if this messiah that we've been waiting for isn't coming yet.

Have you ever had an experience like that in your life.

Where you've been. Been waiting for something for something and it's not coming.

And if only this thing would calm that all of a sudden your purpose would be clarify and that you know what was next or you'd be certain about the next step in your life.

But but you're here and you're you're waiting in the passage. Today

we hear of a pretty incredible encounter. John the Baptist is standing there with some of his followers. And we don't know what they're doing that day hanging around waiting by the corner there whatever it is they see Jesus walk by and.

And John the Baptist you remember we talked about his story last week he had baptized Jesus not so long ago and the Jordan River and he had this incredible experience of God the heavens opened the voice of God was heard that the Spirit came down like a duck.

And there's that same guy. Hey hey guys that's the Messiah. That's the Christ. We've been waiting for. He's right over.

Will this be the person you've been waiting for for several hundred years not only your whole life but your parents and your grandparents and you them before that the purpose of your entire people is it's that guy. Let me go talk to that guy. And so they go up to him and they say.

Where are you staying.

I mean how are you gonna start a conversation with the person that your people have been waiting for for hundreds of years. I guess that's as good as any. And he said well come and see come and find out.

And so they go and stay with them.

And the scripture says that one of the very first things that one of them did the very next day was to go get his brother and to bring him also to Jesus. Now I don't know what his experience like. What

did they talk about in the evening over their meal or what was the morning like. I don't know what that was like. But what I do know what we do know from the text is the Andrew went to go get his brother.

And said hey you've got to come meet this person. You've got to come meet Jesus.

Have you ever had an experience like that in your life.

You've had an experience with maybe it's with a person or with a song or or with a place or with a meal and you just have to tell someone about it. It seems like the purpose that you have then is I've got to tell somebody about this place.

It's great it's fantastic. And that becomes your purpose for a little bit. Now this was dangerous purpose.

I got to go get my brother. I got to tell him about Jesus I've got to help him have an experience like I've had.

And then something even stranger happens. Simon Andrew's brother comes to meet Jesus. And Jesus gives him another name.

Right off the bat. Have you ever had that happen. I've never had that happen now. I've had people forget my name I've forgotten probably I've forgotten most of your names here at one point or another.

Hopefully I can remember many of them now.

But but he gave them a different name and not an accident not because he forgot it but because he saw something in Peter.

But what was it like for you. Hey why did my dad Simon who's Peter I just met you and you're giving me a different name.

I can't. But my brother said you're pretty good guy. But what is going on here.

The text raises some questions.

Like what. What is going on here. What did Jesus see. In Simon.

That led him to call him Peter. Which

means rock. What was his experience like the day before that led him to go get his brother because this was so important and you can't miss this.

Have you ever had questions in your life. About God. About your faith.

About your purpose. Some crazy person that calls you some name and you don't know where they got it from.

Maybe that's never happened to you but maybe it has our hoped during the series is to ask questions to ask serious questions of God and that this might be a place where we're able to ask them that when we engage with questions with one another we don't do it just so that we can give an answer or the answer to the book or the answer that we've been taught we ask questions and I hope that we will engage each other with those questions and listen deeply and pay attention.

And my hope is that during the series that we might be able to engage in some of those questions together answer the question today Does God have a purpose for my life.

Does God have a purpose. For my life and the text there you wonder.

We certainly don't know much about Andrew and his brother Simon who was named Peter before what did they think their purpose was before them.

I don't know whether they had big aspirations or whether they were pretty content with their lot in life. What what was.

Their purpose. How

did they understand as whatever was like in the past when they had an encounter with Jesus something changed.

For Andrew and Simon there must have been some kind of sign or some kind of vision some kind of insight that opened up in a new way for them to be able to know and embrace something that they hadn't known before. And whatever it was it changed their life. It was transformational for them. It gave them a special insight not only about who Jesus was but they came to know a little bit more about who they were because of this encounter with Jesus somehow some way Jesus revealed to them who he was.

And more about who they were this is this is how Jesus works.

It seems the more we get to know about Jesus the more we see the truth about ourselves. And sometimes it's the truth about ourselves that we are excited about. To know that we are someone that God has claimed a way with God's love that nothing that we can do can separate us from the love of

God and Jesus Christ. But sometimes when we get to know a little bit more about ourselves in light of Jesus it's it's not so nice.

The truth is that we all make mistakes. I can't think of any number of ways in this last week where I've maybe said things are done things that that weren't helpful. That turned me against other people I ignored other people's needs where I focused only on myself and and.

And this is our human condition and when we're left to ourselves we we mess up and so this mirror this way of understanding ourselves is both something that's new and amazing.

And it also recognizes our need for confession and forgiveness. This

is part of how Jesus works in our lives.

And I suggest from the story that it's not only that when we encounter Jesus but there is something about Jesus when we encounter him that he sees something in us in you in me. And that's certainly what happened here I believe. SIMON And Peter and John they saw Jesus and they met him they had some kind of encounter in him.

But I believe Jesus saw something in them that they didn't see for themselves. That Jesus saw in Simon not just a fisherman not just a day laborer not just someone who was trying to make it by in the world but God saw in him.

The rock on which he would build his church. Jesus saw in him something he didn't see in himself and it changed his life.

It shaped his direction it helped give him purpose in a new way in a new context.

Jesus looks deeply into our souls and sees the very best in them. Throughout the Gospels Jesus when he encountered people he. He. Healed them.

If he could removing any roadblock be it physical or spiritual that kept them from becoming all that God intended them to be. Jesus sees possibilities and turns them into purposes.

God saw the possibilities in Simon and help take them into the purpose for his life.

God sees the possibilities in you and shapes them into the purposes for your life. For my life for our lives together God sees things that you and I can't see.

In ourselves in the people around us in our community and part of our journey is helping to see as as Jesus sees to see the truth about who we are as a congregation.

To see the truth about places in our community that maybe we would rather not see and to see the truth about ourselves.

The truth about ourselves about you and me that we have a purpose beyond just making an everyday Jesus saw beyond the faith of a fisherman he saw disciple who sees Peter's soul and when he sees it he

helped him become more of who he meant to be and so Jesus still works. Today Jesus sees in you and I something that we all see for ourselves.

God sees you as a part of God's kingdom coming on earth as it is in heaven. God sees you as being good news to the poor and helping those that are downcast. God sees in you someone who is able to care for others who others won't pay attention to.

God sees in you and me followers disciples even when we don't see them for ourselves. Agents of God's kingdom spreading light and love even when we don't see that in ourselves.

What a life changing moment it must have been for Simon when he realized who he was. His purpose wasn't just to be a fisherman. The possibilities were so much more than that. He was to be the rock on which the church would be built.

Amazing must have been for John the Baptist and the other disciples these life changing moments those those moments when we begin to see things in a new way.

When we begin to have an experience with God that makes it maybe a little bit different than it was before it was one of these moments that John Wesley the founder of Methodism recorded in his journal may 24th 1738. He had had all of the resume of someone that that certainly should have been had a good understanding of God. He worked hard at school. He worked hard in the church he went to Oxford one of the best education possibilities for him of that day organized the holy club. He had a pretty terrible mission in Georgia in the Georgia colony but it was this experience when he realized Christ Grace for himself to finally realize that he was a beloved child of God just as he was.

He wrote down that he felt his heart was strangely warmed that he felt God's love for him even for him. And I wonder if you've had an experience like that. Beginning to catch just a glimpse of the purpose that God has for your life.

That the possibilities that exist are just ideas or are possibilities that you and I have. But but they are part of God's purpose in the world for God uses people like you and me Jesus says You will do.

What I've taught you. And he would do even greater things than these you'll do greater things than these things that Jesus has done.

This is our calling. This is our purpose as individuals as a community. The good news is that God continues to work in this way.

God sees you. God sees what you might become and together we seek to grow on that journey. So look for Jesus for he is with you. Open yourself to experience God's grace it can change everything from that moment on how amazing it is for us when we encounter Jesus for he looks at each one of us and says You are valuable.

Your significant I have something in mind for you and maybe you have an idea yet but maybe you don't have it yet but it's good.

And you're loved far beyond. You can ask or imagine. God has a purpose for a life and sees it when we don't even see it for ourselves. We pray with me God thank you for seeing us for who we are. And who we might become. Help us to live into the possibilities. Just that we have in mind. But your purpose for us. For our family and friends for our congregation and our community.

Strengthen and guide us. We pray. In Jesus name.