

# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY JANUARY 19, 2020

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## "Where's Waldo?"

Based on John 1:29-42

Did you ever play "I Spy" when you were little? When my big kids were little kids, there was a series of books that was a similar game, called "Where's Waldo?" Cartoon pictures with crowds of people doing what crowds do: in parks, in the store, on the beach; and hidden somewhere in the picture was Waldo, a rather ordinary looking fellow lost in the sea of faces. It made for great bedtime reading if you were a kid. But as an adult, a good reminder that what you are looking for could be right in front of you.

John the Baptist had found "Waldo," except of course, he was referring to his Messiah. The problem was, no one else around could 'see him' and consequently, did not believe him.

"Look! There He is. Just coming around the corner now by the butcher shop."  
"...the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (v29)

Those gathered around him all craned their necks, looking for someone in an expensive suit, or official looking robes,

or dare I say it, a slippery used car salesman look (no offence intended to car sales people here, its just that sometimes we preachers get the same look as your rather underhanded car cousins!).

"THE NEXT  
DAY JOHN SAW  
JESUS COMING  
TOWARD HIM  
AND SAID,  
"LOOK, THE  
LAMB OF GOD,  
WHO TAKES  
AWAY THE SIN  
OF THE  
WORLD!"

~JOHN 1:29

"I don't see Him, John," said one.

"Are you sure it was Him?" said another.

"Oh, I'm sure," replied John. "I'll never forget it. When I was baptizing Him,"

*"I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.... I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."* (v32, 34)

"I still don't see Him," said the one.

"I think you've been in the sun too long, John," said the other. "Go home and have a good rest. This preaching business is stressing you out."

The next day, like Waldo appearing on the next page in the book, the scene unfolded again, and started to repeat itself. Except this time, the crowd gathered around John the Baptist was not the rich and the righteous, but a bunch of smelly fishermen, genuine blue collar, hard working, but nothing special to write home to Mama kind of men.

*"Look, the Lamb of God!"* (v36)

Said John, as Christ passed them by on the street.

They stopped to look.

Jesus stooped to look back.

*They said, "Rabbi"... "where are you staying?"* (v38)

*"Come," he replied, "and you will see."* (v39).

And so began a conversation.

Some of the men were disciples of John the Baptist.

Some of the men just happened to be listening in, and followed along.

The conversation continued long into the night.

It was as if the men had forgotten everything else for the moment, and were entranced by what Christ had to say.

They looked at one another and said,

*"We have found the Messiah"*  
(v42)

And so began, the classic story of discipleship: *"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."* (Mark 1:17) John's version is not nearly as romantic as that found in the other gospels, but the outcome is the same. Andrew and Simon drop their fishing nets and begin a new life as disciples of Christ.

But the real question is, why did Andrew and Simon 'see' the Christ, and others, who were given the same opportunity, did not? How was it that Andrew and Simon could find "Waldo" but others could only see the crowd?

- Was it because they were blue-collar working folk?
- Was it because they were poor?
- Was it because they were a rebellious lot looking for a radical leader?

Or was it because they were watchful, observant, and intuitive, and could tell within a few minutes, that this Man, Jesus, was no ordinary man.

A fisherman might have been poor and terribly smelly at the end of the day. He might have worked on a dirty dock. But

he was a man, who had to keep one eye on the fish, and one eye on the boat. Clouds gave warning of coming weather; a puff of air in the sail: a sign of turning fortunes. The sea was unpredictable, and must be headed when she began to boil and froth. Fishermen lived close to death: a misstep, an unexpected squall, and leaky boat could all spell disaster. They might not have been educated men, but they most certainly were wise men. And not just on matters of the sea and of fish.

Andrew and Simon knew what was before them: the Messiah.

Andrew and Simon knew what they wanted to be: Disciples.

There is a world out there that pushes the church away or is ambivalent towards the church, because they cannot see "Christ" in it. They cannot find "Waldo" in the crowd of faces that call themselves 'church-goers'. And there is a lesson in there for all churches. Because sometimes, we churches don't act very much like the kind of place Jesus would be proud of.

But perhaps the world is trying too hard: looking for Waldo in all the wrong places. Because Christ is not just hunkered down in church sanctuaries, hiding somehow, behind dusty hymn books or

the sugar bowl in the kitchen. Christ is alive and at work  
*"Wherever two or more are gathered"* (Matthew 18:20). Wherever there are people, there is Christ.

It's not about being disappointed because you looked in the wrong place. It's not about looking for Christ in all the right places. (because where is the right place exactly?) It's not about giving up because you didn't find Christ where you expected Him to be.

It simply, about looking for Christ.

- In the coffee shop.
- At family dinners (even if they are loud and unholy)
- Watching the sunset in the backyard.
- At the bookclub (even if it is a bit of a racy novel!)
- Getting the brakes fixed on the car
- Yes, at church!

The real question is...  
Are you looking for Him?  
Everyday?  
In the everyday?  
In each breath?  
In each action?

Have you found Waldo today?  
Then turn the page, and start looking again.  
Because He's there too.