

## **“WHAT DO YOU WANT?”**

**Rev. Robert T. Woodyard**

**First Christian Reformed Church**

**June 25, 2023, 10:30 AM**

**Scripture Texts: John 1:35-45**

### **Introduction.**

Welcome again to SERVE week. We have been planning and preparing and praying for you for many months.

We started several months ago having prayer meetings for you. Each of you has at least one prayer partner. You will have an opportunity to meet some of them at lunch today. We will continue to be praying for all of you this week and we encourage all of you to enter into daily prayer for what God wants to do in and through you and with all of us together.

### **SERVE Theme: What do you want?**

The theme for Serve this year is “What do you want?” It comes from John 1:38a: “Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, ‘What do you want?’”

Everyone is looking for something. Everyone wants something. No one is without needs and wants, desires and longings. What do you want? What are you looking for?

Some of those things you will be reflecting on in your morning devotions. Worth, freedom, hope, love, acceptance, and significance.

Some of you might have your own list. Happiness, pleasure, a good life, a girlfriend/boyfriend, good grades, a good job.

What are all these things? How important are they? If you had them all how good or better would your life be? Can you have these things on their own, by themselves, or must we have something else as well?

If you were going to build a house, what would you use for foundation materials?

Would you use sheetrock, wallpaper, paint? Would you use curtains, pillows, couches, chairs? If you go down in the basement or into the crawl space under the house, what do you see? What is the house built on? Is it built on pillows, curtains, couches and carpet?

No, it’s built on concrete, lots of concrete. Does that mean pillows, curtains and couches are bad things? Of course not, they are great to have, but in their right place and order. In a house without a foundation they are not much use. What are you looking for to build your life on?

This week during your morning devotions you will be looking at topics like worth, freedom, hope, love and acceptance, and significance.

I especially urge you to read the Scripture passages near the end of each devotion and the Scripture text where it says listen to God. If you want to hear God's voice speaking to you directly and personally, read those passages with every devotion. Don't leave your devotion time without reading them. They are really important. Don't miss out on the best part.

All of these things are good, but they aren't first. All of these things are good, but you can't get them or have them in any truly meaningful or lasting way without Jesus. You can't get these for yourself, they have to be given to you and they can only come from Jesus.

Our text this morning is the text for the beginning of Serve, it is a foundation kind of text. It is the text that lies unseen under all the rest of the week. Notice what is going on in our text. This is the first chapter of John's Gospel. This is the very beginning of Jesus' ministry on earth. This is Jesus laying the foundation stone of the church.

**Ephesians 2:19-21** ... [we] are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

John the Baptist planted the first seed saying, "Behold the Lamb of God" and two of his disciples left to follow Jesus.

### **John 1:35-42**

*Behold, the Lamb of God (who takes away the sin of the world).*

We aren't Jewish so it is more difficult for us to grasp the full impact of those words and to hear them the way they heard them.

Those words don't take us back to that intense scene on the mountain when Abraham was about to sacrifice his son Isaac on an altar and he said to his son, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering." And miraculous God did provide the lamb for a sacrifice, a substitute for his son Isaac.

Those words don't take us back to the Passover Lamb, whose blood was spread on the door frame in Egypt so that the angel of death would pass over their home and spare their lives.

Those words don't take us back to the daily and annual sacrifices at the temple for the sins of the people.

Those words don't take us back to Isaiah 53:

**Isaiah 53:6-7** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,

**Isaiah 53:5** He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

John the Baptist was announcing God was sending the final sacrifice for the whole world, the blood sacrifice in our place to take away all our sins, the deepest need of all our souls.

This lays the foundation for our freedom, freedom from sin, guilt and shame. You can't have worth and freedom and hope without first knowing how unworthy your sin makes you and how in bondage you are to your sins and how without hope you are without a Savior. You cannot know Jesus unless you know Him as the Lamb of God who takes away your sins. You cannot know Jesus without first confessing and repenting of your sins. Make Jesus the foundation of your freedom.

This is why Jesus' first words are so important to grasp.

***Jesus turns to them and asks, "What are you seeking?" "What do you want?"***

Notice Jesus doesn't say who are you seeking? He asks, "What are you seeking?" What is the meaning of that question?

It sounds like an innocent enough, simple enough question, but you have to know, Jesus never asks trivial, small talk kinds of questions? Jesus is always going deep, for the heart.

What do you want? What are you looking for? What do you really want in life? What is the secret longing of every human heart?

Why did Jesus ask that question? He is God, He knew perfectly well what their thoughts, hearts and motives were. Jesus never asks us a question to gain knowledge, He knows. He asks for our sake, to make us think about our motives and intentions. Why do they want to follow Jesus? Jesus is asking what are you looking for from me, what do you want from me?

Notice the two disciples give a strange answer. What do you want? Your address?!

***Where are you staying?***

They weren't interested in just a little small talk on the side of the road, like we might have in the grocery store aisle or while pumping gas or standing in line at the post office. They weren't

interested in passing some pleasantries with chance a acquaintance. The implication is they want more time with Jesus for private conversation, to know Him better.

Desire to be with Jesus and where Jesus is. Don't seek a casual, occasional relationship with Jesus. Jesus had an intimate relationship with His disciples. They would live together, eat and sleep together, walk countless miles together. They would know what Jesus thought, what He expected and demanded. They would know what Jesus smelled like, that close, that intimate.

Jesus wants the kind of relationship where we experience His unconditional love and acceptance.

The answer to the question, "What do you want?" is Jesus.

***Come and you will see.***

Again notice the words. Jesus doesn't say, "Come and see." "Come and you will see." It is a command followed by a promise. If you obey and come to me, then you will see. Come and your blind eyes will be opened. Come and you will hear great things. Come and you will see great grace.

Come is Jesus' invitation to acceptance. Jesus is always open, always inviting. Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden. Come to me with your questions, your burdens, your fears, your anxieties, doubts. Some of you have some anxieties about this week, some fears, some doubts. "What have I gotten myself into, far from home, with a bunch of strangers."

Draw near to me, learn from me, know me. Jesus wants a relationship with you. He has brought you out of your comfort zone to draw you closer to Him to experience His love and acceptance.

***We have found the Messiah.***

We aren't Jewish so it is more difficult for us to grasp the full impact of those words. The Jews had been waiting for a Messiah for hundreds of years. Since the prophet Malachi four hundred years before there had not been any prophet speak, utter silence from heaven. Remember at the time of Jesus birth, old Simeon and Anna praying and waiting all their life for the consolation of Israel, the hope of Israel. Can you imagine hoping for something for hundreds of years?

This is the foundation of our hope. When everything else fails or falls away, hope in Jesus.

Come and you will see. Andrew obeyed the command and in a very brief time the promise was fulfilled, he saw that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus is true to His promise. You come in faith and He will show Himself to you.

Can you say to your family and friends those simple words, “I have found the Messiah, I have found Jesus, who takes away my sin and leads me along on the path to true peace and joy and hope of eternal life. I have found the Messiah.”

***You are Simon, you shall be Peter.***

Jesus looked at Peter with a gaze that penetrated to the depth of his soul. Jesus looked at Peter and Jesus knew Peter. You are Simon, you will become Peter, which means rock.

This is not just a statement about what Peter will become, this is a statement about what Jesus will make out of him. When Jesus comes into our lives He gives us a new identity, He changes the old and makes us new. He begins the work of changing our hearts and minds and lives.

Jesus says you will no longer be that, you will be this. Jesus has the authority and power to give us a new identity, a new sense of worth, value and significance. A new foundation and a new destiny.

I am no longer just a sinner, I am a sinner saved by grace, a sinner now with the Holy Spirit to enable me to overcome sin and have victory over sin and a desire to no longer sin.

Jesus is not out to make us what we want to be, what we value, Jesus is out to make us what He wants us to be. More than anything else I would rather be what He wants me to be than what I want to be.

I trust Jesus to the point I wish He would make me His puppet, literally, doing exactly what He wills. I want Him to rule and overrule in every aspect of my life.

Why? Because I am weary of my sin, my selfishness, my resistance, my rebellion, my disobedience, my stubbornness, my pride, my fears. With Jesus as my foundation, I want Him to build what has real worth and significance, what is solid rock and not shifting sand.

**John 1:43-45**

***Jesus found Philip.***

Jesus found Philip and said, “Follow me.” Has Jesus found you? Do you want to be found by Jesus? Are you hiding?

Don’t follow the world, don’t follow your friends, don’t follow social media, don’t follow yourself. Follow Jesus.

***Philip found Nathanael.***

Philip found Nathanael and said, “Come and see.”

See for yourself, prove it for yourself. Don't take someone else's word. I have found the Savior, come and see for yourself. This is not just an invitation from Philip to Nathanael, but an invitation to all of us.

Don't stiff arm Jesus or His Gospel, don't hold Him at arms length, especially this week. Don't cast aspersions, don't make assumptions, come and see. Make an honest inquiry.

### **Implications and application.**

The foundation of what it means to be a Christian is based on a personal, real relationship with Jesus that is honest, that admits we need a Savior from our sin, we need our sins to be forgiven.

Non-Christians have no hope and no help to have worth, freedom, love and acceptance. These come from the Holy Spirit who is in those who have found the Messiah, Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Christians can have all of these things when they obey Jesus' command to come, and then receive what He promises.

Do you want all these things? Sure you do, everyone does.

This morning is a call to look for what you want in Jesus.

I call you to come to Jesus this week.

I urge you to want Jesus more than you want anything else.

I want you to make Jesus the center and focus of what you do and why you are doing it.

Draw near to Him this week in your devotions, in the worship time, on the work sites.

Keep your eyes open for Jesus. Jesus is in this place, anything can happen here.

**Prayer:** We commit to your grace these servants, whom you have set apart for service. Make all of them salt and light in this community and grant this week be a week of seeing your glory, and fruit from their labors.

Grant them favor where they serve. Protect them from accident and injury, from evil and the evil one. Strengthen and encourage them for the task. Empower and embolden their witness. Give them unity in their service and may all know they are Christians because of their love.

Send a fresh and refreshing anointing of your Holy Spirit upon them, your Spirit of wisdom and revelation that the eyes of their hearts may be enlightened so that they may know the hope to which you have called them, and the riches of your glorious inheritance for them and the immeasurably great power that works in them. Bless them beyond what they could ask or imagine. Bless them with a great blessing and bless them greatly to be a great blessing.