



## ***Family Service 16<sup>th</sup> January 2011 – Reading***

### **John 1: 29-42**

#### **John Testifies About Jesus**

<sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! <sup>30</sup> This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ <sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

<sup>32</sup> Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. <sup>33</sup> And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>34</sup> I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

#### **John’s Disciples Follow Jesus**

<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 they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

<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). <sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter<sup>[b]</sup>).



## ***Family Service 16<sup>th</sup> January 2011 – Talk***

***"Lord, may the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be pleasing in your sight"***

***Please be seated...***

This story is about the transition between John the Baptist and Jesus and sets out their relationship. Jesus has now been baptised by John and he knows who he is even though he hasn't yet started out on his mission.

John the Baptist, so it is said, is a bit of a mad man. He wears odd clothes and eats very odd things living out in the wilderness. But he speaks with such passion and conviction that people come from miles around travelling out into the wastelands to see and hear him.

Now my vision of John the Baptist is probably skewed slightly by the Life of Brian which I know is a bad image but to me he is a small hunched back man in rags running about and talking from great piles of rock and shouting and bellowing at great crowds of people.

*So I want to be John – I put on my rags and I have grown a beard for the part!*

### **Climb the pulpit**

It is like me talking (or shouting) to you now. But you having come to the slopes of Dunkery Beacon to hear me talk. Having walked there myself on a cold and windy day I am not sure I was go there to listen to somebody speak no matter who they were.

SO picture the scene John the Baptist has this great audience and following of people who come to see him. Then he sees Jesus probably almost at the back and he says

***Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!,***



He presented Jesus as the Lamb of God the Son of God the reason for doing what he was doing.

Don't follow me ... follow him. You can almost imagine the focus of the crowd turning around from John and facing Jesus.

But at this point Jesus had no profile, people didn't know who he was he didn't do miracles and yet by his presence and the words of John the Baptist they turned and followed him.

It is like me turning round and saying stop listening to me listen to that baby listen to baby Grace even though she cannot speak yet.

What marked Jesus out what made him different – what made him followable?

### **Climb down from pulpit**

It is amazing how different people portray different things that you have never seen. But when one person has set an image everybody else then follows that image. The image of Jesus that most of us use today was painted by a monk who saw it in his dream nobody knows what he looked like but yet we all recognise that face as Jesus

I don't know how many people saw the production of '**the nativity**' over Christmas? This like '**Life of Brian**' has given me an image, but this time of the Angel Gabriel as a softly spoken Irishman dressed in white.

But in that scene what Mary saw in the Angel Gabriel bearing in mind that he wasn't glowing or surrounded by the heavenly host was a peace - a spirit and she felt a presence. When he came to the shepherds they followed him and did what he said. That is what I think Jesus looked to the followers of John the Baptist.



John the Baptist was a well known preacher who attracted large crowds yet he was content for Jesus to take the limelight and take the higher place. This is true humility and the basis for greatness in preaching or any other sort of church leadership or work we do for Christ.

When you are content to do what God wants you to do and let Jesus Christ be honoured for it God will do great things for you.

John the Baptist had great humility he was not bigger than his purpose and is a great example of how we should live today.

So following John's instructions two of his followers immediately turned and followed Jesus. They go not knowing him but just having heard that he is the messiah and probably feeling the presence and the peace emanating from him

They turn their back on a man they have travelled far following and supported to somebody they do not know

Jesus then went about selecting other followers who were to become his disciples. He went about asking them literally to give up all they had and all knew to follow him with all their hearts and all their lives - which they willingly did.

I imagine this as being like the lottery advert a few years ago when the big finger comes down and says "**it could be you**" obviously asking you forget the very low odds of winning the lottery. Somebody has to win it and it could be you. The people in the advert were then touched by the finger and their lives were changed as they became millionaires.



The people that turned to follow Jesus gave up everything they knew for a life of service to him. They didn't become millionaires but they became rich in other ways.

The last part of the story is how Jesus was to convert Simon - Peter.

Jesus saw what he could be and said "you are my rock" Peter didn't know what Jesus had in store for him as he selected him to become the leader of his church but he took it willingly and without question.

But that is the same for all of us here today Jesus has selected us all to be his family and his followers. It doesn't matter that you may not think you are as worthy or as humble as Peter. He has selected me and you.

And he also selects Grace to be part of his loving family to follow in the footsteps of his first disciple Peter.

He had great things in mind for Peter when he took him on and who knows he may have great things in mind for Grace when she gets older. She may not know it now yet but she will .... and it is the responsibility of her parents, Godparents and all the church family to help and support her as she develops as a member of Jesus' family.

Amen

*Alan Swan  
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