Lesson 2 [Chapter 1:19-51] "We found Him"

Remember:

Last lesson was the 1st part of chapter 1 which introduces Jesus as the eternal Word (Logos), who was with God and is God, the creator of all things, who became human flesh to bring light, life, and salvation to a world that largely rejected Him, and includes John the Baptist's testimony identifying Jesus as the "Lamb of God".

Lesson Goal:

SEEK God as these disciples in chapter 1 were seeking and FOUND Him.

Lesson Opener:

WE FOUND HIM!

Finding something we've been looking for is exciting and relieving. Think about the student who finally found a great dress for a special occasion, the kid who finally discovered his missing Air Pod wedged inside the couch cushions, or the athlete who realized her cleats weren't missing—her mom just put them away. Each one probably celebrated and then immediately went to tell someone else, "Guess what I found?!"

Today we'll observe Jesus's first disciples realize that He was the One they'd been looking for and then eagerly spread the word to others. Some realized His identity immediately while some struggled with doubt, but to all of them, the invitation was the same: "Follow me."

Have you ever found something or someone after looking for a long time? How did you feel? What makes an ideal leader? What qualities would make you want to follow them?

Lesson Body:

After the wonderful exposition about the Incarnate Word who is the Giver of grace in the beginning of chapter one, in the rest of the Chapter, St. John the Evangelist presents the witnesses for the person of the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. On the first day [19-28] St. John the Baptist witnesses before the priests and Levites.
2. On the second day [29-34] he witnesses upon seeing the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. On the third day [35-39] St. John the Baptist witnesses before two of his disciples.

4. On the fourth day [40- 42] St. Andrew witnesses before Simon, his brother.
5. On the fifth day [43-51] St. Philip witnesses before Nathaniel.
6. On the sixth day: the practical testimony of the water turned into wine (Chapter Two).

This is similar to what happened at the beginning of the creation- the world was created in six days, and God rested on the seventh day.

A Witness of the Incarnated Word

A Voice in the Wilderness 1:19-28

The Jewish leaders sent representatives to the Baptist not with the intention of verifying his message but out of curiosity; or out of a sense of responsibility- as people in authority- to reveal to the people the true character of a certain person if that was beneficial to them.

He clearly indicated that he was neither the Messiah nor Elijah (2 Kings 2:11), nor the redeeming prophet (Ex 15:18). He proclaimed that he was merely a 'voice' (Is 40:3) predicting the coming of the Messiah [23].

The authorities then asked: "Why then do you baptize…" since you have no official rank in the religious order? He replied that the baptism he performed was not an end in itself; but it was to prepare for a greater spiritual act. It would be performed by Someone coming after him, but Who existed before him; and Whose 'sandal straps he was not worthy to loose.'

As if he is saying: " Why are you concerned about the baptism I carry out? It almost has no value if compared with the baptism about to take place. My baptism is a baptism of repentance and preparation. Christ BRINGS greater baptism, the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The time has come and He is here among you, yet you do not know Him and that is how you sin. I wish you stopped being concerned with me and my baptism and be concerned rather with the One I witness to and His baptism!"

The Baptist called Him the Lamb in order to remind the Jews of Isaiah's prophecy in Is 53.

The Lamb of God 1:29-34

God gave John the Baptist the sure sign to know the Messiah. He would be the one on Whom the Holy Spirit descended upon from heaven. The solemn testimony of John the Baptist was that Jesus is the Son of God.

The ultimate aim of St. John's Gospel is to present the Lord Jesus Christ to the people of Israel. St. John the Baptist had not yet seen or known Him until that moment, for Christ had spent His time at home, while John had lived in desert places all his life.

When we ask the Baptist: Then how did you know Him?' His response will be: "I knew Him when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him'".

The Lord came to be baptized to serve as a model of humility and to call us to receive redemption through baptism. The Lord accepted to go through something which was not necessary for Him, yet it was necessary on our account.

The First Disciples 1:35-42

The testimony of the Baptist that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah [35 -37] won Andrew over who was of his disciples. Then Andrew's testimony won Simon, his brother over. The Lord called Phillip, and Phillip won over Nathaniel [45-51]. It goes this way: John brings disciples to Jesus, Andrew brings Peter, and Philip brings Nathanael.

Verse 37 "The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus". Who are they?

They were two of the Baptist's disciples, Andrew and (most probably) John the Evangelist himself. Andrew then went to call his brother Simon Peter. These three are among the first who became the Lord's disciples.

Takeaway:

We always need to give an answer to the Lord's question " what do you seek" in every act, word or thought we are engaged in. Do we seek the Lord in every act? Are we preoccupied to be enlightened by His Holy Spirit?

Do we seek to develop and strengthen true knowledge, and constantly sanctify ourselves and our inner glory?

Do we seek that which glorifies God and the well-being of the Church?

This is the constant question that the Lord Jesus Christ puts to every person: What do you seek? Are you seeking worldly possessions, pleasures, men's praise and fake honor? Or are you seeking to be with the Lord wherever He may be?

The Lord had no place where He could rest for, He lived as a stranger. It is the same for those who seek Him for they will live with Him as strangers on earth. Hence it is insufficient to seek the Lord and follow Him from time to time, but we need to stay and remain with Him.

We are in need to sit at His feet and be refreshed from the springs of His love. We will be enlightened by His Holy Spirit and get acquainted with His hidden and unspeakable mysteries.

St. John Chrysostom expresses this thought in these words: ' They did not say teach us about opinions and beliefs or other important matters, but they said: Where are you staying?" They did not follow Him in a haphazard way, but they adhered to Him.

What was Andrew's immediate response after believing that Jesus was the Messiah? Why do you think he responded this way? He invited Peter.

Andrew used the word "found." What does that reveal about his desire for the Messiah?

He speaks proudly and victoriously of the One they have found: they found a pearl of great value and a true treasure.

Names matter, especially in the Bible, because they become more than a person's identifier—they become that person's identity. When Peter met Jesus for the first time, he was invited to step into a new identity. It's not an identity that Peter deserved, but one that God offered anyway. The new name, "Cephas" or "Peter," means "rock," representing something firm, steady, and foundational. At the time of his name change, Peter wasn't really any of those things yet.

Philip and Nathanael 1:42-51

The Lord went to Galilee to invite Phillip. Philip received his call directly and not through the Baptist as in the case of Andrew and John. Neither was he called through Andrew in the way Simon Peter was called.

Clearly, the Lord uses every possible manner to invite and call His children. The Lord found Philip just like someone who would be looking for him and wanting to find Him.

According to the Gospel (Jn. 1:44) Philip the apostle came from the same city as that of Andrew and Peter. He was blessed because he was the friend of the two brothers as these were the first to be honored by the Gospel.

Having been enlightened by the light of faith, Philip invited Nathaniel to come to the Lord.

Nathaniel and Bartholomew are considered the names for one and the same person.

Verse 46: And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

These words do not come from an unbeliever, nor from someone who deserves to be blamed. He is to be praised…why? Because Nathaniel was interested in the writings of the prophets even more than Philip. He had learned from the Holy Scripture that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem; from the city of David…the character of Nathaniel makes him a person that cannot be deceived easily.

Yet he did not dismiss the Person who came to him, and he came to the Lord with that great desire that he felt towards Him. Inwardly, he felt that Philip might have been mistaken about the place (and not about the Person) St. John Chrysostom.

The Lord praised him for being an honest Israelite that conveys that he is a real descendent of Jacob who struggled for the sake of the Lord and therefore deserved to be named ' Israel'.

Verse 48: Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

St. John Chrysostom believes the dialogue between Philip and Nathaniel occurred under the fig tree.

When Nathaniel came in touch with the Lord Jesus Christ, he called Him ' Rabbi', 'Son of God', and 'King of Israel.' The Lord had praised him for being an Israelite in whom there was no guile, and now Nathaniel bows down to accept Him to be King over himself and over all Israel.

Do you observe how the Lord lifts Nathaniel gradually upwards and away from the earth; leading him to discover that He is not just a mere person?! For how can He be a person when angels wait on Him and ascend and descend to serve Him? That is why the Lord tells him: " You will see greater things than these" [50].

Lesson Delivery Idea:

When we first meet someone, we normally greet them with questions that help us get to know them. We might ask, "What's your name?" or "Where do you go to school?" And yet, when Jesus met Nathanael, Jesus didn't ask him about himself—Jesus told Nathanael about himself.

Jesus's greeting was a confident, insightful, and honest statement that led Nathanael to wonder, "Wow—how does this guy already know me?"

What similarities do you see between Jesus's interaction with Peter and His interaction with Nathanael? What do these interactions reveal about Jesus?

This is very important as Christ tailors his approach according to the person. When dealing with Peter, He recognized his personality and gave him a new name and told him about the rock to excite him. When dealing with Nathanael, He gave him facts about himself to eliminate the doubt.

How does Christ deal with me?

Trust that He will tailor His message to personally reach you. All we have to do is to SEEK as these disciples were seeking and FOUND Him.

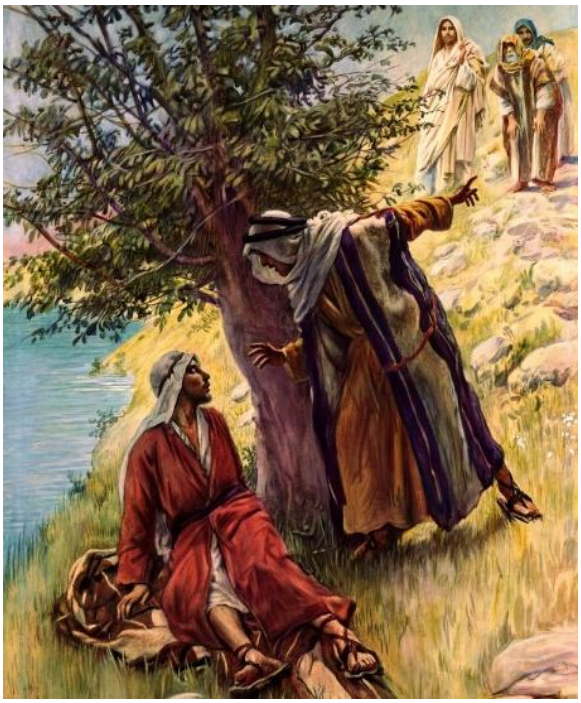
What did Jesus mean when he said "I saw you" to Nathanael? 1:48.

Jesus displayed supernatural knowledge (I saw you), identifying Himself as Messiah. One of the most startling things about God is that He is omniscient, meaning He knows everything. God knows every nook and cranny of our souls! This knowledge reminds us that He is gloriously big while we are gloriously small. In fact, when we try to hide things about ourselves from God, we're like a toddler covered in blue marker who insists they didn't use the blue marker. God sees, hears, knows, and understands us in all ways. Nathaniel believed in Jesus when he realized He is the Omniscient.

Memory Verse:

He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

Jn 1:41-42



References: Bishop Youssef: https://www.suscopts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/new-testament/holy-gospel-according-to-st-john

Fr. Tadros: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1USxNacY0RpvkchQRIe1mq9bQwrhld3cn/view?pli=1