

Sermon Series: Life in His Name

Sermon Title: Finding Life

Text: John 1:35-51

Discussion Questions:

Back in the 1980's - the most recognizable and prominent rock band on planet earth was a foursome out of Dublin, Ireland by the name of U-2. Their fifth album "*The Joshua Tree*" (1987) became the fastest selling album in British history. The second track on that album, "*I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For*," is ranked in the top 100 of the greatest songs of all time. The lyrics include:

"I have kissed honey lips; Felt the healing in the fingertips; It burned like fire; This burning desire. I have spoken with the tongue of angels; I have held the hand of a devil; It was one empty night; I was cold as a stone. But I still haven't found what I'm looking for - I still haven't found what I'm looking for."

It has been observed that the song is written in the style of a gospel-lament which has its roots in the Psalms or the Lamentations of Jeremiah.

- **What is the singer lamenting?**

Along these lines - in his book "Mere Christianity," author C.S. Lewis articulates an argument for the existence of God based on our dissatisfactions as well as our deepest desire -

"...A baby feels hunger; well there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim; well there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire; well there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

Discuss each of these four statements that serve as a syllogism for Lewis' statement - talk about whether you agree or disagree - is what Lewis saying true?

- **Every natural innate desire corresponds to some real object that can satisfy that desire.**
- **But there exists in us a desire which nothing in time, nothing on earth and no creature can satisfy.**
- **Therefore, there must exist something more than time, earth, and created things which can satisfy this desire.**
- **This something is God and life in His name.**

Examination:

- **Read John 1:35-42**
 - The previous verses describe for us how John the Baptist was at a place called Bethany - on the far side of the Jordan River - where he was preaching a message of repentance and baptizing those who believed that message. More than that - John was gaining a good deal of notoriety and attention. People were coming from Jerusalem to hear him. Religious leaders were making the trip to question him. The press and paparazzi were on to him. And more than that - he had some people who considered themselves his "disciples" (v. 35). From an earthly, human perspective - how do you think this would have made John feel?

- Isn't this what most people would consider to be "successful ministry"?
 - Look back at verses 29-31, what did John see as his role? How do you think he would define "successful ministry"?
 - When we see John describing Jesus as "*the Lamb of God*" (twice!) - what do you think he meant by that?
 - How do you think it made John feel when the two disciples of his, left him to follow Jesus (v. 37)? Why do you think he felt that way? Can it be said that Jesus is the goal of John's ministry?
 - The question Jesus asks in verse 38 is actually one of the most important and "powerful" questions in the entire Bible: "*What do you want?*" - or "*What are you looking for?*" On the surface, it's a pretty simple question. But when you drill down a little, it's actually a deeply spiritual question. Compare this question with what U-2 sang about in 1987...or with what C.S. Lewis wrote about in "Mere Christianity."
 - Jesus' answer in verse 39 - "*Come and you will see*" - is also deeply spiritual. What do you think Jesus meant by this answer?
 - What did Andrew "see" that he had to tell his brother about (v. 41)?
 - What difference do you think it made in Simon Peter's life - that right off the bat Jesus gave him the name "Cephas"?
- Read **John 1:43-51**
 - We often think of people "finding" Jesus - or of Jesus passing people by and inviting them to follow along - not so with Philip (v. 43). What do you make of the fact that Jesus "found" him?
 - Philip, in turn, finds his friend (we would assume) Nathanael. What do you make of what Philip tells Nathanael (v. 45)?
 - Why would Nathanael question whether anything good could possibly come out of Nazareth (v. 46)?
 - Jesus had said "*Come and see*" back in v. 39. Here, Philip says the same thing - "*Come and see*" (v. 46). What do you make of all of these references to "seeing"?
 - My goodness - what an amazing thing to say about someone - "*Here is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!*" (v. 47). What do you think Jesus meant by that?
 - This reference in v. 48 to Jesus "seeing" Nathanael under the fig tree has to be more than Jesus having "noticed" him. What do you think Jesus "saw"?
 - Why would what Jesus said have caused Nathanael to immediately declare that Jesus was the Son of God - the king of Israel (v. 49)?
 - The purpose of this entire passage is to lead US to believe (per John 20:31) that Jesus is the Messiah. How significant is it that Nathanael "believed" (v. 50)?
 - There is a note on verse 51 that refers us back to Genesis 28:12. Why?

Application:

Be very aware this coming week of any situation where the people around you admit that "they still haven't found what they're looking for." And then point them to Jesus - the ONLY ONE who can truly fill the void that they feel. How will they know if you don't tell them?