

Opening Doors

Jesus said: "...Come and see..."

Back in the day when we had "real TV", which I am sure many of you remember, there was a game show that required very little knowledge, but some creativity. It was called Let's Make a Deal. The whole point of the show was for a contestant to "deal" well enough to get to the "final" deal to have the chance to trade whatever they had already won for what was behind Door number 1, Door number 2, or Door number 3. And they didn't get to see what they won until AFTER they chose. Of Course!

Doors.

Doors are a part of our everyday life; so much so that even the scriptures refer to them 258 times. And yet doors are not something we think about consciously. You might be surprised to know that here at St. Barnabas we have at least 42 doors—not including appliances or furniture.

What you might be even more surprised to realize is that we have even more doors than that. Each and every one of us has mental, emotional, and spiritual doors.

Now you might be wondering how doors fit with Epiphany, the season of light. We don't tend to think of doors as having much to do with light. But I suggest that doors, even though they are not mentioned in today's readings, have a lot to do with "light"—rather enlightenment.

In today's Gospel reading, the two disciples follow Jesus. Jesus turns and asks, "*what are you looking for?*" The simple answer of course, is "YOU", Jesus. John has just told them Jesus is the "lamb of God". They want to know what that means. But instead of giving **that** answer, they simply ask, "*where are you staying?*" And Jesus, responds, "*Come and see.*" So Andrew and an unnamed disciple "saw". What they saw was so interesting—so fascinating that they stayed there all day. After that Andrew has an Epiphany moment: he is convinced they "have found the Messiah!"

My question is, "what did they really see?"

First, I want to suggest what they **didn't** see; which was Jesus sitting down shooting the breeze with friends or giving a grand sermon with people listening with gaping mouths. What I **do** want to suggest to you is that they saw Jesus in action; as if a door was opened onto a whole new way of being—way of living. They saw Jesus teaching by example; healing the sick in body, mind, and spirit. They saw Jesus meting out justice—God's justice. Jesus was not all talk—he was action! **This** is how Andrew could say he had found the Messiah!

The Gospel writer, no doubt wanted his readers to be curious about Jesus; to reignite their passion for being Christian—followers of Jesus, the Messiah. He wanted them to imagine what it would be like to "*see*" Jesus. So he has Andrew, an apostle his readers

would have heard of, stage a moment that would capture their imaginations. “Where are you staying? Come and see.” John opened a door for his early readers to experience a reminder of who Jesus Christ really “is”.

If we actually take the time to “come and see” and spend the day with Jesus, we will find our imaginations helping us capture how we too can experience what Andrew experienced—so much so that he immediately had to go find his brother and bring him to Jesus. Do we have that excitement?!

As I mentioned, we have a lot of doors here at St. Barnabas. What if we imagined Jesus beckoning us to open each of those doors? What is he doing? How is he inviting us to “*come and see*”? What ministries are hiding there that we never thought of?

Let’s think about our entry door to the Church. I want you to imagine Jesus is standing at there at the entry. As you walk toward the door from the parking lot, Jesus is there welcoming you—“*come and see*”. When you enter you find refreshment for your soul. You find the love and companionship of God sitting beside you, speaking to you, singing with you. Then, you turn to leave and there is Jesus beckoning to you. “*Come and see*”, he says. You are reminded that he is not only in the church, but out in the world working with the community in oh so many ways—and he invites you to take part. He wants **you** to be Andrew to the needy; to show them his loving, life-giving way of life.

So think about it. What doors of ministry might we open that we haven’t opened in the past?

Some of us have experienced opening the door of prison ministry. Is that a door you are curious to open? How might you experience the love of Christ if you walked through that door?

Here are some other doors that you might consider opening:

Stephen Ministry

Providing Child-care during church services and meetings

Youth forum teacher

Coffee Hour host

Eucharistic Minister

Acolyte

Eucharistic Visitor

Volunteering at St. Barnabas’ Thrift Shop

Creating hygiene bags

Volunteering with 5 cities homeless coalition

Serving a meal at People’s Kitchen

These are ministries we have had here at St. Barnabas for a while. But what about ministries we haven’t thought of.

Is there a ministry door we have not opened yet? Here are some our Social Justice Coordinating Team is working on:

How we can serve those with immigration issues?

How we can better care for this Earth we live on?

How we can minister to the mentally ill?

How can we serve those in long term care?

When we open the door to our wider community, how can we partner with others in ministry?

What are we willing to **“trade”** for the opportunity to share Christ’s love, justice, and mercy with others? Our time? (That’s a really big trade isn’t it?) Our resources? Can you ride-share with someone, or do you have a room you can rent out, or can you help someone with housekeeping or laundry? Even those of us who have physical impairment can look to Jesus for a door to a ministry they can participate in; maybe the prayer chain. What ministry is behind Door number 1, Door number 2, or Door number 3? Happily, unlike “Let’s Make a Deal”, you can choose all three if you want!

I wonder. Would you agree that, when we offer ourselves in these tangible ways, we are fulfilling our Christian Baptismal vow to “*seek and serve Christ in all persons*”? The experience of actively being Christ’s emissaries through ministry fills us with all joy and peace.

So, the most important doors that we must open are the doors within ourselves that keep us from following Jesus out into ministry. Are we truly opening the doors of our hearts to “*come and see*” what Jesus wants to show us?

From this day forward, every time you come to THIS church, every time you walk through THESE doors it is my great hope that you will always see Jesus standing there with his face toward you welcoming you to “*come and see*”. Welcoming you in to sit with him and rest and be refreshed and, then, beckoning you to open doors out there, sharing his love and hope in real and tangible ways—saying, as Andrew did, “*Come, we have found the Messiah!*”