

REFLECTION JANUARY 18TH 2026

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE IS JESUS CALLING US TO BE?

Today's reflection connects to last week and how we can be the echo in Isaiah's song of a servant and from John of the baptism of Jesus, and John's recognition of the Spirit in the form of a dove. I find it interesting that he's the only one who makes a comment about it, which makes me think that nobody else saw it that way nor heard God speaking to Jesus. John takes us on a journey that might satisfy our curiosity of who Jesus is calling us to be. As people who are always seeking to live in Christ's light and committed to spreading the good news, John gives us our purpose and the building blocks to grow as informed people of faith. When we are looking for ways to abstain from the darker side of life, we need to go no further than re-reading the scriptures to find our way. Jesus has called each of us to be part of the body of Christ, but what does that mean for us? It begs the question of ourselves, 'What kind of person, or people is Jesus calling us to be?' Like you, I'm certain when Jesus calls to do something, it usually means changes need to happen or at the very least view life through a different lens.

John's passage for today starts with the very familiar declaration that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This recognition is fundamental to our faith. As Christ's followers we know this to be true; it means acknowledging him as the ultimate sacrifice of our sins. Going back in Jewish history, lambs were sacrificed as an atonement for sin, and in calling Jesus the Lamb of God, John emphasises his role in our salvation story.

When we recognise Jesus' role in God's fulfilment of a promise we acknowledge the humility of Jesus. Acknowledging our transgressions and a need for a Saviour reminds us that we're not self-sufficient. Instead, we depend on Christ's grace for forgiveness and a restored relationship with God. Jesus calls us to be people who understand our need for him, embracing humility and surrender as we recognise his divine authority and purpose in our lives.

John the Baptist has become one of the people who model what it looks like to be a faithful witness. He does this by not seeking personal fame or recognition, nor a comfortable living space. He does it by offering full recognition of Jesus and who he was. As disciples, we are called to be witnesses ourselves – individuals who share our experiences of God's grace and truth with others. This involves living authentically and reflecting Jesus' light in our actions, words, inclusive of how we interact with our communities beyond the church borders.

Being a witness means engaging in our communities, sharing Christ's unconditional love, even with those who are difficult, sharing the Good News, and living out our faith, to our capacity in practical ways. The community are looking at us and how we live out our faith; our lives become testimonies of God's work in us, prompting curiosity in others. Just as John boldly proclaimed Jesus, we are encouraged to conversely be who we say we are, followers of Christ, without fear or hesitation.

Well into our reading we come to an important question; 'What are you looking for?' This is a question I'm sure we've also asked both of ourselves, and our Lord. This question helps us explore what drives our spiritual journey. Jesus isn't just looking for followers, he's looking for those who are genuinely wanting answers about life, purpose and faith.

Jesus calls us to be people who are actively engaging in what it means to be a person who is seeking to know more about him. This includes participating in prayer, a disciplined scripture reading practice,

worship, fellowship and participating in missional activities, involving the wider community as well as our faith community. Our doing these activities leads us into a deeper relationship and understanding of who Jesus is and how Jesus impacts our lives. In seeking to know more about Jesus, we grow a closer and transformative relationship with Jesus, filling our lives with purpose and direction.

When we choose to follow Jesus, we are carrying out a critical aspect of discipleship in the same way the disciples did. We are showing our commitment. Following Jesus isn't only about agreeing with what Jesus taught but actively choosing to orientate our lives around Jesus and what he did and said. Discipleship involves personal sacrifice; it requires us to leave behind previous habits, beliefs, and comforts to embrace a new way of life – which is easier for some than others.

The call from Jesus is rather radical, because it demands that we put him above all else. This commitment manifests in various ways, such as prioritising our relationship with him, making ethical choices that align with his teachings, and serving others selflessly, not blindly – always being aware of the false teachers. As part of the body of Christ, we are aware of the difficulties that we can face on such a journey, however, we're also aware that it leads to deep spiritual fulfillment and purpose.

After meeting Jesus, Andrew goes to find his brother Simon Peter, without any hesitancy because he wanted to share the news. From this behaviour alone we get one of the first signs of the importance of growing a community. As part of who we as Christ's followers we are meant to engage with and build relationships within the Body of Christ and beyond.

We are a communal people who thrive on the relationships between us. We are called to invite others to experience the love of Christ, to encourage one another in faith, to share our joys, sorrows, burdens of the heart and mind, as well our mistakes, learning forgiveness given and being received. Building community involves creating spaces where individuals feel welcomed, supported, encouraged, loved and belonging. When we are living with this in our mind and actions we're reflecting the heart of Jesus, who's desire is for us all to come to him.

When I spoke a few moments ago of the difficulties we may face, it wasn't easy for Peter either. When Jesus renames Simon to Peter, it speaks loudly about the new identity that comes with following Christ. Jesus calls us to a new life, offering us identities which aren't defined by our past and what it may have looked like, but by who we are in him. This transformation signifies that we're not judged by our history or failures; instead, we're empowered by the Holy Spirit to lead lives of purpose and impact.

Embracing this new identity, we enable ourselves to be seen as worthy of being in the same light Jesus sees us- when we can do this we live with a bold sense of authenticity and capacity. It empowers us to live on a riskier path of faith, take steps to love differently, to be more confident and energetic in sharing missional activities. Jesus calls us reflect in his image and to reflect his character.

As we think about John's words, we are given essential insights into the kind of people Jesus calls us to be. Recognising His sacrificial love, witnesses and seekers of truth, committed followers, community builders, and people embracing a new identity. Each of these characteristics take us deeper in our relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit who equips us to influence the community around us. Through living out these qualities, we fulfill our calling as Christ's disciples, givers of or receivers his gift of grace and love and helping others to know the divine light of Christ in their time of darkness. In the words of Jesus, we are invited to follow him, embarking on a new journey through life that influences not only our lives but also the lives of those around us.

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This kind of thoughtful contemplation bids us to reflect on our identities and roles within the tapestry of faith and community. It resonates deeply with the essence of living as echoes of Isaiah's prophetic servant, and with the recognition of the Spirit's presence during Jesus' baptism. The fact that John the Baptist uniquely voices this moment piques our curiosity to explore not only our individual perceptions but also the collective understanding of divine revelations that often go unnoticed.

John's reading leads us on a journey that offers clarity to our calling as we strive to express Christ's light in our lives and share the transformative good news. It is a journey marked by intentionality, urging us to seek ways to transcend the shadows of life by adopting the discipline of immersing ourselves in the Scriptures, serving as a divine compass guiding our ethical and spiritual choices. Jesus beckons us into communion with Him, challenging us to delve into the meaning of being part of His body. This pursuit compels introspection: "What kind of people is Jesus asking us to become?"

At the heart of John's declaration that Jesus is the Lamb of God lies an honest invitation to embrace a collective narrative where each sacrifice becomes a pivotal chapter in our salvation story. By identifying Jesus through this lens, we anchor our faith not just in abstract beliefs but in the tangible act of surrendering ourselves to Jesus the One who redeems us. This humility is the foundation upon which our relationship with God is built. Acknowledging our vulnerabilities serves as a reminder of our interconnectedness and shared need for grace; *it is a call to be participants* in a broader narrative of redemption.

John the Baptist personifies what it means to be a faithful witness, giving up his personal ambition for a greater purpose—pointing others to Christ. His humility models for us the essence of discipleship: it is less about elevating ourselves and more about shining a light on the divine. As modern-day disciples, we are similarly called to live authentically, weaving our testimonies into the fabric of our communities, reflecting Christ's unconditional love and truth, even to those who challenge us. Our life stories become pathways for others to encounter God's grace, and in that sharing, we become people of curiosity and transformation.

The probing question, "What are you looking for?" offers an invitation not just for self-examination but for a genuine quest for meaning and connection with the God. Jesus isn't merely collecting followers or 'groupies'; He seeks those whose hearts are genuinely attuned to the deeper rhythms of existence—life, purpose, and faith. Our engagement in spiritual practices—prayer, scripture reading, worship, fellowship, and service—becomes a collaborative exploration, leading us into deeper understanding and relationship with Jesus. Each act of faith enriches our spiritual journey, enabling us to live lives overflowing with purpose and direction.

Following Jesus demands radical commitment, not wishy washy, real commitment; it reshapes our priorities and challenges us to confront comforts that hinder our spiritual growth. It is a call to groundbreaking transformation, asking us to redefine our identities in light of His teachings and to place *kingdom* values above worldly expectations. This discipleship is not solely about belief but about the radical act of orienting our lives around Christ, consequently ordering our thoughts, decisions, and actions in alignment with His worldview.

Andrew's immediate response to find Simon Peter after his encounter with Jesus shows how one transformative experience can ignite a greater movement within the Body of Christ. In our zeal, we are beckoned to build relationships that nurture the growth of our community—where love, support, vulnerability, and accountability coexist. Community thrives on shared experiences, joys, and burdens, encouraging one another in faith journeys that mirror the heart of Jesus, who desires all to know His love.

Yet, following Jesus does not exempt us from challenges. Peter's transformation from Simon to the Rock (Matthew 16:18) speaks powerfully to the new identities we are invited to embrace. Jesus redefines not only who we are in terms of our past failures but also positions us as empowered agents for future impact. This new identity calls us to live fearlessly, embracing authenticity that invites others to experience the transformative power of Christ's love. I find this rather uplifting and speaks right into the belief of being made clean and are given forgiveness when we bring our heartfelt confession to Christ.

Ultimately, John's insights into discipleship mold our understanding of Jesus' expectations for us. We are called to recognise and carry Christ's cross, His sacrificial love, to be seekers of truth, committed followers, community architects, and recipients of renewed identities. Each characteristic beckons us into a far deeper relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit, equipping us to influence our communities positively.

In fulfilling our calling as messengers of grace and love, we can be the light in the darkness surrounding us, embodying the divine light that Jesus offers. His invitation is not merely a personal journey; it is a shared odyssey calling us to shape not just our lives but the lives of those within our spheres of influence. In answering this call and embracing our role within the Body of Christ, we embark on a journey that intertwines our stories with the eternal narrative of redemption—a narrative that reshapes history and transforms lives. In following Jesus, we enter a journey that is not solitary but communal, where our paths intertwine with others, reflecting the multifaceted love of Christ in a world that so desperately needs to see and experience it.