

Second Sunday after the Epiphany  
January 18, 2026  
John 1:29-42

If you could ask Jesus just one question, what would it be? John's Gospel gives us some good ideas — and good examples. Throughout the text, Jesus is asked:

- How do you know me?
- By what authority are you doing these things?
- How are these things possible?
- What signs will you show us?
- What must we do to accomplish what God requires?
- Who are you?
- How can we know the way?
- What is truth?

Those are all good, deep, meaningful questions. And yet, the very first question asked of Jesus is, "Where are you staying?" (John 1:38). John has just pointed out to his own disciples that this is the Lamb of God. The anointed one. The Messiah. And they want to know: where Jesus is staying?

Maybe they were caught off guard because of Jesus's question to them: "**What are you looking for?**" Think quick! "Um, we were just wondering where you're staying..."

Next week's gospel reading will offer an alternate account of Jesus calling the disciples. Jesus will say to Simon and Andrew, "Follow me." In John's Gospel, the call begins with mutual curiosity. Jesus asks, "What are you looking for?" The disciples respond, "**Where are you staying?**" Jesus invites them: "Come and see."

On-liners come and go and most of the time we don't even know who they are. Once in a while we hear that something that was said mattered or influenced their activities, mission activity in particular.

Over the years we with others have helped to meet specific needs: new raincoats and rain shoes for the children, or gifts of new coats, clothes and shoes for children who had never had anything new in their lives. We provided the funds for one child to have a surgery to address the extreme pain, mobility challenges, and growth constraints caused by severe burns sustained when he was just a year or two old. We saw videos of him before, during the surgical healing process, and many months after, when he gleefully ran across a room.

At this point, other churches asked how their informal ministry might meet more needs if they knew they could rely on regular financial support. As soon as an initial payment was sent, this family had rented a small and simple home, providing food, shelter, medical care, and schooling to ten children who were without all of those basic needs before. Their next steps crystallized for us. Some needed to go and see for themselves what God is doing through this family's ministry.

In the context of the relationship between a few from our church and others, and this family, "Where are you staying?" might be the most important question to ask. The others will see where some of them came from, and where others still live. The others, much younger community, will break **naan** with this family, and experience God's presence in their midst in ways that we otherwise never could. The mission is their presence, and abiding together for a time will be their mutual blessing.

John will invite us time and again to abide with Jesus. To dwell in God's presence. There's no substitute for it. In the fourth gospel, Jesus will spend time and share his presence with family and friends at a wedding feast. He'll share a late-night conversation with Nicodemus, and a midday theological dialogue with an unnamed Samaritan woman. Jesus will tell his disciples about the love of God that will abide in them, that they should share with one another once he is no longer present.

We never learn where Jesus was staying, but we can experience what it is like to dwell with him, in the place where God abides. Where is that? We are invited to come and see for ourselves. The invitation might bring us deeper into our own neighborhoods or halfway across the globe.

Many people are searching for meaning, love and belonging. We might ask, "What are you looking for?" There's still no better response than this: "Come and see." We don't have to have the answers. All we need to do is simply dwell with God — and invite others to experience God's presence. This is the start of discipleship.

### Questions for reflection on the Second Sunday after the Epiphany

1. Imagine inviting Jesus to lead a Sunday school class at your church. What questions would people want to ask? What are the longings and needs beneath the questions?
2. What are people looking for today? Those in your pews? Those who aren't in the pews? What are you looking for, and what do you need to hear from Jesus?
3. When have you responded to an invitation to go and see, to get to know others better, in the places where they live? What did you learn about how God abides with us?