

Scripture: John 1:35-42.....1

Text: John 1:38b... "What do you seek?"

Theme: Happy Hunting.

Proposition: Happy hunting is best experienced when people seek Christ.

Date written: Sept. 7. 1957.

Dates and places preached:

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Introduction:

1. Hunting season soon opens: antelope deer, elk, etc.. ~~Already~~ several of our church members ~~have~~ warned the preacher not to expect them in church during the season until they ~~have~~ had happy hunting, or ~~have~~ bagged their game. Most of these folks know that probably the preacher, too, will be out on a weekday or Saturday hunting the deer or antelope he ~~hopes~~ to fell. One of the attractions of life in Wyoming is the fact that for big game hunters there is happy hunting. (Further evidence of that fact is that this year (1957) due to the large numbers of deer in the state it is possible ~~for~~ an individual to be licensed for the shooting of three deer.

2. In New York ^{some years ago} ~~recently~~ (August 1957) one of the Broadway plays that is still ~~packing them in~~ is entitled "Happy Hunting." There ~~is~~ a fox hunting scene in the show, but the title seems to refer mainly to the activity of a newly-rich Philadelphia ~~xx~~ matron in hunting for a European nobleman to become the groom of her daughter. Or perhaps the title refers ^{to} the refugee Spanish prince who is hunting a rich wife. As in most of life, in this musical comedy, from which originated the hit song "Mutual Admiration Society

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each character is hunting his own particular game. Happy hunting, implying success in the hunt, is that which the play's characters experience.

3. "Happy Hunting" might well be considered the theme of our Scripture. Or we might put it in the superlative and call it "happiest hunting," for the characters told about in John 1:35-42 found the biggest possible reward at the end of the search or hunt. John, Andrew and Simon Peter found Jesus. Jesus found two disciples, 1/6 of the number upon whom the success of His mission would depend.

4. As Christians, as members or constituents of a Christian church, we believe that life's happiest hunting is to him who seeks Jesus and who seeks to do the purposes of Jesus, for he shall have success. Speaking of success in finding spiritual satisfaction and truth, Jesus once said, "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receive and he who seeks finds, and to him who knockes it will be opened." (Mt7:7-8). If, as we propose, life's happiest hunting is in the seeking of Christ, and if we are assured that with such hunting (in time) success is sure to come,

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how can we, you and I, find Christ? As we seek some answers to this question we will constantly point out that in this Christ-seeking process we are engaged in "happy hunting." How do people find Christ?

I. People find Christ by continuing to look for Him in spite of difficulty.

1. Some, like John and Andrew, find Jesus rather ~~simply~~ easily simply because they look for Him. Most of those who miss Him do so because they are not sufficiently interested to make a real search for Him.

2. For some, faith is not easy, however; and their quest may prove long. If so, the all-important thing for them is to face fairly the question of whether Christianity at its best seems worth really seeking. The poet Browning has a character in one of his writings (Bishop Babugram's Apology) who puts the question of interest in Christ in these words:

"What think ye of Christ," friend?

When all's done and said,

Like you this Christianity or not?

It may be false, but will you wish

it true?

Has it your vote to be so if it can?"

Do you see the faith and the practice of Christianity, the seeking and following

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of Christ, as really worth while and all-important? If you do, you will find Christ.

3. But perhaps you feel you must answer, "But it hasn't proved itself to me. And whatever I may wish, my mind must be honest." John Bunyan in "Pilgrim's Progress" dealt with the problem of seeking Christ when you aren't really convinced it is quite worth the effort:

"Then said Evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, Do you see yonder wicketgate? The man said No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder shining light? He said, I think I do. Then said Evangelist, Keep that light in your eye, and go directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate."

4. For those who can not yet honestly see in Christ the answer to their problems, and the leader of their way, to be honest demands that they at least make a fair effort to see what He is like, what the Christian way has to offer. You don't know if you like Wyoming hunting until you've given it a fair trial. You don't know if Christianity is the best for you until you've given it a fair trial. For those who keep the light in their eye, who seek to find and give Christ a fair trial,

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the mists may not lift and things may not at once clear. But there is ground for hope. Oliver Cromwell once wrote to his daughter, "To be a seeker is to be of the best sect next to a finder; and such an one shall every humble seeker be at the end. Happy seeker, Happy finder."

5. One ~~man~~ must not let himself be stumbled by petty difficulties or imagine that because an objection is new to him it is really original and has never been faced before. Twelve young men at Oxford University once wrote a book about their doubts. They asked Archbishop William Temple for a preface, and were honest enough to print it. He called their effort, "A startling childishness....It is apparently never contemplated that if what Christians mean by the doctrine were so easily refuted, it would hardly have developed as a summary of Christians' experience, and would long ago have disappeared."

II. People need the help of others to find Christ.

1. As the first two disciples were directed to Jesus by John the Baptist, so friendly hands help and point and guide us. "the idea of a Christian as an independent, all-sufficing being.

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capable from the fulness of his own spirit of satisfying all his higher wants is a mere fiction which all experience belies," writes theologian J. A. Moehler.

2. We are all sharers in a universal life which is carrying us on its tide, even when we think we are moving under our own power. "Certain authors," said one man, "speaking of their works, say 'My book...' They would do better to say 'our book....' because there is in them generally more of other people's than of their own." So it is with a man's personal faith.

3. Indeed, some find Christ not through their own search for Him, but because whos who know Him bring them to Him, as Peter was brought to Jesus by Andrew, and Nathaneal by Phillip.

III. The finding of Christ makes it necessary that we try to bring others to Him too.

1. If we like golf or flying, or anything else, very much we're usually pretty vociferous in telling others about them, in trying to get new sharers of our pleasure. If our faith and our church means much to us, we tell others enthusiastically and try to win them over. That which means a lot to us we try to share.

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2. In this matter of sharing Christ, once we believe we have found Him and His way, we often are remiss, feeling backward about taking religion or church to others.

3. And yet, we are the body of Christ. His feet that must run for Him, His hands that must carry for Him. If Christ is all that we say He is we can not keep Him to ourselves, but MUST share Him with others. Some congregations seem to be mere religious clubs, run for the benefit of the members, not to win the world. This is not evidence of Happy Hunting in the Christian sense. Happy Hunting in the Christian sense is to seek Christ and also to seek to bring others to Him.

3. The fact that it was his brother whom Andrew found first for Christ is natural enough. Yet it is suggestive. Even now, one of the most effective portions of the Church is the Christian home. Even now, one supposes that normally the God of a child has a face strangely like its mother's.

IV. Sometimes the finding of Christ is simply of Christ's doing.

1. Phillip was one disciple whom Christ sought out and called. There are people who are Christian because they feel they had to be, who feel Christ sought them out. They are

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somewhat like the orphaned baby bird in the nest cowering before the hand of the human who takes them to feed and protect, but which later grow to love and be loyal to the human who helped and saved them.

2. Paul tells us that he did not find Christ but that Christ found him.

3. We, too, can frequently have this feeling of being sought out and found by Christ just when we need Him most. We are much like Oliver Cromwell, who on his deathbed murmured, "I think I am the poorest wretch that lives; but I love God; or rather, am beloved of God."

Conclusion:

1. "Happy Hunting" has been the catch-phrase theme of our thought.

2. In hunting we need to be able to answer the question that Jesus asked these two disciples, "What do you seek?"

3. When we can answer that question "I seek Christ and His way," we are giving evidence of engaging in the happiest of hunting, for happy hunting is best experienced when we seek Christ and His way in our lives.

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