

## A Dove's Revelation

John 1:29-42

Do you remember the last time you had an ah ha moment? Maybe it was when you were trying to solve a personal problem...or maybe when you realized that you were in love...or maybe it was when you were working through something that was troubling you and you figured it out. We all have these moments when something just clicks, you didn't real realize what to do and suddenly you did. Some would say it is magic, others might say it is a miracle, but I would say it's the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist had been baptizing people in preparation for Jesus coming as the savior. He knew that he was called and was waiting for the signs to come when he would also know that the messiah he expected to come was here. John testifies that God told him that whoever you see the Spirit descend upon and remain on is truly the one whom I call to baptize with the Holy Spirit." John probably was waiting for the day when he saw the dove descend. And then when Jesus came and asked to be baptized, John thought he knew who Jesus was, but then he saw it. Everything just clicked and the heavens opened, a dove descended and the Father spoke. Suddenly he realized that the time had come, the savior was really here.

The gospel of John doesn't actually tell the story of Jesus' baptism. All the other gospels tell some part of the story of Jesus going to John the Baptist and Jesus being baptized in the River Jordan. But John doesn't because his purpose is different. He wants us to realize the importance of John the Baptist's revelation.

John didn't just happen upon this experience, but it was planned by God. The Holy Spirit prepared John in order to prepare everyone else for this moment when a dove would come down on a man and they could finally rejoice in God's promise of salvation fulfilled. John could do nothing but be excited that what God had revealed to him had come true.

That is why this passage begins with such joy from John as you hear him shouting from the crowd, "There goes the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world." His job is to proclaim from every place he goes because of the great ah ha moment that God gave to him.

Just like Martin Luther who realized that salvation comes through grace and not through works threw out all the rules to get to heaven and brought the bible to the world. It is the reason why Martin Luther King Jr. preached equality for all during the civil rights movement and why Desmond Tutu stood up for justice in South Africa. They all had ah ha moments of revelation from God.

John was willing to step down in his role of preparing the way for Jesus so that Jesus could bring salvation. He says I must become lower so Jesus can become higher. John's ah ha moment wasn't just meant for him, but everyone as he told his own disciples to follow Jesus instead of him and as he said, "Look over there, the Son of God..."

John's message tells us about God's plans to save us. That he had planned it before he created all of us planning that he would send himself to this earth to unite with us again; to restore our relationship with God. God planned to reveal himself as god's son through his baptism. But most importantly John tells us who Jesus is that he is both divine and human, that this baby that God sent to grow up like one of us, is still God and has come to into this world to make us whole again. John tells us that Jesus is Lamb of God, an innocent lamb who will suffer and die on our behalf so that we can live in eternal life. John says that Jesus is the messiah the one the Israelites and Jews had been waiting for. The one who had been prophesied about and that they had been looking for. John further affirms Jesus' personhood by telling everyone that Jesus has been anointed by God as the King of kings through baptism and the anointing of the

Holy Spirit as a dove to be our savior. Finally John tells us that he has witnessed Jesus as the Son of God who has been called to take on this responsibility of bringing whole relationships back into our lives, of bringing salvation and hope again.

This is why John can't stop telling everyone he sees about the ah ha moment that arrived when the Holy Spirit descending like a dove upon Jesus. And when the Holy Spirit works in us we have no other response than to proclaim just like John did.

It wasn't John who discovered Jesus as the Son of God, but it was the Holy Spirit who revealed that to him. It was the Holy Spirit who prepared John and who told him about Jesus. Often we don't give the Holy Spirit enough credit because it is hard to understand the Spirit. We understand there is a heavenly Father who reigns over all and we understand Jesus because he became human, but the Holy Spirit has a very significant role in being God by revealing Father, Son and Holy Spirit to us.

We hear or feel little nudges to do something or to go somewhere. Sometimes we really want to hear the revelations as we wait for God to tell us what to do about a new job, an idea we have, or a message we think we are supposed to give. The Holy Spirit talks to us through other people, the bible and experiences we have. Often those revelations aren't just meant for you, but are meant for you to share, like John did.

As John continued to broadcast his ah ha moment about knowing that Jesus is the Son of God two of John's disciples had been watching and listening. When Jesus walked by and John said "Look over there, Lamb of God!" Andrew and another disciple also had their own ah ha moment. They suddenly realize in for themselves that this is the Son of God. I am sure being John's disciple they had been hearing about Jesus already, but suddenly it hit them. Here he was, Jesus, God's son.

It clicked and they began to follow. At first it was from a distance until Jesus asked them if they wanted something. But then they got closer, they stayed with Jesus all night talking, listening and enjoying being in the company of the holy.

But they too couldn't keep their ah ha moment to themselves. In the morning Andrew ran to see his brother Simon Peter to tell him about what had happened. Andrew can't get out fast enough that they had found the messiah! The one they had been waiting for. Simon Peter gets up, at first wondering what had come over his brother, but he also receives his own revelation from the Holy Spirit and realizes that Jesus *is* Son of God.

Do you remember when you really realized that God was real and Jesus really had come to save you? For some that might have been when you were a child in Sunday school, or maybe it was more recently. And all of a sudden it clicked and you knew it was true. Our whole world changes after we realize that Jesus came for us. When we realize that we don't save ourselves and we aren't in this world on our own and Jesus wants to know you. It is a feeling of relief and excitement all at the same time. I remember being so excited to tell people, to know that I was loved and that God had plan for me. I felt so comforting. I became a regular evangelist to my own community.

What John, Andrew, Simon Peter and the other disciple do so well is that when they heard and felt the Holy Spirit awaken them they responded immediately. John went out proclaiming that Jesus was the son of God, Andrew, Simon Peter and the other disciple immediately go to follow Jesus. We also have to follow through, just like John the Baptist, Andrew, Simon Peter, and the other disciple who responded to the awakening or ah ha moment they had in their life, we do to.

The Holy Spirit didn't stop working in the disciples or in John the Baptist after that day. In fact the Holy Spirit continued to work through Andrew and Simon Peter throughout their entire time with Jesus and after. Peter was the one who gave the first great sermon about Pentecost (after Jesus of course).

Karl Barth says that the Holy Spirit awakens us each day to the love that God has for us and the plans he has for us. God is speaking to you, he awakens you each day, giving you a message, a plan telling you who he is, but we also have to respond to that by proclaiming the message that Jesus gives us and by following his plans. We forget, we get busy, we have a lot on our minds, we keep thinking about work and family, the weather, and the news each day, or sometimes we think we know everything God has to teach us already so we stop listening...and we don't hear how God is speaking to us.

Our response is just as important as hearing and listening to God. We are to respond like the disciples proclaiming the message that God gives us through words and our actions each day. Maybe that means you're the next Martin Luther King Jr. speaking out about social justice. Maybe that means teaching children about God's love each day, or maybe it means changing the way you live. What is important is that you are responding to God's "aha" moments in your life and constantly proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, Messiah, Son of God, the anointed one and your savior.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

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