

WHO IS JESUS?

JOHN 1:35-46

# JESUS IS OUR RABBI



---

**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

DAVID MURRAY  
MAY 23, 2021 (AM)

---

# INTRODUCTION

I had a terrible high school experience. I could write a book about it, but it would be R-rated. I try not to think about it too much. However, a few months ago, I let my mind return to that awful time and the one teacher there who changed my life for good. His name was Alec McVake and he was my PE teacher. He was tough but tender. He pushed us hard but he also pushed us on. I was in awe of his soccer skills and loved his coaching. I looked up to him so much, and admired his strong but gentle character.

I checked up the school website recently and, although it's now 37 years since I left high school, he's still teaching there. I couldn't find an email address, but I sent a message to the school admin expressing how much I owe to him and asked the school admin to pass it on. I doubt it ever got to him, but I wanted to try and let him know how thankful I was for his example and kindness to me in the midst of a violent and abusive school culture. He changed my life. In fact, in some ways, he kept me alive.

Who's the best teacher you've ever had? When we're still at school, we'll usually say the best teacher was the funniest, or the friendliest, or the most easy-going, or the one that gave least homework.

As we get older, and look back on our schooling, our answer to this question often changes to the teacher who changed our lives most. Maybe it was a teacher who pushed us to realize our potential, or who disciplined us away from bad attitudes or actions, or who inspired our interest in a life-changing subject, or made us look at the world in a whole new way, or helped us spiritually? Whoever and wherever, we feel deep gratitude for their influence upon us and we want to live up to their legacy.

But however much Mr McVake changed my life, no teacher changed my life more than Jesus. He's taught me more than I've ever learned in my academic studies. What kind of teacher is Jesus? **What makes Jesus such a special teacher?** John 1:35-46 gives us three reasons, although there are many more.

## BACKGROUND

- Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1-2)
- Jesus is our Creator (1:3)
- Jesus is our Light and Life (1:4-9)
- Jesus is our Big Brother (1:10-13)
- Jesus is our Tabernacle (1:14-17).
- Jesus is our Preacher (1:18)
- Jesus is the Messiah (1:19-28)
- Jesus is our Sacrifice (1:29)
- Jesus is our Rabbi (1:35-46)



What's so special about Jesus?



---

# 1. JESUS FINDS US (37, 43)

Most people become our teachers by default. We go to elementary school and we're assigned to a class with an already chosen teacher. In High School, we might get some element of choice in who will teach us, and college widens the choice further. But Jesus does not become our teacher by default. Neither do we choose him out of many options. He seeks us out, finds us, and recruits us. We find him because he first found us. Indeed, we'll never find Jesus until he finds us. In this passage, Jesus finds students in two different ways.

## Jesus finds students indirectly (35-39)

The day after he was baptized, Jesus returned to the Jordan and walked by John and two of his students. John couldn't restrain himself, proclaiming again, "**Behold the Lamb of God!**" **The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus** (36-37). Jesus did not directly address them or call them to enroll in his class, but did so indirectly through John. John loved to lose students to Jesus!

Wanting to be sure they were enrolling for the right reasons, Jesus turned to his new followers and said to them, "**What are you seeking?**" **And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour (38-39).** A rabbi's classroom was his life. Students didn't come to certain classes at certain times, but stayed with him all the time. When Jesus was sure about their level of commitment, he accepted John's referral and took them into his life-class.

## Jesus finds students directly

Later in this passage, Jesus recruited directly. **The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me"** (43). He found and Philip followed. He knew the student he was looking for, went out of his way to locate him, and simply said, "Follow me!" which Philip did. It's quite remarkable, isn't it? A teacher walked up to him, said two words and changed Philip's whole world. Indeed, given Philip's role as an Apostle, it changed the whole world.

## CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

**Recruit for Jesus.** Like John Baptist, we can say to everyone around us, "Look at the Lamb!" What a privilege to be a recruiter for Jesus. Let's not be ashamed of seeking new students for his class even if it means losing old friends.

**Be recruited by Jesus.** Hear his recruiters, but also hear his direct appeal. "Follow me!" He is the only one who truly deserves the title 'Rabbi' ('my Great One'). Is he your Great One?

THE GREATEST ONE  
CAN USE THE LEAST ONES



What happens when Jesus finds us?



---

## 2. WE FIND JESUS (45)

When Jesus finds us, we find Jesus. Although the order sometimes feels as if we found Jesus first, our finding of Jesus is always a response to his finding of us.

### We've found the Messiah (41)

Andrew said to his brother, Simon Peter, **“We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). [and] he brought him to Jesus (41-42).** 'Found' here means to joyfully discover something that a person was searching for (Matt. 13:44; 18:13). Let me illustrate the kind of joy we're talking about here.

Last Saturday, I lost my phone and wallet in *Menards*. I had put them in the cart, but then swapped carts without transferring my wallet and phone. I didn't buy anything and only realized I'd lost my phone and wallet when I arrived at *Home Depot* 20 minutes later. I had no phone to call back to the store of course or to cancel my bank cards. I drove back to *Menards* in a panic, imagining all the worst case scenarios involving loss of money, identity, phone, etc.

Five long minutes later, I arrived back at *Menards* and ran to where I'd left the cart, found it, but no phone or wallet. The first two assistants I asked did not assist. Eventually I went to the main desk where they checked security cameras, but no joy. I persuaded them to take my name and headed home to an afternoon of changing passwords, phoning banks, trying to minimize the damage. A few minutes after getting home, the store phoned to say that my phone and wallet had been handed in. I cannot tell you the joy I felt both when I got the phone call and got my life back in my hands. But no matter how much joy there was in that finding, there's even more in finding Jesus. It's a daily and increasing joy.

### We've found the fulfillment of the Old Testament

**Philip said to Nathanael, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (45).** This is the person that the whole Old Testament was about, the one that every Old Testament book predicted and pointed towards. And we've found him! What a revolutionary find!

## CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

**How did you find Jesus?** Think back to how you found Jesus and share it with someone else. Share your joy in finding him with others to excite their seeking and finding.

**Where will you find Jesus?** If you haven't yet found Jesus, where are you looking? Are you looking in the Bible? That's generally where Jesus is found. Therefore ask for help to find him there.

GOD'S REVELATION  
STARTS GOD'S REVOLUTION



What happens when we find Jesus?



---

## 3. WE FIND OTHERS (36, 41, 45)

If we find Jesus, we find others. If we find Jesus, we find others to find Jesus. That's what discipleship is all about: finding Jesus and helping others to find Jesus. Sometimes this is through public proclamation, other times by family and friend evangelism.

### John found two disciples for Jesus (35-37)

When John found Jesus, he wanted others to find him too. A day after losing many of his disciples to Jesus, he shrinks his class further by pointing two more students to Christ. He's saying, "Look I appreciate your loyalty, but it's time to transfer it to Jesus."

### Andrew found Simon Peter for Jesus (41-42)

When Andrew found Jesus he wanted his brother, Simon Peter, to find Jesus too. **He first found his own brother Simon...**(41). Peter found Jesus because Andrew found Jesus, and Andrew found Jesus because John found Jesus. Little did John the Baptist know that his ministry to Andrew would be used to bring in a Peter! This is pulpit ministry and family discipleship working hand in hand. Notice, Andrew didn't wait for any theological training. The next day he was sharing the Gospel!

### Philip found Nathanael for Jesus (45-46).

When Philip found Jesus, he wanted Nathanael to find Jesus too. **"We have found...the son of Joseph,"** he said to him excitedly (45). Different men, situations, and approaches.

## CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

This is why I am so excited about our search for a Pastor of Discipleship. He will disciple us like Jesus disciplined his disciples and who then disciplined other disciples, and so on. In a very real way, we are all commissioned to disciple all people (Matt. 28:19). That means we are both disciplined and disciplers. We are helped to find and follow Jesus, and we help others find and follow Jesus. We're taught in order to teach. Every day has discipleship opportunities in our homes, families, work, schools, communities, online, etc. Are we disciples and are we discipling others?

DISCIPLES DISCIPLE



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Share the story > Change others' stories



# SUMMARY



**PRAYER:** Rabbi, you are the greatest teacher. Find, teach, and change me, so I can find, teach, and change others.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who was your favorite teacher and why?
2. How did Jesus find you?
3. How did you find when you found Jesus?
4. Who has Jesus used to disciple you?
5. Who are you discipling and how?
6. Who will you disciple this week and how?

First Byron Christian Reformed Church  
8541 Byron Center Ave SW, Byron Center, MI 49315  
Phone: (616) 878-9768  
[www.firstbyroncrc.org](http://www.firstbyroncrc.org)

Pastor David Murray  
[www.HeadHeartHand.org](http://www.HeadHeartHand.org)  
[www.livingthebible.net](http://www.livingthebible.net)