

## Jesus' First Words

### Scripture Reading — John 1:32-42

*Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"  
—John 1:38—*

In the gospel of John, Jesus is quickly identified as God's chosen one, the deliverer promised in the prophecy of Isaiah. So John the Baptist told his followers that if they wanted to meet the Lamb of God, they would have to go after him.

Jesus was often going somewhere—to Jerusalem, to Galilee, through Samaria, to the cross, to the presence of his heavenly Father. In today's reading, he was "passing by," so if people wanted to meet with him, they had to get up and follow after him.

When Jesus noticed John the Baptist's disciples coming after him, he turned around and let them catch up. (He'll let any of us catch up, won't he?) Then he welcomed them with a question: "What do you want?" What a simple but disarming question!

These are the first words that Jesus speaks in John's gospel. And they are words that burn through so much that is superficial; they are words that invitingly, gently but firmly, clear everything away so that a genuine, fruitful encounter might take place. "What do you want?" Jesus asks. "What are you looking for?" "What is it you seek?"

We might have many questions to ask Jesus, but he wants to know something from us first: "What do you want?"

How would you answer him?

### Prayer

*Thank you, Jesus, for asking me a question I must answer—;not just once but continually. May my answer include re-newing my commitment to follow you. Please guide every-thing I do today. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Gospel of John](#)

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