

Sermon on the 2nd Sunday in ordinary time (B)
(13/14 January 2024 - St Sebastian's Cathedral, Magdeburg)

What do you want?, or: *Find your place*

Gospel of the day;
from the holy Gospel according to John:

³⁵The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, ³⁶and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." ³⁷The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. ³⁸Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. ⁴⁰Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). ⁴²Then he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; 30 you will be called Kephas" (which is translated Peter). John 1:35-41

"What do you want?" Jesus asks this question, dear brothers and sisters, to the two disciples who are running after him. "What do you want?" Why have you come here this morning? This is a question that we are also asked here today. A question that we should not avoid either. Because the answer tells us something about why we are and remain Christians. What do you want? Or in other words: Why do you actually follow Jesus?

Many of us have been told about this Jesus by someone at some point. Maybe it was our parents, maybe our grandparents. We may have heard about it in religious education lessons. Someone once said to us: there is this Jesus, I believe in him, the church believes in him, you should believe in him too. And we accepted that. Some of us have become Christians through a life decision - they have found faith.

It seems to have been similar with the two disciples just mentioned in the Gospel. Originally, the two belonged to John the Baptist - and he told them: This Jesus, "*Behold, the Lamb of God.*" (John 1:36) This is a special person who is worth following. And they do: they follow him, or rather they run after him.

This brings us to this important scene. The Gospel says: "*Jesus turned round*" (John 1:38) Literally this means: Jesus looked at them, Jesus perceives them. Jesus notices these two men running after him. And then he asks the question: "What do you want?" What do you want from me? What do you want me to give you? And the two answer: "*Master, where do you live?*" (John 1:38). Literally it says: "*Master, where are you staying?*" The answer is an invitation: "*Come and see!*" (John 1:39) And the two disciples accept this

invitation: They stay with him and get to know him. They get to know Jesus so well that one of the disciples, Andrew, is able to say to his brother in the flesh: "*We have found the Messiah*" (John 1:41). And this will change the lives of Andrew and Peter - and with them the lives of many women and men. Right up to you and me.

And today he asks you and me the same question! What do you want? He looks at you. He perceives you. He sees you, with your life and your worries. He sees your guilt and your devotion. He sees your weakness and your courage. He sees your tears and your laughter. And in this, your life, he asks the question: What do you want?

Our answer will probably be like that of the two disciples! Maybe we won't ask, where do you live? But still, how can I be with You in my life? How can You be part of my life. That I become a disciple who follows You and with whom I, You, We can have fellowship. And this fellowship, this recognition, just as you are, is what this Jesus wants to give you: Towards the end of the Gospel of John, there is once again talk of the dwelling place: "*In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?*" (John 14:2).

This Jesus, whom you are facing, wants to give you a place. And this place has already been prepared for you. This promise does not only apply for some time when we have died. Because this text about the dwellings of the Father is often chosen for funerals. I believe it applies today, here: Just as you are, this Jesus has prepared a place for you. It is a place where we are safe, where we can find rest: "*Do not let your hearts be troubled.*" (John 14:1) Jesus then tells

his disciples. Despite all the challenges in life, the Lord wants to give you rest: rest of heart.

You don't have to do much for this: ultimately, it's just a willingness to want to be close to this Jesus. To say to him: I want to get to know you. Where are you?

I would like to suggest something to you for the coming period. That you ask yourself this question: What do I want? Perhaps sit down in the evening and ask yourself this question. You can also write down your answer and keep it safe. You can then pray with the answer to this question: Where do you live in my life, Jesus? And perhaps the answer will ring out to you: "Come and see, my friend!" There is a place for you - I will give you your place. Come and rest with me!

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