

Picture of Lego Train

I take my batteries out of my lego train over the summer. The heat in the garage is too hard on the batteries. We had friends and family coming over the holidays so I decided to get my trains up and going. Yes I have a passenger train and a cargo train. So I put the batteries in, turned them on and I could not get them to work. I finally got them to go. But out in the garage they would not work. I checked the connections. I rechecked the batteries. Now the controller works on what is known as Infrared radio signal. It is some kind of signal that goes from the controller to the trains. There are little signal lights within the train that tells me that all is well. They were working. For some reason the trains wouldn't go. I was puzzled. Now these trains are designed to work for a 10 year old. Maybe that was the problem. Then I looked down and realized something. I was pointing the controller not at the trains but at my stomach. The controller itself was backwards. Guess what..turn the controller around and the trains worked! That was my aha moment just after Christmas. Of course, I felt a bit like an idiot, but at least the trains work.

Today is the first day of the season known as Epiphany. An Epiphany event can be seen as anytime God enters our world. Thus God on Mount Sinai is an Epiphany event. This is the season of Epiphany because God is not on a mountain, but walking on the streets and roads of Palestine. Jesus is here! An Epiphany experience can also be an Aha moment. It is when the light of an idea begins and emerges. It is seeing things in a new way. It is opening the door to a new way of not only seeing, but believing and learning and even behaving in a new way. So imagine then, that this season of Epiphany, perhaps we can have an Aha moment, not with Lego trains, but with our walk with God. So in today's lesson we will explore that concept.

Picture of Open Fridge

How many of us have opened the fridge, staring in trying to see the jar of mustard that you know is in there. As hard as you like, you can't see it. You have three options. You can close the door and not use the mustard. You can ask for help. Or the third option, is a friend or in my case, my wife, notices me staring into the fridge, comes over and finds it for me. In other words, my wife helps me to see what I could not see. This is what John the Baptist does in our Gospel lesson. We read the following in John 1:35-36

"The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by he exclaimed," Look here is the Lamb of God"

Johns pointing not into the fridge but at Jesus. Now you will notice a theme that emerges from our Gospel lesson. It is a theme of pointing and seeing. Notice what happens first. John is watching Jesus walk by. Then John points to Jesus and invites others to see Jesus the way he does. Look, here is the Lamb of God. The other theme that emerges from this first chapter is titles for Jesus. So we will look at pointing, seeing and titles.

Lamb of God is a name for the Messiah. While we imagine Lamb of God as a gentle creature who leads us to still waters. But in the Old Testament it is the lambs that are sacrificed on doorposts during Passover. Jesus is the Lamb of God who will sacrifice himself for us. Have you ever sat down and really pondered what that means. That God loves us that much. That God knows who we are, our faults, our

misgivings, our sinful self, and God doesn't care. This is the depth of the love that God has for us. Jesus, Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. So open your eyes, hearts and souls and see Jesus as Lamb of God.

The two disciples of John who heard what John said went to follow Jesus. They address him as Rabbi and they ask him where he is staying. We read his answer in 1:39

“He said to them, “Come and See”.

Jewish rabbis would invite people to be their followers. In doing so, the disciple would either move in with the rabbi or at least stay nearby. Jesus is addressed as Rabbi. This implies he has some teaching to do. He has some eyes to open. He is going to help people redirect their controllers away from their stomachs to others in the world. So Jesus is pointing to his place of residence and invites these two to join him. So Jesus is a Rabbi. What new thing can he teach us this Epiphany season? Raise your hand, if you think you have Jesus all figured out. I knew none of you would. I certainly don't but unfortunately we behave as if we do. You see, to see Jesus as Rabbi means we are open to growing in our faith. For Jesus will open our eyes to a new way of seeing and believing. Once again we have the words Come and See. Look. Explore. Examine. Watch.

Now Andrew, was one of John's disciples who went to Jesus. We read the following in John 1:41

“He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed).

In order to find something you have to be looking for it. They were looking not for mustard but for the Messiah. Andrew is the one pointing here. He makes a claim that Jesus is the Messiah. Messiah means Savior. Now of course he has no clue yet what kind of Messiah Jesus will be. But this is what he sees in Jesus.

Now Jesus recruits Philip who begins to do his own pointing. Philip says that we have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus, son of Joseph from Nazareth. Nathaniel asks can anything good come out of Nazareth. Phillip invites Nathaniel to once again Come and See.

The title, Jesus, Son of Joseph puts Jesus in the line of David. It also reminds us that Jesus is a man. Jesus is human and will do real suffering for us. Now just because someone points out something to us, doesn't mean we always get it. Nathaniel is a skeptic. Nazareth is a backwoods town kind of place and many of them would be considered unpure Jews. So Nathaniel comes and Jesus says that he saw Nathaniel under a fig tree. You see not only are we to see Jesus, Jesus can also see us. For some reason this opens the light bulb of understanding in Nathaniel. We read in 1:49

“Nathaniel replies, Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel”

Two more titles. Son God. King of Israel. This is added to Lamb of God, Messiah, Anointed One and Rabbi. Each title points to the character of Jesus and invites us to see Jesus and ourselves in new light.

Jesus then tells Nathaniel he will see greater things than these and will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon our last title, Son of Man”

So what does this mean for us? Well we are invited to Come and See Jesus during Epiphany. We are invited to open our eyes and souls to what Jesus may teach us. We can invite others to help point the

way for us. We too may point the way for others. Along the way we will for an awareness, a deeper connection with Christ, for while Jesus certainly saves and is the Messiah, the role of Jesus is to point us to who and what God is. That is a very important thing to remember. Now all this talk of Mustard has made me hungry. When I go home I am going to make myself a sandwich.