

Come and See!

John 1:43-51

Pastor Jim Rademaker

It's the story of Philip and Nathanael and how they come to be disciples and follow Jesus. The story begins with Jesus finding Philip and saying to him, "Follow me."

Jesus had been baptized by John in the Jordan. Even though John thought it should be the other way around - that Jesus should be baptizing him - what does Jesus say? *"Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* For Jesus to confess *your* sin as *His*. To take *your* sin on Himself, taking it away from you, and unto Himself.

The heavens being torn open. The Spirit descending on Him. The voice from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased!" Jesus has been introduced to the world. Now what does He do? He introduces Himself to individuals.

Why? That they might follow Him who has fulfilled all righteousness for them. That they too might introduce Him to individuals, that they too, might follow this One who has fulfilled all righteousness for them. And on it goes. That sooner or later, every one might be introduced to Jesus and follow Him unto eternal life. For that is why He came. A Savior of all. That we might, as Jesus said, "have life, and have it to the full!"

Now, after being baptized in the Jordan, what does Jesus do? He leaves the Jordan, for He has somewhere to go. He's got someone to find. *The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.*

And Philip can't wait! What does he do? The same thing Andrew did. Go tell someone close to him the good news about Jesus! What else do you do with good news, but tell it to someone else, beginning with those closest to you! And so, Philip finds Nathanael and says to him, "We found him!" *"We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*

"We found Him!" Well, sort of. Andrew and Peter and Phil found Jesus. How? They didn't know who He was. They didn't know Jesus, but Jesus knew them. They found Jesus, because Jesus found them. Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael, find Jesus, just like we find Him. We find Jesus, because Jesus finds us. He seeks us out, even when we're not looking for him. *"The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."*

That's where you and I are. Lost. And we don't even know it. Wandering aimlessly in this world. Wandering aimlessly in our sin. Wandering from one savior to the next. And Good Shepherd Jesus, is out looking for us. Calling to us. Finding us!

How did Jesus find you? How was He calling to you? Was it through your family? That's often where He begins. You were raised in the church, attending church. The Bible was in your home and read. How did Jesus find you? Was it through a friend, who asked you a question, or began a conversation, or invited you to church? Who invited you to check out Jesus for yourself? Like Philip, to "come and see?" How did Jesus find you? Maybe, it was someone on T.V. or the internet, or by picking up a bible and beginning to read it yourself.

Jesus is looking for you. Coming to you. Finding you. Every day! Inviting you to "come and see". See your Savior - in the gospels, in the Bible, in the Old Testament, in the New. And then, having seen - following. Having been found; having seen; you are no longer lost. No longer wondering. For now you know which Way to go. Now you know Whom to go to. Whom to follow.

What's your purpose in life? Why are you here? To follow Jesus ... wherever that takes you. Wherever He takes you. What better place to be? As a child - what's your purpose? To follow Jesus. As a young adult - what's your purpose? To follow Jesus. In middle age - what's your purpose? To follow Jesus. In retirement - what's your purpose? To follow Jesus. Following Him ... wherever that takes you. Wherever He takes you. What better place to be!

Jesus calls you, even as He called Philip. "Follow Me - every day of your life. Follow Me - on a lifelong journey of faith. He leads the way, every step of the way, all the days of your life. That's why you're here. To follow Him.

Jesus leaves the Jordan and finds Philip, and calls him to follow. And what does Philip do? He runs out and finds Nathanael to tell him the good news that Jesus is the One they'd been looking for! And so it goes. Jesus uses us as, His instruments, to find others; to invite them to "come and see", that they too might follow. And on it goes. Finding (*or being found*). Following. Inviting.

Lost. Helpless. Hopeless. Headed to hell in our sin. Without Jesus, where is your meaning? What is your purpose in life? What hope sustains you? Blind in our sin. Dead in our sin. Enemies of God. That is our natural state. That is our starting point. And it's a dead-end road.

But He's been out looking for you. Searching for you. And now, you are found! You are forgiven. You have a sure hope to carry you through all the trials and afflictions of life and beyond! "I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see!"

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Philip tells Nathanael about Jesus, but Nathanael has his doubts. Like many today, he's skeptical. How can this be? And of all places, Nazareth? Nathanael has questions. He has doubts. Who doesn't? "How can Jesus be both God and man?" Don't all people go to heaven when they die? How can Jesus be the only way? Aren't all religions basically the same? "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

What's the answer to all our questions? Notice what Philip does. He doesn't engage Nathanael in a prolonged argument about the merits of Nazareth. He doesn't get sidetracked. He's just pleasantly persistent, inviting Nathanael to find out for himself. (*Charles Henrickson*) What's the answer to Nathanael's questions, and ours? "Come and see." "Come and see if you too, won't encounter your Savior, in this person Jesus."

Despite his objections, Nathanael does come. And he does see. In fact, Jesus sees Nathanael approaching and says, "*Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!*" Nathanael can tell that this Jesus somehow knows something about him. That he has divine insight. "*How do you know me?*"

"*Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.*" And Nathanael falls over backwards! He can't believe his ears! Under the fig tree that day before Philip called him, Nathanael was all alone! No one for miles! How would Jesus have known! It's impossible! Unless "*Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!*" And Nathanael finds Jesus. Or should we say, Jesus finds Nathanael!

Jesus replies: "*Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these.*" Nathanael will see the divine power and the blessing of God displayed in Jesus' ministry - time and time again! Not just that Jesus could see him under a fig tree. But that Jesus can heal the blind. Cure the deaf. Cleanse the leper. Forgive sins. Raise the dead! "Nathanael, you think seeing you under that fig tree was a big deal? *You ain't seen nothin' yet!*"

"*Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.*" - recalling Jacob's dream in Genesis 28 about a ladder running between heaven and earth. "*And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!*" And Jacob called that place Beth-El, the "house of God," the gate of heaven.

That's what's happening now in Jesus. He's opening up heaven for us. Jesus' cross is our Jacob's ladder. Through his death on the cross, Jesus pays the price for our sin, declares us righteous, bridging the gap between us and God. As we confess in the Nicene Creed, "... *who came down from heaven, for us men and for our salvation.*" (*Henrickson*)

He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

What's your purpose in life? Why are you here? To follow Jesus ... wherever that takes you. Wherever He takes you. What better place to be?

Finding. Following. Inviting. "*Can anything good come from Nazareth?*" "Come and see!"