

JOHN 1:35-51
FOLLOW ME!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 1 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

Keep in mind that John 1:1-18 is laying the groundwork for the rest of this book. John wants us to understand before we go too far into this Gospel, that Jesus is Almighty God, He is eternal and is equal with God the Father.

And the Word, the title given to Jesus before the Incarnation, became flesh and dwelt among us, God became flesh!

Once we understand that then John moves on with the rest of the story as we will see over the next several months in our study of this Gospel.

As we move on in our study, from John 1:19-51 and really on into John chapter 2, we have a series of days that John is going to talk about. In fact, from John 1:19 into John chapter 2, John is recording the events of about a week, all the way through the wedding in Cana that we find in John chapter 2.

Let me show you what I mean.

Day one is what we see in John 1:19-28.

Then we see day two in John 1:29-34.

Day three is seen in John 1:35-42.

Day four is found in John 1:43-51.

And then in John 2:1 we are told, “**On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee . . .**”

That would put us at seven days or one week. That is the timeframe for these events we have been reading about and will be reading about.

And what we see happening here in John chapter 1 is a changing of the guard you might say.

We are going to be moving from John the Baptist to Jesus, which is the focus of the Gospel of John.

John is going to move off the scene and Jesus is going to enter, and we will see that played out as Jesus gathers some of John's disciples and they will follow Him, Jesus!

Also, keep in mind that it was after the baptism of Jesus and those forty days in the wilderness that these events took place.

And in John 1:29, as John sees Jesus coming, after his meeting with the Jewish religious leaders who wanted to know who he was, notice what he says of Jesus, “**. . . Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” John 1:29.

Notice that John did not present Jesus as a great teacher or an example of how we are to live, or a really nice guy. You get the picture. He is God in the flesh who came to take away, not cover our sins, but take them completely away!

I have called our study this morning – ***FOLLOW ME!***

And, as you will see, we are to follow Jesus, we are to point people to Jesus, He is the focus, and He is the One who can save us! Are we willing to leave all and follow Him?

Several weeks back, our neighbor here at the church, Joel, called me over and showed me this turkey that was by our fence walking back and forth, back and forth.

He said he has been doing that for hours! And he was still doing it, back and forth, just looking at the fence. I thought, “***Why don't you just turn around or just fly over the fence?***”

But he didn't and it went on and I had to leave, but the next day he was gone! He must have figured it out unless Joel is having turkey dinner. Just kidding.

Now, as I was thinking about that the Lord gave me this illustration.

Man is looking for hope, for peace, for safety, for deliverance, and they are going back and forth, back and forth, looking to the world that has them fenced in. Well, not completely fenced in, but the fence is before them and thus, they can't get out, at least that is what they think!

And like the turkey, just seeing the fence, man has a hard time turning around and seeing the freedom that they can find, and that freedom is in Jesus who is standing there with His arms wide open to receive anyone who will come to Him!

You see, the answer to this freedom is not difficult, but, like the turkey, if you don't turn around, you won't escape the clutches of this world that seems to have you fenced in, but Jesus can set you free!

I have broken these verses that we will be looking at into several points and the focus is, like I have said – ***FOLLOW ME!***

Here is how I have broken them down.

JOHN INTRODUCES JESUS – JOHN 1:35-37

THE INVITATION OF JESUS – JOHN 1:38-39

THE DESIRE TO TELL OTHERS OF JESUS – JOHN 1:40-42

THE INVITATION OF JESUS – JOHN 1:43-44

THE WITNESS – JOHN 1:45-46

THE WITNESS OF THE WORD – JOHN 1:47-51

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in John chapter 1, beginning in verse 35 and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at the topic – ***FOLLOW ME!***

JOHN 1

VERSES 35-37

I have called these verses – ***JOHN INTRODUCES JESUS!***

Keep in mind that John the Baptist had his following of disciples, but instead of pointing them to himself, he is now pointing them to Jesus saying, “**Behold the Lamb of God.**”

In the church today, it is not about pointing people to Jesus, it is about – ***SELF!***

Because of that we see that they like to say, “***Behold, look at me! Look at what I have done! Look at what I can do! Come and follow me!***”

And obviously that is wrong, and it can be very dangerous as many cults start out like this.

We have seen this with Jim Jones as he led his followers to drink cyanide grape juice and they all died!

We saw this with David Koresh who had his followers locked in a compound and they were burned to death. We are not to draw people to ourselves but to Jesus!

I think John gives us a great example of how we are to live, pointing people to Jesus instead of building ourselves up.

But it seems many times it is the other way around, like I have said, we like to draw people to ourselves because it makes us feel good, important.

Maybe you have heard of the story that was in Eternity Magazine a while back. In this one article it spoke of how this sidewalk flower vender was doing very little business. Then he got this brilliant idea, he would put up a sign that said: ***“Buy a Gardenia; it will make you feel important all day long!”***

Guess what? His business flourished as he sold more and more gardenias.

Why? Because people love to feel important, for their inner most nature thrives on any attention that caters to their pride!

Now the Scriptures tells us the exact opposite.

They tell us that the way up is down or as James puts it, **“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”** James 4:10. We are to crucify the flesh, less of us and more of Jesus needs to be seen in us and the only way that will happen is if self gets out of the way.

You see, if you want to see your ministry grow, if you want to see it blossom, if you want to be fulfilled in your life, then point people to Jesus and not yourself and you will thrive as you fulfill the work that God has called you to do!

Now how does John the Baptist present Jesus to these men?

He doesn't say that He is the Messiah of Israel, the One that you have been waiting for!

Was that true?

It absolutely was and yet, that is not how John presented Jesus!

Yes, that was His title – ***THE MESSIAH!***

But His mission was – ***THE LAMB OF GOD WHO CAME TO TAKE AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD!***

They wanted a King and yet, God knew exactly what they needed – ***A LAMB!***

And how true that is for us today. People think they know what they need. Like more money, a better job, a bigger home, a fancy car, this and that, and yet, people today need the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world!

And yet, people don't see what they need but they crave for what they want. You see, people want physical deliverance and God knew what they really needed, spiritual deliverance from their bondage of sin and death!

The problem for mankind is that no human can save us from our sins because they themselves are sinners.

Remember what Paul wrote in Hebrews 9:22, “**And according to the law almost all things are purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.**”

And we see in the Old Testament, the picture that was painted for us, that God told Moses that the animal sacrifices, the shedding of their blood, can only be accepted by Him if these sacrifices were without spot and blemish. They had to be perfect!

And remember that these sacrifices only covered a person's sins, they could never take away a person's sins.

That is what John the Baptist said in John 1:29 when he saw Jesus, “**... ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’**”

You see, the only perfect and sinless Man was Jesus, God Incarnate! He was without spot and blemish and thus, He could pay in full the penalty for our sins.

That is what Peter tells us in I Peter 1:18-19, “**knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.**”

And we see John the Baptist explain this in John 1:33-34 as he said, “**I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.**”

In other words, John wants everyone to know that Jesus is no ordinary man, He is and was the virgin born Son of God and He could pay the penalty for our sins because He was without sin!

People today are looking for hope, they are looking for answers, they are looking for all kinds of things and they are at a loss. Kind of like that turkey going back and forth by the fence. The way out was to turn around!

And that is true for people today. The key for us is that we don’t get in the way of pointing people to Jesus by pointing out other things, like . . .

There is this great self-help book!

You have to take care yourself before you can feel better!

There is a good program for you to go to!

And this list can go on and on, but it is missing the point!

The point is, they need Jesus, the wonderful counselor, the comforter, and the most important thing, the One who can forgive a person of their sins and set them free from the bondage that they are in!

Don’t let them walk back and forth like that turkey, because, as Jesus said, “**And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . . Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**” John 8:32, 36

JOHN INTRODUCED JESUS TO OTHERS – may we do the same!

VERSES 38-39

Here we see - ***THE INVITATION OF JESUS!***

Remember back in John 1:37 we are told that two disciples of John the Baptist heard John speak. And when these two heard John the Baptist point them to Jesus, they turned from John and followed Jesus!

Who were these two disciples of John the Baptist that followed Jesus?

One of them we know for sure, and that is Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

We are not told of who the other disciple is, but I truly believe that it was John, the writer of this Gospel.

It is interesting because John talks about himself several times in this Gospel but never mentions himself specifically by name.

Alford made these comments about this second disciple, ***“Who the other disciple was, is not certain: but considering (1) that the Evangelist never names himself in his Gospel, and (2) that this account is so minutely accurate as to specify even the hours of the day, and in all respects bears marks of an eye-witness, and again (3) that this other disciple, from this last circumstance, certainly would have been named, had not the name been suppressed for some special reasons, we are justified in inferring that it was the Evangelist himself.”***

So I believe that the other is John, the writer of this Gospel. In fact, this meeting with Jesus made such an impression upon John that he wrote the exact hour that it took place, **“... about the tenth hour.”** John 1:39.

We see also that Jesus turned and saw these two men following Him and He did not ask them, ***“Who are you seeking?”***

That is interesting to me. Jesus asked them **“What do you seek?”**

In other words, He knew that they were following Him, and thus, His question is *“Why are you following Me? Are you seeking to follow Me because you are curious or are you following Me to know Me?”*

I think that is the real issue here for these men!

And they responded by saying, *“... **where are You staying?**”*

That is an interesting question, and we may miss the point that they are making here.

The point that they are making is this. They were saying to Jesus and the question He had for them, *“Yes teacher, we want to be Your disciples and we want to follow you, learn from you and talk to you about it. Can we stay with you?”*

And what does Jesus tell these two men?

“Fill out this resume and I will get back to you?”

No, He didn't tell them that!

And we can list so many worldly ways to check someone out, but all Jesus tells them is this, *“**Come and see.**”*

Many people today see the Christian life as a playground, and they don't get the clear picture that we are in a battle!

And we must count the cost before we come to Christ.

Think about our daily lives. We get up. We eat breakfast. We go to work. We work long days. We get home and have dinner, watch tv, talk with the wife and children and go to bed.

Then we get up and do it all over again!

And many get tired of that because they have not counted the cost. And I think that is what Jesus is doing with these men here. *“Are you ready for this kind of life? You need to be!”*

Now let me say this before we move on. A disciple is a learner and thus, John and Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist, they were learning from him.

But now they are making that decision on being a disciple of Jesus!

And here's the thing. We read this and we think that they heard Jesus, got up and followed Him, end of story. No, there is more to it than that. I guess I can say, "***And now, for the rest of the story!***"

Did you know that Jesus called these men to be His disciples three different times before they fully obeyed and left their jobs and all to follow Him? Let me show you what I mean.

We have read here in John 1:35-42 where the first meeting took place.

The second meeting or invitation you might say is found in Matthew 4:18-22 where we are told, "**And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.' They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.**"

For whatever reason they left for a time and followed Jesus, but it was not a permanent thing, not yet. I guess they went part way and then came back and again, this is the second invitation that Jesus made to these men!

How can I be so sure?

Because listen to what we are told in Luke 5:1-10, **“So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’ But Simon answered and said to Him, ‘Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.’ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.’”**

So, after that second invitation it seems that these boys went back to their fishing business and here, they have another encounter with Jesus and another invitation!

And it is here that we see them leave all and follow Jesus. Listen to what we are told in Luke 5:11, **“So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.”**

This third invitation to these men cut to their hearts and what did they do – ***THEY FORSOOK ALL AND FOLLOWED JESUS!***

Their business of fishing. Their family. Their friends. It was a life of total surrender to Jesus! This was a permanent response by them!

It is not always easy to leave all and follow Jesus.

God calls us to do things that stretch us. He calls us to do things that mean we must sacrifice some things.

And sometimes it takes some time for us to listen and obey or really surrender to what He wants us to do.

I remember when Julie and I were first married, we talked about retirement and what we wanted to do. We had all kinds of plans. We were going to get an A-frame house in the mountains, lots of trees and lakes around us, and just live!

God had other plans for both of us!

The first was the invitation into the Kingdom of God! I got saved!

And then it was the invitation to leave all we had in Illinois and come to Wisconsin to be a pastor of Calvary Chapel of Manitowoc.

We left family. We left many Christian friends. I left my job. We left our church. And some would say, *“Wow, you sacrificed so much! How can you do that?”*

The reality is, we did not sacrifice anything because God has blessed us with so much more. Yes, we miss our friends that we were close to back in Illinois, but I look at all the friends God has brought into our lives over these last twenty-six years, and it is amazing!

Do you think these disciples felt that they left so much behind when they looked back on their life? Maybe initially. But in the end, I don't think so!

And I do realize that God does not call everyone to forsake their jobs and careers to follow Jesus into full time ministry, but He does call all of us into full time commitment!

What do I mean by that?

I mean that nothing gets in your way of your commitment to Jesus, He must be your first love and Lord over all of your life!

And let me finish up this section on dealing with this about Jesus. He never forces anyone to do anything, not even to get saved. He invites people to come to Him. We even see this at the end of the Bible, in the book of Revelation we are told, “**And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.**” Revelation 22:17.

Again, Jesus does not force anyone to follow Him, but He invites them to follow Him! All through the Scriptures we see this and what a beautiful picture it is of God inviting us to come and see!

THE INVITATION OF JESUS!

VERSES 40-42

Andrew, as I have said, is one of the two disciples of John the Baptist who is now following Jesus.

Now what is the first thing that Andrew does after he comes to Jesus?

He goes and gets his brother Simon and tells him that they have found the Messiah!

What a powerful testimony!

Remember what I have called these verses – ***THE DESIRE TO TELL OTHERS OF JESUS!***

I like what one writer had to say about Andrew's life. He wrote, ***“Whenever you find Andrew in John's Gospel, he is bringing somebody to Jesus: his brother, the lad with the loaves and fishes (John 6:8), and the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus (John 12:20–21). No sermons from Andrew are recorded, but he certainly preached great sermons by his actions as a personal soul winner!”***

That should be the nature of all Christians who have come to Jesus, that they have that desire to share that experience with others.

It is as David said in Psalm 34:8, **“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!”**

Think about your favorite food, how great it is and how you tell others about it.

Well, if you have tasted Jesus, if you have come to that saving faith and see the wonderful things He has done in your life, you too will want to share that with others, you will tell them to taste and see that the **LORD** is good!

Now Andrew is often called **“Simon Peter's brother”** and that can get old real fast! If any of you have older brother's or sister's you are probably aware of this, ***“Oh, you are the brother or sister of so-and so!”***

And what happens is you could lose your identity. And because of that you can easily get frustrated, but Andrew didn't.

Why?

Because his focus was not upon his popularity but on bringing people to Jesus, the One who really does count!

May we not lose that perspective. Can you imagine if Andrew refused to tell his brother Peter because of jealousy or whatever? I wonder if that has caused any of us to hold onto what we have and not share it.

Also, in verse 42, notice that Jesus changes Simon's name, which means "**shifting sand**" to Peter or "**Rock,**" *PETROS* in the Greek.

Now old Rocky was going to find out that if he was going to do things in the power of his flesh, he will be on shaky ground.

But, if he does things through the power of God, does them upon Christ, he will be stable because Rocky will be standing upon the Rock, Jesus Christ!

And we truly see that in Peter as he denies knowing the Lord three times as he tries to stand for Jesus in the power of his flesh. After he failed, after he is broken of self, Jesus raises him up and on the day of Pentecost he boldly proclaims the Word of God and 3,000 people get saved! The empowering of the Spirit of God upon his life!

That is also true in our own lives, the strength of the flesh is built upon shaky ground, but the power of God is built upon the Rock, Jesus!

THE DESIRE TO TELL OTHERS OF JESUS!

VERSES 43-44

Once again we see – ***THE INVITATION OF JESUS!***

This is the fourth day, and we see that Jesus wanted to go to Galilee.

Keep in mind that Bethsaida was located on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee and this was where Philip was from, also Andrew and Peter were from Bethsaida.

And all we are told is that Jesus found Philip and said, "**Follow Me.**"

I love the fact that the Lord comes looking for us. He seeks us out and then it is up to us to respond to the calling of Jesus in our lives or to ignore that calling!

And what I want you to notice here is that there was no thundering or lightning, no smoke rising up, Jesus said to Philip, “**Follow Me,**” and he did!

For some who get saved it is a very emotional experience, and that is not wrong, but neither is just a simple prayer and a commitment to step forward by faith. That is how it was for me.

I do want to touch on this invitation of Jesus even though we did deal with it in a few earlier verses.

If you have not repented of your sins and asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, then please understand that you are not here by accident or listening or watching this service by just luck.

The Holy Spirit is coming along side of you and drawing you to Jesus. There is that invitation. He will not force you to come, but He will encourage you to come because He loves you more than you will ever know.

All you must do is, like I have said, ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins and then ask Him to be Lord and Savior of your life. At that instant, you are a child of God and your sins have been cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more!

And then you need to get involved with a Bible believing and teaching church where you can grow in your relationship with God.

But what about those of us who have come to Christ, does Jesus invite us to do things?

You bet He does. Let me show you a few. We are told,

Again and again in the Bible men and women are graciously invited to enter into personal fellowship with God. Someone has said that the Bible is a book of invitations from God to mankind, urging us to become His partners in redeeming the world.

The first invitation is an invitation to rest.

Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Since the early dawn of mankind’s history, when our Eden of bliss became a desert of discord, we have been creatures of restlessness. When we are bereft [deprived] of the peace that comes from God through the saving grace of Christ, we become fish out of water.

Divorce, alcoholism and immorality are direct results of the restlessness of sin. This diabolical unrest has permeated our nation like a contagious disease and has become the underlying cause of domestic, community and social problems. The basic cause of our national immorality is this spiritual unrest in people’s lives today.

Christ could solve the problems of the many celebrities who have made headlines because of their marital difficulties. If the principals in a domestic brawl were to accept Christ, not only would their sins be forgiven, but Christ would help them solve their problems. A love that has apparently gone dead between husband and wife could be rekindled.

Psychologists, schooled in the intricate workings of the mind, are confessing that psychology is helpless to solve all of the mental and nervous disturbances of people today. Sociologists, trained in the interactions of society, are admitting that sociology cannot cope with the tremendous problems in human relationships.

Political leaders point out the moral ills of America, but none of them seem to have an answer to the desperate need for a new moral integrity that would reverse the moral plunge that Americans are taking. Many political leaders privately admit that they are unable to cope with the seriousness of the moral dilemma.

In my travels about the country, I have sensed unrest in almost every phase of our modern-day living. This changeable, unsettled, roving, transient, sleepless and fidgety spirit is due primarily to the restlessness of the human heart and its separation from the Christ of tranquility and peace. These insecure individuals could find spiritual peace and physical rest by surrendering their lives to Jesus Christ.

The Bible says, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isaiah 57:20). "In the morning you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!'" (Deuteronomy 28:67).

Every day I come in contact with mixed-up, paradoxical men and women: rich people who are held in the grip of insecurity; intellectual people who have lost their way; strong people who live in fear of weakness and defeat. I long to take every one of them by the hand and lead them into the presence of the Savior who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." . . .

A second invitation is to discipleship.

"Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men'" (Mark 1:17). We are saved to serve; we are redeemed to reproduce spiritually; we are fished out of the miry clay so that we in turn may become fishers of men. . . .

This invitation to discipleship is the most thrilling ever to come to mankind. Just imagine being a working partner with God in the redemption of the world! Jesus challenged, “If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor” (John 12:26).

Christian discipleship gives us the privilege of being associated with Christ intimately. And the faithful discharging of the glorious responsibilities of true discipleship invokes the approval and favor of God Himself. . . .

The third invitation is to live in the realm of God.

Jesus said, “Abide in Me, and I in you” (John 15:4). Personal salvation is not an occasional rendezvous with Deity; it is an actual dwelling with God. Christianity is not just an avocation; it is a lifelong, eternity-long vocation. David, thrilled with the knowledge that his life was in God, said in Psalm 91:1 – “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

If you read and reread this beautiful psalm, you will discover that in Him we have a permanent abode and residence, and that all of the comfort, security and affection that the human heart craves is found in Him.

Modern psychiatrists say that one of the basic needs of mankind is security. In this psalm we are assured that in God we have the greatest of security: “No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways” (Psalm 91:10-11). . . .

These three invitations are not mine. They are given by Jesus Himself. No man or woman has ever found complete rest apart from Christ. To the multitudes of distressed, troubled and weary He beckons, “Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest.”

Do you want to know rest, joy, peace, security and affection? Do you want to know what it means to belong? Surrender and commit your life and your heart to Christ. I guarantee that you can know peace with God, peace of soul, peace of mind and joy such as you have never experienced.

- <https://bit.ly/34lxsss>

What a wonderful Lord we serve – ***THE INVITATION OF JESUS!***

VERSES 45-46

In these verses we see – ***THE WITNESS!***

And we have talked about this already with a different witness, John the Baptist and Andrew. But now we have Philip, who also brings people to Jesus. The person that Philip shares Jesus with is Nathanael, and the testimony of Philip is that of Jesus being the Messiah and it is based on what the prophets spoke of the Messiah.

In other words, Jesus is the fulfillment of what they said. God’s Word is living, and it is powerful, and it can change and does change lives!

Now, as Trench points out, ***“Nathanael is today generally understood to be the same person as Bartholomew, one of the Twelve; Nathanael being the personal name, Bartholomew (son of Tolmai) the patronymie.”***

And that joy of someone coming to the faith sometimes just explodes from that person’s life and it touches those around them.

One writer put it like this, *“Philip wanted to share his new-found joy with someone else, so he went and found Nathanael. New converts are the best soul-winners. His message was simple and to the point. He told Nathanael that he had found the Messiah who had been foretold by Moses and the prophets - Jesus of Nazareth. . . .”*

I am sure you have experienced this as you have shared your faith. You tell someone about Jesus, and you are so excited and then their response, and that can be devastating when they reject what you are saying!

And that is what we see here with Nathanael as Philip shares Jesus with him.

Now we have to understand that he was at least honest. Some people just tell you what they think you want to hear but not Nathanael, he was very honest.

You see, once Nathanael hears that Jesus is from Nazareth, the walls go up, his prejudices against this city and its people were too much for him to believe that anything good could come from this town.

“If Jesus is from Nazareth, then He can’t be the one, He can’t be the Messiah.”

Now Nazareth was a poor city of Galilee, it was looked down upon. The name *“Nazareth”* means *“Sprout town”* not too impressive.

You see, Nazareth, from an economic position, from a military position, from a political position, was totally insignificant and for the Messiah to come from Beansville was just too much for Nathanael.

And make no mistake about it, Nathanael knew the Scriptures and what they said of the Messiah, **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The one to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”** Micah 5:2.

Bethlehem was the place to be, the Messiah coming there from eternity, land stretching out so far and wide, keep Nazareth just give me that Bethlehem countryside!

Sorry for all those of you who are Green Acres fans!

Now, at this point Philip could have been very discouraged and walked away. He could have told Nathanael that he is going to burn in Hell if he doesn't change his tune! Now both of those responses have been and are being used by Christians, but not with Philip, look at what he does.

Instead of arguing or mocking Nathanael, he invites Nathanael to come and see!

What a great lesson for us. Do you invite people to church, to come and see what Jesus is really all about, what His people are really like?

You should!

Instead of arguing, mocking, condemning them, do as Philip did, tell them to ***“Come and see!”***

Before I came to Jesus, and I am sure it was the same for you, I mocked Him, thought it was ridiculous to believe in God. In fact, I did not even believe in God, not at all.

But as my wife prayed for me, as she showed me the love of God and then it was the Word of God through the Spirit of God that opened my eyes to Jesus!

THE WITNESS led to salvation and that brings us to our last point – ***THE WITNESS OF THE WORD!***

VERSES 47-51

Once again, what we see here is – ***THE WITNESS OF THE WORD!***

And, as we read these words, we may think that this is just good luck on the part of Nathanael, that Jesus encountered him.

Not at all. God desires to meet with us where we are at and that is what we see here with Nathanael! This is a divine appointment!

When Jesus meets Nathanael, He basically tells him that he is a good person and that He saw Nathanael under the fig tree. And please understand that this phrase “**under the fig tree**” was a phrase that was used by the Rabbis to describe someone meditating on the Scriptures.

So, as Nathanael is sitting under the fig tree, meditating on the Word of God, Jesus saw him there, saw what he was doing, and then Philip called Nathanael to come and see the Messiah, to come and see Jesus!

And then we see that Nathanael’s eyes are opened and he gives testimony of who Jesus is, the Messiah, the King of Israel, the Son of God!

Now I tend to think there was more to it than that. I think there was no way for Jesus to see Nathanael and that is why he is blown away by what Jesus said.

Also, I wonder what would have happened in Nathanael’s life if Philip did not say to him “***Come and see***” for yourself about Jesus? What a great lesson for us to not only learn but apply to our lives!

Now in verse 50 Jesus speaks of seeing greater things than this and then in verse 51 He speaks of heaven opening and the “**angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.**”

What is that all about?

Jesus is probably connecting the dream that Jacob had in Genesis chapter 28 with Himself.

You may remember the story, Jacob, and keep in mind that his name means heel-catcher or conniver, took the birthright from Esau his brother.

Actually, Esau gave it to Jacob for a bowl of bean soup because he was hungry, and the birthright was not important to him at this time.

Jacob also tricked his dad Isaac into giving him the blessing of the firstborn, and thus he took this from Esau also.

Now, as you can imagine, Esau was not a happy camper and he wanted to kill his brother Jacob.

When Jacob finds this out, he is exiting stage left, he is getting out of town before sundown, and he begins to flee to his uncle Laban's house in Padan Aram.

As the sun begins to set, Jacob spends the night in a place called Luz, which he will rename Bethel, or House of Bread.

As he gets ready to sleep, he lays his head down upon a rock for a pillow and drifts off to sleep. Not sure how he went to sleep when he laid his head on a rock, but when you are tired, when you are beat, I guess you can sleep anywhere.

And in Genesis 28:12 we read, "**Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.**"

That is what Jesus is speaking of here in John 1:51 only now He shows us what that dream was pointing to.

You see, that ladder that Jacob saw reaching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending upon it is none other than Jesus Christ. He is the Mediator, the bridge-builder between God and man.

Here is something for you to think about. What portion of Scripture do you think Nathanael was meditating upon while he sat under the fig tree? I believe it was that portion of Scripture in Genesis chapter 28 that dealt with Jacob and his dream of this ladder reaching up into heaven. The reason I say that is what Jesus had to say to him impacted Nathanael tremendously!

And as Nathanael was reading that portion of Scripture, maybe he was thinking about what Job said, **“For He is not a man, as I am, That I may answer Him, And that we should go to court together. Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both.”** Job 9:32-33.

Notice the problem for Job.

How can he go into heaven, to go before God, to God’s court, and plead his case?

He is a man and there is no one that can bridge that gap, no mediator.

A sad state for Job!

You see, a mediator is there to end a dispute. The dispute between God and man is that man has sinned, and his sin has separated him from God and justice demands death.

We needed someone to bridge that gap between us and God that sin had made.

That is what I Peter 3:18 tells us, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

What man could not do; Jesus has done. As our Mediator, Jesus Christ says to the Father,
“There is no more debt due, I have paid it in full!”

And guess what? The case is closed; we are set free in Christ! What a wonderful God we serve!

And we have to understand this, that our sins have separated us from God. But now Jesus came and bridged that gap by paying the penalty for our sins. He brought God and man together once again!

It is as Paul said in I Timothy 2:5-6, **“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”**

Make no mistake about it, there is no one else that can bridge that gap, no priest, no man, not even Mary, only Jesus Christ who, being God, made Himself flesh to die for our sins in order to bring us to God.

Jesus is our ladder to God; He tore that veil in the Temple that separated man from God, opening that curtain up so we could boldly come before God through Jesus Christ.

I believe that this witness of the Word of God that Jesus spoke to Nathanael brought him to saving faith!

We must understand that God’s Word is living, and it is powerful, and it can and will transform lives. It is the Word of God that brings us to saving faith!

And what the enemy does is get us to believe that the Word of God needs to be updated. The Word of God is not all true. The Word of God is not living. And there are so many things that the enemy throws out there and wants us to believe.

But we are to believe what the Scriptures say, and if we do, it will not only transform your life but all those who hear it, as we see here with Nathanael!

God has called us – ***COME AND SEE!***

Then what are we to do?

We are to – ***FOLLOW HIM!***

And then what?

YOU WILL SEE GREATER THINGS THAN THESE!

That is what God has for us if we are willing to follow Him!

And yes, becoming a disciple of Christ, although not an easy life, is the only thing that makes life worth living!

Commit yourself to being a faithful disciple of Jesus because, if you do, you will never regret doing so!