

Third Sunday after Epiphany -- January 14, 2018

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Pastor Charles Heup

Come and See!

John 1:43-51 (NIV)

The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." 44) Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45) Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46) "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. 47) When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." 48) "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." 49) Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." 50) Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." 51) He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Dear Friends in Christ:

Come here once, come on! I've got something to show you. With just a little prodding we're likely to stop what we're doing and respond to such an invitation by going and taking a look. A day or two before the events of our text John the Baptist had pointed out Jesus to some of his students by calling Jesus the Lamb of God. These two students or disciples of John got up and followed Jesus. It seems as if John, the author of this Gospel was one of those men. The other was named Andrew. (John 1:38-39) **Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39) "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.**

It didn't take any prodding on Jesus' part for Andrew and John to go along with Jesus. They were eager to be with him and to learn from him as their teacher. And it didn't take very long before these eager followers of Jesus were inviting others to come and see. (John 1:41) **The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).**

The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." 44) Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45) Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46) "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

There it is again – that invitation; Come and See! Has your curiosity been aroused? What's so interesting? Well Come on along with me! Let's take a closer look at our text together.

Theme: Come and See The Son of God

1. He's the one who fulfills the Scriptures
2. He's the one who reads our hearts
3. He's the one who brings us heaven

If you knew that someone important was coming to town – you'd probably be a bit excited too if one of your friends came running to you and said Come, on! Hurry, come and see. There were many God-fearing individuals at the time of Jesus who were eagerly waiting for the Christ to arrive. The Old Testament Scriptures had promised that the Lord would send his anointed one to be ruler of Israel – of course, some misunderstood

those promises and were simply looking for a political rescuer. Others understood that this Messiah would be a spiritual rescuer. And of course there were many who were waiting but weren't exactly sure what they were waiting for. But the Christ was the Son of God – he's the one who had been chosen by God to rescue sinners from their sin. He was the one who would call them back to God.

It would seem likely that Andrew and John had been looking forward to the coming of Christ as one who would take away the sins of the world – after all it was in response to John the Baptist's comments that Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world that they followed after Jesus. Apparently Philip also had been waiting for the coming of the Messiah foretold by the Scriptures – those Scriptures had spoken of him as one (Micah 5:2) **“who would be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”** Passages like that help us to identify the promised one – the Messiah – as the Son of God who existed from all eternity.

If Jesus is truly the one who takes away the sins of the world – well then he has to be the Son of God and he has to fulfill the Scriptures. Philip knew that and was convinced that Jesus was the promised one. **5) Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."**

Philip expressed what he and the others believed about Jesus – their faith came from hearing the message – from hearing the word of Christ. Romans 10:17 reminds us that it is the word which is responsible for bring us to faith: **Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.** And so it was the word of Jesus which Andrew, Peter and Philip had heard when they followed Christ that created faith in their hearts.

Philip had heard enough to convince him that Jesus was the one spoken about by the prophets and “the Words of the Law” – a technical term for the books of Moses. It was Moses who recorded these words of promise: (Deuteronomy 18:15) **The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.**

Philip's understanding of Jesus wasn't complete at this time but he was certainly willing to listen to him and to tell others about him. There's something that we can learn from Philip. Actually there are two things. 1) We can learn to listen to Jesus as we search the Scriptures which testify about him for more and more information about him. Recently sports reporters from around the state have doing lots of searching and investigating as they have tried to find information about the latest hires in the front offices of the Green Bay Packers. And fans have hung on every tidbit they can discover as they attempt to form their opinion of the new leaders.

As we search the Scriptures we'll find more and more information about Jesus – information which will enable us not just to form an opinion about him but also to believe in him. Philip teaches us to search the Scriptures and secondly Philip teaches us to share what we know. Once again the events surrounding the Packer's restructuring provide an example of how people are often eager to share what they have discovered. All we had to do was listen whenever a couple of reporters or fans got to talking or read the comments sections on the sport web pages and we would discover that fans were eager to share what they knew even if they had to admit they didn't really know too much.

As followers of Jesus we may at times feel as if we don't know all that much about Jesus – after all the Scriptures are filled with more information than we can remember but that shouldn't stop us from telling others what we know. Philip reminds us to do just that. That's the second thing we learn from Philip.

So what can we expect when tell others about Jesus? Well what happened when Philip told Nathaniel? **Nathanael asked. "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?"** One reaction might be skepticism. Nathanael was skeptical – because Philip had identified Jesus as coming from Nazareth – a place not normally regarded as home for anyone who had done anything important. And perhaps more importantly a place not mentioned in the Scriptures as home to the Messiah. Once again, we can learn from Philip – he didn't try to argue with Nathanael. He didn't try to persuade him to believe. Instead, he invited him to **"Come and see."**

Perhaps you have friends who are doubters like Nathanael – people who are interested in spiritual things but don't yet believe in Jesus as the Son of God who fulfills the Scriptures. Well it's not going to be your wise and persuasive words which are going to change the situation. The apostle Paul reminded the Corinthians that they had once been in the dark concerning Jesus. (1 Corinthians 2:4-5) **My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5) so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.**

Doubters like Nathanael will only come to faith through the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Word. Our faith doesn't rest on man's wisdom but on God's power and so when we encounter those who are skeptics our response can be to invite them to come and see that the Words of Jesus are spirit and life. Invite them to hear the word with you, to examine the word with you. And when the Spirit works faith through the word of Christ then seeing will become believing! That's exactly what happened to Nathaniel.

Philip said – Come and See the one who fulfills the Scriptures. Nathanael saw the Son of God who reads our hearts. **47) When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." 48) "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." 49) Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."**

From afar, Jesus made a comment about Nathanael that caught him by surprise. Jesus spoke of him as an Israelite who looking forward to the coming of the Messiah to be his Savior. How could Jesus know his thoughts without even having had a chance to talk to him before? That's what Nathanael wondered and so he asked: How do you know me? Jesus' answer showed that he is the one who knows all things -- **"I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."** Now Nathanael is really astounded! But he's also convinced – convinced that Jesus is more than a teacher – convinced that he is the Son of God – convinced that he is the ruler of Israel promised in the Scriptures. And Nathanael would not be the only one to come to that conclusion: After Jesus calmed a storm on the sea of Galilee his disciples would worship him saying, **"Truly you are the Son of God."** (Matthew 14:33) Simon Peter would acknowledge to Jesus **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** (Matthew 16:16) After the pagan centurion witnessed the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion and death; he and the others with him exclaimed **"Surely he was to Son of God."** (Matthew 27:54) And following his resurrection Thomas said to him, **"My Lord and my God!"** (John 29:28)

Jesus is indeed the Son of God who knows our thoughts – he sees and knows our sins and yet he declares to us that he is our Savior. And with his powerful word he convinces us that he is the Son of God who gave up his life to rescue us from our sins so that we might also see him as the one who brings us heaven. That's what Jesus told Nathanael. **"I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."**

As we dig into the Scriptures, we also will see Jesus as the one who brings us heaven. We'll hear Jesus promise: (John 14:2-3) **In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back**

and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. We'll hear him cry, "**My God, My God why have you forsaken me?**" and we'll know it was because of our sins. We'll hear him declare, "It is finished" and we'll believe that he's paid for our sins completely. We'll hear the angel's announcement: (Acts 1:11) **This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.**" We'll be encouraged in our faith as Jesus says" (John 3:16) "**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**" We'll look forward to a blessed reunion with him and our loved ones in heaven because he says: (John 11:25) "**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.**"

You know it never seems to fail – when we've gone to see something wonderful there's going to be someone who is going to ask: So, what did you see? So what did we see today? We saw Jesus – the Son of God who fulfills the Scriptures, who reads our hearts and who brings us heaven. Now that you have come and seen you can go and tell. You can say to others come and see and you can show them their Savior in the Scriptures. Amen