

GOSPEL OF JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

“Come and See”

John 1:35-51

Open your Bibles to the Gospel of John Chapter 1. We are going to finish the chapter at this time. Let’s read our text and then we’ll take it apart verse by verse. Beginning in verse 35, John the Apostle writes:

³⁵Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. ³⁶And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

³⁷The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?”

They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying?”

³⁹He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

⁴⁰One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus.

Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone).

⁴³The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip 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.”

⁴⁶And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

⁴⁷Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!”

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⁴⁸ Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

⁴⁹ Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

⁵⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” ⁵¹ And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

How many of you have seen the new movie, “*Jesus Revolution?*”

A few of us went a couple weeks ago. The movie depicts the beginnings of the last revival here in America, the “Jesus Movement” of the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. It centers on a drowning pastor named Chuck Smith and his wife, Kay. They saw what was happening to the youth in So Cal and began praying for them. These “hippies,” as they were called, were tuning out of society and turning on to sex, drugs and rock and roll music. They were looking for what they called “*love*,” but had no idea where it was to be found. Little did Pastor Chuck know, **but God** had a plan.

The Lord gave him a burden for these kids, and he began to minister to them in God’s Word. And he did it with a “*Come just as you are*” attitude. He had no idea what the Holy Spirit wanted to do, so he just kind of tagged along, taught God’s Word, and got out of the way. Before you knew it, his sinking church was filled to the brim, not only with people, but also life (abundant life).

Gone was the stale religiosity that had held back and even quenched the Spirit. And in its place was a move of the Holy Spirit that not only touched the people at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa. It moved out into the streets and touched the youth of a nation. What began as a small revival became a movement that has produced many pastors and churches. And it all happened because people allowed the Holy Spirit to work in and through them. They just looked to the Jesus of the Bible and followed Him.

That is what happened in the beginning of the first Jesus Movement as well. As we left off last time, we saw that the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and never left Him. So the Man, Jesus Christ, walked in the Spirit at all times. This was very appealing to a bunch of people who were looking for hope in a seemingly lost world.

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And the message that Jesus shared with them was simple. He first said, “**Come and see.**” And this caused them *to go and tell*. That is church growth, Jesus style. Look how it all began (verses 35-36):

³⁵Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. ³⁶And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

This is the third day in our sequence of events here at the beginning of John’s Gospel. On the first day John the Baptist was interrogated by the priests and Levites. On the second day, he introduces us to Jesus, the One of whom he is unworthy to untie His sandals. And here on the third day, he is bringing others to Jesus so they can follow Him.

John sees Jesus as He “**walked**” and then proclaims Him once again as the “**Lamb of God.**” Then, as we shall see, John sends his disciples to follow Him.

Isn’t that what we are supposed to do?

We see Jesus as the Savior we have been looking for all our lives, He saves us, and then we introduce Him to others. That is basic Christianity.

You don’t need programs, projects or surveys to build the Church (although there is nothing wrong with these things). You need Jesus — He is the Head of the Church. And He needs to be at the center of all you are doing. Just give me Jesus! Look at verse 37:

The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

You have to love the humility of John the Baptist. He didn’t worry about what would happen to his ministry if all followed Jesus. He, in fact, expected this to happen. In chapter 3 of John, his disciples got into a dispute with some religionists about baptism. And they came to John saying this (verse 26):

“Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!”

Does anyone remember what John’s answer to them was?

It is found in verse 30. John says:

He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

Here John repeats what he said the day before about Jesus being the Lamb of God, and then he steps aside. Here is my Sandy Adams’ quote for the day:

John prepared the way; then got out of the way.

And when he does, these two disciples “**behold**” Jesus and leave John’s ministry to follow Him. Look what happens next (verse 38):

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Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?”

Jesus asks these two disciples an important and logical question here. And this is a question He continues to ask all humanity today.

“What do you seek?”

The people of the world are looking for any and everything to help their lives make sense.

Isn't that what we are all looking for?

By the way, these are the first words that Jesus uttered in His public ministry. He wants to know if we are motivated by idle curiosity or by a real desire to know Him. You see, to be Jesus' disciple, you have to have a personal relationship with Him.

All humans are seekers, because God has put eternity in our hearts. And nothing or no one other than Jesus can fill this void. God wired us that way. So Jesus invites these disciples to be a part of His life and ministry. But their response seems a little off base. Look at the back half of verse 38:

They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying?”

This kind of reminds me of what Peter said on the Mount of Transfiguration. When he saw Jesus talking to Elijah and Moses, he was blown away. So he just blabbers and asks Jesus if he, James and John should make tabernacles for them. Peter was just talking to make noise. We humans can be so earthbound. I think this is kind of the same thing here.

But Jesus doesn't make fun of them. Instead He invites them to come and spend the day with Him. Look at verse 39:

He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

I love that Jesus just says, **“Come and see.”** This is the *“come just as you are”* attitude I spoke of earlier.

Jesus isn't looking for a change in you before you come to Him. He is looking to make the change in you. He wants you to come and **“remain”** with Him, because He is the One who can make you whole again. This word **“remain”** is interesting.

It means to abide or to continue to be present with someone. We will be talking about *abiding* a lot here in John's Gospel. It can also be translated to *“to be held or kept,*

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continually.” I don’t think Jesus is just talking about them hanging out for a while. He wants them to become His disciples. And notice this: I believe one of them was John, the writer of this Gospel.

Why?

Because he puts a time stamp on this meeting. Only someone who was there could have known that it was exactly the tenth hour (4:00 pm) when this happened.

Do you know the time and date you came to know the Lord?

Next, let’s meet the other disciple who followed Jesus (verse 40):

One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.

So the other disciple is Peter’s brother, Andrew. This guy is interesting to me. Every time we meet Andrew in John’s Gospel, he is bringing someone to Jesus. In John 6:8 he brings a lad who has some fish and bread to Jesus for Him to use to feed the people. Then in John 12:22 some Greeks came to him and Phillip looking to see Jesus. So he takes them to meet Him. Here he is so enthusiastic about having met the Lord, he heads to his younger brother to tell him all about it.

This is how ministry works. Most people come to faith because they had an Andrew bring them to Jesus. The nature of the Christian experience is that those who meet Jesus desire to share their life-changing experience with others.

You see, Jesus is not just some good teacher who we like listening to. He is not a great holy man as some would have you believe. He is the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior. Look at verse 41:

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

I think it is wonderful that the first person Andrew thinks about after meeting Jesus is his little brother. Your family is typically your first ministry. Especially if you were saved late in life like me. And that can be a great thing if you are walking in the Spirit. The people who know you best will see the transformation the Holy Spirit is working in your life. It is as if Jesus puts us in front of them and says, **“Come and see! *Look what I have done in Frank’s life. This is what I will do for you.*”**

But what happens if you are always walking in the flesh?

Enough said.

Andrew sees Jesus as who He is and then does this:

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And he brought him to Jesus.

This is such a great example of what Paul talked about in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7. He wrote this about planting seeds of faith:

⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

John planted the seed in Andrew, and then Andrew watered it by bringing Simon to Jesus. But it is the Lord that changes him into Cephas (Peter). Look at verse 42:

Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone).

The first thing Jesus does when he meets Simon is to change his name. To the Jews this would have brought to mind others whose name God had changed. Abram was renamed Abraham. Sarai was renamed Sarah. And Jacob was renamed Israel.

Did you know that Jesus has a new name for you?

In Revelation 2:17 He tells those who overcome (believers in the church age) this:

And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*.

Here Jesus gives Simon the new name Peter. This same Peter was used by Jesus to start His Church (Matthew 16:18).

Remember that?

When asked who Jesus was, Peter said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” And on this testimony, Jesus built the Church. He then preached an amazing sermon on the Day of Pentecost and thousands came to know the Lord. He also became one of the Lord’s most trusted associates. And he wrote a couple of the epistles we find in the Bible. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus transformed him from Simon, the fisherman, into Peter, the one who fished for men. But this would not have happened if Andrew did not share the Lord with him.

You know what this tells me?

We should share Jesus as much as possible with the people we meet.

Why?

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Because we never know if we are talking to a Peter. And if we don't share, they might just remain a Simon. Or maybe even a Philip or Nathanael. They are next on the Lord's disciple list. Look at verses 43-44:

⁴³The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

Here we see that the Lord is gaining a little steam as He moves along. There was no "come and see" or anything dramatic recorded about the call of Philip. Jesus simply said to him, "Follow Me." And Philip did.

Now if we only had John's Gospel, we might think that this was the first time Jesus had met these men of Galilee. But the other Gospel accounts tell us that He had met many of them before. And some of them actually knew Him but followed Him full time after. In fact, that is what happened with the first four guys we met this study. Turn to Matthew 4 and we'll see when John and his friends began following Jesus. Beginning at verse 18 Matthew writes:

¹⁸nd 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. ¹⁹Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him.

²¹Going 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, ²²and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

The reason I brought this up is to help us understand that sometimes it takes a while for someone to fully follow Jesus. It would seem that what we read earlier in John's Gospel happened before what we just read in Matthew's. John and Andrew hung out with Jesus for a day, and then Andrew went and told Peter. Then they went and saw Jesus, but they did not remain with Him. John also told his brother James about the Lord. But here they committed their lives to Him.

We don't know how long this took or what their commitment was to Jesus before He called them. So what we need to learn in light of this is that we need to keep on sharing Jesus with people until they become His disciples. For John and his friends, it took a little while. But for Philip (and Matthew) all it took was for Jesus to say, "Follow Me," and they did. And then he too went and shared Jesus with a friend. Look at verse 45:

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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.”

Jesus **“found”** Philip and now Philip *finds* Nathanael.

Did you know that seven of the 12 disciples of Jesus were fishermen?

Jesus did not go to the rabbinical schools or the Sanhedrin to find men to minister with Him. He didn't head to the Temple and find holy men. He uses the **“foolish things”** of the world to confound the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27). Jesus went to the streets — or in this case, the pier. In fact, Bethsaida had a bad reputation.

Later in His ministry Jesus returns to the area, and the people in this same region refused the good works He had for them. Listen to what He said about Bethsaida (Matthew 11:17):

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

The very town that Peter, Andrew and Philip came from did not accept what Jesus had for them. So this is a picture of grace.

Jesus called them all out of a wicked place. He called me out of a wicked place as well (Reno is so close to Hell you can see Sparks, the town I lived in). And the place where Jesus came out of, Nazareth, was not so nice either. Look what Nathanael says when he hears where Jesus was from (verse 46a):

And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Well, Nate, Philip says, this man I found is the One Moses and the prophets wrote about. But Nathanael was rightfully skeptical.

Nazareth had a seedy reputation. The city sat at a crossroads of several caravan routes. So it was kind of like a truck stop. Now we all know that this is where Jesus lived as a youth. But, according to Micah 5:2, He was born in Bethlehem, just as the Scriptures said. So maybe Philip was thinking about this when he spoke of the prophets. But he didn't argue with his friend. He just adopted Jesus' own words and said this:

Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

Where have we heard that before?

I love this.

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We can't argue people into the kingdom. All we can do is bring Jesus to others and others to Jesus, as my friend Pastor JD Faraq always says. So when people challenge us with theological arguments and debates, we just take them to Jesus. When they bring up things we can't answer, we just bring them to church and let the smart guys like Pastor Glenn answer their questions. Or even better yet, we just bring them to OBC and then love them into the kingdom. Sometimes it is just best for us to, like Jesus, say **"Come and see!"** And then leave it up to the Holy Spirit to do the work. Look what happens with Nathanael (verse 47):

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

The word **"deceit"** here is important. The KJV renders it **"guile."** In Jesus' time this Greek word was used for bait, for catching fish. Here it signifies *"any cunning contrivance for deceiving or catching"* (Morris). It is used in the Bible of Jacob the patriarch before his change of heart (Genesis 27:35).

Jacob was tricky. He tricked his brother out of his birthright and blessing. He tricked his uncle out of the better part of his goods. But when he wrestled that night with the Lord, he realized something. All he ever really wanted was the Lord's blessing. When that happened, he was no longer **"heel catcher."** He became Israel or *"Governed by God."*

Jesus obviously thinks that Nathanael is ready to come to Him. But Nathanael has one more question. Look at verse 48:

Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

"Under the fig tree" was a phrase the rabbis used to describe meditation on the Scriptures. So we can surmise that this is what Nathanael was doing when Jesus **"saw"** him. And he may have been meditating on Genesis 28, the story of Jacob in the wilderness. You'll see why I say this in a moment.

By the way, how did Jesus the Man do this?

How did he *"see"* Nathanael under the fig tree?

Of course, Jesus is God and that means He is omniscient (all knowing). But He is also 100% man.

I believe He was operating in a spiritual gift called **"the word of knowledge."** Sometimes the Holy Spirit can give us knowledge that we cannot otherwise acquire. We

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serve a big God. Whatever happened, it touched Nathanael's heart. And look what happens when Jesus brings glory to God (verse 49):

Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Suddenly, Nathanael dropped his theological disputation and says the truth about Jesus. But the Lord has much more to show him. Let's read to the end of the chapter (verses 50-51):

⁵⁰Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

What Jesus did when He saw Nathanael was wonderful. But He has a lot more to show His disciples. It was awesome that Jesus saw Nathanael under the fig tree. But the point is that Jesus is the Ladder in the story that He was reading.

Jesus is the "Living Link" between Heaven and Earth. He is the Son of Man. We will visit that title for Him many times in our study of this Gospel. It was Jesus' favorite title for Himself (He used it some 80 times). You see, Jesus is the One on whom the Holy Spirit remains. He is the One we need to **"Come and see."**

In this section John shows us four ways of coming to see Jesus:

Andrew came because of the preaching of John the Baptist.

Peter came because of the witness of his brother.

Philip came to Jesus as a result of His direct call.

And Nathanael came to Jesus as he overcame personal prejudices because of a personal encounter with Him.

How much more testimony could anyone need?

Well, show up next time and we will see how Jesus used His miracles to help His disciples become strong in their faith. Read ahead and *"see"* that the Lord is good.

Let's pray.

SING THE REVELATION SONG