

John 1:43-51 The next day, Jesus wanted to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter. 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 Nathanael said to him, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" "Come and see!" Philip told him. ⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, "Truly, here is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." ⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered, "Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you." ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰ Jesus replied, "You believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that!" ⁵¹ Then he added, "Amen, Amen, I tell you: You will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

"COME AND SEE!"

Early one morning, many years ago, while staying at my parents' house in Colorado Springs, my little sister barged into my room. She told me to get up right away and join her on the front lawn. I rolled over and tried to go back to sleep. But my sister kept after me, saying, "Get up! You'll miss it!" "Miss what?" I shouted. "Come and see!" So finally I dragged myself out of bed and went outside. There, in the first light of the day, we saw about 25 colorfully decorated hot air balloons, floating over the city, jockeying for position in a race that would take them over nearby Pikes Peak. If my little sister hadn't bothered me and insisted that I get up at once and come and see, I would have missed a memorable sight.

In our text today we see Jesus in the process of gathering His first disciples. The day before this, He called to Himself the brothers, Andrew and Peter. Now our text begins, "The next day, Jesus wanted to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and said to Him, 'Follow Me.'" Philip in turn, went and found his friend Nathanael. Philip's message to Nathanael is our theme today: COME AND SEE! In looking at this, we'll consider two questions: 1. How do people come to Jesus? And 2. What do they see?

How is it that people are brought to Jesus and come to Him? That's an important question, and it's asked by Christian churches and church bodies all over the world. They come up with a variety of answers. Television ministries are begun. Evangelistic crusades are launched. People are sent into neighborhoods to canvass and witness.

Missionaries are sent into fast growing communities and to foreign countries. All of these are good and helpful to do. But by whatever means people are led to Jesus, the final cause is Jesus' own call, extended through the Gospel.

John writes in our text, "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.'" And when Nathanael cynically responded by asking if anything good could come from such a little, unimpressive place as Nazareth, Philip simply replied: "Come and see!" This call of Jesus Christ in the Gospel always has the power to influence people. If a person is called from the darkness of unbelief into the light of faith, if he's converted from unbelief, only the Gospel voice of Jesus, conveyed by His believers can bring it about.

With that in mind, would it be right and proper for a new Christian to say, "I decided to follow Christ and believe in Him on my own. I weighed the evidence and made my choice for Him?" That would run contrary to the powerful Gospel call, which is alone is able to draw believers to the Lord. As we confess: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him."

Only our Lord's call can draw us. For Scripture teaches, "As for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins." Dead spiritually, we don't have the ability to find or come to Jesus on our own. He must find us and call us. And He does just that through Baptism and the preached and taught word. The Holy Spirit works through the means of grace to draw us and work in us the miracle of faith. "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."

Consider again what Philip did right after Jesus called him to be a disciple. He didn't go off somewhere by himself to think things over. He didn't go on with whatever he'd planned for that particular day. What was now his was too important and the message was too important to keep to himself. He went to his friend Nathanael and he got right to the point: We have found Christ, the promised Savior, the One our ancestors knew and waited for and hoped for, the One we have read about and heard about, He is here.

This is our privilege and joy, to bring others to Jesus Christ, just like Philip did. This makes our lives as believers, and our associations together as a church, something very important. Jesus has given to us this responsibility to do for others what Philip

did for his friend Nathanael – to say to our unchurched friends and family members, “Come and see!”

As we do that we should make sure that Jesus, and no one else, is preached in our church and taught in our school. That He is made known as “the way and the truth and the life, and that no one comes to the Father except by Him.” This is the church’s chief task – to proclaim the only way of salvation, which is through faith in Christ. As Paul told the church at Corinth, Greece, “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

Insisting on that message isn’t popular now. Nowadays many different avenues to God are promoted. But we should remember that people can only come to Christ when He is presented as their only Savior. In answering the charge of the Pharisees who denied He was that promised Savior, Jesus warned, “If you don’t believe I am the One I claim to be, you will die in your sins.” The earliest believers took that claim very seriously. When he was taken before the ruling council in Jerusalem, Peter announced: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven, given to men by which we must be saved.”

We want do what Philip did; we want to say to others, “Come and see.” Maybe we are reluctant to do that is because we are afraid someone will challenge us about a certain point in our faith. We might appear foolish. But notice that when Nathanael challenged Philip, saying, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”, Philip didn’t argue or retreat. He simply replied, “Come and see.” We aren’t directed to win debates, but rather to proclaim the good news and invite others to come and see what Jesus has done for them. We can do that by inviting them to a service or to one of our study groups or service groups, or to a fellowship event. We’ll have an opportunity to learn more about those various groups at our fair and picnic after second service today.

We can bring others to the Lord also by our example. Jesus said that we are the light of the world, and that light is noticeable in the kindness and patience and concern we show to those around us. family should see this in our patience with them, in the language we use around them, in our taste in entertainment. They should get a sense that our lives are not

By our invitation and example, people are led to “come and see” Jesus. And just what do they see? They see themselves. That is, they are brought to see their need for the Savior. When we hear the Law, the message of what God expects of us and the

morality He demands of us, we see ourselves reflected there, and it frightens us, if we believe it. We should come to the same desperate conclusion as Isaiah who wrote, "All of us have become like one who is unclean...We all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind, our sins sweep us away."

Every day we should see ourselves mirrored in the law. We should feel sorry for our sins, and repent of them. In doing this, though, we should cast our gaze upon the Gospel, like a hungry person gazes into the window of a fine restaurant. There we see what we need. We see Jesus Christ, who has a free and precious gift for us.

In looking at Jesus we see the One who knows us better than any other. Our text records, "Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him and said, 'Truly, here is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.' Nathanael asked Him, 'How do You know me'?"

Jesus knows you and me. He knows everything about us, including all about our sins. And out of His great love for us, He allowed Himself to be beaten and hung on a cross to pay the price for our sins and to have us in heaven forever.

So when we see Jesus, we see the very One John the Baptist introduced to the disciples, when He said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." The OT believers were accustomed to the offering up of a perfect, unblemished lamb for the sins of the nation each year on the day of atonement. So they knew what John meant when He pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God - that He would be offered on the cross as the final payment for the sins of the world.

So, in seeing Jesus, we see the promised One who has opened heaven to us. That day, He told Nathanael: "You will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." For Jesus' sake, now the separation between God and sinners has been bridged, and the enmity has been removed. Now the connection between heaven and earth is open, united through Jesus' blood and death.

Come and see! We come to Jesus and bring others to Him by the proclamation of the Gospel. It tells us how Jesus saved us by His obedience under the Law for us, and by His death on the cross as the perfect, innocent Lamb of God. When we see Him, we see our true and only saving God, and the door to heaven swings open. Amen.