

Pt 9 The Calling of Philip – John 1:43-45

A sermon series in the Gospel of John, by Pastor Byron Chesney at Porchlight Baptist Church www.pbcknox.com

John 1:43-45

43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, **Follow me.**

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Last week we looked at verses 35-42 which detailed the beginning of the call of Jesus' disciples; Andrew and another of John the Baptist's disciples (most likely the Apostle John) and then Andrew went and got his brother Simon Peter and brought him to Jesus. This is the first interactions Jesus would have with those with whom he would call to be his Apostles.

We pick back up starting with verse 43 **The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.**

These events occur on the 4th day since John's testimony began before the religious leaders who had come out to question him about who he was, what he was doing, and on who's authority he was doing it. Here in verse 43 we find Jesus heading toward Galilee where he would begin his earthly ministry.

John doesn't record the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, but according to Matthew chapter 4, that happened immediately following his baptism by John in the Jordan. We know the temptation lasted 40-days and 40-nights so there has been a considerable amount of time passed since Jesus came to be baptized by John and the beginning of his earthly ministry.

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Last week we read where Andrew and another disciple heard about Jesus from John the Baptist and started following him, but this week we read that Jesus found Philip and told him to follow him. Whether you sought out Christ or He came and found you, either way, it is the sovereign drawing of the Father that causes it to happen, as we read in **John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.**

We also read from Jesus' own words when speaking with his disciples:

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

This entire message is centered upon the calling of Philip as a disciple of Jesus. There are a lot of discouraging sermons out there that really tear Philip down. I listened to one preacher say "**Philip is a very uninspiring individual,**" and "**there's a lot of great men in the Bible but Philip is not one of them.**"

It's true that Philip had his flaws but I do not agree with that preacher and tend to prove him wrong through the Word of God.

Perhaps you have never considered Philip much. He's pretty obscure in the Scriptures. The Synoptic gospels only mention his name when listing the disciples. The Gospel of John is the only Gospel that gives us detailed information about him.

So, with that being said. I want us to examine Jesus' calling of Philip and why he chose him to be an Apostle.

A few interesting things about Philip:

1. There are 4 different Philips mentioned in the Bible.
 - a. Philip tetrarch of Ituraea, which was a son of Herod the Great and his wife Cleopatra. (Luke 3:1). The city of Caesarea Philippi was named by him; Caesarea to honor Tiberius Caesar and Philippi to honor himself.
 - b. Philip, another son of Herod the Great with his wife Mariamne. (Matthew 14:3)
 - c. Philip the disciple (or Apostle) as we read about in our text. (John 1:43)
 - d. Philip the Evangelist, one of the first men called as a deacon (Acts 6:5).
2. The name Philip is a Greek name, and it means "**Lover of Horses.**" We are never told what his Jewish or Hebrew name is.
3. As we already mentioned, Philip was the first disciple which Jesus sought out and told to follow him.
4. We aren't told what Philip's occupation is but it is highly likely he was also a fisherman along with Peter and Andrew. They were all from the same city, Bethsaida (which means House of Fish), I think it's fair to say that Peter and Andrew most likely had told him about Jesus prior to Jesus finding him. I think that's why Philip had no problem with just up and following Jesus when Jesus came to meet him.
5. Philip was intellectual but sometimes weak in faith. This is one of the reasons many people have bad things to say about him. We read the following in: **John 6:5-7 When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? 6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. 7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.**

Philip had already counted up in his head what it would take to feed such a large crowd and had determined they didn't have enough money to do it. Even after seeing Jesus turn water into wine and healing the sick and all manner of miracles, this large crowd seemed out of the realm of possibilities.

Another reason many people speak harshly of Philip is because of what he said to Jesus in John Chapter 14:

John 14:1-11 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. 7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? 10 Believeest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Jesus gave Philip a mild rebuke for his lack of understanding and faith. Jesus had revealed the Father to the disciples the entire time he was with them. Whether Philip was expecting a visible manifestation of God the Father, such as Moses desired, it's hard to say, but certainly Philip and the rest of the disciples should have learned by now what Jesus had been teaching them; "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." But, let's not be too hard on Philip, we would probably have done the same thing if we had been there that day. I believe all the disciples had the same lack of faith that day and that's the reason Philip said: **Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.**

6. Despite Philip's lack of faith, we find that he was a witness for Christ and a student of the Bible.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Much like we read about Andrew who immediately ran out to tell his brother Simon Peter about Christ, Philip did the same thing with his friend Nathanael. It's obvious from Philip's description of Jesus, he understands that Jesus is the Messiah.

Notice Philip tells Nathanael "we have found him." But, wasn't it Jesus who found Philip? Like we said before, no matter how it happens, it happens by the sovereign will of God. He is the instigator in everyone's salvation.

of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write – It is also obvious that Philip is student of God's Word. He's studied the Bible and the passages that deal with the Messiah.

Philip didn't have the New Testament Gospel's or Paul's letters, but he had the Five Books of Moses (Pentateuch) and would have read about the Promised One in passages such as:

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Genesis 49:10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.

Deuteronomy 18:15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

He also says, "and the prophets did write" That means such passages as found in:

Isaiah 4:2 In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6-7 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. **7** Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

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Jeremiah 23:5-6 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. **6** In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

7. One last thing about Philip, and this is not in the Bible but Foxe's Book of Martyrs tells us: **He (Philip) labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom at Heliopolis, in Phrygia. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified, A.D. 54.**

This means that Philip was the 2nd of the Apostles that was murdered for the cause of Christ. James, son of Zebedee was the first.

According to legend: *After the resurrection of Christ, Philip is thought to have spread the gospel through Phrygia, or modern-day Turkey. Philip served as a dedicated apostle until about 54 A.D., when he was tortured and crucified by Phrygian Jews.*

Conclusion:

So, was Philip perfect? No, but neither was any other of the disciples. There has only been one perfect man to ever live and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. I think Philip should serve as a reminder that even with flaws and weak faith, God can use anyone to fulfill His purpose. That means you, me, or even the worse person you know has the potential to be used for His glory.

Lord willing, we will pick back up in verse 46 in 2-weeks and talk about the next disciple: Nathanael.

Don't forget, next Sunday, February 5th, I will be preaching at Northside Baptist Church for both AM and PM services. Everyone is invited to join us there.