

Lighthouse Bible Church

September 2nd, 2012

John 1: 43 – 51

‘Jesus finds those to follow’ *scripture reading John 10: 22 - 30*

Stand – Read – Pray

Two weeks ago we left off in John Chapter 1 with Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother and John, the writer of the book of John, leaving the discipleship of John the Baptist and following after Jesus.

And you remember that Jesus turned around and saw them following and asked them **what do you seek?** He wanted them to acknowledge why they were following Him, because He already knew. And we looked at how some people want to follow Jesus but only if it is convenient or will help them or is of some benefit to them.

You remember that they spent the day with Jesus and when they were finished Andrew said **we have found the Messiah.** Jesus had revealed Himself to them as the long awaited prophesied Messiah, the Christ.

We saw briefly the process that God always uses to bring someone to faith in His Son Jesus Christ. It is by the faithful proclaiming of the gospel of Jesus Christ by those who have been born again and then God sovereignly opening their hearts to hear the message and then responding in faith and repentance as they believe the message of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Well, that happened to Andrew and one of the first things that he wanted to do was to go and tell his brother Peter and then bring Peter to meet Jesus. And so he does and Jesus says to Peter **you are Simon ... you shall be Cephas**

That is where we pick it up this morning in Verse 43 where we see two more people become followers of Christ, however this time, Jesus seeks out someone to follow Him, so lets look at it in Verse 43.

Verse 43: the following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee and He found Philip and said to him, ‘follow Me’.

Jesus was leaving the area of Judea and the Jordan river walking north to Galilee when he meets up with Philip. It says **He found Philip**. Philip, **Verse 44** says **was from Bethsaida** which wouldn't have been far from where this encounter takes place. We'll see Philip several more times in the book of John to get a fuller understanding of who he is there. By the way **Bethsaida** means house of fishing (beth = house, tsaida = fishing) (like beth – el) it was the fishing town of Andrew and Peter.

This was a divine appointment with Philip because He purposely went there to find him. Just like **Matthew 18: 11** says **He came to seek and to save that which was lost.**

Jesus said to Philip **follow Me**. This was God's divine choosing of Philip for salvation. In **John 15: 16** it says **You did not choose Me but I chose you and appointed you ...** and **John 6: 44** says **no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...**and he said just a few verses earlier in **John 6: 37** **all that the Father gives to Me will come to Me...**

But there is absolutely nothing recorded about what happened between Jesus and Philip after Philip followed Him. We don't know where they went or what was said or anything. But we do know that he too, like Andrew and Peter and John, was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah.

And he too, like the others, didn't want to keep that good news to himself, he wanted to share it with someone, the convert became a soul winner, one friend went to another friend and told him about Jesus.

There is something about a true genuine convert to Christianity that has such a zeal to share what they themselves have received and experienced, the love of Christ. There is a church recorded in scripture that left their first love, which is Jesus. Look at **Revelation 2: 2** – Look at Verse 45

Verse 45: 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.

Philip tells Nathanael that **we have found Him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote**. Whenever you see the phrase 'law and the prophets' it is usually talking about the entire Old Testament and here he is saying Moses wrote about the Messiah and the O.T. prophets wrote about the Messiah. Did they? Absolutely!

Remember back in **Luke 24: 27** with the two men on the road to Emmaus? It says **and beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scripture** (Moses + Prophets = all the scripture) **the things concerning Himself.**

Was Jesus the Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote that Philip was telling Nathanael about? Yes! You can go back to the first book of Moses, **Genesis 3: 15** and you have the prediction of the crucifixion by **Satan bruising His heel but Jesus crushing Satan's head.**

You can go to **Isaiah 53** and read about Jesus there as the **one who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows who was smitten by God and afflicted and was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities as the lamb to the slaughter...**

You can read every book of the Old Testament and see either directly or indirectly the references to Jesus and His birth, life, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and return.

And so Philip says to Nathanael ‘we have found Him of whom they wrote’ and it is **Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph**. Look at Nathanael’s response in Verse 46.

Verse 46: and Nathanael said to him, Can anything good come out of Nazareth? According to **John 21: 2** Nathanael came from Cana of Galilee, about 10 miles north of Nazareth, which would have been on the opposite side of the sea of Galilee from Bethsaida where Peter and Andrew were from, but in the same general area.

Probably part of Nathanael’s skepticism is because up until this time, there is nothing mentioned about the city of Nazareth; nothing in the Old Testament, nothing in the Jewish writings, nothing. He says, ‘you mean the Messiah would come out of a little insignificant town like that?’

But rather than argue with him, Philip says and the end of Verse 46 **come and see**. Come and see for yourself, come and talk with Him and see if He is not in fact the one that was written about. Just like Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, Philip brings Nathanael to Jesus.

Verse 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him and said of him, ‘behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit’.

Philip and Nathanael are approaching Jesus and Jesus says to Nathanael **an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit**. Jesus is acknowledging that Nathanael is an honest man and a true genuine actual Israelite. Jesus didn’t mean that he never lied, he is saying that he is a consistently honest and sincere man.

How does Jesus know that, when, by what Nathanael says in the next verse, he has never met Nathanael before? Remember, Jesus is God in human form and He knows all things. In **John 2: 23 – 25**

In **Matthew 9: 3 – 4** it says **and at once some of the scribes said WITHIN THEMSELVES, ‘this Man blasphemes’. But Jesus, KNOWING THEIR THOUGHTS, said, why do you think evil in your hearts. Matthew 12: 25** says that **Jesus knew their thoughts**, Luke uses the same phrase several times as well.

In **Luke 5: 21 – 22** and the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying ‘who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? But when Jesus **PERCEIVED THEIR THOUGHTS**, He answered and said to them ‘why are you **REASONING** in your **HEARTS**...

That is how He knew Nathanael and that is how He knows you as well. He knew you before you were ever formed in the womb **Jeremiah 1: 5** says, He knew you in the womb and the day you would be born **Psalm 139: 13 – 16** says, He knows your life and every thought you think **Psalm 139: 1 – 4** says, because He is the Son of God, God in human form. And so in Verse 48 Nathanael says.

Verse 48: Nathanael said to Him, how do You know me? I've never met you before this very moment, how do You know me? Jesus answers **Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.**

Jesus gave a display of His omniscience, His all knowing power, that God alone has, by telling Nathanael where he was before Philip ever came to get him. The implication is that He knew what Nathanael was thinking while he was under that fig tree by the statement he makes in Verse 49 and whatever doubt Nathanael may have had about a Messiah from Nazareth were gone.

You know what the sad thing is? People followed Jesus all through out His life and ministry and saw many miracles that He had done and heard all the things that He said about what it takes to be saved and their conclusion was in **Matthew 12: 24 – 30** He did all these things by the power of Satan. They didn't believe who He was.

So why was Nathanael, Philip, Peter, Andrew and John all able to readily believe who Jesus was? The answer is this: it is the sovereign calling of God that changes a persons heart to believe and follow Jesus. A lot of people follow Him but they are not saved, as we shall see later in John. But not so with Nathanael

Verse 49: Nathanael answered and said to Him Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel.

Nathanael answers and calls Jesus **Rabbi, Son of God, the king of Israel.** Maybe he calls Jesus that because he was reading **Psalm 2** while he was under the fig tree; that Psalm describes the Messiah as the Son and king. Anyway, those are both, once again, titles that John writes so that people will know exactly who Jesus is. Nathanael's description is added to that of all the rest we have seen so far.

And when Nathanael acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God he was calling Him, in essence, God in human form. You can see it in *John 6: 69, 11: 27, Matthew 14: 33, 16: 16, Lk.1:32*. When he acknowledges Jesus as the **King of Israel** he was calling Him the Messiah foretold in the scriptures in such places as *Zephaniah 3: 15, Zechariah 9: 9, Micah 5: 2 and John 12: 13*.

Look at what Jesus says in response to his acknowledgement of who Christ is, in **Verse 50** because **I said to you ‘I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe?** It is not so much a question as to, if he believes or not, but more a statement as to the fact that he does believe based on what he knew of Christ being the all knowing Son of God.

Jesus says, in essence, Nathanael, you believe because you just got a taste of My all knowing power that saw you before I ever met you. Well, that is nothing compared to what you are going to see. Look at Verse 51.

Verse 51: 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.

Jesus, here, is alluding to a dream that Jacob had back in **Genesis 28: 12** when he laid down to sleep, it says **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.**

And maybe he says this because Nathanael, while he was under the fig tree, may have been reading this passage or thinking about Jacob; who knows. In Jacob’s dream there is a ladder between heaven and earth which is symbolic of mankind on earth communicating with heaven and the angels, the messengers of God, were the means of communicating His message.

We know from scripture that angels were instrumental in bringing the law to Moses, they are ministering spirits and they were the messengers of God to many O.T. prophets. One of the greatest messages of all the O.T. was the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel that still needs to be fulfilled in a time yet future to us, was given by the angel Gabriel. So was the message to Mary that she would bear the Messiah.

But look what Jesus says in Verse 51 **and the angels of God ascending and descending upon**, not a ladder but Jesus Himself. What Jesus is saying is He is, in essence, now the way of bringing God's message and the mediator between man and God. He says 'you have permanent open access to God through Me' and isn't that what **Hebrews 4: 16:** and **Hebrews 10: 19** say. **We can come boldly to His throne of grace, to enter the Holiest place**, into the very presence of God in prayer, **to obtain help in time of need by the blood of Jesus?**

And by the way, many times in scripture the angels ministered to Jesus, did they not. They announced His birth (**Luke 2: 13**), they orchestrated His escape from death at the hands of king Herod (**Matthew 1: 13**), they attended to Him after His 40 days in the wilderness (**Matthew 4: 11**) and they strengthened him (**Luke 22: 43**) as He was praying in the garden just before His crucifixion.

Jesus will say later in **John 3: 13** **no one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.**

One writer puts it this way "but Christ is himself the bond of fellowship between heaven and earth, between God and man, for Jesus is both "the Son of God" as Nathanael said and "the Son of Man" as Jesus here calls himself. God and man meet in Christ. He is the true Jacob's Ladder. "I am the Way," Jesus will say."

By the way, when Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man, which He did quite often, He is referring to Himself as the Messiah and alluding to what **Daniel 7: 13** said.

If Jesus has found you or someone has introduced you to Jesus and you have become a born again believer by putting your faith and trust in Jesus as your sin bearer then you have something to remember when we come to this table

Closing Prayer

Lord's Table

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‘Jesus Finds Those to Follow’

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John 6: 37, Revelation 2: 2 – 5

Verse 45 We have Found Him
Luke 24: 27, Genesis 3: 15, Isaiah 53

Verse 46 – 47 Nathanael, a true Israelite
John 2: 23 – 25, Matthew 9: 3 – 4, 12: 25
Luke 5: 21 – 22, Jeremiah 1: 5, Psalm 139

Verse 48 How do You know me
Matthew 12: 24 – 30

Verse 49 The Son of God & King of Israel
Psalm 2, *John 6: 69, 11: 27, Mt. 14: 33, 16: 16*
Luke 1: 32, Zeph. 3: 15, Zech. 9: 9, Micah 5; 2

Verse 50 – 51 You shall see heaven open ...
Genesis 28: 12, Hebrews 4: 16, 10: 19, Luke 2: 13
Matthew 1: 13, 4: 11, Luke 22: 43, John 3: 13
Daniel 7: 13

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