

1Yr08 – How Jesus Got Things Started John 1:35-51

Pastor Dave Shepardson Calvary Chapel Nuevo / www.wordbymail.com

Open your Bibles. That's what we do. Title of the message this morning, "How Jesus Got Things Started." I'm really excited about this message. We are going back to John in our "One Year With Jesus" series. We're in message number 8 of 52 messages of just walking through life with Jesus. We are in verses 35 to 51 of John.

Let me ask you a question, to start. If you were God of the universe (and by the way, newsflash, you're not) but if you were and you came to earth to spread the good news that you yourself were going to take on the sin of the world and pay the full penalty to set all those who would believe free from the penalty of sin and reserve a place in glory with you, if that was your mission, if that was your purpose, how would you start?

How would you start the process? Now, how would you do it, without knowing how Jesus did it, how would you do it? You have all of the power and all of the glory of heaven in the palm of your hand. You can literally crack the sky, roll back the curtain of heaven and show everybody on earth who you are in an instant. How would you begin this most eternally important process of informing the world of the good news of salvation, the free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ, how would you get things started? Got your answer?

Listen, if you were God and you wanted to start this most eternally important process of informing the world of the good news you would start with one person. Actually, two. You would start one at a time. And you would make disciples. *You would make disciples.* If you were to do it God's way, you would make disciples one at a time. Discipleship. How did Jesus get things started when he really was setting the stage to bring the message of the gospel to the ends of the earth, Jesus Christ started one person at a time. Not because that's all he could do, but because he is God and he knew that was the best thing to do. Jesus did it by making disciples one at a time.

Discipleship is God's chosen process for
#1) How we get to know Jesus – and
#2) How we help others get to know Jesus.

Discipleship, one at a time is the way Jesus got things started to cover the entire earth of the free gift of salvation in his name. Discipleship is the foundational process for us to get to know Jesus and for us to help others to get to know him. It's discipleship. So today we're going to see how Jesus started things rolling. How did he get things started? One at a time Jesus started calling disciples. And then he had those disciples go out and make other disciples.

So in 2009, after about six months of really intense meeting with the elders of the church, we changed the entire focus of this church to discipleship. Now if you haven't been around for six years, you might not remember. But it was a big deal. And it cost us about, I don't know, about twenty percent of the church got mad and left and tried to take other people with them. But we cut out all social programs, we said, "Listen. We're either going to make disciples or we're going to quit." And we were really aggressive about it, and you know what, it was easier said than done. We had a really, really hard time. We are still today having a very difficult time implementing the truth that we know that Jesus grows the church by making disciples one at a time. It was much harder to implement than we thought.

In our text today, we see why. I'm telling you what we're going to learn before we learn it. The reason why it is so hard for the church in our culture to do things the way Jesus did, to get things started the way Jesus got them started is because Jesus never worked in large groups. Never. I'm not saying he didn't address large groups, but he never grew the Kingdom in large groups. Jesus Christ did it one at a time. That should make you feel really good because that means he wants to speak to you, individually. He wants you to become a disciple, individually. One at a time.

So Jesus starts, one at a time, and then he develops this inner core of three, Peter, James and John and he really pours his life into these three. And then there is the twelve, the original twelve disciples that we call Apostles. So he got to twelve and basically, he stopped. He just said "Okay, that's enough." Really, honestly. God, the creator of all that's been created said, "No, no, I just need twelve. That's it. And I can change the world forever with these individuals."

Now, we know that Jesus called seventy. In Luke Chapter 10 it says that he sent out the seventy, two by two. But we don't really even know where those seventy even came from. They don't really get even more than an honorable mention in the gospels, because Jesus didn't work with large groups. When Jesus addressed large groups, listen carefully please, when Jesus addressed large groups he did it primarily for two reasons.

Number one, to thin out the crowd. When Jesus stood up in John Chapter 6 in Capernaum and said if you don't eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part of me he was just kind of thinning the crowd out. And all the people that went "Ewww" and left – he said, "Okay."

It's like that story of the KGB. So the KGB had broken into this underground church. And they lined everybody in the church up in the front of the church and they had their Uzi's out. And they said "We are going to kill every person in this church, but we are going to give you one chance to walk out. And if you'll walk out of this church we'll let you live, but if you stay here, we're going to kill you." They opened the door, half the

people left. They closed the doors and they said, “We just wanted to fellowship with real Christians.”

That’s how Jesus worked with crowds. He shook them up to thin them out. The other thing that Jesus did with crowds is he used them as an object lesson for the twelve, for those who were following him. He kind of pointed to the crowds and said, “Look.” Like the feeding of the 5,000 and the big events. That wasn’t for the crowd. He shooed all those people away in the next chapter. It was for the twelve. Jesus worked in individuals.

So, today, here’s what we’re going to see. We’re going to see that Jesus got things started through discipleship of individuals and then through calling those individual disciples to make other disciples. That’s how Jesus got things started, that’s what we’re going to see.

Let’s pray. *Heavenly Father, bring that home to us Lord. Allow us to fully sense that you work individually. You call individually, severally. You deal with us individually. You call us as disciples and then you call us to make disciples individually. You are an awesome God. Lord we would never do things the way you do them. But Lord, let us see how you did them. Not how the church does them. Let us not be influenced by all the mass stuff, but help us to see how you changed the world, Jesus, how you got things started. It’s in your name we pray, amen.*

So let’s start with my favorite definition of disciple. A “disciple” is “*a learner; one who walks so closely with his master that he becomes like him in his thinking and behavior.*” That’s a disciple. A disciple is simply a “learner” but more intensely. It’s one who walks so closely with his master that he becomes like his master. As 2 Corinthians 3:18 says ***as we behold his glory we are changed from glory to glory into his image by the Spirit.*** A disciple is a learner who walks so closely with his master that he becomes like him in his thinking and behavior.

Here’s a side lesson. If you are walking with Jesus but you are no more like Jesus this year than you were last year, maybe you’re not walking close enough. Because Jesus wants to change you. Jesus wants to change me. And every year I should be more like him. That’s what a disciple is. One who walks so closely with his master he becomes like him in his thinking and his behavior.

That’s how we’re going to see Jesus get started today on the most eternally significant process plan that has ever existed. Telling the entire world, for as long as the world exists, that Jesus Christ came to make the ultimate sacrifice, to pay for our sin so that we can be seen as righteous before God and spend heaven in eternity. And we have to see how Jesus starts it. And even if we think it’s odd, we have to remember, he’s setting an example for us. And so how Jesus did it, we should do it.

Last message we paused because John the Baptist made this incredible exclamation when he saw Jesus walking towards him. He said, “***Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.***” And that is such a big statement, and it is exclusive only to John in the gospels. It is such a big statement we had to stop and say wait a minute, what does that mean? How can we begin to understand the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world? So we dealt with that last message. This message, a different day, same statement.

Have you ever met those people that all they can do is talk about Jesus? It’s like really bro? I was with you last week you were talking about Jesus. Is that the only thing you’ve got to talk about? “Yes. That’s the only thing I have to talk about.”

Second day, same topic, John 1:35.

John 1:35–36 (ESV)

35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” (same statement – different day)

Listen, John the Baptist had been teaching his disciples about the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is not the first time that these two disciples had heard about the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John had been preparing them. And on this day he just says, “Look. There he is. The one I’ve been telling you about, the Lamb of God who is coming to take away the sin of the world, that is him. Behold!”

The word “behold” means “*to fix your gaze intently.*” It’s not a casual glance, but it’s a penetrating look. Behold. Grasp. Focus intently on the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Fix your gaze on him.

That was John the Baptist’s job, and can I tell you please, that’s our job. Our job is not for you to look to us (your Pastor and elders and leaders) for your answers. Our job is to get you to look to Jesus for your answers. Amen? Listen our job is not to fix your problems. Listen, we don’t know. All we know is Jesus. And if we say “Behold the Lamb of God. Fix your gaze. Set your gaze. Focus intently on Jesus” until you get so fed up and leave. You can think, hey, maybe they were trying to get a point across. Maybe I need to do what John the Baptist’s disciples did when John the Baptist said “Behold the Lamb of God” to his own disciples, those who were looking to him.

John 1:37

John 1:37 (ESV)

37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

So this means they physically followed him, because Jesus was on the move. Jesus wasn't stopping. He was on the move and he's still on the move today. And if you want to follow him you better get on the bus. You know what I'm saying? So Jesus is on the move physically, but it also means that the disciples began to follow him spiritually as his disciples, no longer John the Baptist's, but Jesus' disciples.

Guys, Jesus is on the move. Everything we see in this text is about Jesus being on the move. He's got a job, he's got a purpose, he's got a plan and he is moving forward with it. So you either join him or not, or you stand on the side and think about it until he's gone.

John 1:38(a) – Jesus is still walking (ESV)

38 Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?”...

As he was physically walking away, Jesus turns to the first two disciples and asks “What do you guys want? What are you seeking?”

It's a challenge. What are you seeking? Why are you following me? The question is a question of motivation. The question is a heart question. It wasn't for Jesus' good, it was for the disciples' good. He questioned their motivation for beginning to follow him. Well that doesn't really sound like what we would do. We would expect Jesus to say, “Oh, hi you guys. Let's just stop for a minute. I'm going to pray, I want you to repeat after me. Just slip up a finger and repeat these words and you'll be good to go.”

Jesus said, “What do you want? What are you doing? Why are you following me?”

Do you see that Jesus challenges the first two disciples? Jesus challenges the first two disciples' motivation, their heart. And their response might seem a little odd to you, but if you read into it a little bit, it may very well be revealing to you. Look at the second half of verse 38.

John 1:38(b) (ESV)

38 . . . And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”

Jesus says, “What are you seeking?” The disciples say, “Where are you staying?” In other words, where are you going to be later? Where are you staying? Is there a chance that John the Baptist correctly disciplined these two that they knew that what they truly, honestly needed the most was to be where Jesus was? Is it possible that these two disciples knew because of their training from John the Baptist that what they needed most was to be with Jesus?

When John the Baptist said “Behold the Lamb of God, fix your gaze intently on the Lamb of God” is it possible that these guys got it? And they said, “Listen Jesus, I just

want to be where you are. Dwelling in your presence. Feasting at your table. And surrounded by your glory.”

What if these guys were saying, “Jesus, we just want to be where you are? We just want to dwell daily in your presence. We just want to rest with you. We just want to be with you. We don’t even know the answer to your question, what are we seeking. We don’t even know how to answer that. All we know is that if we are with you we’ll know. If we’re with you we’ll have the answers. If we are with you, you will lead and guide us.”

Jesus says, “What are you seeking?” The first two disciples answer, “Where are you staying, because that’s where we want to go.”

Now here comes the real test. The first half of John 1:39.

John 1:39(a) (ESV)

39 He said to them, “Come and you will see.” . . .

“Wait a minute. Jesus we asked ‘where are you staying?’ Like where are we going to be if we follow you?”

Jesus says “You follow me and you’ll see where I lead you. Come and see. Come and you will see.”

Listen carefully. If you are only following Jesus because you know where he is going you are not truly following him. If you think Jesus is your road map and he has already downloaded it to your phone and you know exactly where he’s taking you, are you really following Jesus? No, you just used him as Garmin and he just gave you directions. Now you’re following the directions, you’re not following Jesus. But if you don’t know where he is going tomorrow, if you don’t know where he is going to lead you later today then what do you have to do? You have to cling to his presence and you have to stay focused on him. Because if he turns you have to turn. Why? Because you don’t know where he is leading you. That’s following Jesus.

And can I just tell you please, Jesus will not negotiate your desire to know where he is taking you. “Jesus, if you just tell me where we’re going then I’ll follow you.” That’s not following him. Jesus says, “Come and you will see.”

Is it possible that we might have some trust issues with Jesus? Listen carefully, I am being gently sharp with you. Is it possible that we might say, “Jesus I want to believe in you enough for me to get to heaven, but I don’t want to believe in you enough to actually trust you to lead my life. How much trust do I have to give to make sure I get my heaven ticket punched? Because that’s where I want to limit it. I don’t want to trust you enough to actually follow you, because I might not like where you take me. “

See, it's the real deal now. That's how Jesus started, by challenging two disciples and saying, "Listen, you want to follow me, then follow me. I'm leaving." And he just keeps walking. And these guys have to decide. The first two disciples have to decide either follow or not follow. They had to make a decision without knowing the direction or the destination or the path between here and there. They had to decide are we going to follow Jesus or not. Yes or no. Follow or not follow.

It reminds me of a scene in the very first Star Wars movie, which is the only one I've ever seen. Master Yoda is in a swamp with Luke Skywalker. And Master Yoda says something like this, "You must only follow – or not follow. But there is no where are we going?"

You either follow Jesus or you don't follow him but you don't negotiate with him and say "Where are you taking me, pal? I'll decide if I'm going to follow you if I like where I'm going. If I don't like where I'm going I'll go ahead and keep the wheel of my own life. And be my own lord."

I'm not saying it's easy. I'm just showing you it's what Jesus demands. And if you'll take him at his word and follow him, it will be the greatest adventure of this life and then heaven is waiting in eternity! The rewards are so great! It's so indescribable to live a life like this, where you're just saying, "Lord, I'm following you. I'm with you."

We know one of these disciples' name is Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, the other one most scholars believe is the Apostle John, the writer of the gospel, because he never names himself, and there's a number of reasons why they really believe it's him. But look at the end of verse 39, this is something very, very cool.

John 1:39(b) (ESV)

... So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

Listen, here's what's happening. The writer of the gospel of John, the Apostle John, is date and time stamping the moment that he made his commitment to follow Jesus. He's saying on this day at the tenth hour, I decided to follow Jesus no matter what. That's cool, right?

Listen, I kind of poke a little bit at the simple, make it easy for everybody to receive Christ kind of thing, and I don't mean to be cynical. I just need you to know if I'm going to teach the Bible I have to tell you that's not in the Bible. But it's okay. Pray the prayer. Do pray the prayer, but hear what the Bible says too. But here's the thing I do like. I do like you having a date and time stamp on your having a commitment to follow Christ. I love it when you come forward and say, "I'm committing to follow Christ."

It was about 10:30 on a Sunday morning on April 29, 1979 the first time I heard the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. I shot out of my seat and I was first to the front. On that day. I want you to know I was living in a non-Christian environment, extreme non-Christian environment. Living in a recording studio in Hollywood. I came home and called the studio and said, "I'm never coming back." I turned my back on that life and said "From this day I'm following Jesus. No matter where he takes me, no matter what it looks like I'm following Jesus from this day."

It was so radical. And listen, every once in a while, when I forget and I mistakenly ask Jesus, "Lord where are you taking me? Where are you taking me and my family?" he says the exact same thing, "Come and see. I'm not telling you a thing."

And my prayer is "Lord allow me to follow you with the intensity that I began following you with. Allow me to follow you clinging to you, looking at you, gazing intently on you. When you turn I'll turn. And when you go I'll go. And when you stop I'll stop."

That's how Jesus got things started. Please hear me when I tell you it's the greatest adventure in this life. Following the Savior moment by moment, prayer by prayer, day by day is the most incredible way to live in this life and the most expectant way to be headed to heaven. Which, the moment you go there you're going to be saying, "I'm so glad I lived for heaven my whole life."

There's a second lesson here. The second thing we see in this text is that we know how the disciples got started. We've seen how Jesus got started, now we see how the disciples get things started. In this next set of verses we see how the good news of Jesus Christ got from the Galilee in 30 A.D. to Nuevo in 2015. This is it. This is the process that the God of the universe chose to get the gospel message from 30 A.D. to 2015 from the Galilee to Nuevo.

John 1:40–41 (ESV)

40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ).

Messiah is Hebrew. Christ is Greek. They are the same thing, the Anointed One. The One Come from God. It's a reference to the salvation, the Savior, of God. The first thing Andrew did is go find his own brother and say "Listen, we found the Messiah! We found the Christ! We found the one who is going to pay for our sins freely, forgive us our sins so that we can go to heaven in the righteousness of God! We found him!"

The first thing Andrew does is reach out to his very own brother. And then the next thing he does is critically important to see.

John 1:42(a) (ESV)

42 He brought him to Jesus . . .

I'm telling you now how the disciples got things started to get the gospel to spread over the world. First thing Andrew does is find his brother, Peter and tell him "We found the Savior, the Messiah." And then, this is important, he brought him to Jesus. *He brought him to Jesus*. Do you think there is a lesson there about how we as disciples should get things started in our own lives? Andrew found the person he loved the most, told him about Jesus and then brought him to Jesus. It's not that complicated, is it? That's why Jesus started with fishermen, because this isn't rocket science and he wanted the world to know if a fisherman can do it, anybody can do it.

John 1:42(b) (ESV)

42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

Cephas is Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke.) Peter is Greek. They both mean "Rock." First thing, Jesus looks in Peter's eyes and says, "Listen, There's going to be some stories told about you." You could just see Jesus shaking his head. But then he says, you are going to be "Rock. Peter. You are going to be the rock." And we'll see plenty of Peter as we go. So there is a clear example of how things got started. It's so easy. Jesus challenges the first two disciples, they desire to be in his presence, and then the first thing they do is go find someone they care about and tell them the story of Jesus, and say, "Hey, come. Let me bring you to him."

A little geography lesson. John the Baptist had been baptizing south of this point, near Jerusalem, in Jericho in the south. He is now north of that in an area called Bethany beyond Jordan, or Bethabara, and he is about maybe five miles south of the Sea of Galilee at this time. And he is about to leave that area and go to the northern end of the Galilee. You see him moving in John 1:43. I think the reason that Jesus went to the north shore of the Galilee is because that was the best fishing spot on the Galilee and Jesus wanted to collect some fishermen. And he does. John 1:43.

John 1:43 (ESV)

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

Some people think certainly he said more. I don't think so. It's the same way that he responded to Andrew and to John. No plan; only "follow me" and Phillip gets to decide, Follow or not follow but there is no negotiation. Follow or not follow.

John 1:44 (ESV)

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

Philip, Andrew and Peter are from a small town called Bethsaida which is on the northeast corner of the Sea of Galilee right where the Jordan River comes in to the Galilee, which is great fishing. (Bethsaida is just now being uncovered and it's a cool place to see. And so when we go to Israel in February 2016 we will see this place, right on the edge of Galilee.)

Andrew and Peter are brothers. Catch this. Andrew and Peter are brothers, Philip is their friend. When you see how small a fishing village Bethsaida is you know these fishermen are all friends. Fishermen are all friends. (That's why I like fishing. Because when you're fishing, you're among friends.) So *Jesus is forming a band of followers who have relationships already*. Guess what? When you get saved the first thing you should do is ask people that you already have a relationship with to follow Jesus with you, because it's so cool. Many of you have seen it in your own lives. Tell your friends, tell your family, let's follow Jesus together. We'll stay together, we'll hold each other accountable, we'll hold each other up. Let's get into this together. That's what Jesus does with the fishermen from Bethsaida. Notice verse 45 what Phillip does as soon as Jesus says follow me.

John 1:45 (ESV)

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 does the same thing as Andrew. Philip goes to a friend, Nathanael (he was from Cana.) Nathanael was a friend of Philip. And so Philip goes to him and says the same thing Andrew said to Peter.

Guys, this the way the Gospel is spread. For 2,000 years. I know we think "Oh no, it is the megachurches. Oh no, it's the stadiums." That's cool. But that's not how the gospel spreads around the world. Here's how the gospel spreads around the world. Someone tells you about Jesus, you become a disciple and then you tell someone else about Jesus and they become a disciple. That's God's plan. That's how Jesus got things started. Someone told you, now you tell someone else and then you all follow Jesus together. That's it. That's the whole plan. And we're like, "Okay, I can handle that. I don't have to go to Bible College for that." Just tell somebody.

So Philip does his part and tells Nathanael but maybe you know someone like Nathanael. Nathanael has a bit of a reservation.

John 1:46 (ESV)

46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (great response) Philip said to him, "Come and see."

See, Philip is a fast learner. Philip says the same thing Jesus said, “Come and see. I’m not going to argue with you, I’m not going to debate with you. I’m not going to go back and forth. Jesus Christ wants to save you from your sins, set you free from your bondage and reserve a place in heaven for you. If you want some of that, then come and see. I’ll take you to him. If not, think again. Reconsider your decision.”

So Nathanael is obviously a bit prejudiced about Nazareth, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

Nazareth is this small little out of the way town with a bad reputation. Have you ever heard of a town like that? Small little out of the way town with a bad reputation? So Philip doesn’t argue with Nathanael. He just says “Come and see for yourself.”

Guys, you don’t have to convince anybody. You can’t convince anybody. *Salvation is a supernatural thing*. Now that doesn’t mean you don’t need to share it and encourage and exhort and pray. But it is a supernatural event. And so our job is to get people in the presence of Jesus. What does that mean? Maybe bringing them to church, but not necessarily. We don’t want to count on the church. Most churches are a wreck. We’re just following Jesus, like you. We don’t have the answers, Jesus has the answers. Don’t bring them to us, bring them to Jesus. Now, if you experience Jesus in this environment, which is what we work and pray for every day of every week, then bring them into this environment. But it’s not the church. You have to bring them to Jesus. *You* need to experience Jesus and decide for yourself. You take it up with Jesus. Let Jesus have a little interaction with you, then you decide.

That’s what Philip does to Nathanael. In John 1:47, Jesus does the convincing.

John 1:47 (ESV)

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

Now Jesus is playing a little word game, I don’t have a lot of time to go into this. But, Jesus, honestly, is just messing with Nathanael. I love this about Jesus. When Jesus just starts kind of messing with people. Jesus says, “***Behold an Israelite...***” The Israelites came from Jacob, the twelve tribes of Jacob, twelve sons of Jacob became the Israelites. Jacob was a deceiver. I mean a good one, he was a master at deceit. In fact his name means “*supplanter*” or “*heel-catcher*” because he caught his brother’s heel (Esau) as they were being born and Jacob was a deceiver. And so, in Genesis 32 God changes Jacob’s name to Israel. “Israel” means “*to strive with God*” or “*governed by God.*” So the deceiver became governed by God, or striving with God. And so Jesus does this little word play on Nathanael just to mess with him. Back in Genesis 32 Jacob has a wrestling match with God and God changes his name. But Jesus isn’t done.

John 1:48 (ESV)

48 Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

The phrase “under the fig tree” is a bit of an idiom, or a figure of speech. It was used for the Jews as a time of meditation, and prayer and rest. That’s what you would do, you would say “I’m going to be under the fig tree.” And you would sit in the garden or under a literal fig tree and pray. And so Jesus is most likely saying to Nathanael, “When you were meditating and praying, I saw you there.”

John 1:49 (ESV)

49 Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

So a little bit of omniscience from the Son of God is all it took for Nathanael to be “all in.” But Jesus kind of messes with him and that’s all it takes and Nathanael is all in, but Jesus isn’t done having some fun.

John 1:50 (ESV)

50 Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”

And then in the next verse it’s believed that Jesus may be making reference to what Nathanael was actually meditating on when he was in his time of prayer and meditation under the fig tree.

John 1:51 (ESV)

51 And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

So just prior to God changing Jacob’s name (the deceiver’s name) to Israel, Jacob had a dream, in Genesis 28. He laid his head down on a rock and he had a dream. And in his dream he saw a stairway to heaven. He did. And on this stairway to heaven he sees the angels ascending and descending on this stairway. What is Jesus saying? ***You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.*** Jesus is saying “That stairway that you were meditating on when you were under the fig tree, it’s me. I am the stairway to heaven. It’s me. I’m the only stairway to heaven and you cannot buy this stairway to heaven, it is a free gift.”

Jesus is the stairway to heaven. And so he blows Nathanael’s mind. So, let me summarize.

Jesus got things started by calling one disciple at a time. Jesus got things started by calling one follower at a time. Jesus got things started by calling one learner at a time. Someone who would walk with him close enough that he would become like him in thought and action. That's how Jesus started one at a time.

And then those individual disciples were called to go and find someone else and make them a follower of Jesus. Guys that's the whole thing. That's the whole thing. That's how Jesus got things rolling and that's how he still rolls today. You follow him with everything you've got and then you find someone else that needs to go to heaven and then you encourage them to follow Jesus. The rest of it just plays out. And we will play it out with the rest of the series.

Let's pray. *Lord God you are incredible. Jesus you just blow our minds. You came with such power to change lives to change the world to change eternity. You came with such a huge purpose and a huge plan, to cleanse us of our sin and make us right before you. To come and live inside of us, to make us a temple of your Holy Spirit. To move in us and through us. To use us for mighty things. And yet you did it one at a time, Lord. You come to us and you say, "Follow me." And then Lord, you keep walking because you have a job to do. And instantly we have to decide follow or not follow. Follow or not follow there is no try. There is only follow or not follow. Lord, speak to us. Put us in the position of the first disciples and give us the courage to make the decision they made and say, "Lord I will follow you wherever you go. And the place you take me isn't important. It's whether I am with you or not that is important. It's whether I am clinging to you, my eyes fixed firmly on you, Lord. And if they are, then where you go I will follow. And where you take me will be for your glory and my ultimate good. Lead me and guide me Lord for your names' sake."*

If you would make that decision, make it today. *"Lord I will follow, I will follow. I'll go where you go, I'll be where you stay. I'll cling to you. I'll rest in your presence. I'll walk so closely with you Lord that I'll allow you to transform my life. I'll be a disciple."*

If you have never said that, today is the day to make that commitment, to date and time stamp your life, to say "This is the day. This is the day that I decided to follow Jesus no matter what. That where he goes, I'll go. That where he leads, I'll follow." If you need to make that stand, make it. Tell God, *"I won't back down. I won't negotiate the journey with you. I'll follow you Lord. No holds barred. No negotiations. No what if's."*

Jesus called the one. *"Lord I'll follow you no matter what it takes, no matter what it costs, no matter where it goes, no matter where the path goes, Lord. I'll follow you. I'll stand with you. I'll seek your presence alone Lord."*

"Father you are an awesome God. And Lord may these men and women stand before you just as they are. Ready to follow you no matter what. Ready to follow you because of who

you are not because of where you are taking them, but because they trust you and they trust that where you ultimately take them will be for your glory and for their good.

Pray after me, just like this. *“Lord Jesus, I will follow. Where you go I’ll go. And what you say do, I’ll do. Because you’re my Lord. And you’re my master. And I trust you. I trust you completely. For your glory, amen.”*