

John 1:35-51

Come and See

Image Church // Behold Him: Week 3 (Christmas Eve)

Introduction

Merry Christmas Image Family! I cannot believe that it's actually here!

- If you're a guest with us this morning, we're so glad that you're here...

We've been in a series leading up to Christmas called **Behold Him**, where we are looking at who Jesus is and how He is the **ultimate fulfillment of God's promise to restore humanity**.

So far, we've looked at **where Jesus came from** (family line) and **who Jesus is**, and this morning we're going to look at **why he came**...

If you have your Bible, turn to John 1...

Build tension: *Who is the person you would want to spend some time with... (Willie Robertson) What if under your tree this Christmas you got an invitation from that person?!?... The most important invitation of your life...*

We're going to pick up right after **John the Baptist** serves his purpose, which is to announce Jesus as the Messiah... Pretty cool, right? He was born (*miraculously*) for that purpose!

Verse 35, after the big reveal of Jesus...

John 1:35-50

35 The next day, John [the Baptist] was standing with two of his disciples. **36** When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" **37** The two disciples heard him say this and followed Jesus.

We'll see in a minute that one of these two is Andrew, the other is left unnamed, most likely, it's John who's writing this account...

Verse 38: 38 When Jesus turned and noticed them following him, he asked them, "What are you looking for?"

I want to ask you a question this morning... **What are you looking for?**

- Maybe looking for something here spiritually...
- Maybe you're not looking for something here this morning. Maybe you were drug here, or you're here as a formality...
- Maybe the thing you're looking for right now is something in your life right now...
 - What is it? *Better job, a promotion, more money, a circumstance to change, a marriage to be healed, answers for a diagnosis, tension with your spouse or kids...*
 - *Maybe you're looking for freedom from addiction, maybe you're looking for freedom from pornography...*
 - *Maybe it's stuff that you're looking for... You're looking for that new house of that new thing that can make life easier for you, if you just had it!*

We all walked in here looking for something this morning, whether or not we would admit it... We are all looking for something, spiritually, physically, or circumstantially...

Let's see what happens next...

They said to him, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

They call Jesus teacher, and they obviously have questions about what He's teaching, but rather than ask those questions in the moment, they want to know where Jesus is staying, they want a sitdown...¹

Jesus' simple yet profound response... Verse 39

¹ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, 155.

39 “Come and you’ll see,” he replied. So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

Here’s the thing that I want you to see... ***The same invitation Jesus gave them is the same one he’s extending to us today...***

- Some of you a skeptical of the whole Jesus thing...
- Some of you have questions, but you’re not committed to searching for the answers. You don’t know how...

When Jesus ascended back to heaven, He left the church as the primary place where He makes Himself known...

- This is why the church is called the ***body of Christ***...
- It’s designed to be the place where you learn about Jesus and where you see Jesus!

For some of you, you need to ***commit to the church*** and watch as Jesus becomes real to you, and watch as some of the questions that you have get answered!

- Or, at the very least, commit to reading your bible looking to discover who Jesus is... John wrote this gospel so that you would see and know Jesus (**John 20:31**)... The Book of John is a great place to start!

For those of you who are here and you are Christians, what I want you to see is the profound impact of Jesus’ invitation...

- Jesus invited these guys to follow Him, to come be around Him...
- You can extend this same invitation to people by inviting them to our church gathering.
 - When you invite someone to our gathering, you’re inviting people to experience the Body of Christ through His Church!

Let’s keep reading ... Verse 40...

40 Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed him. **41** He first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated “the Christ”), **42** and he brought Simon to Jesus. When Jesus saw him, he said, “**You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas**” (which is translated “Peter”).

So, you have Andrew, and probably John, the writer who follows Jesus, and then **Andrew** goes and grabs his brother **Simon**...

- He says that we’ve found the **Messiah**...
 - Important title... It acknowledges that Jesus is the promised deliverer that was promised back in **Gen 3:15**

Simon comes to Jesus, and Jesus does something interesting... Jesus receives Simon and changes his name to **Cephas translated: Peter**...

Now here’s the thing... Peter’s name means rock...

- Now, what you will find is that in the Gospel of John, Peter is everything but a Rock... Denies Jesus...

But here’s the important reality that I want you to see...

Here’s what Jesus did then, and this is what Jesus does now... ***He calls people, and then He makes them into who He’s called them to be...***²

When God calls you to Himself, when He saves you, He also makes you into who He wants you to be...

- It’s through His power you experience change. Not through your own power...

Jesus ***doesn’t*** say *change for me*, He says, come to me, and I’ll change you...

Some of you are far from God, you’re in the midst of sin... What I want you to see is that God is able to clean you up no matter how dirty you think you are...

² Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 156).

- You have to turn to Him. You have to see Him for who He is and surrender to His work in your life...
- Opening your hands and saying I'm a mess, would you make me into the person you want me to be...

Jesus calls you and then makes you into who He's called you to be...

- Don't see that change? You're trying to do it on your own and not opening up your life to Jesus, not looking to His power, you're trying to do it on your own...

Illustration: Need open heart surgery... Try operating on yourself... not going to go well... The best way is to get on the table and surrender to the doctor and let him do his work... You can't do what only the doctor is capable of...

Verse 43...

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and told him, "Follow me."

Again we see right here is the consistent call of Jesus...

Jesus invites you into a relationship, not just to a belief system... He invites you into a life of following Him because of who He is...

- **Right theology should always lead to right activity with your heart and your hands...**
- Christianity is about following Jesus, embracing and experiencing Jesus, and cultivating a life where He's at the center, He's Lord- He dictates how we live...

We see this through His Word. That's why **we just teach the bible here...** In everything we do, we just want to hold it up to understand it and apply it!

Verse 44... Here's who we have so far, **Andrew**, and **John**, who followed Jesus... And then, **Andrew** went and got **Simon**, Jesus changed his name to **Peter**... Now we have **Philip**...

And now **Philip's** going to go get someone... **Verse 44:**

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 so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth."

So **Philip** goes and gets **Nathanael**...

- Philip goes even further than Andrew did earlier in his explanation of Jesus... Philip **points out the fact that Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT!**

Now, at this point, you should see **the principle of multiplication!**

- These guys who've found Jesus go and get others and bring them to Jesus...

The crazy part is that there's a lot they don't know yet... I think a lot of times we feel unqualified to tell people about Jesus... That's not the case here...

- What we see is that **the personal impact of Jesus leads to a personal invitation to Jesus!**
 - I think it's easy for us to get past the simplicity of this...

Your story of finding Jesus is a tool for helping others find Him!

Illustration: Chevy trucks...

Appeal: Your story is only a tool if it's real to you...

- If you're just religious, then your story isn't a tool...
- If your story is based on an emotional experience that happened years ago with little to no impact on your life, that's not a tool...
- It becomes a tool when it's truly changed you!

Alright, so Philip goes and gets Nathanael. Let's look at how Nathanael responds...

46 "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael asked him.

Nathanael gives a snarky response...

See, Nazareth was a little podunk town... And Nathanael has an "I'm from the other side of the tracks kinda pride"... Can't nothing good come out of that kinda of town!

- For the record from those of you who are from a less-than-ideal town, where the world says that there's seemingly less-than-ideal people...
- **Jesus feels you!**
- I love the fact that Jesus could have been known to be from any town, and podunk Nazareth is the place!
- You get a glimpse into the kind of Savior Jesus is... Coming humbly and lowly...

So Nathanael says can anything good come out of Nazareth!??

- And look at how Philip responds...

Verse 46... "Come and see,"

A simple yet profound response here... Philip doesn't even answer Nathanael's question... He just extends an invitation...

- Again, **we can't miss the power of a simple invitation...**

Some of you need to respond to that invitation today...

- You have doubts... You have questions... You have uncertainties...

So did Nathanael... And yet he took a step of faith to find out more... And watch what happens next...

Verse 47... **47** Then Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

This is the first of 2 **wow moments** that Jesus is about to give Nathanael...

- Jesus plays His hand, calling out to Nathanael, showing that He knows him... *Will see in just a minute how well he knows him...*

*But what I hope that you see in this is that when you genuinely and willingly open up your heart to explore and examine the reality of Jesus, Jesus will meet you there...

This is why pointing people to Jesus is so important...

- I think we forget the power of Jesus and the gospel...
- I think we forget that God doesn't need our help to save people he just needs our faithfulness to do what he's called us to do, and that's bring people to Jesus...

Illustration: *Would be like if you were asked to defend a caged lion... You don't need to defend it, you just need to pen the gate and let it defend itself!*³

- Skeptic, *yeah right... Not been my experience...* That's because you don't allow yourself to believe the lion exists...

Let's look at how Nathanael responds to Jesus... Verse 48:

48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

Something about what Jesus says surprises Nathanael... But Jesus is about to do him one better...

Jesus says... "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you," ~~Jesus answered.~~ *And to that Nathanael replies...*

49 "Rabbi," Nathanael replied, "You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel!"

Here's the thing, we don't know what went down under the fig tree, but it seems that it was significant because of the way that Nathanael responds...

- You don't respond this way if that wasn't the case...
 - Was Nathanael under the fig tree at the end of his rope?
 - Had he lost something dear to him?
 - Was he questioning God?

³ Illustration credit to JD Greear, *Jesus First Three Questions*.

I don't know, but what I do know is that whatever it was, Jesus saw it...

- And what this shows us is that Jesus is the kind of Savior that sees and knows everything about us... That even when we think He doesn't see, He does...

Here's the reality... If we're honest... More than anything, what we want as humans is to be **fully known and fully loved**...

- The reason why we experience hurt in relationships is because we expect to find this, but in the end, we realize that there's gaps...

What we see from Jesus is something different... A Savior that says I see you, and I know you... **Even your darkest moments that you're most ashamed of**...

- And yet in the midst of that, He says, come to me...
- Jesus says I want you to see me for who I am and understand what I came to do...

Verse 50...

50 Jesus responded to him, "Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." **51** Then he said, "Truly I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

What the heck does that mean?!?! Jesus calls to mind a picture from **Genesis 28**... Where Jacob has a special encounter with God...

Jacob was in a vulnerable place... He was running for his life from his brother Esau who Jacob had cheated out of his birthright...

And **Genesis 28:12-16** says this:

12 And he [Jacob] dreamed: **A stairway was set on the ground with its top reaching the sky, and God's angels were going up and down on it.** **13** The Lord was standing there beside him, saying, "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your offspring the land on which you are lying."

14 Your offspring will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out toward the west, the east, the north, and the south. All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.

15 Look, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." **16** When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." ... **v. 19** and Jacob got up and named that place **Bethel**... *That means house of God*...

What God shows Jacob is that in the midst of his sin, God is still going to provide for him and work through him... And that God will be faithful to His promise in the midst of the mess that Jacob's in...

And what we get a glimpse of is God being with Jacob... And there's a ladder in his dream that connects heaven to earth...

And so what Jesus does here with **Nathanael** in **verse 51** when He says **Truly I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man**

Jesus is showing Nathanael that he's going to see greater manifestations of His glory than what he just saw when he looked into him and called out where he had been...

Nathanael's going to see that Jesus is the definitive link between God and man... **He is the bridge**...

- *That when God moves toward humanity, He moves on Jesus, and when man moves toward God, He moves on Jesus!*⁴

Jesus would be the **new Bethel**, the place where we experience the presence of God... No longer would there be geographic holy places because Jesus would become the way that meeting place where we encounter God!⁵

⁴ John Piper. *Son of God, Sone of Man, King of Israel*.

⁵ Ibid.

But the question is, how could this be?

Jesus would tell us just **2 chapters later** in **John 3:14-16...**

14 “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, **15** so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. **16** For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

- Jesus gives a picture of what He came to do...
- The snake was the thing killing the Israelites, and it's the thing God told Moses to lift up on a stick
- He would take one what was killing us in order to bring us life...

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Listen, *Christmas is all about the tree; it has always been about a tree, even from the very foundation of the world.*

But it's not the tree that most people think about around this time of year. It's a different tree...

*It wouldn't be the tree in the den that you decorate, **it would be on a hill of execution.***

From the first breath that Jesus took, he was walking toward this tree. Every step He would take would be walking to the cross.

Jesus knew when He came to earth that the cross was his destiny. It was the only way that what was broken in the garden with Adam and Eve could be restored.⁶

Conclusion [VAMP]

The question still stands: *What are you looking for this Christmas season?*

- *Appeal...*

Would Jesus be what you find... Would you see that He is enough...

Some of you need to come and see this morning...

- *Call to believe and respond with the card.*

⁶ Adapted, some language taken from Paul David Tripp: *Make the most of your Christmas tree.*