



LIFE AS MISSION
The Invitation of the Mission
Week 11

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Bob Warning and Crossway Church in Menifee.

Closing prayer

Introduction:

After next Sunday, we will have spent 12 weeks on the topic of the Great Commission. Why?

- **The Episcopal Church in Canada**

It's one thing when a denomination abandons the gospel and thus shows that people who care about the gospel abandon a church that doesn't preach it. But when a church or denomination abandons the gospel there is no growth, because the gospel creates the church. Without the gospel, a church becomes pointless.

It has been said this way: “Churches that have lost their heart for evangelism are living out their final chapter.”

This might be the 3rd or 4th time you’ve heard this idea during this series, so let me just restate it again, because today we’re going to be looking at the biblical roots of this idea. And the idea is this. The difference between dying churches and growing churches is one word: invite.

Our Scriptural Focus today is:

John 1:46

⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

That’s our goal — to get people to come and see that the Lord is good.

But some people are troubled by the idea of church growth as a goal. Why do you suppose that is?

- Takes us outside of our comfort zones.
- Forces to rethink how we've been living our Christian lives.
- Growth brings about change. Some people like the status quo.

But today we're going to look at the simplest idea that the Bible presents when it comes to evangelism, a technique every Christian can engage in, no matter if you've been a Christian for fifty years or five-minutes — the simple invitation to come and see.

We'll look at two examples of this, one in John 1 and the other in John 4.

John 1:43

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

1. The first step in evangelism is a personal call.

This simply means the first step in evangelism is being evangelized yourself, to believe the

gospel yourself. In order to lead someone to Christ, you have to be a Christian first.

Have you believed the gospel? Then you've been called to share the gospel. And one of the simplest ways you can engage in that work is by asking people to come and see.

John 1:44-45

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

2. It's natural for the Christian to share about Christ.

Without even being told, Philip seeks out his friend Nathanael and shares Christ with him. Notice here he doesn't just share his personal experience, but he points to the prophetic nature of the Bible's message.

Nathanael's initial reaction to this good news is negative. It's interesting to note that we don't have to be around someone for a long period of time to get to know something about his personality. In the little we learn about Nathanael it becomes clear he is a natural skeptic.

John 1:46

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

Notice Philip doesn't engage Nathanael in apologetics of any kind. He doesn't present him with a defense of the faith. Maybe he didn't feel qualified. Many of us don't feel qualified either. That's not an issue when it comes to evangelism. Philip shows us why. Instead of apologetics, he just says, "Come and see."

3. One aspect of evangelism is the invitation to "come and see."

This is why we have intentionally developed a church culture of inviting and including. This is why we have the Invite Cards. It's why we announce the Invite Cards on Sundays. It's why we're doing this series with the intentional challenge of making a list of seven people you know who don't know Christ or aren't connected to a local church. It's why we're developing four big services throughout the year, like Orphan Sunday and Christmas Eve and Easter, services that you'll be excited to have a friend or relative experience.

**Services that you can invite people to and say,
“Come and see.”**

**Here’s the reality. Invitations are factually
effective.**

The stats:

**When people were asked, “How did you end
up attending your church?”**

- 6-8% walked in on their own initiative.**
- 2-3% liked the programs.**
- 8-10% liked the pastor.**

- 3-4% had a need.
- 1-2% were personally evangelized.
- 3-4% were attracted by Sunday School.
- 70-80% were invited by a friend, relative, or coworker.

Now, let's look at another example of the "come and see" version of evangelism.

- Summarize the Woman at the Well

John 4:28-30

**28 So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people,
29 “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” 30 They went out of the town and were coming to him.**

This woman doesn't have a lot of education. (Though she's got a lot of *reputation* because of her past.) She's only been a Christian for a few minutes. How can she articulate her new-found faith? She uses two verbs: “Come” and “see.”

Again, out of all the evangelistic strategies that we can practice, this one is the simplest: *Come and see.*

It's the same approach we saw Philip use with Nathanael. Philip said to him, "Come and see." (John 1:46b)

John 1:46b-47

46b Philip said to him, "Come and see."

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

So, here's another point encouraging us to invite people and that is...

4. Jesus sees your friends, relatives & coworkers coming toward Him.

This should give you confidence in reaching out to them.

Have you ever been invited to a party of someone you didn't know? Maybe a friend

said, “Come as my guest. They told me to bring a friend.”

Now, there are two different experiences you can have when you arrive at this party. One — your friend introduces you, but you feel the host’s response is cold. Then your friend darts off and mingles while you’re left standing by the snack tray with unfriendly people staring at you.

Two — you get to the party and the host welcomes you like a long lost friend.

Now, which of those scenarios do you think Jesus is going to welcome someone like? Which one of those scenarios should people experience when they visit a church? Our church?

What's interesting is how Jesus engages with Nathanael. Jesus points out a positive character trait of Nathanael's.

Do you think Nathanael had some faults? Even hidden faults that he wasn't aware of?

Don't you think Jesus knew the specific sins of Nathanael? Of course He did. But He initiates His conversation with Nathanael by pointing out Nathanael's inclination for honesty. Here was a man who sincerely based his life on the facts as he saw them. He was honest with himself and others and Jesus pointed this out.

When you don't hide from yourself and you don't hide yourself from others, you won't hide yourself from God. That's the kind of

person Nathanael was. But he is at heart, as we saw, a skeptic.

John 1:48-49

48 Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?”

Nathanael doesn't even take this evaluation of himself at face value. He wants to know how Jesus knows this about him.

Honest people search for the truth for the sake of truth itself.

Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

Jesus revealed His divine nature to Nathanael in order to answer his question. Jesus told Nathanael something about himself that only Nathanael would know. It was the same thing with the Woman at the Well — Jesus told her

something about herself that no stranger would know about her.

So, Nathanael knew Jesus was telling the truth, but he also knew that this little fact was miraculous. “Who might know such details but God’s anointed servant?”

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

Nathanael responds to Jesus by confessing that Jesus is the Messiah he has been waiting

for along with the others. Now, do you think Nathanael's response was a surprise to Jesus?

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."

Once Nathanael believed, Jesus gave him a gentle rebuke regarding his skepticism. But it was a positive rebuke. "You believe because

of such a little thing. You'll see greater things!"

Do you fail to invite people to church because you don't believe Jesus will do anything? That Jesus won't interact with them? Jesus answered Nathanael. Don't you think Jesus will answer your friend or relative? Don't you think Jesus will speak to someone when he or she comes to church?

- The early marriage story

“God is near to all who call upon Him in truth.”

It’s a wonderful thing to know that God is open to listening to all honest inquiries.

- The Christmas Invite**

GOSPEL REMINDER: 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.” The gospel we believe can be verified with the prophetic writings. This is

one of the greater things that we get to see.
It's what we'll be looking at during our
Christmas series — God has verified His
Word.