

“Under the Fig Tree” - John 1:35-51

Please Stand and Open Your Bibles to John 1:35-51

Today we are going to see the calling of the first disciples who at a later time will become part of the Twelve Apostles. This is an inside look that is unique to John's gospel. But before we begin let's remember why John wrote his gospel...

John 20:30-31

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

And to that purpose the stories contained here all relate to that end. Last week we saw the testimony of John the Baptist as he pointed to Jesus being the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. This title was the gospel in a nutshell as it is only through the work Jesus did for us that we are saved. John's ministry was a baptism of repentance that prepared his followers for the coming of the Messiah. But once He comes his ministry is now ended and all he can do now is the same thing we do, point people to Jesus.

John 1:25-26

Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. 36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

This is important for you and I to consider. We cannot make anyone follow Jesus. All we can do is point people to Him and it is their choice whether to follow Him or not. Remember we just read in the Prologue...

John 1:12-13

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

This has been lost in the modern church. Everywhere you look is full of “How to” teachings. “Your Best Life Now” or “Purpose Driven Life” has taken over the pulpits of America. We wonder why there is no real move of the Spirit anymore and I believe because we have replaced the work of the Spirit with manufactured Christianity. It is part of our human nature to want instructions, and it is so much easier to follow a list of dos and don'ts than to just follow Jesus and be led by the

Spirit. This is why the Judaizers were so appealing to the Galatians.

Galatians 3:1-3

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

Do you really think your how-to plan is going to succeed? And if it did, who would get the glory? Do you want to know what the first false doctrine that came into the Jesus people movement that did damage to it? It was called the “Shepherding” movement. What this taught is that every believer needed a shepherd over them that told them everything they needed to do. They were to have control over every area of your life including your finances. It led many astray including Lonnie Frisbee. Why? Because Chuck taught people to just walk in the Spirit and trust God by faith to lead your life. This does not appeal to the flesh. It is hard for us to surrender by faith to God in every area of our lives than to have someone tell us what we need to do. Today this is alive and well in the modern church. The first one to bring up today is what you may have heard

before called “The New Apostolic Reformation” Churches all over have either been sharing their teaching or in many cases their music. This is in many churches without even calling it that. Bethel Redding and locally Jesus Culture are movements that are not led by Pastors leading the flock and pointing them to Jesus but self-proclaimed “Apostles” and “Prophets” that have authority over people. They Lord it over them and it leads to not only spiritual abuse but in some cases physical abuse. Here at this church, we point you to Jesus. We encourage you to trust in him. We teach you to read the word and pray and be led by the Spirit. We follow the teaching on leadership we find in the scriptures...

1 Peter 5:1-4

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

We are to show you the way and live as an example to follow and point you to Christ. It is not complicated but it lies in the

face of our flesh and our intellect. Now let's look at calling of the first disciples...

John and Andrew

John 1:37-40

Now it is up to us to assume that the other of these two is John. We know that they were friends with each other as they shared in the same fishing business.

Luke 5:9-11

For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

So, it is a good assumption that this is John who stays anonymous throughout this gospel. But what is it that we see here that isn't said directly, is obvious in the text. They followed and stayed. Jesus asked, "What do you seek?" and what was their question "Where are you staying?" The implication is we are going with you. Where you are we are going to stay. Coming to Jesus is not a temporary thing. You do not come and go; you

come and stay! It is one of the ways we know whether someone is truly a follower of Jesus. John would bring it up in his first letter...

1 John 2:19

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

But notice what happens next, if you are with Jesus, you can't help but bring others to him!

Andrew and Peter

John 1:40-42

Again, we have another spot that tells us that John's gospel was written later on in Ephesus is by his letting the readers know of the translations. Andrew introduces Jesus as the Christ. The word Messiah is transliterated from the Hebrew "Meshiach" meaning "Anointed One" it is the same from the Greek and English Christ. Many are confused and think His name is in the first middle and last like we have. No. Lord Jesus Christ are all three His. Lord is who He is. Jesus is His name and Christ is His mission. He is the Anointed one who has

come to save. What did Jesus do when he saw him? Gave him a new name!

Simon is his given name, Peter is Greek, Cephas is Aramaic

Simon = Hebrew “Hearing” or “Heard”

Peter = Greek “A Rock or Stone”

Cephas = Aramaic “A Rock or Stone”

Now we know that the same introduction that Andrew gives to Peter, that he will come to this realization on his own...

Matthew 16:15-17

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”

Notice all Andrew had to do was bring Peter to Jesus and God does the rest! This brings us to the next form of legalism I want to show you...

Matthew 16:18-19

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

There is a play on words that is missed here. Jesus is saying you are Peter (Little stone) on the rock (Large Rock) He will build his church. What is the rock? The confession of who Jesus is! The Church is built on the gospel message not the authority of its leaders. The Roman Catholic Church made this calling of Peter as the first Pope and his authority was passed down to pope after pope. This is why the Pope today wears keys around his neck. It is called “Apostolic Succession”. This unfortunately has been passed to the Reformed and Calvinistic churches as the role of the elders in the church. They say these keys have been passed down through the eldership, and they have authority over you to tell you right from wrong. Many of these churches abuse this authority and use these elders to make sure the people in the church are tithing and attending and serving. They have taken the role of the Holy Spirit and made it their own responsibility.

I am sorry if you have been abused in either one of these two heresies. I hope that you can find healing here and allow the goodness of God to help you grow in Him.

Let's move to our final characters today...

Phillip and Nathaniel

John 1:43-51

First, we see Jesus tell Phillip to “Follow Me”. That is all that Jesus asks of you. He has done it all and will lead the way.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

And what do we do when we follow him? We point others to Christ! Now we meet the last guy of the day, Nathanael. This guy is quite the character. This is most likely the Bartholomew mentioned in the other three gospels listed with Phillip. As we have already seen they had multiple names. Phillip introduces Jesus as “Jesus of Nazareth” and all Nathanael heard was Nazareth. Nazareth at that time was just a small rural town with nothing happening. No great things had been done there,

and no one great came from there. It would be no different than someone saying, “Here is Jed from Orangevale”. What? Where’s that? But what we discover about Nathanael is he is an open book and completely honest. Do you know these are the kind of people that Jesus reaches? There is nothing wrong with honest skepticism. Jesus will work with that as we see in the interaction with him. Jesus is now playing with him in his response to meeting him. Jesus calls him an Israelite with no Guile or deceit. This is looking back to Jacob whose name means deceiver and was changed to Israel. Nathanael is like “How do you know me?” and Jesus says something that means more than location. What was not mentioned here is what was in Nathanael’s heart. Obvious Jesus was pointing out more than location by his response. Jesus was saying He saw his inner most thoughts something that only God can do.

Jeremiah 17:9-10

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”

God sees in our hearts and knows our ways and still loves us and desires a relationship with us. Just like Jacob in the Old

Testament. The final verse here takes us back to when Jacob had an encounter with God in Bethel.

Jacob's Dream

Genesis 28:10-22

The funny thing about this story is all the promises that God made him were not predicated on his oath he made at the end. It will take him years for him to come to surrender his life totally to God. That was when the name change to Israel happened. Jesus is saying that He is the one who spoke to Jacob. He is the one that makes the promises. Jesus is God in the flesh! But just as Peter got a new name and Jacob got a new name so do you!

Revelation 2:17

“To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

And the overcomer here is not someone that has become some super saint but to all as John explains...

1 John 5:4-5

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he

who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

You want to be an overcomer? Believe in Jesus and follow Him. He gives you a new identity and new life!

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.