

John 1:43-49 Come and see!

Pentecost 3 June 21, 2009 No children's devotion

Grace and peace are yours from God our Father and from our risen Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

We hear words of invitation are in John 1:43-49

This is Your Word heavenly Father. Let us pray a verse from one of Martin Luther's hymns: "May God bestow on us His grace, with blessings rich provide us, and may the brightness of His face to life eternal guide us that we His saving health may know, His gracious will and pleasure, and also to the heathen show Christ's riches without measure and unto God convert them. Amen."

Dear Friends, in Christ,

Today many of you are hearing me preach for the first time. You'll find that sometimes I have an introduction and at other times. Today is one of the times that I will go right to the theme:

Come and see!

First, what do we see? When Philip found Nathaniel, he described Jesus in this way, "*We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*" (v.45) Nathaniel shot back, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathaniel thought that if someone great like the Messiah was to come, he should come from Jerusalem or at least from Judea and not the common area of the region of Galilee.

I believe that many people in our country are disappointed with God. They expect great things of Him in this world, and if they don't get them, they think that God has let them down. Sometimes people may join a church with great expectations: their life will instantly improve or they'll have no more problems in life. Miracles do happen, but most of the time God works through His Word to bring people hidden changes. Sometimes God allows believers to be challenged by letting the devil worsen their lives for a time. This is the outward appearance of things.

Even we can be discouraged at times. Since my short time here, I have learned that the congregation has great financial concerns. God owns all the wealth of the world, so why can't Jesus send down a check from heaven for \$200,000 or more and then we could focus on the spiritual work that we are to do? Then we can take time to count our spiritual blessings that God has for us. We are at one of those "Nazareth" times, where God is challenging our faith. He would never want us to be discouraged. Rather, He is urging us to look deeper, with an eyesight that only He can give.

Second, take a closer look by listening! Philip didn't argue with Nathanael when he complained about where Jesus was from. He simply said, "*Come and see!*" (v.46) The word see in the original language means to take a close look at something, not just a glance. And Philip used an imperative, which means, "Don't delay to come and see!" This is important enough for you to stop what you are doing and hold your questions until you see for yourself.

Have you ever been looking for something, but just couldn't seem to find it? Then along comes someone else and says, there it is right in front of you! And you think, "How could I miss it?" So, all people need to know that beyond the world that they see, there is a whole different spiritual world. A few people in the Bible like, St. Paul, the martyr Stephen, and Elisha were able to see angels and even get a view of heaven. The rest of us in the world need to see it by faith. It is God's Word which will open our eyes to the realities that our spiritual. It is God's Word that will convince us of the truth. It happened to Nathanael. *When Jesus saw him approaching, He said, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."* (v.47-48) What a change Jesus' words made for Nathaniel. The outside questions disappeared and were replaced with confidence in Jesus as His Savior.

What did He learn? He believed that Jesus knew everything about him. Jesus not only knew where he had been, He knew Nathanael's thoughts that he was waiting for the coming Savior. With the few words of Jesus, Nathanael's hopes and the fulfillment of them were brought together. He declared that Jesus was the Son of God. The Gospel of John makes much of the fact that Jesus was God's Son. Why is that so important for us to believe that? If Jesus was only a man, He would have saved only Himself when He died. But, because the human and divine natures were brought together in the one person in Christ, we have a sacrifice great enough to take away all sins!

Think of this example: A donated unit of blood can save up to three lives. How many lives were saved by Jesus' donated blood on the cross? He paid for all people of all time. That is some powerful blood! The Bible states, "*The blood of Jesus, [God's] Son, purifies us from all sin.*" (1 John 1:7) Think of another example of the Lord's Supper. When you receive the bread and wine can you see or taste Jesus' body and blood? No! Yet, because Jesus said that He is present and connected to those elements, you can know with certainty that along with the bread and wine you are supernaturally receiving Jesus' body given into death for you and His blood that has washed you clean. Through God's Word we have come and we see this spiritual world that God uses to strengthen our faith.

Third, now that we truly see, we speak! Nathanael declared, "*Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.*" (v.49) Nathanael took quite a risk in speaking as he did. To call someone of the Son of God would have been considered blasphemy or idolatry. The Pharisees could have taken him out of the city and had him killed for speaking like that. Thankfully we don't have such threats against us in our country. Yet, there is a risk in speaking about Jesus. Some people might think that we are fanatics. Others may think that we are wasting our time reading God's Word or coming to church. But, we know the saving truth and we must do whatever we can to get the message of Christ to others before it's too late.

I've seen a picture of once of a castle high on a hill. Down below in the valley is a wooden fort with captives inside and the place is on fire. We Christians are in the castle. We have God's Word keeping us safe and secure, but held captive in the burning fort of the devil? Do we simply stay and on the hill and watch it burn with everyone inside? Do we at least sound the bell to try to get some of the people to leave the burning fort or do we run down to the fort and call and reach in the thick smoke to pull people out! That is what this church is about! We are to always have a balance of holding to the truth and proclaiming the truth. Someone once wrote, "Christ says to every sinner "Come!" and to every convert "Go!"

That is what happened in our verses. Jesus found Philip and invited him to follow. Philip found Nathanael and invited him to come and see. And we can thank God that people in the past took the time to teach God's saving truth to us! Some of you like me are new to this congregation. Others have had family here for generations. Now we are all one family in Christ. And our concern needs to be another generation of children who need to know the saving truth about Jesus. 50 years from now we want children and grandchildren to be sitting in these pews worshipping and saying, Jesus, you are the Son of God. You are my Savior!

A minister once described what he thought was a most beautiful picture. It was a picture out at sea and there was a terrible storm. A person had been washed off a boat, but by God's grace he had been able to grab hold of a rack in the midst of the storm, a rock that had a cross on top of it. Later he said that he found a better picture. It was the same sea, storm, and rock, but now the person was hold on the rock with one hand and holding another victim of the storm in the other. That is what God has called us to do. We all have opportunities when people are going through storms of life who need to know there is a God who cares, who loved them so much He sent His Son to die for them. We sing in the hymn, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but whole lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

Earlier I asked why Jesus didn't send down a check for a few \$100,000 dollars. He has His reasons. But instead He has given this congregation an amazing amount of talented people. That's how I see it, and I've only met a few of you! He has blessed all of us with more blessings than this church will ever need. So, what would God have us do? We are all to use our talents and gifts for the two purposes that the church exists: to support the teaching of God's Word within the congregation and school and reach out with that saving Word others who still need to know. Let me close with the words from Daniel March, "If you cannot speak like angels, if you cannot speak like Paul, you can tell the love of Jesus, you can say He died for all. If you cannot rouse the wicked with the Judgment's dread alarms, you can lead the little children to the Savior's waiting arms." Come and see! Take a closer look and invite others to do the same. Amen.

The peace of God...