

SERIES: **#come**
#comeandsee – John 1:43-51

INTRODUCTION: The social network “Twitter” makes it possible to *follow* almost anyone -- a politician, an entertainer, your favorite team, or your best friend. You can watch where they go, how they respond to others, how they spend their “downtime”, or see what’s important to them. There’s no better way to know someone than to follow them – just ask Philip! As he followed Jesus and came to realize who He really was, he couldn’t wait to get the word out! When we see who Jesus really is, we can’t help but want to follow Him!

Becoming a believer results in actions and reactions. There is a great change in one’s life when the Light replaces darkness. God’s call comes by and through his free gift of grace. The believer reacts with thankful action. That Light that now shines in the heart of the believer also shines through the believer for others to see. Today’s Gospel reveals that as believers we are won to win others to Christ. Christ has won us to himself that we might win others to Christ. Before us today is the action and reaction of Jesus’ call as Philip follows Jesus, and then finds Nathanael.

In the verses preceding our text, what took place leading up to our text is explained. Jesus was baptized. The next day John explains that the Lamb of God takes away sin. Then the following day John points to that very Lamb of God. Andrew and Peter then followed Jesus. Now as we see in v. 43, Jesus leaves the area the next day to go to the region of Galilee.

When he arrives Jesus immediately sees and calls Philip by saying, “Follow me.” Philip does not hesitate but follows. We are then told that Philip was from Bethsaida, like Andrew and Peter (and later, also Nathanael). These first four disciples all had this same background in common.

Now there was more. They had saving faith in common. They were won to win others by Jesus’ call. Today we are reminded once again of the saving power of God’s word. Jesus simply says: “Follow me.” This is enough to change the life of followers by changing their hearts. All too often today many think they need to see great signs or wonders to see the power of God. True, one can see God’s power in nature. But it is only in his Word that one sees and can receive eternal salvation. This is God’s greatest power. The apostle Paul came to know this. He walked in darkness for a long time. By grace, God won him to win others. He declared in Romans 1:16, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.” God’s Word is the power of salvation!

People are attracted to the things they can see, feel, and touch. These physical things often must be accompanied by glitz and glamour. Sadly, all too many are led astray by the distractions of this world. The reality is that the simple gospel message is what is truly needed. It is not the media shout slides during worship. It is not the musical groups. It is not the mega-church or crystal cathedrals that save. It is not even the charismatic or charming preachers. God’s Word is the saving Word of God’s grace and power. Paul once said, “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power” (1 Cor.2:4,5). How sad when anyone puts confidence in anything other than God’s word.

Our world is growing darker with each passing day. Sin abounds. Wickedness continues to increase. But, God in his infinite mercy and grace has called us out of the darkness of sin into His marvelous light. We are in awe that God has loved us and saved us. Our eternal salvation

reminds us of the hundreds of thousands, the millions who still sit in the darkness – lost. God’s call changes our hearts. By faith we react with actions of love and concern. The book of Jude says, "Have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garments stained by the flesh." We are won to win others to Christ.

Jesus sees Philip and tells him to, "Follow me." Philip follows him. Essentially, "follow me" is the same as the phrase "come and see". Philip comes away from his encounter with Jesus, excited. He has found the One of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. He’s so excited that he can’t contain himself. He meets one of his friends, Nathanael, and tells him about Jesus. Nathanael is a little skeptical. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" he asks. Philip tells his friend to "come and see."

Nathanael meets Jesus and is impressed. Jesus seems to know a lot about him even though the two had not met previously. Nathanael came and saw and proclaimed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God, You are the King of Israel." God’s Word gave Nathanael saving faith. Nathanael would see even more in his walk with Jesus.

Jesus had descended to earth as perfection. He descended to take on our imperfection and sin and carry it to a cross. Three days later as He rose from the grave, He perfectly fulfilled God’s requirements for us and God’s plan. Man, now forgiven, received the righteousness of God. In other words, following Jesus changes us and should change everything about us!

EXAMPLE - There was a church that had a young lady who had just started attending worship. She had more than a checkered past to say the least. She had turned her life over to the Lord and had dedicated the rest of her life to serving and following Jesus. She had worked very hard to not let her past get in the way of her new found salvation and life. It seemed everywhere she went people could not forget her past.

The Pastor’s son noticed her and their relationship began to grow. As the relationship grew so did the rumors, gossip, and dissatisfaction among the church members. They felt as if the pastor’s son needed to find someone with a better history and family background. As the relationship continued to grow so did the dissension in the church. When there was a wedding being planned, the church members held a meeting to see what they could do to stop it. During the meeting the pastor’s son and the young lady showed up. The pastor’s son boldly walked to the front of the group and addressed them with the following:

"I feel very sorry for all of you today. I will pray for each and every one of you that is in attendance. It appears that you are somewhat confused about the issue, the ability, and the power of the total redemptive power and forgiveness of the blood of Jesus Christ. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. No sin is greater or smaller than another. The same precious blood cleanses all manner of sin. Following Jesus changes us in every way!"

Here we begin to understand a little bit more the meaning of amazing grace. God’s grace is simply, truly, totally amazing. To be saved and sit in the light of the Lord is completely awesome. We cannot help but declare God’s goodness to those who still in the dark. Every one of us are surrounded by someone or those who need to "come and see" and experience the life-changing power of God. We may feel reluctant or ill equipped. Don’t let these unfound fears stop you. May the joy of salvation always be ready to burst out of us and on to others around us.

CONCLUSION: Dear friends in Christ: Believers are won by Christ to win others to Christ. Andrew could not help himself but immediately found his brother Peter. It was the same with Philip who found his friend Nathanael. This was the reaction of their faith to the action of the call of Christ. Each day we need to remind ourselves of the excitement of being a believer. At times we may take our faith for granted. There are still many people who would love to know as much about eternity as we do. We were won to win. God has won the victory over sin, the devil, and death – for us! The victory is ours. The victory is ours to share. In the book of Daniel we hear (12:3): "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." Believers have been made wise for salvation. Believers in Christ are the shining stars in this sin-darkened world. We have been won to win. Who will you go to today or tomorrow and say, "Come and see?" Amen.