

The Gospel of John

1:43-51

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of John.

✠ **John 1:43-51** *The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 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." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."*

If you will remember last week's study, we talked about how Andrew was known for bringing people to Jesus. We may see more evidence of this in verse 44.

✠ *Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.*

Philip was from the same town as Andrew and Peter, and it's very possible that they told other people about Jesus, who they just met the day before, and spent the day with. Kind of makes you wonder what Jesus spoke about that day, which impressed upon Andrew and Peter to tell others about Jesus?

Even more so, what has Jesus spoken to you through His word that would impress upon your heart to tell others about Him?

At one point in time Jesus said to you **"Follow Me"** and you did and have been walking with Him ever since.

Was it because Jesus offered you a new home and car if you did?

Did Jesus say that you would never get sick or you would have long life or not ever be hurt physically again?

Was it because it was the "in" thing to do, with Jesus being in the biggest movie of the year, or had a hit CD?

Did Jesus say to follow Him and your friends would be impressed with the company you keep?

I know these all sound like stupid questions, and the answer to all of them I hope is NO! But these are the things people are looking for today. They think these things will make them happy and content with life.

But the more we seem to get, the more we seem to want.

No Jesus didn't give us any of these physical things, in fact there are some things you may have given up to follow Jesus. But there is one thing Jesus offered that the world can never offer, and that was His life as payment for our sins.

We all have a choice, whether to choose a short time on this earth living the so-called pleasures of sin, and then spending eternity in hell where no one will ever be happy. Or living for Jesus because He died for us and spend eternity in heaven where everyone will be happy and content for all eternity.

Sounds like an easy choice, but for all of us, we chose the first for many years, even though the second was offered to us many times.

Maybe you have chosen the first, the life of sin here on this earth, thinking you will party in hell. There will be NO party in hell; you have believed the lies of your friends, TV, movies, and satan himself!

"No I haven't. No one is telling me this." You may be thinking.

You have been told many times the truth about hell and the life you are living, and you have just been told again. What makes you think things will be better when you die? Maybe you just don't believe that you will go to hell or even that there is a hell.

Someone who loves you would tell you not to stand in front of a car going 100 MPH because you will get hurt and die. But someone who doesn't care about you or even hates you will tell you to go ahead and do it. Who would you trust with your life? Or who are you trusting with your life?

You see God loves you and warns you about the consequences of how you are living, and your rejection of His Son Jesus. He tells you because He loves you and just as the person who would warn you about standing in front of that car, God is warning you, because He cares even more about you, and knows the path you are on, and that it leads to destruction.

† **Matt 7:13** *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.*

On the other hand, satan hates you and even despises you; he wants you to die and go to hell, he knows what it's like and wants you to suffer for all eternity, because he hates you. Why, because you are God's creation, and satan hates everything God has created.

But in the same verses, Jesus says that there is another path. A good path that we should all be on.

† **Matt 7:14** *Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

“There are few who find it” Have you ever wondered why?

Think of it like a man who is driving somewhere but is lost and refuses to stop for directions. Even his wife may know the way, but he seems to know a short cut, and this short cut has gotten them lost, and his pride will not allow him to ask for directions or even listen to his wife.

We are all lost without Jesus, and even though many will point the way to Jesus, we want to go our own way. Only after a man will stop and humble himself and ask for directions will he find the destination he is looking for.

Only when we stop and listen to the directions in God’s word, will you be on the path that leads to life.

That’s possibly what was happening here. Andrew and Peter told Philip about Jesus. Philip put his pride aside and listened to what they were telling him. And as soon as Jesus spoke, Philip knew Jesus was the way to life. We know this because he went and told Nathanael.

✠ *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."*

Reading this verse, you can also tell that Philip and Nathanael studied God’s word. They were looking for the Messiah whom Moses and the prophets wrote about, meaning the Old Testament of the bible.

Did you know that there are over 300 prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament? Philip and Nathanael did, or at least knew that the bible spoke of the Messiah, but they also did not understand what the prophecies were saying, at least not until Jesus rose from the dead and they were revealed to them through the Holy Spirit.

You see, the Jews expect the Messiah to be this great leader who would protect them from their enemies. He would be a king ruling with a mighty hand abolishing their enemies and they thought they would finally have freedom from the oppression of the Roman government.

They weren’t expecting anything like Jesus at all. One who was humble, yet firm. One who would expose their man made traditions and religion. One who would go to the sinners and minister to them.

If you will notice, it seems the only time people believed in Jesus is when they got something out of him, like food or healing. But when Jesus spoke, it exposed their hearts to themselves and they just could not accept that.

† **John 6: 60-61 & 66-69** *Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" When Jesus knew in*

Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?"

From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Even though Jesus' word cut into the heart of the eleven, still they knew that Jesus had the words of eternal life.

† *John 6:70-71 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.*

We are getting way ahead of ourselves in the book of John, but I want you to notice something here. All of this happened the day after Jesus feed the 5000. Notice Peter did not say, "We believe because you feed us with food". No simply put Peter says, "*You have the words of eternal life.*"

We as Christians will try all sorts of things to get people to go to church or accept Jesus. But the only way is, by believing in Jesus and His words, only then will people be saved. It's not the music, it's not the food, it's not the show, it's not how beautiful your church building is, or the number of people in your church that saves people. Someday we will all understand that and stop trying to put Jesus and salvation in a show.

Now don't get me wrong, I am not against Christian concerts or special events in the church. I do believe they can, through much prayer, draw people to hear the message of salvation. But do we spend more time preparing the event or on our knees seeking the Lord to be in control?

So Philip gets Nathanael and his response is:

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

The Jews believed that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem and not Nazareth.

† *Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."*

It's very well that this is what Nathanael was talking about. But it also says that Jesus would come out of Egypt.

† **Hosea 11:1** *When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.*

This was fulfilled in.

† **Matt 2:14-15** *When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."*

Another thing Nathanael was talking about when he said, "*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*" was the fact that Nazareth was not a good town or place to be from. It would be like saying, "Can anything good come out of Las Vegas or Sin City?"

But then again:

† **1 Cor 1:27-29 (NLT)** *Instead, God deliberately chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose those who are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important, so that no one can ever boast in the presence of God.*

Jesus came from a bad town, but also if you think about it. The King of kings and Lord of lords was not born in a big fancy hospital, with maids all around to tend to Mary's needs, or even a doctor or midwife to deliver the baby. No Jesus was born in a stinky stable with nothing but animals around, and was laid in a feeding trough, which was very likely covered with the animal's saliva. The smell of the animal droppings was in the air, with dust and hay particles flying around.

This King had no army of thousands but had a band of twelve men and even one of them would betray Him. The Creator of the heavens and earth allowed His creation to smite Him with their fists and torture Him. He allowed them to spit on Him and mock Him. These are all foolish things in the eyes of the world, but they all served a purpose in God's eyes.

Maybe things seem kind of foolish in your life right now. You don't understand what God is doing or allowing to happen in your life. Has it seemed like forever that these things have been going on? Is your faith failing you because you can't see or understand what God is doing?

Mary didn't lose faith when she was ushered into a stable to have her child. Jesus didn't lose faith when He was being beaten and crucified.

The woman caught in adultery didn't lose faith when she was brought before Jesus.
The woman with the issue of blood didn't lose faith when so many were around Jesus that she could barely even touch the hem of His garment.
Paul and Silas didn't lose faith when they were beaten and thrown in jail.
Even Peter, after he denied Jesus, didn't lose faith. He didn't like what he did, but he still believed in Jesus.

Is your situation worse than any of these? Even if it is, is it too big for the creator of the heavens and the earth to handle?
How big is your God?

† **Isaiah 66:1-2** *Thus says the LORD:*
"Heaven is My throne,
And earth is My footstool.
Where is the house that you will build Me?
And where is the place of My rest?
For all those things My hand has made,
And all those things exist,"
Says the LORD.
"But on this one will I look:
On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My word."

This is what Nathanael saw when he met Jesus.

✠ **John 1:47-49** *Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him,*
"Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" Nathanael said to Him,
"How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip
called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered
and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

When Nathanael asked, "*How do You know me?*" what he is saying is "How do you know about me?"

You see, Jesus said to Nathanael, "*Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!*"

What does all of this mean?

It is possible since Nathanael studied the scriptures that he was reading or meditating on

† **Gen 28:10-12** *Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.*

Remember in our study in Genesis that Jacob's name means heel catcher, which means he was deceiving or deceptive. And Jesus was telling Nathanael that he wasn't like Jacob but was an honest Israelite.

So why do I think Nathanael was thinking or studying these verses? By Jesus' answer to Nathanael.

✠ **John 1:50-51** *Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."*

Just like the dream Jacob had.

Maybe you to have believed by something simple that Jesus said.
Let me tell you, you ain't seen nothin yet.

✠ **Rev 21:9-27** *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut*

at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

AMEN!

Next week we start chapter two, with the wedding at Cana and the turning of water into wine.

May God richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy and may you be excited to see the things God will be doing in your life!