

**Prayer of the Day:**

Almighty God, you gave your one and only Son to be the light of the world. Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and believed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Verse of the Day:**

Alleluia. He said to me, "You are my servant in whom I will display my splendor." Alleluia. (Isaiah 49:3 cf. NIV)

**Sermon Text:**

How do you know? It's a question that is often posed to Christians. "How do you know that God (fill in the blank)?" If we are honest, it's not just a question that is posed to Christians, however. It is also a question our own sinful flesh will force us to ask in the darkness of trial and temptation. How do you know that God (fill in the blank) when everything about our world might seem at first glance to tell us differently? Today, in

Word we meet Philip and Nathanael. As they interact with Jesus, we learn truths about our Savior, which help us answer those questions when the Devil, the world and our own sinful flesh tempt us to doubt because **WHEN GOD SPEAKS, HIS PEOPLE LISTEN! HE'S THE ONE WHO FULFILLS THE SCRIPTURES (VV. 43-45). HE'S THE ONE WHO READS OUR HEARTS (VV. 46-49). HE'S THE ONE WHO BRINGS US HEAVEN (VV. 50, 51).**

**Text: John 1:43-51**

<sup>43</sup> The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." <sup>44</sup> Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and told him, "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." <sup>46</sup> "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. <sup>47</sup> When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." <sup>48</sup> "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." <sup>49</sup> Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." <sup>50</sup> Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." <sup>51</sup> He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Jesus is the fulfillment of all scripture. How often we saw that at Christmas. The Children told us that in their Christmas service at school. Prophecy was truly fulfilled in the birth of God in a manger. Micah foretold, "*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.*" (Micah 5:2) Scripture was fulfilled as shepherds heard the news and praised God for his mercy and grace, as a star shown bright in the night sky, as a baby was born in Bethlehem, the son of God more ancient than time itself, all foretold in the prophecies of countless prophets inspired by God.

How often don't we see that throughout the church year, as Jesus lives a perfect life in your place, healing the sick, and teaching his believers as we see so often in Pentecost, as he suffers and dies for our many sins which is our concentration in Lent, as he rose again for our assurance and sits at God's right hand ruling all things for his people as we see so often in Easter, End Times and Advent. All of it, Jesus' entire life fulfills more prophecy than we have the time to look at this morning. It's no wonder Phillip tells Nathanael "*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.*"

Jesus calls believers to follow him. Notice how he worked with Phillip. Phillip had learned of Jesus Christ. Somewhere along the line he was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. Perhaps John the Baptist instructed him, perhaps his own knowledge of scripture lead him to the assertion but he was convinced that this was the Savior of the world.

Notice, also, how Jesus worked with Nathanael. Nathanael was also a person who knew the scripture but he was more skeptical. Kings live in castles and elaborate cities. They don't come from the rundown places. Jesus reveals himself to Nathanael in a slightly more impressive way. He gives him a peek of his omniscience. Both through study or by miracle the Word always works and in Nathanael it produces positive results as he confesses "*Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.*"

Jesus calls us as well? He calls us to faith as we hear the simple gospel imperative to believe. Page after page in the scriptures, we find that he truly is the one whom scripture speaks about. Speaking to the Pharisees Jesus exclaims, *You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me,* <sup>40</sup> *yet you refuse to come to me to have life.* (John 5:39) So ask yourself, when Jesus called to you asking you to "Follow Me" Did your bible become thread worn or dusty, well read or unopened beside the bed?

We must all confess that on our own we would not only ignore the Gospel call of Christ but go out of our way to blare it out as well. We all need the all knowing, all seeing, all powerful God to come to us. He sees us before we are even born. He constructs us and puts us together and he convinces us of who he is just like he did with Nathanael. In our Baptism, he sends the Holy Spirit to place faith in our hearts. There the skeptic is immediately made believer as water and Word change our lives forever and the faith that follows Jesus is placed in our hearts by God himself.

When we realize, through the mercy of a loving God, who Christ is and set to follow him as did Phillip and Nathanael, We have heard the call of Christ to **COME AND SEE** the amazing things that God has done for us. But notice then what part of following Christ is. Phillip gets up and follows Jesus as he rushes off to Nathanael to tell him the glorious news as well. What news it is that we can spread to the corners of the globe as we invite others to **COME AND SEE** as we **TELL OTHERS OF HIM WHO BRINGS HEAVEN TO EARTH.**

Notice Phillips reaction. Faith immediately produces work as he runs to Nathanael. It's like a bottle rock that is lit. Once burning it cannot help but explore with a report that lets everyone know what has happened. Jesus calls himself our light, our fire and faith even receives that picture often as well. And like a bottle rocket we pop with the promise of paradise.

But why? If it's all about the fact that Jesus is special and that's it then who cares. If it is because Jesus was able to do some pretty neat tricks in this world then let's close up shop and go home because I'm wasting your time. But it is about much more than those things. They are only

proofs for the message that is most important and Jesus conveys that thought in our lesson. *“You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.”*

What is greater than miracles and displays of power? Jesus says it, *“I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”* What’s so special about that? Think about it for a moment. Jesus will be the bridge from heaven to earth and vice versa. Jesus will reopen the gates of heaven. And the Greek gives us the idea that they remain open it’s not an automatic door that closes after 30 seconds.

For a people undeserving of paradise, whose ancestors were evicted from the paradise of God those words are sweeter than honey. God hears our prayers and is willing to speak to us as well. He will again treat us as children. All through our Savior who bridged the gap with his perfection and his innocent death on the cross. Our Savior who made us his own and called us to come and follow him. Our Savior who called us to come and see the wonder greater than any display of power, the wonder of the guilt declared innocent.

Such a message must be told to others. And it requires no eloquent delivery. Phillip lets the Word do the work. "Come and See", that’s all Phillip says when asked to explain himself. Convinced that the Word will work for others just like it works for us we to invite everyone we meet to come and see the wonders that are told in the scripture and displayed in the sacraments, the wonders that proclaim sin forgiven. Through his life lived for us he has become the bridge that reopens the gates and brings heaven to us.

When we open the Bible and read the passages and paragraphs you can’t help but notice that Jesus at all times look exactly as he should. His dress is more recognizable than any police officer or doctor. His uniform proclaims him as God and man, the officer of true peace and the doctor for those sick with the disease of sin. **COME AND SEE** on Sundays in scripture lessons, during bible classes which look to him, at home in devotions and personal study which concentrate on his Word. God has moved you and will strengthen you in your ability to **FOLLOW THE ONE FORETOLD IN SCRIPTURES** and as you follow him don’t be shocked as he leads you to others as well. It is his desire that we all **TELL OTHERS OF HIM WHO BRINGS HEAVEN TO EARTH. COME AND SEE!**