

Come and See
Sunday Epiphany 2, Year B
1 Samuel 3: 1 – 10; 1 Corinthians 6: 12 – 20; John 1: 43 – 51
January 17, 2021

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

“*Come and see,*” said Philip to Nathanael. Philip had come to him with great excitement. You can almost hear him panting between words, both from his excitement, but also from trying to get to Nathanael to tell him this good news, “*We have found him of whom Moses and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*”

Nathanael, who in the other Gospels is called Bartholomew, replied with markedly less enthusiasm, “*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*”

It is hard to blame Nathanael for not jumping at Philip’s words. The world had been waiting since Adam and Eve’s fall into sin for the Messiah to show up. The prophets kept proclaiming, Moses promised, and, to add insult to injury, there had been many false Messiahs.

No wonder Nathanael was skeptical. Besides, Nazareth wasn’t known for anything big or great. It was a small town, not even mentioned in the Old Testament. How could the fulfillment of the Law and Prophets come from a place that was never mentioned by the Law and Prophets? “*Can anything good come out of Stilwell...Park Hill...Briggs...?*” You get the idea.

But, even if it did, how would you know?

How would you know that the Messiah had showed up? If Jesus walked in here today, how would we recognize Him from any other man who would walk in here off the street? We wouldn’t. He would look and sound like any other man. He would not have a halo. He would not glow. He would not be accompanied by a host of angels... He may have some fishing buddies with Him... but, so could Bruce ☺

I’m not sure, but I’m pretty sure Bruce isn’t the Messiah.

But, this is why we have the season of Epiphany. In this season we see many of the ways in which the Messiah is revealed. We see how this man, this rabbi from the small insignificant town of Nazareth, isn't just a rabbi (a teacher), but is the Messiah, the Savior of the whole world. That He wasn't just any man, but the Son of the Living God.

There is no way you and I could be as ignorant as those first century Jews and Gentiles. There is no way that we enlightened Christians could miss the Messiah. Right?

Actually, yes, we could. And, yes, we do.

Friends, we miss Jesus all the time. We miss Him in the Lord's Supper when we do not believe that He is really there. We miss Him in baptism when we believe that it is our work and not His. We miss Him in Confession and Absolution when we do not believe His forgiveness is given to us. We miss Him in His Word because it doesn't say what we want it to say. We miss Him because we try to shape Him into what we think He should be, instead of seeing Him for who He is. We miss Him when we shape Him according to our beliefs, instead of shaping our beliefs according to His Word.

Samuel is a good reminder of this. Samuel was a son who was prayed for. His mother was barren and sought God and made a promise that if God would give to her a son, she would give him over to the service of God. God answered. Samuel was that son. And, he was given over to the care of Eli, the priest, and served in the Tabernacle; the tent of God.

As we heard this morning, Eli was resting in his bed and he hears a voice call his name. He thinks it is his master, Eli. Eli tells him to go back to bed. It happens again. Then a third time. Finally, Eli realizes what is going on and tells young Samuel that if it happens again to say, "*Speak, Yahweh, for your servant hears.*"

Here is the interesting thing, *“Now Samuel did not yet know Yahweh, and the word of Yahweh had not yet been revealed to him.”*

Here he was, under the care of a priest, serving in the Tabernacle, sleeping in the same area as the Ark of the Covenant, and, yet, does not know Yahweh. Up to that point, he had not heard God’s voice, He did not recognize the voice of His shepherd.

But, he does exactly as his priest tells him and the next time he hears the Voice calling him, he responds, *“Speak, Yahweh, for your servant hears.”*

And, from then on, he knew God’s voice, would respond, and would share it with those who needed to hear.

The same is true for you and for me. St. Paul reminds us, *“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ”* (Rom. 10:14-17).

This is why I love response to Nathanael’s question, *“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”* His response is so short, yet sweet, *“Come and see.”*

In other words, don’t take my word for it. See for yourself.

Also, notice that he doesn’t say, “Go and see.” But, “Come and see.”

It’s not a ‘go find out for yourself’, it’s a “Look, brother, I’m going. You can come with me if you want to see what I’m talking about.” I love that.

It is great that Philip brings Nathanael to Jesus, just as in the reading before ours this morning, Andrew brings Peter to Jesus.

This is how evangelism works, isn't it? We, who do know the Messiah, go to those who don't and we tell them, "We have found the one who can save us from the perils that surround us. It is Jesus of Nazareth. The Promised One. Come and see."

My friends, the season of Epiphany reminds us and shows us that Jesus is the Messiah. He is the very One who Moses and the Prophets spoke of. He is the One of whom, as we saw last week, God Himself proclaims is His Son. And, when this season of Epiphany ends, we will hear our Heavenly Father speak again.

Perhaps, as we are reminded of the Divinity of Jesus, the Messiah, we can take that Epiphany to others around us. We can tell them, "Come and see." We can bring them to Jesus, for He is most definitely here.

So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Amen.