

COME AND YOU WILL SEE

John 1:35-51

Key Verse 1:39

“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.

First, “We have found the Messiah” (35-42). Look at verses 35 and 36. The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” Whenever John saw Jesus, he shouted, “Look, the lamb of God!” In the previous day, when John shouted, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,” no one followed Jesus. But when he shouted the same thing the next day, finally, two of his disciples decided to check out who Jesus really was. So, they followed Jesus. How did Jesus respond? Did he say, “Welcome! God bless you”? No. Instead, turning around, Jesus asked them, “What do you want?” Even from the beginning of following him, Jesus wanted them to have the right motive. It was actually Jesus’ challenge. One day, a real estate agent decided to attend worship service; he sent us a letter saying that he would bring even one tenth offering. Yet, what did he want? He considered the church as a good pool of his customer base. Another person was lonely; so he came to church, and there, he found his sin-partner. Still, there was another person whose mother encouraged him to go to church so that he might be able to find a marriage partner. People come to church for various reasons. But Jesus wants them to have the right motive in coming to him. So he asks, “What do you want?”

At this question, the two answered, “Rabbi, where are you staying?” Why did they want to know where Jesus was staying? They had already heard about Jesus – Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world; maybe, they heard John the Baptist shouting of Jesus, “He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.” Maybe, they heard that Jesus was the one who would give them the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Maybe, they heard that Jesus was the Promised Messiah and John was his forerunner just as God had prophesied in the Old Testament. They had heard about Jesus and had a lot of knowledge about him. But they were not satisfied with this second hand knowledge about him; instead, they wanted to know who he really was – that’s why they were following him. How can you know someone really? You can know someone only by spending time with him – maybe, by having life together, or working together. So, they wanted to know where he was staying so that they would visit him and talk with him.

At this, Jesus was glad and said to them, “Come and you will see.” When Jesus asked them, “What do you want?” he was curious; his question was actually his challenge. But now when he saw their sincere desire for him, he

was glad and happily welcomed their desire for him. It was the right answer. Jesus invited them to himself. Even if he was the Son of God and they were nothing but lowly nameless fishermen, he accepted their heart's desire for him and willingly opened up his life to them. It was indeed Jesus' grace upon them.

I know you do so many things for God as Christians, as shepherds – Sunday worship service, Friday testimony meeting, Bible study, fishing and teaching. But Jesus wants to know why you do so – your motive, your purpose. So, he asks, “What do you want?” What is your answer? Here, we are reminded of the Apostle Paul's desire. He says, “I want to know Christ.” I pray that we all may come up with the right answer – Rabbi, where are you staying? I want to know you.

Jesus said to them, “Come and you will see.” Here, the expression, “and you will see,” shows Jesus' confidence that, once they came to him and spend time with him, they would see who he really was, and that, once they saw him, they would not be disappointed; instead, they would be really amazed at who he really was – such a wonderful person, such a glorious being, and thereby, they would be really happy and satisfied. Some people look great from the distance, but when people come closer to them, they are so disappointed; that's why people don't want anyone to come closer to them. But Jesus is different. We want to know him really. So, we follow him wholeheartedly. Yet, he is not burdened at all. Instead, he welcomes our desires and struggles for him, saying, “Come and you will see!” This is his promise that, if we come closer to him, we will not be disappointed; instead, if we come to him, we will really see who he is, and once we see him, we will be really amazed, we will be satisfied. There are many great looking things or people – money, fame, power, husband, or wife, or great titles and positions. But when you come closer to them, you will be only disappointed – there is nothing or no one special; so don't go for such things; they are broken cisterns that cannot hold water; don't spend your money on what is not bread, on what does not satisfy. Instead, come to Jesus, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

So, they went and saw where he was staying. It was about the tenth hour, about four o'clock in the afternoon. Most likely, they ate dinner together, and then, had Bible study, or they talked and talked, bringing up all the questions they had, and Jesus answered them all. It must have been really an eye-opening moment when everything became so clear to them. Maybe, they stayed until 1 am, or 2 am, or even 3 am. Maybe, after this glorious time with Jesus, as they came to see so many things through his answers and teaching, they could not sleep. Through this time with Jesus, something great happened to Andrew, one of the two who spent time with Jesus. Look at verse 41. Let's read this verse together:

⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him,

“We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ).

Here, the expression, “The first thing Andrew did...” illustrates Andrew’s joy and excitement. He simply could not hold it to himself; he had to find someone and talk about what he had found. It seemed that Simon, his brother was Andrew’s best friend. As soon as the conference with Jesus was over, he ran, looked for Simon, and when he found him, he shouted, “Simon, guess what?! We have found the Messiah!” The word, “Messiah” means, “the Anointed One,” showing God’s seal of approval, or God’s assignment. When Adam sinned, God promised to send the offspring of the woman who would destroy Satan and deliberate mankind from Satan’s rule. Now, God assigned Jesus to be that person and sent him into the world – Jesus was the Anointed One to go and save the world from sin and Satan. God sent Jesus as the Messiah, as the Solution to all the problems mankind had. He is our Savior. Once saved from Satan, we can live a beautiful life.

Actually, all Israel people had been waiting for the Messiah. They were under the Roman rule, despised, humiliated and oppressed. Their life was miserable, and they were sorrowful. But they had the hope that, once the Messiah came, he would defeat the Romans and restore the kingdom to Israel; then, they would rule over the world together with the Messiah happily ever after. The Messiah would solve all their problems and they would be victorious and enjoy their life to the full -no more sorrows, no more tears, but they would enjoy a happy life forever. To them, the Messiah was the one who would solve all their problems and make their life truly fulfilling and meaningful. Andrew found this Messiah. How happy he was! We don’t know exactly what problem Andrew had, and why he had been looking for the Messiah. He was a fisherman in Galilee. But while all other fishermen were working hard to catch more fish in Galilee, what was he doing here in Judea, following John the Baptist as his disciple? This shows that Andrew could not find any meaning in catching a few more fish. His occupation as a fisherman did not carry any value that he simply gave it up, came to Judea, and was now following John the Baptist, a great man of God; but John could not be the answer, and now Andrew found the answer in Jesus – Jesus was the Messiah, and when he found Jesus as his Messiah, he was no longer depressed or gloomy; instead, he was full of joy and excitement; he became a happy man.

Nowadays, all people know Jesus’ title as the Christ, the Greek word for the Messiah in Hebrew; simply, everyone calls him “Jesus Christ.” But it does not mean that they really know him as the Christ; simply, what they know is the expression, “Jesus Christ.” And even when many church going people say, “Jesus is the Christ,” often, it is not their true understanding of him, but just an expression they learned through their pastor’s preaching or through others. In the true sense, they have not met Jesus as their Messiah who solves their problem. A woman had a very sorrowful childhood because of her alcoholic father. She was a nominal Christian, but she had never brought her real

problem of sorrow to Jesus; as a result, she was always sorrowful even if she went to church regularly. Then, she too became exactly like her father, being alcoholic, and getting angry all the time for nothing, and died at the age of 40. How sad it is that many people do not bring such problems to Jesus, but carry them all by themselves to the grave, only to be miserable and destroyed. Jesus is God's Messiah, who came into the world to save people from their problems, so that we can enjoy a truly happy life as God originally designed. Jesus is your Messiah. Let's come to Jesus with all our problems, talk to him and spend time with him until we come to have complete confidence and confess, saying, "We have found the Messiah!"

Look at verse 42. Let's read this verse together:

42 And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

The word, "Cephas" means, "Rock." Jesus said to Simon, a fisherman, "You will be called, "Rock." Right then, Simon was a fisherman; probably, his hair was sticking out, and he was full of fish smell; his language was very natural, and his behavior was very rough. But Jesus saw greatness in this young man to be a very solid, stable and dependable person like a rock; in Jesus' eyes, Simon was a diamond in the rough. So, he said to him, "You will be called "Rock." Wow! What a great encouragement it must have been to Simon! He was a lowly fisherman; no one paid attention to him in the way Jesus did. In Jesus, now he found a great vision for himself to be a rock-like person, so reliable and faithful, unshakable. Later, Simon Peter became a powerful man of God, rock-like leader that under his leadership, Christians remained faithful to Jesus despite the fierce persecution from the Roman government and overcame it. Indeed, he was a material for greatness. Jesus was the only person who knew this young man's true potential and greatness. In Jesus, his greatness came true, and so many people were blessed. You will be called Rock.

We didn't think of ourselves too highly; at best, we hoped that we might be able to survive in this dog-eat-dog world with a stable promising career. We ourselves didn't know what we were really capable of – the greatness we had. But when we came to God, God saw our greatness and said to us, "You will be the father of many nations." "You will be the mother of many nations." "You will be fishers of men." "Make disciples of all nations!" Wow! This is what God sees in us; this is what God sees we are capable of. When we learned of this, we were really excited and amazed. Since then, we follow Jesus as his disciples, talking about something really great, saying, "With the gospel, we can conquer the world." "I will be the world-class spiritual leader." Jesus is the only one who knows us really.

Second, “You are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel” (43-51).

Look at verse 43. It reads: “The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”” The statement, “The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee,” shows that it was not Jesus’ intention to look for disciple candidates. But as he was leaving for Galilee, he saw another diamond in the rough. So he called him, “Follow me.” At this, Philip followed Jesus. After spending some time with Jesus, Philip went out, found his friend 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.” Philip met Jesus as the one Moses wrote about in the law. What did Moses write about in regard to Jesus?

In Deuteronomy 18:18, God told Moses, “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.” Moses told the Israelites: “You must listen to him.” (Deut 18:15) Here, the Prophet Moses talked about is the One who tells his people everything – what to do and what not to do, where to go and where not to go. So, when people listen to him, they will not be in confusion any longer; they will not say, “I don’t know what God wants me to do.” Instead, they will see everything clearly, and knowing what God wants them to do, they will dedicate themselves completely to God’s will and they will do great things. When Philip said that he met Jesus as the One Moses wrote about in the Law, he meant that Jesus is the very One who told him everything he needed – what to do, where to go and how to live his life. By the way, what did Jesus say to Philip? He didn’t say that many words, but only two words: “Follow me!” Amazingly, that simple command was everything Philip needed, and when Jesus said to him, “Follow me,” Philip could see everything clearly for his life – what he must pursue in his life; he must follow Jesus, not money or his own dreams. Jesus is the One Moses wrote about in the law, who tells us everything – we must listen to him.

Philip was a very smart person. There is an episode that shows what kind of person Philip was. Once they were in the wilderness with five thousand people; it was getting late, and people had no food to eat. Jesus wanted to feed them. But he first asked Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” There was no Costco, or Denny’s, or even 7-11. In this kind of situation, people would say, “It is impossible. We cannot.” But Philip answered, “Eight months’ wages will not buy enough bread for each of them to have a bite.” The language he used was that of a MIT mathematician. Certainly, he was not an ordinary man. He was a genius or nerd. But with such brilliance and capability, he did not know what to really live for. If he wanted to be a doctor, certainly, he could be; if he wanted to be a lawyer, he was able to pass the bar exam, but he was not sure if he should pursue it; he had no clear life direction. He had extensive Bible knowledge, but still he was not sure what to do with his life. He was wandering. Then, Jesus became the person who told him everything he

needed, by saying, "Follow me." Through this, Philip met Jesus as the one Moses wrote about in the Law, the one who told him everything he needed.

Now in this internet age, people have access to all kinds of information, and they are smart and able. But as they have more information and more options for their lives, they are more confused than before. People do not know what to do with their lives; they do not know what to do and what not to do, where to go and where not to go. They don't know how they must live their lives. The world suggests that money and success is everything in this life. Some people think that enjoying fun and pleasure is the most important thing in this life. As a result, they end up doing what they should not do only to degrade themselves and make their lives so ugly and shameful. One student changed his school three times, and his major four times, still just hoping that his new choice would work out. People must meet Jesus as the One Moses wrote about, who tells them everything they need, who tells them what to do and what not to do, where to go and where not to go. As the One Moses wrote about in the Law, as the One who tells us everything we need, Jesus commands: "Follow me!" As the Prophet God promised to send into the world, who tells us everything we need, Jesus tells us not to follow money or success, or fleeting pleasures of the world, but follow him. Our life is to follow Jesus. We must listen to him.

Look at verses 46 through 49. When Nathanael heard Philip say that the one Moses wrote about was from Nazareth, he quickly recalled that Nazareth had a bad reputation, so he said, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" But no time to argue. Out of deep confidence, Philip simply said, "Come and see!" So Nathanael agreed to check it out, and came to Jesus. As soon as Jesus saw Nathanael, he recognized that he was no ordinary man either; so he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite in whom there is nothing false." All of them were Israelites, but Nathanael was a true Israelite, whose heart was really offered to God, seeking God really sincerely. When his heart was really offered to God, when he sought God really, his heart was pure, and there was no second thought or ulterior purpose; he might have weaknesses, but definitely, no wickedness – there was nothing false in him. This is all our disciples are about – maybe, weaknesses, but no wickedness in them. When anyone's heart is really offered to God, there is nothing false in him. Otherwise, that person is not following Jesus.

Nathanael was shocked. He asked Jesus, "How do you know me?" Jesus replied, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." When Nathanael heard this, he declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." It is really shocking that he confessed Jesus, a human being, as the Son of God; to him, Jesus was God! Only because Jesus said to him, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you," he said that Jesus was God. Objectively speaking, what Jesus said

sounds just ordinary. Someone might say to me, “Hi missionary John, I saw you yesterday while you were walking on 166th street.” I would not be shocked at this at all; I would never say to him, “You are the Son of God,” only because he saw me while I was on the street. Nathanael’s amazement and confession shows that the time he spent under the fig tree was a special moment between God and him, and the fact that Jesus saw him while he was still under the fig tree was very special to him.

His confession of faith is very unique that both God and King are the objects of devotion and loyalty. This shows what Nathanael had been looking for – the true worthy object of his life’s complete devotion. He was a true Israelite, meaning that his heart was offered to God and he was seeking God sincerely. As a true Israelite, he did all he could do – attending worship service, reading the Bible, or volunteering to assist priests or Levites in officiating worship service. But the problem was that, despite all these activities, he could not find his God; he was not confident that he was really serving God; his heart for God was not fulfilled with these activities. He went to the right, but he could not find his God there; he went to the left, but he could not find God there either. He did all he could do, but still he was not sure if he was really serving God. Other people, just doing some activities, became confident and proud that they were God’s chosen people, but Nathanael was not satisfied even though he did more than 10 ten times they did. You can imagine the situation – when he went to the synagogue worship service in Galilee, usually the Pharisees or teachers of the law served the message; when he went to the temple worship service in Jerusalem, the messengers were the Sadducees who said that there was no eternal life and no resurrection. His heart’s longing for God could not be satisfied. Maybe, under the fig tree, he was pouring out his agonized soul to God, crying, “Show me the way! How should I serve you? Where can I find you?” Then, Jesus said to him, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.” In the eyes of Nathanael, the one who saw him while he was still under the fig tree must be God. Nathanael met Jesus as his God and his King. Now his worship of God had a clear object – Jesus. How would he dedicate himself to God? By worshiping Jesus, doing everything Jesus wanted him to do. He would live for Jesus and die for Jesus, because Jesus was his God.

There are many true Israelites among Christians, who is sincerely seeking God; they do all the things they are required to do – attending worship service, Bible reading, praying, and even handing out flyers for evangelism on the streets – but still are not sure if they are serving God enough. While others are just happy and satisfied, saying, “I am saved,” because they go to church once a week or do some Christian things, these people are crying for God’s help, even after doing things 10 times than others do. While others are just happy with that exciting rock band at the church, these people look depressed. While others take great pride in their big church building, these people are not

so confident about their Christian life. It is all because they really seek God – their hearts for God cannot be fulfilled with some activities or some Bible knowledge. They are poor in spirit; they mourn for right relationship with God. They are true Israelites – in our term, maybe, “true Christians.” We need to find them all and bring them to Jesus. When they meet Jesus as their God, then, their worship of God becomes concrete – no longer through boring worship service on Sundays, but living and dying for Jesus’ mission of taking care of his sheep as shepherds. Among unbelievers, there are true Israelites who cannot be satisfied with money or boyfriend or girlfriend, because they seek the truth. While others are just happy with such things, these people are in deep agony. We need to bring them all to Jesus. Maybe, they say, “Bible study?! No way! Christianity is boring.” But we somehow overcome all these barriers and bring them to Jesus, saying, “Come and see!” Once they find Jesus as their God, they will be happy to live and die for him, pouring out all their energy, time and talent for him.

Once a servant of God said, “Unless you have a mission to live for and die for, you have not started your life yet.” Without having the true worthy object of worship and loyalty, our life has no direction or meaning or purpose. Who is truly worthy of our life? What can be the true worthy object of our life? Without knowing Jesus as our God and King, we cannot help but become like Nathanael, wandering and suffering. Without knowing Jesus as our God and King, people cannot help but give their devotion and loyalty to worthless things only to be empty and miserable. Nathanael was happy because he found his true Master whom he was more than willing to live for and die for. Jesus is our God; he is our King. Those who meet Jesus as their God and King, those who find the true worthy object of their life devotion in Jesus are blessed and happy.

Look at verses 50 and 51. Jesus said to them, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.” Then he said to all of them, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” In Genesis 28:12-13, Jacob saw in his dream, a stairway extending from earth to heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. The stairway refers to Jesus, the pathway, communication line, between the heaven and the earth. What Jesus meant was that, as they followed Jesus, they would see the relationship between God and men restored through him. They had already made great discoveries – they met Jesus personally and solved their life problem. With this discovery of Jesus, their lives changed completely. It was the turning point in their lives. They were truly blessed. But to Jesus, it was just the beginning because he had a great plan for them that they would participate in God’s glorious redemption work for the world. As we serve God’s salvation work through one to one Bible studies, we see many lost souls being restored to the relationship with God, coming to love God and pursue God wholeheartedly.

This is what Jesus promises for those who follow him. Let's pray that we may see God's salvation work occurring abundantly in the lives of many students through one to one Bible studies.

From today's passage, we heard the testimonies of the first disciples about Jesus. To Andrew, Jesus was the Messiah who solved his deep life-problem. To Philip, Jesus was the One Moses wrote about, who told him everything he needed, what to do and where to go. To Nathanael, Jesus was the Son of God and the King of Israel, the one worthy of his complete life-devotion and loyalty. Each person had a different testimony, because each person's life struggle, life problem was different. But they all found the answer in Jesus; Jesus was the answer to all their problems and life struggles. Jesus was everything to everyone. Today, what are you looking for? Jesus asks us, "What do you want?" Jesus invites us to himself with his promise, saying, "Come, and you will see." When you come to Jesus, you will find what you have been looking for, and you will be satisfied with him. Jesus is the one you have been looking for and waiting for. Come to Jesus, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

One word: Come, And You Will See