

John 1:35-51

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[0 : 00] Let's pray, Lord. Thank you so much for your word. Thank you that Christ has come, that he is risen, and we can celebrate the height and depths of who he is.

Lord, come before us today, incline our hearts to your understanding in Christ's name. Amen. Well, this morning, we're in John 1, one more time, starting at verse 35, and we turn our attention to the first disciples as recorded by John to become followers of Jesus.

The first disciples that became followers of Jesus. And John, the author, writes for us what happens to make those followers stop following John and then turn to follow Christ.

What persuades them to leave their current course of action to follow somebody who doesn't have in himself or in his relationship, the significance that John the Baptist would have had at the time for those folks.

What would be the motivation? In fact, we could ask, what is the motivation for anyone to follow Christ? What would cause anyone to want to turn from the life that they love to something opposite?

[1 : 44] What's that motivation to follow Christ, to give up a life you know, or even give up the means to gaining the world that you know, giving up friends and giving up close knit relationships and ties?

What would be the motivation? We're witnessing this morning elements of what I would call the converted life. You're witnessing elements of a converted life.

This Jesus, according to John, was worth as much. Apparently, he's worth it all. To utterly stop the action for any individual and to follow him.

Followers of Christ, at least laid out by John, the author, have been witnessed to by John, the baptizer. There's a witness on the streets proclaiming that someone will come.

Someone of more significance, someone of higher rank, someone who is credible enough for you to make a U-turn. You saw that in verse 29.

[2 : 59] Previously, he says. The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

I mean, John lets his listeners know that, hey, this is him. The one I've been talking to you about, the one you should have known about. But let me tell you about him.

Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And from the jump, the arrival of the Messiah signifies rescue. If you ever listen to an old rap group called the Cross Movement, they had a song that said the rescue.

He brought me back, although he didn't have to. He brought me back. And then they went back in the day when rappers rap, they would pick up their knees for whatever reason. I don't know. Now everything's up here.

It was all this. It was all that for that song. He brought me back. The Messiah being heralded by John signifies a rescue.

[4 : 02] The Baptist's sole purpose is to point people to the one to whom all history has already conveyed and to whom everything they've known and heard is associated with.

John's testimony concerning the divine lamb means that if this is truly the lamb, then this is the son of God.

If this is truly the lamb, then he is accompanied. He's accompanied by the ultimate sacrifice that will not only rescue God's people from their sinfulness and the sinfulness that they are protruding amongst them, but he will rescue them from the sinfulness of their enemies.

It's not just you, but he also takes you away. And provide safe haven. So he points his disciples to him.

John, the baptizer does the arrival of Christ in these verses uncovers two stories in these verses, two stories concerning the first followers of Christ.

[5 : 10] And you see it laid out there starting in verse 35 through 42, one story and then 43 all the way through the end. The second one.

Salvation in verse 35 through 42. Number one, Christ answers the question for individuals who are seeking 35 through 42.

He answers the questions for individuals who are seeking. You might want to marinate on that a little bit. What are you seeking? Are you an individual this morning that is seeking?

Maybe you stumbled your way in here and just want to hear what what what the text has to say to you. Maybe you're maybe this is the hour that you're seeking true answers.

But then number two, Christ takes initiative in answering the cynic or the skeptic. Verse 43 through 51. He answers the cynic.

[6 : 13] And he answers the seeking. Answers for both of them. First of all, let's start with answering the seeker. The lamb of God is spoken of by John.

Right away. The next day again, John was standing with his two disciples and he looked in G. It looks at Jesus as he walked by and said, behold, the lamb of God.

If if verse 29 was a public behold, the lamb of God, then verse 35 is a private. Yo, check out the lamb of God. So he he announces it to his followers.

John's witness about Jesus helped draw two of his disciples to Christ because he stated this the day before that. There's a man coming who ranks before me because he is before me.

That's verse 30. Right away. The follow. They follow Jesus. And they take a look at Christ and they and they are witnesses of his response to them.

[7 : 15] He turns and asks, what are you seeking? Verse 38. What are you seeking? The first words we see of Jesus in the gospel of John. What are you seeking?

It's a crucial point. One that Jesus will repeat. Two more times throughout the book of John. We don't have to turn there, but right in chapter 18 in the garden of Gethsemane.

He's standing there with his disciples and then the Pharisees and Judas and some leaders and soldiers come up and he asked them. Who are you seeking? If you remember the story, they fell to their face when he finally said, I am he who you seek.

I don't know what happened there, but I know it was a powerful statement. But then even later, after the resurrection, Mary Magdalene is laying there and she's crying.

She's crying so hard. She doesn't even recognize the person that's standing before her. And he says, he appears to her and says, who are you seeking? And she's like, no, sir, if you could just tell me where they put his body, I'll go get it.

[8 : 20] Don't worry about it. Mary. And he goes, she's like, what? Sorry. The question about what are you seeking is one that is meant to pierce the heart.

It's not just a peripheral question. It's not just a top layer question. It's a question that's where is your heart in this? What's up? What's really up? What's really real?

Right. What are you seeking? It pierces the heart. It's meant to ask, what do you really desire? John, the apostles writing here is to say that not everyone that followed Christ.

Followed him for the same purpose. What are you seeking? He's kind of saying, hey, just so you know, some people sought out Christ for ulterior motives.

You'll see that as we get through John. It's meant to challenge even the readers of John's gospel. What are you seeking when it comes to this Christ?

[9 : 28] Some people seek them out. There's stories of folks who are atheists, who are agnostic, who sought out to understand Christ. And they didn't want anything to do with the spiritual aspect.

They just wanted to see the elements of what he did. And if that life was worth living, there was a story of a guy. Who just did the diet of the Jewish of the Jewish diet.

And and and he reported, man, I feel better. I'm sleeping better. I'm up earlier. I'm doing a lot. I don't want I don't want Jesus, though. I'm just saying I feel better. We are searching.

What are you searching for? Or better said, what are you here for? Even later, John 5, 39 through 40, he says we see Christ's response. And he says, you search for the scriptures.

You search the scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life. And it is they that bear witness about me. Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. Could it be that even amongst us here today, there are those of us who search the scriptures, but would rather do without Christ.

[10 : 35] The response of Christ. I mean, they respond to Christ by saying, Rabbi. They were Rabbi, which which means teacher or my great one.

Rabbi, where are you staying? Or Rabbi, where do you abide? Perhaps their words are more so out of nervousness. You know, all right, we're going to go up to him.

He's what are you seeking? Where do you where do you stay? Where do you live? John seems to show us in his writings that it takes more than it takes more than just information to follow Christ.

It takes faith. And that's where Jesus is getting at with his words. What are you seeking? Come, you will see. Come, you will see is Christ's response. That true followers of Christ seek to learn from Christ and to seek to abide with him.

There's no partial when following Christ. You can't follow Christ. According to John, you can't follow Christ and also follow someone else, too. Or likewise, you don't follow Christ and then go home and take a break, take a breather.

[11 : 50] Friend of mine used to say like this, dog, you can't. He's from Tuskegee, Alabama. He's like, dog, you can't date Jesus. You don't you don't pick them up wearing your best clothes and then try to say the right things and then maybe have some engaging conversation over dinner.

And then if you say something wrong, you're quick to apologize. And then you go home and then you finally take off your mask. I mean, you're whatever you have. And, you know, you don't just drop them off later. It's it's a marriage.

If you're going to if you're going to put it in context, it's meant to say it's meant to say that. No, you're in this wholeheartedly. I mean, you get the sense of seeing the real person.

And maybe marriage is not the right one. Maybe even if you're just roommates, when you see the right person, I mean, you start to see the real person because, you know, like, man, he never lets down the toilet seat or he never.

He always cuts the air up way too high or she is. I mean, her music's way too loud. You start to see the real person. And what Christ is showing them here is you want to see the real Messiah come.

[12 : 51] You will see. It's no partial. Christ's invitation come and see is welcoming disciples into his presence. The most light they most likely spent a night with him.

Indeed, there's there's a point of discipleship here even. That even when it comes to pursuing people and building relationships with folks, there's a sense in which you need to be all in.

I mean, I'm 33 and I can tell when someone doesn't want something to do with me. Right. Let alone folks that don't know you.

And maybe out here where it's you meet folks in. Maybe it's an opportunity to share Christ with them or you're in an Uber or. A lot of times it takes more than just having the right information.

It takes the right relationship. Well, you see all that with John's writing. You see this discipleship. You see this relationship.

[13 : 59] You see them being welcome into the presence of God. But the response of Christ sparked the idea for Andrew to not just sit on the couch.

It sparked Andrew to to go find his brother. And by way of the grammar here, it might mean that, you know, he first saw his brother or he first went to his brother.

But either way, he got up and went to tell somebody that he found the one they've been seeking. The idea here is is immediately he told someone we have found the one we have been seeking.

Verse 30. Verse 41. John uses language here to link link us back to Christ question. What are you seeking? And he goes and says, hey. Brother Simon.

The one you're seeking is here. Finding the Messiah points back to the anointed one of first Samuel 16. Who the anointed one who has been spoken about by the prophets who would be set apart.

[15 : 04] The one who would come from amongst them. As even John has proclaimed. John the Baptist has proclaimed. Christ is presented here as the Messiah.

The testimony of Andrew to Simon is also meant to echo the proclamation of John the Baptist earlier that the Lamb of God is here.

Since since the readers and the hearers are meant to see the Lamb of God as Messiah, it's meant to be understood that this Jesus is the one who will take away the sin of the world.

Jesus is the one. When I'm I'm not sure even Andrew, if Andrew nor Simon have a full understanding of what this Messiah means or what he will mean, they do know that it is.

The one who will bring hope. When Simon is brought to Christ, you see what happens there. He's brought to Christ by Andrew. Christ immediately exercises what I pulled out here as authority as he proves himself to be the boss of Simon.

[16 : 16] He says, your name will be Cephas. Which means Peter, as John puts a note there for us. This could indicate the calling that Simon will be walking in.

This could indicate the role he will play. But in all likelihood, it was mostly a nickname for him. And it's actually meant to show that even back in the day when when God would change names of individuals, it's meant to show that there's a transfer of the old life into the new life.

You're not the same as you were. In fact, coming to Christ means I mean, it's supposed to mean that you look different, that you are different no matter what they say, because of the one who has brought you to.

Those that seek the Messiah and follow him find find also a savior who invites them in one that abides with them, one who proves their his authority.

He transformed them. He conforms them and he even blesses them. I would argue one cannot ignore even the evangelicalistic aspect here as well. How John's witness means he will give up followers because he's pointing to one that's greater or how Andrew immediately responds by telling his brother what he's found.

[17 : 38] Andrew's testimony. Andrew announces Christ to Simon, despite even being the lesser known in the throughout all of scripture. It's interesting that it takes a lesser figure to bring a bigger figure to the Lord.

I mean, Simon doesn't know what's going to happen, but you see the that every little bit counts in Christ, that there is no wasted energy, that you are not insignificant, that even your ministry, no matter how waning it looks.

Following Christ means that he's going to ring out every ounce of that for his glory. And you have to make no apologies for that. I mean, think of stories.

Think of Robbie Zacharias, the only one that came up to the altar call through a Youth for Christ camp meeting. Or think of Dr. Martin Luther King, whose father was a pastor, but his father came to Christ because he ended up going to a church that he was trying to date the girl whose dad was the pastor.

And you see what happens there. Now think of your own stories. Think of the individuals along the way. The Asperger calls it the jewels for the journey. Folks that helped you along the way.

[19 : 01] If you're seeking Christ today, I would encourage you to not just look forward, but to look back and consider that God, as the old folks used to say, has brought you a mighty long way.

That he's already been making straight the paths for you. He's answering the seeker by letting them know that God has intentions for you all along.

But next, in verse 43 through 51, he's answering the cynic, the skeptic. Maybe you're not seeking here. Maybe you have questions, significant questions that would cause you to stop or turn or go a different route or reconsider what you might have considered originally, according to Christ.

Next day, you see it there, verse 43, the next day. Meaning about the fourth day within our text now from chapter from the beginning of chapter one all the way to now is about the fourth day of Jesus's ministry.

We see John throw in that Christ found Philip. Philip. It's not knowing how Christ knew Philip. But since the text puts him from the same town as Andrew and Peter, it's likely that Peter or Andrew probably talked him up.

[20 : 16] Yeah, we got a friend named Philip. Nonetheless, Jesus invites Philip to follow him. It's a direct invitation of discipleship. There is no ask of what are you seeking.

It's clear that Christ is doing the seeking. No, no, you come with me. Is that where you are today? And that's grace, mind you. There's individuals I know that had to hit rock bottom in order to look up to see that Christ was the only way.

Nonetheless, Jesus invites Philip. Philip, just like Andrew in the previous verse, goes and tells another about his findings. Except Philip adds when he gets in front.

When he gets in front of Nathaniel, he adds, yo, bro, check it out. We found him who Moses and the law and also the prophets wrote. Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Verse 45. For Philip. Oh, you found him? Okay. Jesus. Okay, which one? Which Joseph? Which town? Nazareth.

[21 : 24] You can hear the music almost stop. Nazareth. Nazareth is, Nazareth doesn't seem like the place for Nathaniel that Jesus would come from.

Nazareth is a small town, insignificant even. According to Nathaniel, this Messiah that's come is not insignificant. He's significant.

He's great. Why would Jesus come from there? Why is that the God we're looking for?

The Savior we're looking for? I mean, he's going to do big things. To say you're from Nazareth, you're not helping your case there.

Most of you know I like wrestling. Whenever a wrestler comes out, they say, hailing from. Some people make up places.

[22 : 24] Some people say they're real place. One of my favorite wrestlers is Undertaker. And whenever he comes out, they go, hailing from Death Valley.

I can imagine being Nathaniel, hearing the good news, and then being taken aback by, no, that's not, we got to do better than that.

That's not going to sell the crowd. There aren't that many people in Nazareth he's skeptical about. Did you actually find them, bro? Because, and Philip doesn't really bring a lot of evidence.

He's just, hey, you remember the scriptures? Come and see them. Even though Nathaniel himself is from a small village of Cana where Jesus is heading into, in Galilee.

Why would the anointed one, the Lamb of God, come from Nazareth? This sparks Nathaniel's question, can anything good come from Nazareth? No doubt he is, he's just being honest.

[23 : 25] I want to be real with you. There's a sense of prejudice, even within his words of skepticism. Anything from Nazareth? Are you kidding me? Why?

Because Nazareth was insignificant. This gets us back to the question of what are you seeking? Or better yet, what are you expecting when it comes to Christ?

If I was to bring it to today, when it comes to Christ showing up on our behalf, a lot of times we create for, we create for God the letter of what we want him to sign. And like, God, this is what I need.

This is what I want. And this is how I'm going to get there. And I am a witness to that. My own self. And God's like, uh-huh. Uh-huh. Okay. And then he gives you a blank slate and says, sign this.

He was like, there's nothing on it. He was like, I know, because I'm me. What are you expecting? What does our own ideas of, where does our own ideas of God fall short?

[24 : 27] Where are we skeptical when it comes to God's hand in our lives? That couldn't have been God. I worked hard for that. I loved them very much.

That couldn't have been God. And that gets into a whole sovereignty conversation. But the idea here is that Philip's response mirrors Christ.

In verse 39, he says, I don't know, bro, come and see. As if to say, I'm not going to debate with you. Take a look for yourself. John, the author, is writing in this fashion, showing readers that the Spirit of the Lord does the convincing.

Philip doesn't need to convince because he knows the truth. Come and see. I'm not going to argue. You're going to have to just check this out for yourself. Jesus, upon seeing Nathanael in verse 37, says, behold, an Israelite indeed whom there is no deceit.

Meaning, look, there is an Israelite who within himself has nothing false. He's a straight shooter. This man, he tells the truth.

[25 : 42] He has no guile within him. And while Christ's words here, they seem to look sarcastic and a little humorous, he's responding to Nathanael's skepticism.

Could be for a few reasons. He could be comparing Nathanael to a figure of deception within the scriptures, a man in his own family, Jacob. Especially if Nathanael acted in that manner throughout the town, he might just be using that sarcastically to say, hey, look at this guy.

Who does what we all know he does. But, you know, he doesn't have that. Right. And he could be using that to using that to actually draw out some hypocritical nature that Nathanael was displaying.

But even thinking about Jacob, while even Jacob was a man of guile and deception, he was designated for transformation, as I put it.

I mean, it was bad enough for God to actually be shown as the only one that can transform him. So he could be using that to describe Nathanael or he could be contrasting Nathanael with the forefather Jacob before he was changed, saying before in Israel saying, behold, an Israelite without an ounce of the old Jacob within him.

[27 : 08] Saying that this man will not act as some of these Pharisees act. He's a real Israelite. And the answer might be in Nathanael's response. How do you know me?

How do you know me? And it seems that Nathanael answers. With no trickery in his answer. How do you know me? Which also points to his cynicism.

Towards Christ. And where it comes from, because he's so truthful. He was like. So, you know who I am. You know me. I'm a straight shooter. I haven't. I don't have anything to hide.

Christ lets Nathanael know that he saw. He saw him in the tree. He saw him before Philip even brought him to him.

Which which is enough to satisfy Nathanael's question, it seems. And. He responds by saying, Rabbi again. And there's that word again.

[28 : 13] Teacher. My great one. You are the son of God. You are the king of Israel. Nathanael realizes.

He realizes that this is the true teacher. That the God of the universe has sent a son to save the world. That this is the king of the world.

That's where that king of Israel is. If you were the king of Israel. You were saw as seen as the king of the world. And Nathanael applies that to Jesus Christ. It's almost as if.

He's being converted just on Christ's response. But Jesus isn't done with Nathanael. Christ wants Nathanael to know that merely being impressed with the fact that Christ saw him before Philip saw him.

Or being impressed by the fact that he knew who he was isn't enough. To follow Christ.

[29 : 12] To be a full follower of Christ. It takes a life of faith. There are plenty of people that are impressed with the works of Christ. And still walk and do their own thing.

You can be impressed with Christ without faith. Walk away believing the wrong thing. This is why John the Apostle would quote Nathanael using the word gnosko.

Meaning to know. You know me? Because as John writes back in verse 10. He was in the world.

And the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him. You see what happens is. People know God. Know about Christ.

But then they don't know about Christ. But the same way I know my wife. Better than any of you in here. It's the difference between the way I know my wife.

[30 : 13] And the way her chiropractor knows her. It's an intimate knowledge of knowing Christ. Christ is not believed and received merely on the basis of impression.

And meeting your own criteria. Now he might meet some criteria. And he might be impressive. But the faith life is lived by a heart transformation and a life that responds in faith.

Well. In this case. Nathaniel goes from being a cynic. From being a skeptic to being a follower. And what's Christ's response in Nathaniel's pronouncement?

Verse 50. With further encouragement. Don't just be impressed by what you see here. There will be greater things to come. Don't let this.

Get you caught up. Because what's about to happen. Will be greater. Christ responds by blessing. Nathaniel. He responds to let Nathaniel know that Christ's power has been fully on display.

[31 : 21] That there is still more that he must see. But then that his confession. That his confession of him. God being Christ being Lord.

And that he is the rabbi. And the lamb of God. That this is the son of God. The king of Israel. Means that he can step back and watch Christ go to work. He will see greater things.

Verse 50. B. And in verse 51. Christ responds to Nathaniel with a double confirmation. Truly, truly. Or amen. Amen. The promise.

That the promise that is to come. Rests on Christ. The Messiah. What are you skeptical about? Christ has come.

And he says he answers. Even your strongest skepticism. The vision that Christ is pointing to in verse 51. Again, points back to Jacob.

[32 : 18] And in his vision of the ladder. And in that vision. You would have gotten a sense. That there will come a savior. Who will save the world. That everything rests on the one that is promised.

And yet Christ points back to that. To say. I am he. I am the son of man. I am the one who angels will rest on. Now mind you. If Christ isn't the one.

We have a different relationship with these angels. They're enemies. They're coming to do away with us. We have a different relationship with God.

In other words. Christ is saying that. I am the one that stands in the gap. I am the bridge between heaven and earth. I am the one that gets you over the hump.

Whatever other euphemism you can come up with. I am he. I'm the one that will get you there. There's no competitors. There's no comp. You don't have to search any longer.

[33 : 19] And every question you have rests in my answers. I am the one revealed. And I am the one who they've talked about from the beginning. Jesus now speaks of a day when not even the grave will hold him.

Where not even lies can defeat him. Jesus is not only talking about getting folks over. He's talking about laying his life down as the one who will be the lamb that will be.

Shedding his blood for a sinful man. He he he's pointing them to the fact that he will defeat death with his own life.

That he will be the ultimate sacrifice. He he speaks even of an of an apocalyptic day when the trumpet will sound and the whole world will see that Christ truly is the king.

That every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus truly is Lord. And won't just be if there's a greater thing than Nathaniel will see. It won't just be y'all talking about me.

[34 : 24] The whole world's gonna have to talk about me. Either reluctantly or submissively. But they're gonna speak about the king. You want to see some great stuff here.

Consider what John is portraying here as I shut it down. He not only saves the cynic. But he loves the cynic in the text. And you see that because he's like no I saw you.

I see you. I see you. What what a. A sobering and awesome reminder that God. Sees you.

There was a day. When I felt that God wanted nothing to do with me. And if it wasn't for loving brothers and sisters and little help of John Owen.

I would have been over the edge. He sees you. But then not only that he sees the heart. For some of us. That might be scary. For others.

[35 : 28] It's a relief. That you're not carrying this stuff on your own. He sees the heart. He knows the heart. He wants to change the heart. Says I'll take out. Your heart of stone and put in a heart of flesh.

He sees that. And for the cynic. It's not just about answering your questions. But it's about. A different disposition in life. I remember one time I was at.

Iowa State University for an Odyssey of the Mind competition. Don't ask. And. We were doing like a science project. And I remember.

I was. In the dorms. And there were some students still there. And there were us. Who were high school students. And somebody tipped someone off. That I was a Christian. And they came.

Ready to fight. And I'm like. So. So. You. You like this Jesus. Right. And I'm like. I guess. Yeah. What's up. And I think we argued. Till about 2 a.m. Until I had no voice.

[36 : 30] I haven't been back to Iowa since. By the way. Jeff. So. Sorry. But I remember. I didn't. My last thing I said. And. I was. I was.

Heartbroken. Because they were so adamant. About. The stuff. Like. Talking. Snakes. That. And words. That I shouldn't use. And I just remember. I just summed it up.

And it had to be the Holy Spirit. And. God. Loves you. There's no way around that. I don't know how else to put it. And I.

You know. You get that voice. At the end of the night. Where you should just go to sleep. And I'm like. He loves you. If you're a cynic in here. Start there. And then.

If you're seeking today. Christ invites you to seek the Lord. While he may be found. To call upon him. While he is near. Isaiah 55. Seek the Lord with your whole heart.

[37 : 28] That for the cynic. And for the seeker. He sees you. He knows you. He invites you to experience. Who Jesus is. He says. Come. And see. Jesus is the one in control. He chooses his followers.

That's the crazy part of the text. It looks like they're doing stuff. But it's Christ. Christ is maneuvering. Despite them. He chooses his followers.

Christ's picture of his followers. Seeing heaven open. Is meant to encourage us. That he truly is the one. Who stands in the gap. He's the bridge. This Messiah is the one.

That Isaiah records. As the punishment. That brings upon. His people. Peace. Upon him. The Lord has laid. The iniquity. Of us all. That this Christ.

Is the person. Whom God is revealed. Through. The ultimate. Miraculous sign. That John points. Us to. Is with Christ. Points us to.

[38 : 25] Is that Christ. Will be glorified. And. He will fulfill. All this. On the cross. Whereby death. Is the means.

For his exaltation. That provides. For the followers. Of Christ. A way. To the promise. Of eternal life. This is what. The Lamb of God.

Invites us to. Today. I just love. The way. Paul says. That if you. Were buried. With him. You will. Rise with him.

You've been baptized. Into a death. Like his. Well certainly. You will resurrect. With him. Be encouraged. And we invite you. To come and see.

Let's pray. Lord. Thank you. Again. That while we were yet sinners. Christ died for the ungodly. While we were. Going astray.

[39 : 23] While we wanted. Nothing to do with you. You sought us out. And now we can come. And see you. Minus guilt. Minus shame. Lord.

I pray. That if we are. Cynical today. That you will. Answer our questions. Draw us to yourself. If we are seeking. Today. That we will find you.

In Christ's name. I invite you to stand. And sing with us. Please.