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Preacher: Joel Grigg

[0:00] Amen. Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds.

! Help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.! Purify us, Father, that your church may be pure. Amen. And, Father, we pray this. May only your word be spoken and only your word heard. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. And please be seated.

You know, when Pat sent out the bulletin, she made a note that you should take a look at the gradual song because it's so nice.

Hence the prayer, all right? It really is. It's something that we really need to focus and think on.

Because as we entered into church today, God have asked, what were you thinking?

[1:26] What were you thinking? Were you coming in with an expected heart? Or, okay, let me just come on in and sit and go this, and we're filling a box for the week.

You know, when Carolyn, my wife and I, when we lived in Montgomery, Alabama, you've got to say that right, you know, the church we attended, when you went into the sanctuary, it had written in red letters above the door as you entered these words, and it said, expect a miracle.

Expect a miracle. You know, so often today at the church, we don't expect a miracle. Oh, we pray for them a lot. We want them, don't we?

But do we really expect them? Do we look to God with a hope, knowing that He can do all things and renew our minds, and as that song mentioned, you know, purify us.

Teach us, Lord, so that we will know You. It's such a wonderful idea, and as we come and we gather together and we want to worship and we want to give God our all for today, we're called today, just as our Lord called His disciples, and we heard that in our Gospel reading.

[3:09] Think about that, just for a moment. The same God, the same Holy Spirit, who looked down, who had, the day before we heard our Gospel reading, had looked at Andrew and probably John, looked and said, they said, where are you staying?

And he said, come. Come and see. Come and see. And so then, and so what happened? Andrew got so excited, he went and he told his brother Simon, and Jesus looked at Simon and said, you're Peter.

Your name is Peter. And we know the wonderful stories of Peter and how ambitious he was and how he would stand up in his great proclamation of that Jesus was the Messiah and what a great leader he became in the church.

The same Lord who called them on that day called us and brought us all here today. the continuity there.

And he is with us. He is with us and we can take confidence knowing that in this Gospel reading, just as Jesus called Philip and we have Nathanael, we are in that same line as Andrew and John and Peter and Philip and Nathanael.

[4:49] As those fishermen from Bethsaida, we are in the same line. We can expect our Lord to operate in the same way because we always, we like to say, our Lord is the same yesterday and today and forever.

And if He's the same yesterday and today, yet when we read the Scriptures, do we expect Him to act in the same way? Do we expect to see the miracles in our lives today?

Sometimes it's a question I think we need to ponder just a little bit. And as we think about the discipleship that we live, this is a discipleship that is the same discipleship that our Lord called those original twelve disciples and apostles the same discipleship, the same power, the same ministry that we're called to just as they were.

What's the difference? They had better looking sandals probably, I'm sure. But you know, it's there.

We are in the same line. And we live for them. So let's take today, let's take a moment to look at this calling that Jesus gave to the disciples, particularly in Philip and Nathaniel.

[6:20] With this in mind, because this is our walk, this is where we're going. This is who we're following. And we have the same message that they have as well.

And as John wrote in his gospel here, on the next day, Jesus was going to Galilee. They said he had just gone in John's narrative.

He had been baptized. Andrew and other disciples who were disciples of John the Baptist. John the Baptist looked up and said, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

And those two left John and went to Jesus. And so the story starts. And so after this day, Jesus has just spent the day with those first few disciples, talking to them.

He said he's going up to Galilee. And he found Philip. He found Philip. He found Philip. And what did he say to him?

[7:26] Follow me. Follow me. They said, now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Follow me.

Notice, Jesus didn't go into some great theological explanation. He didn't go into anything deep. All he said was, follow me.

And in this command, we hear Jesus the same thing. He is the one who is giving the command.

And he says, follow me. He is also the subject of the command.

He is the one who witnesses. And he is the subject of that witness. That was his call to Philip. And that is his call that he gave us.

Follow me. To witness about him. That is what we're called to. We're called to enter into the same relationship and to follow him.

[8:31] Remembering that Jesus is the topic, the subject of our message. But also, he is in that relationship as well.

The same Holy Spirit that empowered Jesus, as we saw last week and we looked in the Gospel reading in the baptism, the same Holy Spirit that descended upon him is the same Holy Spirit that comes in and dwells in us and calls us and leads us and empowers us.

You know, we tend to forget quite often that when Jesus said, follow me, he didn't just say, okay, now go out and do whatever you want to do.

And we were talking just with the choir a little bit this morning about gifts that God has given us.

Sometimes, they sneak up on us. They sneak up on us and we don't recognize whoa, wait a minute, did I just do that?

Or we'll see something, God, you may get this nudge in your prayer life or something, God said, go talk to this person. Oh, I can't do that.

[9:45] No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. I'm not gifted for that, God. That's our excuse. We forget that he has gifted us.

That he's not going to call us to do anything that he's not going to equip us to do. If you think about, think about this for a moment, just for a moment, think about Moses.

Go back to Moses, okay? Moses is out in the desert, okay? He's out there with sheep. He's out with them, taking care of them.

Here's a man who was once walking in the halls of the palace of the most powerful nation on earth at that time, and what's his job? I watch sheep.

And so, what's he do? He's out there, and as we read in Exodus, he sees the burning bush, and what did Moses tell God?

[10:52] God said, Moses, you're going to go out and lead my children out of Egypt, and immediately Moses starts saying, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Uh-uh, no, I'm not going to do this. I can't do this. I'm not a good public speaker.

I just can't do this. So what did God do? He says, Moses, he says, what's in your hand? A staff.

It's like, this is not a trick question. All right? A staff. God said, throw it on the ground. And the scripture says, he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it.

Probably not what he figured would happen when he put this piece of wood. But the Lord said to Moses, put out your hand and catch it by the tail. And so he put out his hand and he caught it in the staff.

And it became a staff in his hand. And they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and the God of Jacob has appeared to you.

[12:00] And you know, even then, he said, they're not going to believe me, Lord. What am I going to do? What am I going to do? So what does they say? He said, and the Lord said to Moses, when you go back to Egypt, see that you go before Pharaoh and do all the miracles I have put in your power.

Do all the miracles that I have put in your power. And don't think, there was no, you know, divine power school in Egypt, you know, that Moses attended or anything like this.

God called Moses and was telling him, I'm equipping with you not just to be able to talk well, but to be able to do divine power.

Because the task that you are up against is not a task that any single human can do. It is a divine task. This is God versus the spirit of darkness.

And Moses was the one who was God's mouthpiece. And he equipped him for that. And now here in John, we read where God, Jesus looked at Philip and he said, follow me.

[13:28] Just follow me. Follow me. Follow me. That's all we have to do. That's what he called. And when we fall in line, when like Philip and Andrew and John and Peter and eventually Nathaniel, we hear it, we join that same line.

And when we say, when we accept that call by God that says, follow me, God empowers us with those gifts that we need to follow him. It's not just a head thing.

It's a heart thing. And it's an active thing. And that's what he's calling us to. God's calling is not just an idea.

It's an act. It's an act of power. It's an act of defined, defined message that he has given us.

And so what happened in this? Philip, he's excited now. This is called the gift of excitement. Okay?

You know, we get that sometimes, you know, you gotta say, yay!

[14:39] You know, we can get this all in now and then, you know, he has the gift of excitement. By the way, I don't think you're gonna find that listed by Paul anywhere. That's mine, okay?

So, what did he say? He said, Philip went and found Nathanael and said to him, we found him of whom Moses and the law and the prophets wrote.

Jesus of Nazareth, the son of God, son of Joseph. He said, we found him. This is him. This is the one. He was excited about this.

Now, I don't know, have you ever gone and talked to a friend sometime with some of the greatest news that you've ever heard? And what's your friend say? Yeah, so, how do you feel?

I mean, that's like the biggest downer. That's kind of, kind of what happens here when you, you know, here, Philip goes and he finds Nathanael and he said, we have found the one that the scriptures talked about that we have been waiting for.

[15:44] And what's Nathanael say? Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

Now, in our early 21st century sensibilities, we kind of really get down on Nathanael for saying something like that. But you really can't blame him.

I mean, obviously, they had some, some acceptance. They knew what the scriptures said. And here, in here, Philip, you went to him and he said, hey, we found the one that Moses and the prophets, the one who talked about, that gives him a reference.

He knows. He's talking about this is the Messiah. This is the anointed one. And many of the patristics point to this.

And they say, these first disciples, they knew, they knew what God had done. They knew the story. They knew who the Messiah was supposed to be.

[16:52] So you really can't blame Nathanael for asking this question. Can anything good come out of Canaan? Canaan? Because it's talking about Canaan, but coming out of Nazareth.

Why? Because Nazareth really wasn't a very popular place. It really wasn't. And it was Theodore of Mopsusia.

He was a bishop in the late 4th century, early 5th century. And he wrote that among the Jews, the name of that village was much despised because a great number of inhabitants were pagans and seemed impossible that anything good might come from them.

It'd be kind of like, you know, you're sitting here in Syracuse and somebody says, hey, guess what? We found this out.

And they said, can anything good come out of Baldwinville? You know, we pick on that.

[18:02] We look at the size of the place and we said, yeah, there's nothing good happening out there. Plus, when we look at it, I mean, if they knew the scriptures, Nathaniel would have known, hey, wait a minute, how can the Messiah, how can you say that this guy from Nazareth is the one that Moses and the prophets talked about?

I've read Micah. He comes from Bethlehem. The Messiah, the one who is to be king, comes from Bethlehem.

Not from Nazareth. Can anything good come out of Nazareth? But what did Philip say?

I mean, this is where we today get things wrong. We have good news for a friend and we tell them, hey, I want to tell you about Jesus, we're going to tell him about that. You hear one complaint and what do we immediately start want to do?

We start talking about, no, you're wrong. And we start going through this list and telling him, oh, that's a really wonderful way to get along with somebody. Yeah, I know what's right, you're wrong.

[19:14] But you know, what does Philip do? He just looks at him and says, come and see.

Come and see. What did Jesus tell Philip before? Follow me. It's the same command.

It's the same command. come and see. Come and see. That's what we're called to do. Just come and see and look and see what God is doing.

He didn't go along with him and say, well, you're right, Nazareth, there's nobody who lives in Nazareth, don't worry about it, or something like this. He just said, no, Nathaniel, please, just come and see.

It tells a little bit about their hearts, wasn't it? They knew they were on to something. They knew they were asked by somebody special. And so Philip simply says, come and see.

[20:32] Come and see. for the next time when you're excited, you're telling of your experience, your witness for Jesus.

Somebody can come and say, well, that's not right. All you have to do is say, come and see. Come and see. That's why, by the way, the word for witness, we get martyr.

means just that. A witness. A witness describes what they know. A witness doesn't, or at least they shouldn't sit in a trial and make things up.

No, they're asked to testify about their experience or what they know. We are called to witness. Our calling is the same when Jesus tells us, follow me. Our response should be, come and see. Come and see.

[21:42] Take that expectation and share the gospel. And so what happens then, Nathaniel, they're going on, and it says that Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward him, and he said of him, behold, an Israelite indeed in whom there is no deceit.

Kind of a strange kind of introduction, don't you think? Suddenly here, somebody said, here's somebody who has no deceit. Now, that word deceit, *dalos*, in the Greek, it doesn't mean somebody who never lies.

deceitful, it means that they have, they are going to, they are faithful. A deceitful person will kind of, they'll hedge a little bit.

Well, I know I really didn't say that, but they'll do this or that and so on. In fact, we see just the opposite of what Jesus is talking about, or what it means to be deceitful, as opposed to what it means to be a lack of deceit.

A little bit later on in John, in his gospel. See, he says, Nathanael was one who had a spirit of faith. Nathanael was one who had a spirit of faith, and Jesus looked and said, here is one in whom there is no deceit.

[23:13] To put it another way, he has that spirit of faith. And as we continue reading, in this gospel account, we can compare, we can compare Nathanael, that faith, the way in his seeking, and he saw Jesus.

He was sincerely seeking Jesus, not out of what he thinks the Messiah should be, but what God had said in his word, who the Messiah should be. Later on, we read in chapter seven of John, where Jesus went into Jerusalem for the feast of booths.

And it says, on that last great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, if anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. And whoever believes in me, as the scripture says, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

And now he said this about the spirit, whom those who believe in him were to receive. Jesus inviting the people, believe in me, because I am the source of light in life.

Now, what was the Pharisees response to this? What did they say? You're witnessing about yourself, therefore it's a lie, it's not true.

[24 : 35] And Jesus said, no, I, my witness is true because my father who sent me also witnesses for me as well.

And they just can't get it. Later on, they're all upset because people are listening in Nehemiah, excuse me, not Nehemiah, that says, listen, we need to judge a man by our law, having two witnesses.

do we condemn him only because he has one witness? And they say to him, no, wait a minute, no, no, no, no. Look in the scriptures itself, does it say that the Messiah comes from Galilee?

No prophet arises from Galilee. You see, the Pharisees and religious leaders were looking with their own blinders on, with their own ideals of who the Messiah should be.

Philip was looking for, I'm sorry, Nathaniel was looking for the Messiah with a spirit of expectation and hope according to what God has said, not according to what he thought God had said.

[25 : 58] Today, as we enter, we have certain expectations and we want to worship our Lord, we want to come into him, but there are expectations that quite often we think, well, if God doesn't meet our expectations, our walk isn't worth it, but it is those expectations, those faithful expectations that Nathaniel had in that same walk that we walk behind him.

Many of today's church leaders think they're preaching the gospel, but unfortunately they're preaching a gospel that they think is God, but not a gospel based on his word.

Based on his word. Jesus looked at Nathaniel and quite explicitly told us the difference between those who look faithfully are different because those who are different like the Pharisees as Jesus went on and he said, their father is the devil.

And so what do we have now? So he said, Nathaniel said to him, how do you know me? And Jesus said, before Philip called you when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.

And he says, Rabbi, you are the son of God, you are the king of Israel. Now many of us reading, just because somebody said, hey, I saw you under the fig tree and you think they're the Messiah.

[27 : 38] Does that make any sense? That term is kind of a euphemism of the day. It's that somebody who studied the scriptures was somebody who would sit under the fig tree.

But to Nathaniel, when Jesus said that, it revealed to him that Jesus was one who saw the heart, not just the outward experience. And he was about to experience the blessing of that.

Because he said, Rabbi, you are the son of God, you are the king of Israel. For Peter, it took a long time in the gospel to be able to have him to be able to respond like that.

When Jesus asked the question, who do people say I am? It took a long time for him that. But right away, Nathaniel knew it. I know this person is the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel, simply because he knew that he could read his heart.

And Jesus said to him, truly I say to you, you will see heaven and earth open, the angels of God descending on the Son of Man. Such a wonderful image that we have.

[28 : 54] Here we have Jesus, the perfect, the true Israel. referring back to the original Israel.

In Genesis, when Jacob was fleeing from his father and his brother because he had just tricked his brother out of his blessing.

And so he was running to his uncle Laban. We talked about deceit. What did Jacob do? He had deceived his father to gain a blessing.

And so on the way, he had a dream. He said, behold, there was a ladder set upon the earth and the top of it reached up into heaven. Behold, the angel of God were descending and ascending on it.

And behold, the Lord stood above and said, I am the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, I will give to you and your offspring.

[29 : 58] And the rest of that passage is where God gives that same covenant to Jacob. The one who had just deceived his way into such a blessing was now seeing heaven open.

Seeing heaven and the ladder, angels descending and coming down. But, in this case, notice there is no ladder.

Jesus has replaced the ladder. We noted when we read of Jesus' baptism, the sky is opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him.

Now the true Israel, Jesus himself, is replacing that original Israel, the one who had deceived, who saw angels, descending and ascending, has promised to his church, to his people, those who are faithful, that the power of God will be ascending and descending upon them and they will live in that

power.

Just as all his people throughout the centuries. God has promised to each one of us.

[31:26] When he calls us, follow me. Nothing great, all we have to do is say, come and see. But he has equipped each one of us in very wonderful and special ways through a calling, through the confirmation salvation and through this glory that he is showing his disciples.

The angels descending and ascending because the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit is on Jesus. So we as his followers today can have expectant hearts.

We can look to him and say, Father, equip me for that which you are doing. He has wonderful things in mind for us that we do not know of. And would probably shudder if we thought about some of the things that he was about to call us to.

But he is calling us and he is equipping us to spread his gospel. Because he is the subject of the gospel and the object.

He is the empowerer of that same message. As we came in today, we can come in with expectant hearts knowing that he is our Lord and we are here to give of ourselves freely.

[32:53] We have in the power of the Holy Spirit to cast aside all those troubles, all those anxieties, all those questions. And just for a few moments, focus on the one who has given us that promise.

who has given us that calling, who has equipped us to be his people, who is training us each and every moment, each and every day to follow him, to follow him.

And when it comes down to it, when he calls us, follow me, what should our response be? come and see. Come and see.

We don't need to come up with some deceitful ideal. We don't need to come up with a story.

Just come and see. Follow Jesus. Follow Jesus. And we, God has promised there.

[34:04] Because we are in that same line. We will see angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. It's a promise.

A promise by the One. A promise by the true Israel. It's a promise of the One who called Andrew and John and Peter and Philip and Nathaniel and calls each and every one of us.

Each and every one of us. So when we enter, enter with expectations. Expect a miracle.

Expect God to show up. Expect Him. and then allow Him to work those miracles and to proclaim His kingdom in a world that needs desperately to hear the good news.

To hear those words, follow me. And our response can be simply, come and see.

[35:21] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Hope. 10- Ex- The end. being a you. so