

Calling and Glory

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 January 2026

Preacher: John Howard

[0:00] All right. Oh, that's good and loud. No one's going to go to sleep today. Well, maybe you will. You never know.! I haven't heard anything yet.

We're going to continue our study in John today. We're starting in the end of chapter 1. This is the second one Glenn did last week. Got us started. You want to turn in your Bibles to John 1.

We're going to start in verse 43. In my passage, which goes down into chapter 2, about 13, there are actually two stories.

And they're not apparently connected. I mean, you got this and then you got this. And I'm going, okay, Lord, I don't know what to do with this. One of them is calling a few more of the disciples and the other is the wedding at Cana.

They're both interesting. Now, I could teach you on both of them, but we'd be here for a while. So, keeping time in mind, I'm going to not go deeply into both these stories.

[1:06] I'm going to try to do justice, but with one and attempt to connect it to the other. And may God have mercy on us. All right. So let's read John 1.

We're going to read 43 through 51. That's the last part of chapter 1. On the next day, Jesus wanted to set out for Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, Follow me.

Now, Philip was from Bethsaida, the town of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and told him, We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law and the prophets also wrote about, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathanael replied, Can anything good come from Nazareth? And Philip replied, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and exclaimed, Look, a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit.

Nathanael asked him, How do you know me? And Jesus replied, Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, you are the son of God.

[2:15] You are the king of Israel. And Jesus said to him, Because I told you I saw you under a fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than this. He continued, I tell all of you the solemn truth.

You will see the heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. Now earlier in chapter 1, two of John the Baptist's disciples saw Jesus and they heard him say of Jesus, Look, the Lamb of God.

And they went up and approached Jesus and he asked them, Well, what do you want? And here are these two guys walk up to him. I had this picture of him just sort of looking at him like, Okay, this is the Lamb of God.

And they're just not sure what to do with him or toward him. So he asked them, Well, what do you want? I think they're a little taken aback by that. And they say, Well, where are you staying?

And others, Where are you going? What's going to happen? Where are you going to be? We'd like to sort of see more of this, understand what this means. What is the Lamb of God? What is this all about? And he says, Come and you will see.

[3 : 32] And others, Follow me. Come on. Let's go. Now, one of them was Andrew, and he went and found Peter and brought him to Jesus. And then in our passage, we have Philip, who's in the same town.

They're all in the site at this time. Same town that Andrew and Peter were from. And Jesus had called him to follow him. And Philip goes and finds Nathaniel.

Now, I don't know their relationship, but they obviously were friends or close because Philip felt important to go find his friend and tell him, I found the Messiah. Basically, that's what he's telling them.

When he says he found the one that the prophets spoke of and that Moses spoke of because Moses said that there will be one greater than he would come. And the prophets spoke. I was thinking particularly of Daniel.

Daniel talks to the Son of Man. The end times, you know, this Messiah is coming. And he says, he wants Nathaniel to know that.

[4 : 31] Now, I think you get a little picture here as you go through this. Think of this. Nathaniel apparently is a very thoughtful person who's studying the Scriptures.

And how do I know that? Well, when Jesus says to him, look, a true Israelite in whom there's no deceit. Nathaniel is surprised and asks him how he knows that.

And he says, before Philip called you, you were under a fig tree. I saw you. Now, here's the gist of that. Rabbis would often go and sit under fig trees.

Why? It's shadow. It's shady. And it's a good place to get at a pretty good size. And so, they would gather their students under the fig trees and they would study Scriptures.

So, what he's telling Nathaniel is, I saw you studying Scriptures under the fig tree. Now, did he actually see him? Well, not face to face, but he knew that's what he was doing.

[5 : 32] You know, he had that knowledge. And when he told Philip that, or told Nathaniel that, Nathaniel's going, what? How could he do that? How could he do that?

Unless, Philip's right. This is the prophet that Moses spoke about. This is the one that's coming that the prophet spoke about.

And he says, Rabbi, which means what? Teacher. You are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel. Now, this term, Son of God, goes back to Daniel.

And this Son of God is the one that's to come. The eschatological, end time Messiah. It's coming. And Jesus says, you're going to see even greater things than this.

You think this is important. You think this isn't a big deal. Wait. Wait. What did he tell me he's going to see? He says, Jesus says this.

[6 : 38] Listen here. Because I told you I saw you under a fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than this. I tell you all the solemn truth.

You will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. What's that an allusion to? Jacob.

Jacob had a dream. We talked about it in Sunday school this morning. Jacob had a dream. The angels coming up and down on the stairway from heaven to the earth. It's possible.

It's speculation. But it's possible the very Scriptures that Nathaniel was studying was Jacob in that dream. And Jesus is making another connection.

You think that me seeing you under a fig tree is a big deal. I know what you were studying. And you're going to see things that are greater than me knowing what you were doing.

[7 : 36] You're going to see the heavens open. You're going to see the glory of God. Have you ever wondered why that was such a powerful proof in Nathaniel that Jesus was the Son of God?

I mean, that's pretty amazing, but have you ever thought about it? I think we read John sometimes and we just sort of hit these things and we go, oh, okay. That's nice.

I don't know what it means, but I'll just keep going. Right? See, I think he was telling Nathaniel that he saw I was studying the Scriptures and that he was...

that this all... that I am the Messiah. that this is what you think you hope you're curious to know is probably true.

Is it? In fact, it's true. You're going to see it. I'm going to prove it to you. Now, Nathaniel was a godly man. He was studying Scripture. He was doing...

[8 : 41] you know, he's searching the Scriptures to understand. He was a true Israelite. Well, what's that have to do with us? It's a nice story.

Well, think about it. Weren't you two called to follow Jesus? Each and every one of you heard somehow, some way, in some particular way, at some particular time, you heard or felt you heard Christ calling you to follow Him.

It happens differently. Now, I know it happened to me. I foolishly volunteered to go with a friend of mine on a religious retreat. And I was prepared because I'd read Genesis 1.

I was going to argue with those guys. they were all so religious that they were wrong and I knew better. Until I ran into an Irish evangelist who set me straight.

And the prayers of my friend that took me that I might actually come face to face with the Christ that saves. So I know when that happened. I can't tell you the exact date.

[10 : 00] It was in November. I was about 23 years old. But you think about it. Where did Jesus call you? He calls everybody by the way.

That's whosoever. He calls them all but not all respond. Some turn away. You mentioned the one lady she decided to go that way. That may be a temporary detour in her case.

But you have a choice and you made the choice to follow Jesus. Just like Peter and Peter and Nathaniel and Philip. Some of us searched the Scriptures.

I mean, some of us were raised in church and so you were taught the Scriptures and you saw someone explained it to you that here's Jesus. And you go, I want to follow Him. I want to know Him.

I want to see Him. Some of you might have had a friend that opened up the Word or did something that you just sort of had this wow.

[11 : 08] Wow. There He is. He knows all about me. He knows who I am and what I've done and still He loves me. But once you're called, that's not the end of it.

That's just the beginning. He says, come and follow me. Come and see. You know, that's an invitation. What are you going to do with that invitation?

You're going to follow Him. What are you going to do? You're going to learn of Him and you're going to see Him working and you're going to have times where He's going to teach you. And you say, how does Jesus do that?

How many of you have seen things in your life that you know that only God could do? There He is. He says, come and see.

I'm going to show you things that the equivalent of the heavens open up. Things that you just say, wow, how could that be? I remember sitting in an emergency room not long ago.

[12:17] And the doctor comes in and says, I've got good news and bad news for you. And I go, what's the good news? What's the bad news? You broke your neck. Okay. What does that mean? He says, that's the good news.

70% of the people who do what you did don't walk again or are dead. And I'm going, oh, wow. And Janet said, God's not done with you, John. I said, well, I have a feeling there's about 40 people that wish He were.

He said, I said, God's not done with you. I said, God's not done with you. See, those are times you wake up and you go, wow, God is involved. He's doing things that are amazing in my life.

Things that are beyond reasonable explanation. Why did that happen? He also wants you to learn of Him.

He wants you to see how He works and what He's all about. He wants you to see Him in each other. You know, that's why Jonathan gave me a book for my son.

[13:19] He gave me a book for Christmas and it's about the reason for the church. And right now he's talking about, you know that the church, and I've known this, almost all the you's in the Bible and especially in the New Testament Paul's letters that talks about you do this and you do that and you should do that and all plural.

You know what he's talking about? Community. The early church believed you couldn't be saved outside of the church. In other words, outside of the community of believers. Why? Because how in the world are you going to see all of Christ if you don't have brothers and sisters that you're intimately involved in it?

Because each of us shows a part of him. Each of us are the hands and the feet of him working in the lives of each other. You know, that's the way it's supposed to be.

That's why that community that these ladies want is so important because that's where you find the love of Christ. That's where you find the strength and the endurance and the perseverance that you need to succeed as a Christian to overcome temptation.

We're learning that in, we went to the seminar conference where we're learning how to disciple and care for people. We went eight hours at one and we've got to go back. But it's basically the same thing.

[14:38] You're showing people that they are not alone, that they need to be surrounded by brothers and sisters in Christ who love them no matter what.

how does Jesus love you? Warts and all, right? No matter what, you love them. And you love them deeply and you're willing to sacrifice for their well-being.

I think that's part of what we get out of this. Now we're going to turn to Canaan. Canaan was a little town not about eight miles away from Bethsaida.

I'm not going to read the whole thing. I think most of you are familiar with it. Jesus' mother, Mary, comes to Him and they're at a wedding and it's a good possibility this is a relative of the family because Jesus and Mary and the disciples were invited.

It's a big deal. Marriage then lasted, the ceremony or celebration lasted a week. You know, so it's a big deal. The whole community was involved in this.

[15:42] it was also an obligation, a social obligation of the groom to provide, the groom and his family, to provide refreshments, food and drink for this entire week.

In fact, there are even indications that there was a legal requirement that if you failed to do that, you could be in legal trouble. So here we have a wedding going on and Mary notices they're about to run out of wine.

Big trouble. If not legal trouble, at least reputation and social trouble. And so she goes to Jesus and says, you need to do something about this.

And He turns to her and says, woman, and that's not a critical name by the way in this case, it's sort of like saying mother, but it's a little more formal.

what business is that of us? Why should we be concerned about this? And she just turns to the servant, whatever He says to do. Now she knows that He's, this is the point where Jesus is now no longer going to just be her son, He's going to start His public ministry and this is, His response sort of says that.

[17:02] Okay mom, I'm stepping aside, woman, now, here I am, the son of man about to do my father's work.

And she knows He can do it, that He has some way to solve this problem. Alright, how does He do it? Well, there are six big jars, now these are big stone jars and they're used to hold water that they would use for ceremonial washing.

Jews were required to wash their hands for meals and did different ceremonies and whatnot, they needed these things. So He tells the servants to go fill these things up.

Now this is about 120 gallons of water. I don't know where they got the water from, but that's a lot of hauling. You know, a bucket maybe hold a gallon or two. And they've got to have 120 gallons of this stuff.

But they fill up these pots and He tells the servant to draw some and take it to the head steward, the guy that's in charge of the arrangements.

[18:10] Not the host and not the groom, but the person that, sort of like we would call him a wedding planner, I guess, right? The guy that's in charge to make sure all this fits and everything's in the right place at the right time.

The head steward takes this and says, ooh, and he goes to the groom and says, everyone serves the good wine first. That makes sense, right? And then the cheaper wine when the people are drunk.

They don't know any better, they don't care, right? You've kept the good wine until now. So Jesus, somehow, it turns water into wine.

Now, there are only seven miracles recorded in John's Gospel. And he says he recorded those seven miracles so that you would believe. Now, if you look at the other six miracles, they're biggies.

Raising the dead, healing the sick, calming the storm. I mean, it shows Jesus' power over all of creation and even the demons. I mean, everything. And here, we've got the first miracle he records and it's water into wine.

[19:21] Now, I know in a lot of churches, they go, ooh, he didn't really make that wine. We can't have that. That can't happen. Why would he do that? No, he wouldn't do that.

You know, and they sort of like to skip over this story. Why? Because it's socially unacceptable to them. Especially if he made good wine. I think that he did this intentionally.

It's not, to us, it's not, I mean, it's hard to raise the person from the dead or turn water into wine. Well, they're actually both pretty difficult for us. I can't do either.

But for him, it wasn't an issue. It just happened. He did it. I think he did this partly, because this is, in my sense, this is a low-level miracle as opposed to a hot meal.

he did it because his disciples were new. He had Nathaniel saying, you're the Son of God. You had the others saying, what are you doing?

[20:28] Who are you? Why are you the Lamb of God? What's this all about? And he's saying, come follow. And he says, look, I'm going to show you who I am. I'm going to show you who I am.

It's also a very practical miracle. He didn't just do that and walk away. He saved a groom and his family from social disgrace.

He also allowed that ceremony of a wedding, a marriage, to continue joyously. What does that tell you about marriage?

He thinks it's pretty important. What do you think he says about just celebrating with one another in community? He thinks that's pretty important. John wrote after it describing this.

He says, Jesus did this as the first of his miraculous signs in Cana of Galilee. In this way he revealed his glory and his disciples believed him.

[21 : 35] They looked at that and said, no man, normal man can do this. And that reinforced their belief that this must be the Messiah and revealed his glory.

Now, I don't know about you, we use that word a lot, but I don't think any of us really know what it means. Anyone want to suggest something?

What is glory? glory? I mean, if you had to define it, how would you define it? It is one of those things you might know when you see it, but how would you define it so you know what to look for?

God's essence. God's essence, that's a possibility. His majesty. Anybody else?

I'm going to give you my bad definition here. Glory means he revealed his power, his specialness, uniqueness, his worthiness, his honor, his majesty.

[22 : 46] This is a person that has something that we as normal human beings don't have. God is glorious. He's other than us. He's magnificent.

He's powerful. He's all encompassing. He's all consuming. He's all in all. He's bigger than us. You know, a king has glory.

Why? Because he sits up above us and he has power and authority and people honor him. That's his glory. So Jesus revealed his glory.

He was not just, in a sense, an ordinary human being. He was able to change things. In this case, he changed water into wine.

Concerning the disciples, he was changing them for fishermen and tax collectors into apostles, declaring the kingdom of God as in the Messiah.

[23 : 44] As it goes on through the gospel, he's going to change death into life, sickness into health, blindness into sight, darkness into light, despair into hope, sinners into righteous saints.

That's what we're in the business of doing, by the way, people, as Jesus' representatives, as his people. We are doing these same things. We take despair and we show hope.

we take these things that people suffer and we say, those aren't what define you here. Look at this. In Christ you're this. Old people, old nature, dying, corrupted men into new creatures in Christ.

Christ. Even this world, this old world that we have destroyed and polluted and damaged, he's going to turn it into the new earth restored to its fullness.

And one day, we're going to join him for the wedding feast of the Lamb. Amen. here's a parallel. He's at a wedding and they're celebrating. We're going to be at a wedding, the wedding feast of the Lamb.

[25 : 04] I can't wait. I wonder what it's going to be like. I mean, I really wonder. Very long table. I think a very long table. And it won't be just six stone jars there either.

at that wedding, we're going to celebrate the victory of our God and our Savior over everything evil and sinful and rebellious in creation.

He's going to renew it and renew us. He's going to make us what we were supposed to be, what we were intended to be when we were created. And the wine there, I'm just going to go out and lay in.

I'm going to say in the wine there is going to be better than even at Cana. Jesus cares about us. Each and every one of us deeply and passionately. So much so that He died for us to set us free from sin and death.

And gave us an eternity with God. Think about that. An eternity with the glory of God surrounding us every day.

[26:10] So I think this wedding at Cana foreshadows the wedding feast of the Lamb. and there are times when we see Jesus, we know Him so well that we declare in our own lives and in our own minds, indeed, You are the Son of God.

Indeed, You are God in the flesh. Come to save and rescue us. And we see His glory. glory of the one and only Son. Now, I just finished a book on remembrance and it says you should remember what God has done in your life.

You should remember that. Why? Why? Because when you remember, then you're led to worship. How could you not worship me?

You said, God, you spared my life in that accident. I don't understand why you did that, but you did. And I thank you.

[27:16] Thanksgiving is a form of worship. And I praise you. I don't understand why, but I trust you. This is worship. worship. So we need to remember Him.

And remember what He's done in our lives. And what He's done in His Word, for that matter. And worship Him. Why? Because He's worthy. Let's pray.

Amen.