

## Sermon for January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Second Sunday of Epiphany

### John 1:43-51

BLESSINGS TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD THE FATHER, OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

On **Wednesday** afternoon when the carpet was being installed in my office the men were **also** fixing the seam in the main aisle here in the sanctuary. The **doors** were open, the **office** door was unlocked. As I walked out of Toni's office I **heard** someone come in the front door. I turned to look to see **who** it was; it was **not** someone I recognized **or** one of the carpet men.

I **walked** toward the man and **asked** him if I could help him. Possibly he was here to get a food card??? He proceeded to tell me that he would like to see the sanctuary as he had **passed by** our church many times and he thought he would take the chance that someone was in the office to let him take a look around. At **first** I was sort of taken aback, but **then** he told me that last year he had seen the model of our church that Harvey Clark takes over to Walmart each year. The man told me about the information he had received about **Martin Luther**, how he had become curious about us, and so he thought he would 'come and see' our church.

We ended up having a rather long conversation about Lutheranism and Christianity. His name was **Sammy Qunitero**. He told me about his Mexican family roots, about how his **family** was Catholic, about his faith, and how he now

attended an Assembly of God church in Moreno Valley. It was a **very interesting spirit-filled** meeting. It **all** happened because of Harvey's evangelism outreach to the community. **Also**, because this man was curious he wanted to 'come and see' just what **our** church was like and **who** we are as a faith community. He said that he and his wife would like to come and worship with us sometime. That would be nice I said and told him they would be welcome anytime.

I do not know what Harvey said to the man when he came up to the church model at Walmart but whatever he told him it was enough that Sammy wanted to 'come and see' and know more about our church. Isn't that what happened in our gospel reading for this morning—an evangelistic invitation was made and someone followed that invitation.

A few verses **back** in chapter 1 of John's gospel Andrew and Simon Peter had just become Jesus' **first two** disciples as they were **also** encouraged to 'come and see'. Now today we read that Jesus had decided to move on to Galilee. In this decision it does not seem as though Jesus was driven, led, or had to leave where he was. There is **some comfort** in the fact that even Jesus, even though he was **totally** filled with the Holy Spirit and **completely** in sync with God's will, sorted out his options and made decisions on where to go. Along the way Jesus found Phillip and said to him 'follow me'. Phillip did so without question. Possibly

being from the same town as **Andrew and Peter** Phillip may have already heard something about Jesus. It seems as though Phillip was **eager** to follow.

But here is where the **real test** of discipleship comes in—with the one who **questions the call to follow**, and **wonders** just who Jesus is anyway. Nathanael hears Phillip's exciting news, "*We (not sure who we are—I suppose Andrew and Peter) have found Him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus, son of Joseph of Nazareth.*" Nathanael was **not** so impressed. *Can anything good come from a little backwater town like Nazareth?* He wanted to know. A town of about 200-400 people, a pretty much **nothing** town. From Nathanael's point of view Jesus could be no more than a simple Jew from an insignificant village. The Messiah would **most certainly** come from **more prominent parents** and from a **more significant place** than Nazareth—or so he thought.

Nathanael's poo-pooing did not discourage Phillip. Phillip doesn't take the time to give Nathanael all sorts of theological talk—he makes the best possible invitation for evangelism both then and now, **'Come and see for yourself.'**

When Jesus **sees** Nathanael coming toward him Nathanael gets one of the highest accolades a Jew could get, Jesus says, "*Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.*" Here is a man who is **honest**, who is **sincere**, and who is **trustworthy**. The fact that Jesus, who has never met Nathanael, knows of his

integrity suggests that Jesus can read right into people's **hearts**. This is one of those **remarkable** cases where God takes a person who is praiseworthy in every way and make of him something even more—God makes him a **disciple**.

**Next** is the question that may have been said by every disciple—where did you come to know me? How **is it** that God knows our hearts? How **is it** that Jesus knows about us **even before** we know Him?

Although Nathanael at first maintained that Jesus **could not be** the Messiah because of **who** he was and **where** he was from; this encounter had **changed** his mind. The fact that Jesus knew who he was before they even met Nathanael was **convinced** that he was in the presence of one who was divine, no mere human. In the **further** opening of Nathanael's eyes he addresses Jesus as “‘Rabbi—teacher’, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel.” Jesus goes on to **promise** that Nathanael will see even greater things—just you wait—you will see the **heavens opened, angels of God** will be ascending and descending. Just you wait—you will see.

There has been an awakening on the part of Nathanael all because of Phillip's offer to 'come and see'. Such simple, open, and inviting words. Words which **Sammy** heard when he talked with Harvey that day a year ago at Walmart, words that were said by Zack Anderson last week when he was talking about the Sunday School and **encouraging us** through the words of the gospel of Mark to

bring the **children** of family, friends, or neighbors to church to 'come and see' what **God** is doing here at Eden.

'Come and see' these words are a fitting response to having witnessed the grace and mercy of God which has taken **shape** among us. These are the words we are invited to say to others who are seeking **something more** out of life. 'Come and see' because this Good News that we have to offer about God is hard NOT to share, especially with people we care about. If we are timid about it, which I know many of us are, we can start **small**; it can be as simple as sharing what God is up to in our lives, what God is up to in our church, or what we like about our church. Maybe over time when we find someone who is looking for a **faith** home we can say 'come and see' what a great church we have here at Eden.

As disciples of Jesus, like Phillip, we **too** can share those things which matters to us in our lives by saying, 'come and see'. And let **God** take care of the rest. **AMEN.**