

Daily Discipleship

Second Sunday after Epiphany (B) – John 1:43-51

An Attitude of Discipleship: *Inviting*

Focus Question: *How do you personally invite and encourage others to follow Christ?*

word of life

“[Jesus] found Philip and said to him ‘Follow me.’” John 1:43 (NRSV)

Read John 1:43-51

It is clear from this passage Jesus is not going to wait for people to find him and discover his message. In this situation, Jesus decides to go to Galilee and find Philip. It is unknown if Jesus already knew Philip. Perhaps, Jesus went looking for him on the recommendation of Andrew and Peter. They were all from the same home town. It is possible there was no previous connection. The key aspect of the story is one of invitation.

When Jesus finds Philip, he simply invites him by saying, “Follow me.” (John 1:43 NSRV) There is no mandate. There is no theological discourse. It is a simple invitation: “Follow me.”

1. *What can you say about Jesus from this one verse, John 1:43?*

If Philip responded verbally to Jesus’ invitation to follow him, it is not recorded in the Gospel. Yet, it must have been a resounding “yes,” because Philip leaves Jesus to find another seeker, Nathanael. Jesus’ actions have sparked a chain reaction. Jesus invites Philip only to have Philip invite Nathanael. Today, this might be called *relational evangelism*. The good news of Jesus is shared from one person to another.

2. *What might have motivated Philip to leave Jesus to seek out Nathanael?*

3. *What does Philip tell Nathanael about Jesus?*

Philip and Nathanael are educated men who are well-versed in the law and prophets. Both know of the promise of the Messiah; both anticipate one sent by God. Yet, Nathanael is doubtful when Philip announces he has found the one whom they have been seeking. Nathanael points out the obvious. What good ever came from Nazareth, a town not known for much of anything?

Philip’s invitation to Nathanael is a simple one: “Come and see.” (John 1:46 NRSV) No need to debate it. Come and see. Yet before Nathanael can respond, Jesus finds him. Jesus knows him, but how? Nathanael is baffled. Jesus answers, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.” (John 1:48 NRSV)

Jesus’ answer can easily baffle us. Was the fig tree isolated, making it impossible for anyone to know he was there? Some believe the fig tree is symbolic for studying the scriptures. Perhaps Nathanael had studied the scriptures in secret with Philip. (Some scholars surmise Nathanael is actually either Bartholomew or Matthew.) Nevertheless, something clicked for Nathanael. He was convinced and proclaimed Jesus as Rabbi, Son of God and King of Israel.

4. *How would you describe Nathanael?*

Jesus promises Nathanael will see far greater things. Again, it is not clear what all Jesus is describing. Perhaps, this is a reference to the resurrection or the end of time. As the rabbi, Jesus reminds Nathanael his learning is not over, but extends an invitation to continue to learn and grow.

5. *What do you think is the main point of the Philip and Nathanael story?*

word among us

Aaron came running into the kitchen, “Mom, come and see!” Aaron’s mother immediately dropped what she was doing to witness Joey’s latest discovery in his backyard safari.

Monique rushed back on the trail to her waiting father, “Dad, the waterfall is amazing. Come and see!” Her dad breathed deeply and chuckled, “Give me a minute. Let me catch my breath. I’m not as young as I used to be.” Monique sat beside her father and waited patiently. Finally, he took her by the hand and nodded. She danced with joy and shouted, “Yes! Come and see!”

From childhood days, we have invited others to celebrate the discoveries of life. Come and see! Come and enjoy!

1. *Describe a time when you invited someone to “Come and see!”*
2. *What kind of response did you get?*

It’s just that simple. In our story, Jesus invites Philip. Then, Philip invites Nathanael. Each invites because there is a deep desire to share good news with others. In this case, the good news is Jesus Christ himself. This is the one whom Philip and Nathanael have been waiting for since they began studying and understanding the scriptures.

3. *Take a moment and reflect on your own life. Who invited you to come and see this one named Jesus?*
4. *What role has the church had in that invitation to grow in the love of Christ?*
5. *How is that invitation still changing your life?*

In this passage there are several invitations. Jesus invites Philip to follow him. Philip responds favorably and extends an invitation to Nathanael. But Philip’s invitation is met with doubt and suspicion. Nathanael is hesitant to respond to the invitation to come and see Jesus, so Jesus goes to Nathanael.

6. *In your opinion, what makes someone hesitant to respond to an invitation to come, see, or follow Jesus?*
7. *If someone would come and see your congregation, what would they find?*

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to have an attitude of inviting others to “come and see” just as we have received the invitation.

8. *What makes us hesitant to invite others?*
9. *What if we meet rejection, then what?*
10. *Take a moment to prayerfully consider those in your life who need an invitation to come and see Jesus. Plan how you will personally extend an invitation to each of them.*

Prayer

Christ, thank you for inviting me to know, love, and follow you. Send me to invite others to come and see you. Amen.

Dig Deeper

John 4



Daily Discipleship

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last word

This week,
invite someone to
attend a church activity with you.