

## I.

- A. John 1:43-51 . . . The next day [Jesus] purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." [44] Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. [45] Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." [46] Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." [47] Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" [48] Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." [49] Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel." [50] Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these." [51] And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."
- B. As we work our way through this story, we will consider the fact that no one can follow Jesus without leaving something, and often many things behind that were once held dear. We will look, a little bit, at evangelism. I will reinforce the truth that to learn what the scriptures mean – not just say, you must put into practice the truths found in them. And we will give some consideration to what it means to be without deceit.
- C. Pray

## II. Jesus finds Philip who finds Nathanael

- A. Following Jesus is both costly and rewarding:
  - 1. John 1:43 . . . The next day [Jesus] purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me."
  - 2. No one can follow Jesus without leaving something, and often many things behind that were once held dear.
    - a. For example, when the rich young ruler asked Jesus what he needed to do to obtain eternal life, Jesus told him to keep the commandments. When the young man said he was already doing that, Jesus said that if he wished to be complete, that is, to be

perfect, he must sell his possessions, give the money to the poor, and follow Jesus (Matthew 19:16-22).

- b. Another example of having to leave behind what we once held dear in order to follow Jesus is the fact that Jesus is the Lord. Therefore, to follow Jesus is to follow Him as your Master, which requires giving up two things that we all have highly treasured, and maybe still do – self-rule and self-interest. In other words, following Jesus requires abandoning self-rule and self-interest whenever and wherever they contradict or get in the way of doing the will of your Master, Jesus Christ.
  - c. Turning to 1 John 2:15-17, we read John's exhortation to abandon our love for the world and the things in the world – such as pride, fame, the selfish use of power over others, the excessive accumulation of possessions, the hoarding of riches, dependance on earthly security instead of God, and common physical comforts that unbelievers rely on to give them a sense of well-being in difficult times. And why must we give up such things as these?
    - (1) Because you cannot love the world and love God at the same time, just as you cannot serve two masters at the same time.
    - (2) To drive this truth home, John concludes these three verses by saying it is the one who does the will of God, that is, who follows Jesus as his Master, who lives forever.
3. Jesus, himself, on several occasions, talked having to abandon and give up things you once treasured in order to follow Him. For example:
- a. Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. [24] For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it" (Luke 9:23-24).
  - b. On another occasion, Jesus said that those who love father or mother more than Him are not worthy of Him, and those who love son or daughter more than Him are not worthy of Him, and those who are unwilling to deny themselves and die to self-rule and self-interest in order to follow Him are unworthy of Him (Matthew 10:37-38).
  - c. Finally, we see how serious Jesus is about this requirement for following Him when, on a particular day, He told those who were following Him that He was taking them to the other side of the sea. One of His followers said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." To which Jesus said, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead" (Matthew 8:21-22).

4. These scriptures may make it seem like following Jesus is all personal sacrifice and no reward, but that is far from the truth. The rewards of following Jesus include such things as an abundant life in this world and eternal life in the next. And those are but two treasures on a list that goes on from there. For example –
  - a. When Peter spoke about the disciples having left everything to follow Jesus – as if there was only the sacrifice side of following Him, Jesus responded with, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, [30] who will not receive many times as much at this time (in this life) and in the age to come, eternal life” (Luke 18:29-30).
  - b. Possibly the most succinct yet comprehensive statement about the cost and rewards of following Jesus, is “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things (the things you need for daily life) will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).
  - c. Jesus pointed out another reward of following Him when He said, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life” (John 8:12).
  - d. And in talking about His followers, Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; [28] and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:27-28).
5. The truth about following Jesus is that we cannot follow Him without leaving behind something, and often many things that we once held dear. However, the cost of following Jesus is not the only side to following Him. The other side is the reward side – in this life and in the next. And that side includes rewards of an earthly, temporal nature, and of a life changing, deeply spiritual, and eternal nature.

B. Evangelism grows out of following Jesus

1. There is one more “Follow Me” statement that I want to draw your attention to, and it is found in Matthew 4:19, where Jesus said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”
2. This is not the only thing Jesus said about evangelism, but this is what He said about evangelism in relation to following Him.
3. But before looking at this statement, I want to make it clear that there are other scriptures and many worthy and helpful tools available to help us do evangelism – as a church and as individuals. And these helps include such things as books, videos, seminars, classes at

Christian colleges, weekend training sessions, and specific methods like friendship evangelism or the Four Spiritual Laws. And many of these helps are good, well presented, and worthy of our attention.

4. However, the master evangelist offered just one method for learning how to be fishers of men when He was inviting folks to follow Him – and that one method is to follow Him, to learn from Him, to listen to Him, and to watch Him. If we apply this to ourselves and our church today, it at least means the following things –
    - a. First, it means becoming familiar with the gospels and epistles so their truths are well implanted in our mind and can be easily called up at any time when talking with unbelievers.
    - b. Second, following Christ to learn how to be fishers of men means dealing with sin in our own life so we are clean vessels for His use (2 Timothy 2:20-21). But it is also true that when we deal with our own sin as we ought, we bring into our evangelism the knowledge of what sin looks like, how enticing yet harmful it is, how challenging it is to put it out and replace it with godliness, and how to live, in the most practical ways, a godly, God-honoring life. This is important for both sowing the seeds of truth and making disciples of those who respond to our evangelistic efforts. And it is vital for validating the worthiness of our message.
    - c. Third, following Jesus to learn how to be fishers of men means becoming personally intimate with Him so that your evangelism includes a heart-felt plea for repentance and trust in Jesus – not only to gain eternal salvation, but to be reconciled to God today in order to enter in to a personal, intimate, joy filled, and immensely fulfilling relationship with to God. You will only be able to promote and lead others to the true intent of reconciliation with God in this life when your relationship with God is a most precious treasure.
  5. Once again, I want to affirm that I am not dismissing or condemning the evangelism helps that abound in the church today. My purpose is to encourage you to include learning evangelism from following Jesus, for it is in this way that you will learn and so be able to convey to others why He is your most precious treasure, why He is completely trustworthy, why you willingly serve Him, why you live to please Him, and why you cherish knowing Him personally and intimately.
- C. Applying God's word to our lives leads to understanding the true meaning of God's word.

1. John 1:44-45 . . . Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. [45] Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses [wrote about] in the Law (Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Genesis 3:15, 49:10), and also [He of whom] the Prophets wrote (Isaiah 9:6-7, 53:1-12; Daniel 9:24-27) – [He is] Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."
  2. It should be obvious that Philip was a serious student of the OT, and someone who lived according to the scriptures sufficiently to recognize that Jesus was the Messiah. Though anyone who reads the Bible can know its words, it is those who live according to the Bible who understand the meaning of what it says.
  3. David said it this way, "I have more insight than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, because I have observed Your precepts" (Psalm 119:99-100).
  4. Jesus put it this way, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall" (Matthew 7:24-27).
  5. The point here is that many know what the Bible says, but to gain the best understanding of what it means requires putting into practice the truths found there, day by day.
- D. John 1:46 . . . Nathanael said to [Philip], "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."
1. We don't know exactly what Nathanael was implying by asking if anything good can come out of Nazareth?
    - a. But it is likely that he knew there is no mention of Nazareth in the OT, which means there is no prophetic reference to Nazareth in relation to the Messiah.
    - b. Therefore, it is probable Nathanael was questioning how anything good – such as the Messiah – would come from Nazareth since Nazareth is not mentioned in any positive prophecy.
  2. However, what we do know is how Philip responded. He did not argue his case or try to persuade Nathanael with the use of strategic scripture verses or even good logic. Instead, he asked Nathanael to

come with him to see Jesus – and after Nathanael had personally encountering Jesus, he could decide for himself if Jesus was the Christ.

E. What it means to be without deceit.

1. John 1:47-48 . . . Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" [48] Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."
2. Jesus said of Nathanael, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit."
3. As you may recall, Jacob – the son of Isaac – was a deceiver who through cunning, lying, and fraud deceived his father and cheated his brother out of his father's blessing. And yet, God gave Jacob the name Israel. Therefore, though Jacob was an Israelite indeed, he was not an Israelite in whom there was no deceit.
4. So what does it mean to be someone in whom there is no deceit? A person in whom there is no deceit is one whose character is such that he has no disposition or inclination to deceive or to lead others into wrong thinking or wrong doing.
  - a. Are you aware of how often we are tempted to deceive, even if it is just a little deception?
  - b. Consider how tempting and easy it is to add a little deception to our explanations or statements when we are trying to look good in the eyes of others and think that the plain truth will not make us look good enough or will prevent us from getting what we want.
  - c. And though we may wish to believe our small deceptions are of no consequence in comparison to big lies, the truth is, deceptions of any size, by Christians, reveals a double-mindedness and distrust of God that ought not be part of any Christian's life.
5. Returning to vs 48, the next thing Jesus does is to identify Himself as divine by informing Nathanael that He saw Nathanael under the fig tree before Philip came and invited Nathanael to come and meet Jesus.

F. John 1:49 . . . [To this revelation by Jesus,] Nathanael [responded by saying], "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."

1. Back in vs 34, John the Baptist declared Jesus to be the Son of God, and now Nathanael is saying the same thing.

2. Interestingly, the title “Son of God” appears 9 times in the Gospel of John, 7 times in Matthew, 3 times in Mark, and 6 times in Luke. John also uses it 7 times in 1 John. Which raises the question, where did this title come from?
  - a. Given the fact that those who first used this title only had the OT scriptures, we might conclude it came from there. However, this title cannot be found anywhere in the OT. So now what?
  - b. One of the well-known prophecies concerning the Messiah comes from Isaiah 9:6 . . . “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
  - c. Notice, Isaiah says that this son will be born – just like every other child. And yet, he is the Mighty God and Eternal Father – which means He is both human and divine – and that is what the title “Son of God,” is meant to convey.
3. But Nathanael did not stop with the Son of God title, he went on to call Jesus the King of Israel. So where did this title come from?
  - a. Psalm 2 unites Jehovah with Messiah, and goes on to talk about Jehovah having a son (Jesus Christ) and establishing Him as the King of Israel.
  - b. And in Isaiah 44:6, we read, “Thus says the LORD (Jehovah), the King of Israel (this time God is the King of Israel) and his Redeemer (Jesus Christ), [who is] the LORD (Jehovah) of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last (notice, God does not say, “We are” as if there were two – the Father and Son, or God and Messiah, but rather only one), and there is no God besides Me” (Isaiah 44:6).
  - c. In other words, just as the Son of God title represents Jesus Christ as being both human and divine, so the King of Israel title represents the same truth.

### III. Conclusion

- A. Because of the time, we will stop here and take up the last two verses of this story – and this chapter – next time.
- B. So to summarize, no one can follow Jesus without leaving things behind that were once held dear. One good way to learn evangelism is to follow Jesus. The best way to understand God’s word is to live according to God’s word. And though wrong, small deceptions are very tempting. May we be like Nathanael, without deceit.