

COME AND SEE HIM

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY (YEAR B)

Lectionary Readings

Old Testament Reading	1 Samuel 3:1-10
Psalms	Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18
New Testament Reading	1 Corinthians 6:12-20
Gospel Reading	John 1:43-51

Reflections on the Word

1 SAMUEL 3:1-10

3 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; 3 the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!"[a] and he said, "Here I am!" 5 and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. 6 The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. 8 The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Calling

In this reading the young Samuel is called by the Lord. We know that in that time *the word of the Lord was rare*. Through the narrative we are given a window into Samuel's first experience of hearing the voice of the Lord. The Lord first calls him, saying, *Samuel! Samuel!* Samuel, however, believes the voice to be that of Eli, the priest under whom Samuel served and ministered in the sanctuary. He runs into Eli's room and proclaims, *Here I am, for you called me*. But Eli responded, *I did not call; lie down again*. This occurred two more times. The third time Eli realizes that the Lord is calling Samuel and instructs Samuel to respond by saying, *Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening*.

Hearing the Voice of the Lord

We know from the rest of the narrative that Samuel grew up to be a *trustworthy prophet of the Lord*. The amazing aspect of this story, however, is that the creator of the universe; the King of kings and Lord of lords desires to speak to his people. Although he is all powerful, he meets us

where we are, young and old alike. Like Samuel, we each come to know the voice of the Lord. Jesus told us in that he is the Good Shepherd and that his sheep know his voice (John 10:3). He knows us and we know him.

PSALM 139:1-6, 13-18

- 1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
 - 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
 - 3 You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
 - 4 Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.
 - 5 You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
 - 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.
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- 13 For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
 - 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
 - 15 My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
 - 16 Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
 - 17 How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
 - 18 I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.

Intimately Known by God

This theme of knowing and being known by God is further expounded in Psalm 139. We glean from this beautiful psalm of David that the Lord knows us intimately. He discerns our thoughts, our comings and goings. Considering this amazing reality David declares, *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.* We'll see later in the Gospel readings that Nathaniel is overwhelmed by Jesus' knowledge of him under the fig tree. He discerned Nathaniel's thoughts which in turn led Nathaniel to confess Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Israel.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

We also learn from this text that we are *fearfully and wonderfully made*. Our very bodies are the handiwork of a loving, creative God. Every atom, cell, tissue, and organ are the design of a

power much greater than ourselves. Even the days of our lives are ordained by the Lord. He has a path marked out for us, and we have the joy and privilege of walking with him on this journey of discovery. We are called by him live out our days according to his plan and purpose. David's heart sings in response to all of this by declaring,

How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end[a]—I am still with you.

Our God knows us; we are his. Our thoughts, our bodies, and our lives are under his care and guidance.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

12 "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. 13 "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,"[a] and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." 17 But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple[b] of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

Not All Things are Beneficial

In the New Testament reading the apostle Paul declares that, though all things are lawful, *not all things are beneficial* for us. We have been created body and soul. What we take into our bodies, which know are fearfully and wonderfully made, affects our soul and our spirit. I have discovered over the years that my body, my mind, my soul, my spirit are all intricately connected. I used to try to compartmentalize these various facets of my being, but that is simply not possible. We were made to be whole and holy. God did not create us with the ability to separate body, mind, soul, and spirit.

A Temple of the Holy Spirit

Indeed, our bodies are a *temple of the Holy Spirit* within us. If we desire to be whole and holy, we will realize that there are things that get in the way of our sense of wholeness. Thus, Paul can say that not all things are beneficial. *The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.* We are called to be vigilant in stewarding our bodies; being careful of what we see, hear, taste, and touch. When I am stewarding my body, I find that my soul is light. I don't feel a sense of heaviness or a burden, but a deep sense of peace.

JOHN 1:43-51

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." 46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" 48 Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." 49 Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 50 Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." 51 And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Calling

In the Gospel reading we find the first disciples being called to follow Jesus. Just prior to this account, Jesus called Andrew, John, and Peter to follow him. Here, we find Jesus calling Philip. The recorded account is brief. John simply writes, *The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."* The reader gets the sense that Jesus' call is so compelling that one cannot help but follow. Perhaps Philip had already heard something about Jesus; perhaps Andrew, John, and Peter had spoken to Philip about their encounter with Jesus. The text doesn't say, but we can be sure that Jesus' call to Philip was obeyed.

Invitation

Next, we see Philip, seemingly full of enthusiasm and excitement (a natural response to encountering Jesus), looking for and finding his friend Nathaniel. Philip shares, *"We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.* Upon hearing this news, Nathaniel responds somewhat cynically, *Can anything good come out of Nazareth?* To which Philip replies, *Come and see.* Philip's invitation to Nathaniel is simple, yet utterly profound and ultimately, completely transformative. Philip is inviting Nathaniel out of the overflow of his own joy in being found and called by Jesus. He can't help but invite his friend into this same joy. I wonder, do we carry that same zeal and joyful overflow in extending Philip's invitation to those in our acquaintance? Do we invite others to experience the joy of knowing Jesus?

Knowing and Being Known

What Philip is really inviting Nathaniel to "come and see" is the intimacy of knowing and being known by Jesus. Though he is at first cynical (*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*), ultimately, he confesses Jesus as the Son of God, the King of Israel. What caused this change in Nathaniel's perspective? Soon after their first encounter, Nathaniel realizes that Jesus already knows things about his life. As he saw Nathaniel approaching Jesus declares, *Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!* Nathaniel naturally replies, *Where did you get to know me?"* Jesus answers, *"I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.* Nathaniel's confession comes after Jesus spoke these words of knowledge about him.

The amazing reality, which can be overlooked, is that *Jesus knows us intimately*. The God of all creation, in the person of Jesus, knows us more deeply than we know and understand ourselves. We don't have all of the details as to why Nathaniel so quickly confesses Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Israel after Jesus shares his knowledge of Nathaniel sitting under the fig tree... but Nathaniel knows! This narrative reminds of Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well in John 4. After her conversation with the Messiah she declares to the people of her town, *Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!* (John 4:29).

The invitation is not only to be known by Jesus, but also to know Jesus. As Philip declared, we are invited to know the one *about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote.*" Reflecting on this verse, one commentator writes:

Up to this point Philip is expressing a great truth, for *Moses and the Prophets can never be understood unless Christ is seen in them.* (Hendriksen, pg. 109)

Philip is inviting us to see Jesus as the one to which all of the Old Testament writings point. He is the true Prophet, Priest, and King. He is our Healer and our Redeemer.

Greater Things

After Nathaniel's declaration regarding Jesus' divine identity, Jesus responds by saying, *Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.* Jesus then goes on to say, *Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.*"

These words remind us of Jacob's dream in Genesis 28:10-12. In his dream Jacob saw a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. In recounting this Old Testament imagery with Nathaniel, Jesus is representing himself as

the *link between heaven and earth, the bond of union between God and man, the One who by means of his sacrifice reconciles God to man.* (Hendriksen, pg. 111)

What promise and anticipation for Nathaniel and this early group of followers! What promise and anticipation for us today as his followers as well! We, too, should expect to know and experience "greater things" as we walk by faith with Jesus. His promise to these early disciples is just as poignant and real for us today.

Reflections on the Song

I began writing *Come and See Him* in California in 2014. I remember being struck by the simple invitation from Philip to Nathaniel, *Come and see.* Those three words, though simple, seemed so profound to me. I also came across Psalm 66:5, which offers a similar invitation,

Come and see what God has done:
he is awesome in his deeds among mortals.

As Christ's followers we are called to share this invitation to those around. We are called to invite others to "come and see." We have the privilege of stewarding, not only our own stories, but God's story of redemption with our family, friends, and neighbors.

In the song, the chorus is the invitation; the verse lyrics tell the story of redemption: Christ's birth, death, resurrection, ascension, sending of the Holy Spirit, and eventual return. It lays out the story of Jesus' life and after each verse invites to come and see; come know and be known; come and fix your eyes on the Son; come and be healed for Christ is making all things new.