

Finders and Followers (*Part 2*)

John 1:43-51

Thought for the Day: Jesus knows our heart and mind; He knows us through-and-through, and still He calls us to follow Him as the Lord of our life and the Savior of our soul!

In John 1:35-42, we read of Jesus calling His first followers: Andrew, John and Peter. In the remainder of the chapter, Jesus calls two more disciples: Philip and Nathanael, who elsewhere in the Gospels is known as Bartholomew.

43 The next day...

- This is the fourth day in the first week of Jesus' public ministry. (John 1:19-2:12)

...Jesus decided to go to Galilee.

- Jesus' ministry took place primarily in three Roman provinces that made up Israel:
 - Judea in the south – included Bethlehem (where Jesus was born), and Jerusalem (the principal city).
 - Samaria, the central province – inhabited by people who were a cross between Jews and Gentiles, and therefore despised by the Jews.
 - Galilee in the north – named after the Sea of Galilee; included the town of Nazareth (where Jesus grew up).
- Jesus traveled from the Jordan River in the southern province of Judea (where He had been baptized) to the northern province of Galilee. A journey of about 75 miles.

He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

- "These are great words because of the One who spoke them and great because of the privilege they offered. The Savior is still issuing this simple, yet sublime, invitation to all men every where." (*MacDonald, p. 1426*)
- Have you heard and heeded Jesus' call? Are you following Jesus today? Is He a part of your daily life through time in the Word, prayer, and obedience to His commands?

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

- Bethsaida literally means "House of Fish."
 - A fishing village located somewhere on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.
 - Jesus performed some powerful miracles there. (Mark 8:22-26; Luke 10:13)
 - Because of the unbelief of the people, Jesus pronounced a curse on Bethsaida. (Matthew 11:21)
 - The town was so completely destroyed that even today, archaeologists are debating its exact location.
 - When we see the hand of God at work in our lives, but harden our hearts to His claims, devastating judgment will follow.
- Three of Jesus' twelve disciples—Philip, Andrew and Peter—all lived in Bethsaida; it is likely that they knew one another.

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."

- "The Law and the prophets" – a common way of referring to the entire O.T. Scriptures.
 - Philip was a student of the Scriptures.
- New converts are some of the most enthusiastic evangelists; good news is easy to share!
- Philip's message was simple and to the point: "We have found the Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures. His name is Jesus, and He comes from Nazareth."

46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

- Nazareth – a small town of approximately 2,000 people in Jesus' day.
- Nothing in the Scriptures indicated that the Messiah would come from Nazareth.
- Many people have preconceived ideas about Jesus based on false notions that others have communicated to them that prevent them from coming to Him. We need to encourage them to come and meet Jesus for themselves.
- Philip "felt that the best way to meet objections was to introduce men directly to the Lord Jesus—a valuable lesson for all who are seeking to win others to Christ. Don't argue. Don't engage in prolonged discussions. Just bid men to come and see." (*MacDonald, p. 1426*)
- Evangelism is "One hungry beggar telling another hungry beggar where to find food."
- One of the best methods of evangelism is just sharing what Jesus has done for us.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"

- Jesus knew Nathanael's character without any previous contact! This illustrates His divine knowledge and understanding of all people.
- Jesus knows us; He knows our character; He sees our behavior (vs. 48). Nothing is hidden from His view!

48 Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

- Jesus "saw" whatever was going on in Nathanael's heart and mind.
- The Lord knows what we need; He knows what we are searching for. What we need and what we are searching for is found in Jesus! (Matthew 11:28-30; Matthew 6:33)

49 Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

- Both are Messianic titles found in the Old Testament. "You are the Messiah!"

50 Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, '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 heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

- "It is likely that Nathanael had been meditating on the story of Jacob's ladder (Gen. 28:12). That ladder, with its ascending and descending angels, is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the only access to heaven... Jesus was saying to Nathanael that he had seen only very minor demonstrations of His Messiahship. In the future Reign of Christ, he would see the Lord Jesus fully revealed as God's anointed Son. Then all mankind would know that Someone good did come out of Nazareth." (*MacDonald, p. 1427*)