

## Wesley United Methodist Church

January 14, 2018

“Come and See.”

John 1:(35-42), 43-51

I like the story of the young woman who wanted to go to college, but her heart sank when she read the question on the application blank that asked, “Are you a leader?” Being both honest and conscientious, she wrote, “No,” and returned the application, expecting the worst. To her surprise, she received this letter from college: “Dear Applicant: A study of the application forms reveals that this year our college will have 1,452 new leaders. We are accepting you because we feel it is imperative that they have at least one follower.”

In our text for this morning, Philip comes to Nathaniel and proclaims that he has found the one whom Moses wrote about. He is Jesus of Nazareth. While we do not know what expression Nathaniel had on his face when he responded, I think that it is safe to say that his response had kind of a cynical sneer. “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” Answered Philip, “Come, and see.”

You see, the church has the same problem. The church is full of those sure of themselves. We may even get to the point where we believe very little that we are told. We sit back under the fig tree with a sneer of a Nathaniel and we ask, “Can anything good come from Wesley?” Can anything good come from our Youth Group; can anything good come from the Pastor; can anything good come from the UMW, or UWW, or any committee or team?” People come in and out the doors of this church with a critical eye. Skepticism is not a modern virtue.

Doubting Thomases have been around since the dawn of time. By nature we don’t want to be led. We want to lead. But in the church, it is imperative that we have followers. In fact, it is imperative for all of us to be followers. Nathaniel learned this. He was skeptical at first, but he was transformed. He became a follower because Philip invited him.

Let me ask you, what was it that Philip saw in Christ that moved him to follow, that stirred him so to invite his friend Nathaniel? Come and see, what?

What did Philip see in Jesus of Nazareth? Let’s attempt to answer that question this morning. Come and See, what?

First, Philip asked Nathaniel to come and see souls redeemed. The day before Andrew followed Jesus and invited Peter. Then Philip invited Nathaniel. There were eight others who would become Jesus’ inner circle, 12 in all. This was just the beginning. Soon there was 70, the scripture tells us, that comprised the outer circle. The net of redemption was cast large even in those early days. Hundreds soon were following, by the end of the century half a million. Today souls are being redeemed everywhere. The church’s work is not yet done.

It was Andrew who made the first invitation to his brother and now Philip who made the second to his friend. They were watching as people began to place their lives into the hands of this Nazarene. They listened as Jesus spoke to people in a way that made them understand their lives better than they understood themselves. They had seen souls redeemed just as they had seen their own redeemed. So, when Philip asked Nathaniel to come and see he knew Jesus would redeem Nathaniel as well. Come and see, he said, just come and see, that’s all I ask you.

I know that every Christian here believes that God can redeem a soul. I know you believe that. So, I ask you from this moment on, live like Philip. Go out and ask someone to come and see. Invite to Bible study, invite them to Sunday school, invite them to worship service, invite them to a church activity.

Will we go out of our way to say to people, “Come and See?” That’s all I ask, just come and see and you will learn that something good can come from Nazareth! Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing if each one, at least once a month, invited another human being to “Come and See?” Wouldn’t it be wonderful if “Come and See” became a natural part of our life and relationships?

Philip asked Nathaniel to come and see lives transformed. Yes, Philip had his moment. A moment with Jesus that transformed him. A moment where joy flooded into his world and made him to go out and speak to someone. He found Nathaniel. But you can understand Nathaniel’s skepticism.

Look at what Philip is asking him to believe. He tells him, "I have found the one that Moses wrote about in the Law, and the one the Prophets foretold." It sounds a little too fantastic for Nathaniel. You almost can't fault Nathaniel. Jesus doesn't. He recognizes his doubt and helps him along. And now Nathaniel is transformed. "I saw you while you were under the fig tree before Philip called you," Jesus said.

Now Jesus has his attention. "Rabbi," he says, "Rabbi," you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." But that wasn't the only moment. There were more to come. Jesus said, you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You're going to see greater things than that. Jesus was saying Come and see, Nathaniel. That's all I ask, just come and see, and you will learn that something good can come from Nazareth!

There's one more thing Philip asked Nathaniel to come and see. Come and see the heavens opened. Come and see the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. Those are the words of Jesus to Nathaniel. And as he and the other eleven disciples spent the next three years living and ministering with their Master. They saw the heavens open. When Jesus was baptized they saw the heavens opened. When Jesus was transfigured they saw the heavens opened. When he fed the 5000 and the 4000 they saw the heavens opened and the spread of that bread. When Lazarus was raised from the grave they saw the heavens open and bring life to a dead man's bones. When Jesus died the heavens closed and grew silent. But the stone...the stone...the heavens opened and the stone was rolled away. When Jesus stood before the disciples behind that locked door, they saw the heavens open and the Lord redeemed them that day.

Redeemed you and redeemed me. And he will redeem all those we invite to come and see.