

Bible Study for Sunday January 17, 2021

Our texts for this Sunday are:

- 1 Samuel 3:1-10
- John 1:43-51

Opening Question: When we invite people to “come and see” in our church, what do they experience, and what is our role in the experience of newcomers?

Read 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.”

Why do you think it took Samuel so long to recognize the Lord?

What do you think your reaction would be if you heard God calling your name?

Is it hard to believe that someone “hears from God” today?

Read 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,^[a] you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

In his book *Your God is Too Small*, Biblical scholar J.B. Phillips asserts that we have preconceived notions about God that box God into something much smaller than God is. We are not able to see how God is at work in the world, because God doesn’t always fit within our preconceived notions; God is beyond what we are capable of imagining.

In our text Nathanael can’t fathom that the Messiah could come from Nazareth. Where might God be at work in your world and in the world around you, but you’re either not looking, not paying attention, or are reluctant to accept that God could be beyond what you can perceive?

Nathanael says, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” What are some similar modern examples of objections people have with Christianity?

- What is Philip’s response to Nathanael’s skepticism?
- What is Jesus’ response to Nathanael’s skepticism?
- What can we learn from these responses?

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, he said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!”

- What do you think Jesus meant by this?
- What kind of person does Nathanael seem like?

Jesus invited Philip to follow Him. What does that mean to you...to follow someone?

Have you tended to think of the Christian life as a system of beliefs *about* God or as a divine encounter *with* God that results in a changed life?

Has someone in your life ever invited you, in effect, to “come and see” how God was a part of his or her life? Or how their life has changed because of their relationship with God?

If you were to ask people to “come and see” your life as evidence of God’s presence and activity, what would they see? And how would you respond if someone asked you in return to “come and see?”

When was the last time (if ever) you invited someone into a conversation about what God means to you?