

John 1:43-51

January 15, 2012 – 2nd SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

When Jesus Comes Calling

👂 “Follow Me.” (v.43)

👁️ “Come and See.” (vv.44-51)

In the name of Christ, our Epiphany Light, dear shining Christians:

What is it that keeps you from witnessing? You’re letting your light shine when family and friends see you heading for church. But the only way they will come to see themselves in God’s holy light is if you speak up. Your life can shine, but only your lips can witness. So what’s stopping you?

The fourth Gospel account is designed to help. Learn warm hearted evangelism from the Master Himself. The Gospel of John is all about God’s love so determined to bring you here. God’s love in Christ powers us up to go and tell. It’s a great day **When Jesus Comes Calling**.

👂 “Follow Me.” (v.43)

To be honest, this was one of the most terrifying subjects of my childhood. Our pastor thundered “evangelism,” mostly meaning door-to-door to strangers. Which makes me laugh looking back. My first job was selling greeting cards door-to-door as a 4th grader. A year or so later, my brother and I were hired by a family friend. Mr. Bates trained us to introduce ourselves, hand the neighbor his catalog, and say, “The Fuller Brush man will be around in a day or so to take your order.” Two cents for every catalog. Better than the money were the root beer floats he bought us going home. Something else I noticed when I was called here to knock on doors for this mission. The same fears I had as a kid dogged me as an adult. But the infield training God gave finally made stranger evangelism a joy for me.

But do you realize that most of the “evangelism” in the Bible isn’t to strangers? Besides that, did you notice who really does the calling? Sin-dead souls cannot go looking for God. And the Holy Spirit says through Paul: “*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.*” (Ephesians 2:1) Can your lights turn themselves on at home? Or does someone at least have to clap-on / clap-off? This is humbling and comforting at the same time. God turns your lights on **When Jesus Comes Calling**.

When our first verse says, “*The next day,*” don’t you wonder, “After what?” If you have a Bible open, look back to verses 35 and 29. See? This was “*the next day*” after the “*next day*” and the one before that. The Holy Spirit reminds us that the Epiphany light of Christ shines in real time. God calls us day by day, and each one with new opportunities.

Day one – John the Baptist told the Jewish religious leaders he was not the Christ, but His forerunner. Day two – “*John saw Jesus coming...and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’*” Centuries of sacrificial lambs foreshadowed Him. Finally Jesus was baptized to make us perfect in God’s sight. The Father’s voice and the Holy Spirit’s dove form certified Jesus as “*the Son of God.*” Day three – John the Baptist testified again, and two of his disciples followed Jesus.

Day four – **When Jesus Comes Calling**, you see who is making the decisions. “*The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee.*” He still decides the time and place to proclaim the kingdom of God. No one went looking for Jesus; He found John the Baptist and His first disciples. Now Jesus goes looking for Philip to say, “*Follow Me.*” Three years later Jesus would remind His disciples, “*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.*” (John 15:16 NIV84)

One of the beautiful things about the God of the Bible, as He shines through His Son Jesus Christ, is how He does not leave anyone out. Jesus calls children of all ages, “*Follow Me.*” Years ago one of my sisters wrote about a boyfriend who kept arguing about this. Wade insisted, “I didn’t know Jesus as my Savior until I was baptized as a teenager!” You know what my sister asked him? “Why did you wait so

long?” If only Christians would accept the Holy Spirit’s difference between faith and reason! Jesus made the decision to find Philip, not the other way around. Praise God for parents who trust His command: **“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”** (Matthew 19:14 NIV84). Making kids wait for adult decisions is unscriptural, backwards. God includes us all when Jesus says, **“Follow Me!” Jesus Comes Calling** for the children too!

👁️ **“Come and See.” (vv.44-51)**

God wants to wrap His loving arms around you. He wants you to see His smiling face. Deep down inside your soul you can relax. Jesus is still **Calling**: **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest,...rest for your souls.”** (Matthew 11:28f NIV84) But God’s peace on the inside makes us want to run on the outside. Grace received is grace to share.

Imagine Christmas around the tree when the little guy pinches his finger in a new toy. Crying, he comes to Grandpa. (Always to Grandpa.) Grandpa squeezes his foot and asks, “Does that hurt?” “No, Grandpa” and holds up his finger. “Let’s try the other foot. Does that hurt?” “No, Grandpa!” Then the squirming starts because he forgot the hurt and wants to get back to his toys. He’s all better now.

The Gospel works like that. God takes us up in His arms and shows how He has forgiven every single sin without exception, the ones you remember and the ones you never noticed. They’re all forgiven. Finally God turns the lights on so you can see you are perfect in His sight, holy for heaven. The pain is gone down deep in your soul. Where peace reigns, you want to get down and go tell.

Just look at Nathanael. The other Gospel writers – Matthew, Mark and Luke – call him Bartholomew. Call him, “Bart,” or call him, “Nate,” but he did not go looking for Jesus either. First, Jesus found Philip and said, **“Follow Me.”** Then **Philip found Nathanael and told him, ‘We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’** Philip is like a little boy whose Grandma hid a present under his pillow. He comes out all smiling, “Look what I found!” Who found whom?

God’s Gift really found Philip. And Philip was ready to echo Jesus. By doing so, Philip shows how to handle hard questions. In fact, we should all be praying for questions we can’t answer. It’s called “praying dangerously.” If you have to say, “I don’t know,” the door is open to come back. Unanswered questions are like an open invitation. Months later people are really impressed that you still remember them. Pray dangerously because there’s something even better **When Jesus Comes Calling**.

How would you answer this Nathanael’s impossible question? **“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”** Do you argue? Is it time for a geography lesson? A denominational debate? Three little words do so much good. Let’s practice. Say it with me, **“Come and See!”**

Watch Nathanael see the Light. Jesus had personal knowledge of Nathanael’s honest character, and he was impressed. But when Jesus told where he was before Philip called him, Nathanael judged Jesus rightly: **“Rabbi,”** Master Teacher, **“you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”** Great as that was, Jesus said, **“You shall see greater things than that.”** Even the devil know facts about Jesus.

So Jesus added for all His disciples to hear – then and now: **“I tell you the absolute truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”** Jesus is the only Stairway that reaches all the way to heaven. Pray dangerously for others to **“Come and See.”**

A pastor told how he’d prayed dangerously before a missionaries conference. “Brace yourself,” he warned. He got caught in one of Wisconsin’s longest pileups on the freeway in fog too thick for the car in front of you. Unhurt, he rushed forward and found a man who was dying. God answered his prayer with a chance to witness Christ’s bleeding, dying love for the man. **When Jesus Comes Calling**, enjoy the warmth of God’s love. Then jump up to go and tell three words: **“Come and See.”** Amen.