



Peters Green News Sheet Issue No: 45

Sunday 17th January 2021

Come, See, Find and Follow. John 1 : 43 - 51

Our Bible passage tells of the calling of Philip and Nathanael; two of the very first disciples of Jesus. The previous section has shown, how Andrew and his friend (probably John) have seen Jesus pointed out by John the Baptist and heard him proclaimed as 'the Lamb of God'.

So eagerly, these two follow Jesus, calling him 'Rabbi' or Teacher; but Jesus says 'Come and see'.

Andrew accepts that invitation and after a day with Jesus has 'seen and found'. Then the first thing he does, is to 'find' his brother Simon. He tells him 'We have FOUND the Messiah'. Andrew has realised that Jesus is not just a rabbi or great teacher, but God's 'anointed one', so he brings his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus.

But the next day, before Jesus leaves for Galilee, it is He who goes in search of Philip; and 'finding' him says simply 'Follow me'. Like Andrew and Simon, Philip's home town is Bethsaida so they may have been together to come to hear John the Baptist.

Philip is mentioned in four other places in John's gospel and unlike the impetuous Peter we get the impression of a quiet man, who likes to question and thinks things through. He seems to have been a good friend of Andrew and the two are very approachable. When faced with 5000 to feed it is Philip who works out that the cost would be 'more than 8 months wages' (John 6 : 7) and Andrew who finds the boy with 'five loaves and two fishes'. And later when a group of Greeks wish to see Jesus it is Philip they approach (John 12 : 21) and Philip and Andrew bring the request to Jesus.

It is good in our church fellowships to have friends who support our witness and whose skills and personalities compliment and encourage our own. I give thanks for those who with their IT skills have enabled us to share in 'on line' services and 'zoom' meetings and prayer times.

We see something of Philip's personality and his clear faith in his actions in this passage. He accepts Jesus' invitation to 'Follow' without question and then goes to 'find' his friend Nathanael. Here we see Philip has carefully studied the Scriptures. He understands that Jesus is the one 'about whom the prophets wrote' (John 1 : 45).

But enthusiastic Philip gets a very sceptical response from Nathanael. He is from Cana and his opinion of neighbouring Nazareth is clear; 'can anything good come from there'. Evidently Nazareth had somewhat of an unsavoury reputation and the way it rejected Jesus (Luke 4 : 14) is in line with that. Those of us who live in Luton know a something of living somewhere that is little thought of. And

many know the problems of being judged by our accents or by the place we were born or live.

But faced with his friend's prejudice and scepticism Philip acts with uncomplicated wisdom. No anger or counter-arguments, just Jesus' own invitation of 'Come and see'.

When Nathanael approaches Jesus he is greeted with a true assessment of his character, 'a true Israelite in whom there is no guile'. Nathanael is honest and straightforward he asks 'How do you know me?' And the answer that Jesus saw him under the fig tree convinces him that this was not just a Rabbi but 'the Son of God'. Jesus had 'seen' him in that private place, perhaps where he was praying and pondering the Baptist's message of 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'. (John 1:29).

Nathanael, too, had come, seen, found and would follow.

And we, in this most challenging week of the Covid crisis, bring our prayers and also our thanksgiving.

O God our Father we thank you for Jesus Christ, 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world'; our strength in weakness and our refuge in every time of trouble.

We pray for the lonely and bereaved, separated from family and friends; be their support and encouragement.

We pray for Hazel Littleworth in hospital after a fall; be close to her and those caring for her.

We pray for all in our NHS, we thank you for them, for all their skills and kindness. Give them strength and times of rest.

We thank you for the roll out of the vaccines and pray for all those who organise and are involved in this huge task.

And we pray for ourselves that as we speak or write or listen to those nearby or far away; help us to share your love and faithfulness through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Amen.

May God bless you this week and in the weeks ahead,
Pam

Will You Come And Follow Me
If I But Call Your Name?
Will You Go Where You Don't Know
And Never Be The Same?
Will You Let My Love Be Shown,
Will You Let My Name Be Known,
Will You Let My Life Be Grown
In You And You In Me?

Will You Leave Yourself Behind
If I But Call Your Name?
Will You Care For Cruel And Kind
And Never Be The Same?
Will You Risk The Hostile Stare
Should Your Life Attract Or Scare?
Will You Let Me Answer Prayer
In You And You In Me?

Lord, Your Summons Echoes True
When You But Call My Name.
Let Me Turn And Follow You
And Never Be The Same.
In Your Company I'll Go
Where Your Love And Footsteps Show.
Thus I'll Move And Live And Grow
In You And You In Me.

