

Finding Jesus.

Text: John 1:43-51

1) Is possible today

Suggested Hymns:

2) Is a great blessing

158, 162, 150, 291, 297

3) Brings obligations

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is John 1:43–51, ⁴³ *The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and 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 of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

⁴⁶ *And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”*

⁴⁷ *Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!”* ⁴⁸ *Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”* ⁴⁹ *Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”*

⁵⁰ *Jesus answered and said to 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, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

There are many ways by which God’s Gospel is brought to sinners. Some hear it from their parents. Some through friends. Some people have read the Bible to refute it, but were overpowered by its truth. Others came to church from curiosity or by mere chance, at a funeral perhaps.

St. Augustine went to hear Ambrose because he was a very good and eloquent speaker, but little by little what Ambrose said drew Augustine to Jesus.

To us Christians these narratives are interesting and important. We have such an account in our text. The theme for today is *Finding Jesus*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Finding Jesus Is Possible Today.

Finding Jesus is possible today in His Word. In our text we can see how Jesus found Philip and then how Philip found Nathanael. Take note of how Philip testified. He simply said, *“We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

We may think of the supposed advantages of having lived at the time of Jesus, of the opportunity and experience of finding Jesus as the apostles found Him. But let us remember that not all who had the opportunity of seeing Jesus found Him. Many people gathered around Him, multitudes pressed near Him, crowds saw His miracles and heard Him teaching, but how few really found Jesus!

It is not necessary for Christ to be present visibly in order that men may find Him. Jesus is to be found in His Word, His Gospel. As Philip testified: *“We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote.”*¹

Christ is to be found in His Word. *Search the Scriptures, ... these are they which testify of Me* says Christ.² When men are sceptical, we can do no better than to urge them to read the Word and see for themselves. Nathanael was sceptical, *Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”*

⁴⁷ *Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!”* ⁴⁸ *Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?”*

Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” ⁴⁹ *Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”*

People found Christ in His words. We read in John 7:46, ⁴⁶ *The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!”* And in Mark 1:22, ²² *And they*

were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

People believed in Jesus because of His Word. We have the example of the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well.³ Likewise Nicodemus as we read in John 3:1-2, *¹ There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."*

People found Christ in His miracles. Never before had a man produced such miracles. We read in John 2:11, *¹¹ This beginning of miracles Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.*

Not only the disciples but *"Many believed in Him."*⁴ People found Christ in His death. Never a man died like this man. The penitent thief *said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."*⁵ The centurion said, *"Truly, this was the Son of God."*⁶

Jesus' words are recorded, His miracles are recorded, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension, and people reading His Word are finding Christ today in this Book of God. We read in John 20:30-31, *³⁰ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

The sceptic may clamour for further proof. Recall the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. *'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'*⁷

Note also 1 Corinthians 1:21-24, *²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. ²² For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

Let doubting people investigate as Nathanael did. He asked Philip, ***“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”*** Nathanael went and saw and was convinced. Nicodemus investigated and found Jesus.

Lew Wallace, author of Ben Hur, wrote: *“After six years given to the impartial investigation of Christianity as to its truth and falsity, I have come to the deliberate conclusion that Jesus Christ was the Messiah of the Jews, the Saviour of the world, and my personal Saviour.”*

Jesus says in John 7:17, ***17 If anyone wills to do [God’s] will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.***

The Finding of Jesus is Made Difficult. In some quarters people are holding up a false Christ. People interpret Christ instead of letting Christ speak for Himself. People veil Christ in their own fancies. They hold up before the world a distorted Christ.

Some deny Christ’s claims to deity and Saviour-hood, telling us that they can gain perfection by right thinking and right living; and therefore it is hard for people to find the real Christ of God, the real Christ of the Bible, the real Christ of Moses and the prophets.

Many years ago someone obtained beliefs of 700 clergymen. He records the beliefs of 500 ministers and 200 theological students.

Of the Baptists who sent in answers, 20% do not believe in the Virgin Birth, 25% do not believe that Jesus’ death on the cross was the one act which made possible the remission of man’s sin.

76% of the Congregationalists do not believe in the Virgin Birth, 80% do not believe in the atonement.

46% of the Methodists do not believe in the Virgin Birth, 40% do not believe in the atonement.

With such errors in the pulpit, it is made hard for people in the pew to find Jesus Christ.

Let us note the application for ourselves. Let us be sure to sit under the ministry of one who brings us to Jesus through the true Gospel.

This is an important call for us to lift up our voices in preaching the true Christ, supporting the preaching of the true Gospel at home and abroad, ourselves speaking to others, urging them to search the Scriptures, inviting them to come to our church, thus bringing them under the influence of the Word and Spirit of God! Where Christ is held up, people will find Him today.

2. Finding Jesus Is A Great Blessing

When Nathanael found Jesus, he found a King and the Son of God. Our text says *“Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”* What a blessing!

And Nathanael was to see still greater things than Christ’s omniscience. ⁵⁰ *Jesus answered and said to 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, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”*

Man has made many wonderful discoveries. From Europe man discovered America and Australia. Man invented printing; man discovered the power of steam, diesel and jet engines; man discovered electricity, and we have the telephone and mobile phone, the radio, television and internet. Man invented the horseless carriage and the aeroplane.

How these discoveries have revolutionised industry and will continue to do so, speeding up transportation and communication! How these finds have brought distant lands nearer!

How they have brought joy to millions of hearts! But put them all together, and they have not done for the whole world and all humanity what the finding of Jesus does for one individual soul.

Finding Jesus revolutionises a man’s life — for Zacchaeus it changed his whole outlook — for Paul and Luther it removed sin — for the penitent thief it brought heaven to his door.

Finding Jesus establishes communication with the unseen God. It makes it possible for him to draw on the resources of omniscience and omnipotence. It relieves his conscience of the weight and guilt of sin. And finally it frees him from the power of sin, Satan, and the world.

When people have found Christ, they have found the Father and heaven. We read in Matthew 16:26, ²⁶ ***For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?***

When a sinner, weary and heavy laden, struggling under the weight of sin, staggers on and on, frightened, despair lining his face, and then at the foot of the cross he finds Christ, the Saviour, what a wonderful blessing!

When a burden-troubled, crushed soul, dejected, oppressed, depressed, goes in the name of Jesus and finds a compassionate, sympathetic, kindly, generous, benevolent Father, what a wonderful blessing!

You will see greater things than these. ⁵¹ ***And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.*** In Jesus’ life Nathanael did see greater things than Jesus’ display of omniscience. His communion with His Father, His miracles, etc., revealed to Nathanael His power and majesty and glory and deity.

Does not a man, after coming to Christ, after finding Jesus and fellowshiping with Him, have still greater blessings and enjoy greater manifestations of divine love, and power, and grace, and goodness, and mercy?

Does he not see gradually how ***“all things work together for good to those who love God”***?⁸ He is strengthened in the inner man. He overcomes Satan. He conquers his besetting sin. He begins to love his enemies. He makes sacrifices he never would have dreamed of before. ***“I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.”*** Oh, what a wonderful blessing when a person finds Jesus!

3. Finding Jesus Brings Obligations

“Finding Christ” brings with it obligations. Philip went and sought Nathanael. Nathanael confessed Christ, saying, ***You are the Son of God!*** Philip and Nathanael and the other disciples followed Jesus.

Having found Christ, what shall I do with Him? There is only one thing a truly repentant sinner can do, and that is to serve Him. Seek to bring others to Him. Confess Him and follow Him.

Obligation to bring others. That relative you live with, have you spoken to him or to her about Christ? That man you work with, that friend you frequently visit, have they found Christ? What are you doing to help them find Him?

It is said of Spurgeon that *“the conversion of the sinner was the dream of all his days.”* That is the kind of dream to have. Do we carry the unsaved, the unchurched, the unbeliever, to God in prayer? Does his pitiable condition concern us or not? If we have found the Saviour, really found Him, then we will directly and indirectly want to bring others to Christ.

The early Church was increased by personal evangelism. Shall we not do more of this bringing others to Christ? *“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,”* is Christ’s command.¹⁰ Are we personally doing that, or are we shifting our responsibility and obligation?

Obligation to confess Christ. A true follower of Christ must confess Him as Nathanael did, *“You are the Son of God!”* Claiming to have found Jesus but then denying His deity is unimaginable.

We must confess Christ before men when time and opportunity demand. We read in Matthew 10:32,³² *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.”* The person who has really found Christ will not be ashamed to confess Him by word and deed.

In our day also there is need of clear, personal, individual testimony. When religion is discussed in the office, over the lunch table, in the family circle, in the social group, do we bear witness that Christ is God and King of kings?

When Satan and sin are being served in the business world, in the neighbourhood by others, do we confess Christ by refusing to do the wrong and standing up for Jesus?

Obligation to follow Christ. When we have found Jesus, we should be willing to follow Him wherever He leads us. The narrow way is lonely, steep, and dangerous; but having found Christ, we always desire to walk it. If we have found Jesus, our Saviour, Shepherd, Friend, our God, we will want to follow Him; indeed, we would be unhappy if we did not follow Him.

Many people would enjoy the blessings of finding Jesus, but they are loath to meet the obligations. When we keep the blessings before us which Christ has

merited for us, the least we can do is to be faithful to Him, seek to bring others to Him, constantly confess Him, and loyally follow Him.

Let us in word and deed hold up before others the true Christ, the Son of God, the only Saviour of the world. Let us proclaim Him to others. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ For example Gen. 3:15; Gen 22:18; Gen 26:4; Gen 49:10; Deut. 18:15; Psa. 16:10; Psa. 22; Isa. 7:14; Isa. 9:6; Isa. chap. 53; Jer. 23:5; Micah 5:2; Zech. 6:12; Zech. 9:9.

² John 5:39

³ John chapter 4

⁴ John 8:30, John 12:42

⁵ Luke 23:42

⁶ Matthew 27:54

⁷ Luke 16:31

⁸ Romans 8:28

⁹ Philippians 4:13

¹⁰ Mark 16:15