



Come and See!

Considering a Message from John 1:43-51
For the Week of July 21st, 2019

The 5th Sunday after Trinity focuses us on “Discipleship.” On this Sunday, we hear about the privileges and joys of following Christ; but we are also given encouragement for the times when we, as Jesus’ disciples, face challenges and hostilities from our spiritual enemies. What comfort we have as our Lord reassures us that He will strengthen us and be with us every step of the way. As we go out, it is not our own efforts or work, but His work that is carried out through us, that grows His kingdom. After all, the Lord is the one who sends out “many fishermen” and “many hunters” to bring His people back to Him. (Jeremiah 16:14-21) It is the Lord who gives “the hope that is in you”—that which motivates us to “always be prepared to give an answer” to those who see and ask about our faith. (1 Peter 3:8-15) As Jesus began His public ministry he called upon Philip to “Follow Me.” Philip happily did this by sharing the news about Jesus with Nathanael. When Nathanael responded with skepticism, Philip simply said: “Come and See!” Jesus then took it from there. He demonstrated to Nathanael that He was indeed the Promised One and He promised Nathanael that they would witness great things when following Him. This is a promise that applies still to those who follow Jesus—who continue in “discipleship.” We too listen to that gracious invitation and we share it with others: “Come and See!” “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus!”

Opening Prayer: We thank You Lord Jesus for the gracious invitation you give to “Come and see YOU.” We thank You for calling us to be Your disciples and for working through us to invite more people to “Come and see!” Be with us now as we gather to discuss Your Word. Strengthen our faith and trust in You. Help us to be Your disciples. We pray this in Your name. Amen.

CONNECT to Each Other

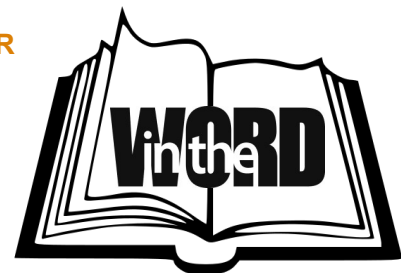
For this first session, take a few moments to get to know each other better—especially anyone who might be new or unfamiliar to the people in your group. Have each person briefly introduce themselves with: first/last name, immediate family, where you work(ed), how long you’ve been a member of Mt. Olive, and one thing you like to help others remember you: *“I’m the guy or gal who likes to...”*

1. (Icebreaker:) Has there ever been a certain event you had to be persuaded into attending—that later on you were grateful for? Or has there been a certain product, or place of business, or website that you were initially skeptical about, that someone convinced you to check out—that you came to appreciate and find useful? Explain....
EXPERIENCES WILL VARY/BE SUBJECTIVE—PERHAPS IT WAS SOMETHING THAT IS NOW A HOBBY OF YOURS... PERHAPS IT’S A COMFORTABLE PAIR OF SHOES OR ARTICLE OF CLOTHING—SOME CLEANING SUPPLY—A FUNNY OR HELPFUL WEBSITE OR PHONE APP YOU REGULARLY USE NOW... SOMEONE ESSENTIALLY INVITED YOU: “COME AND SEE!” FOR YOURSELF AND YOU ARE GLAD YOU DID.

CONNECT to the Word—Read the Bible text together (also consider its context): **John 1:43-51**

2. In John 1:46, Philip told his friend Nathanael, “Come and see!” What are some ways a church might seek to make that same invitation to people who don’t know Jesus? **MANY THINGS THAT CHURCHES DO...DOOR TO DOOR CANVASSING, RADIO/TV/INTERNET BROADCASTING...COMMUNITY EVENTS...PARADES/HANDOUTS...SERVICE PROGRAMS/YARDWORK/**

ETC. ALSO OUR CHURCHES SEND OUT MISSIONARIES THROUGH OUR SYNOD—WE ARE SUPPORTING THEIR WORK AS THEY GO INTO ALL THE WORLD INVITING OTHERS TO “COME AND SEE!” ...THERE ARE MANY WAYS WE DO THIS...



3. There are many different strategies that churches employ for outreach and evangelism. These strategies meet with varying success in various places. Finally, what alone can draw an unbeliever to Jesus? What is it that brings out Nathanael’s profession that Jesus is “the Son of God!”? **ULTIMATELY THIS IS GOD’S WORK... REVIEW: EXPLANATION TO 3RD ARTICLE OF THE APOSTLES’ CREED: “I CANNOT BY MY OWN REASON OR STRENGTH BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST MY LORD OR COME TO HIM, BUT THE HOLY GHOST HAS CALLED ME BY THE GOSPEL....ETC.” JESUS WAS THE ONE WHO MADE THE IMPACT ON NATHANAEL...IT WAS BY JESUS’ POWER, DEMONSTRATED TO NATHANAEL, THAT DREW OUT OF HIM THE PROFESSION OF FAITH. PHILIP WAS THE INTERMEDIARY, HE SIMPLY OFFERED THE INVITATION, JESUS DID THE REST...**
4. Why must this power to bring people to faith—to make disciples—be God’s, and not our own? Why is this comforting for us to consider? How might this also be a frustrating thing for us? **GOD IS THE ONE WHO IS AT WORK BRINGING PEOPLE INTO HIS KINGDOM BY THE MIRACLE OF SAVING FAITH. THIS IS COMFORTING FOR US BECAUSE BY NATURE WE ARE DEAD IN SINS, AND UNABLE TO COME TO JESUS OR BELIEVE IN HIM ON OUR OWN. BUT IF IT IS GOD’S WORK AND HIS PROMISE, WE HAVE ASSURANCE AND CONFIDENCE THAT WE ARE HIS DISCIPLES. THE PRESSURE IS OFF OF US—GOD’S POWER IS WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING PEOPLE TO FAITH—IT’S NOT ABOUT US OR OUR ABILITY TO PERSUADE OR CONVINCE, WE SIMPLY INVITE: “COME AND SEE FOR YOURSELF!” THIS CAN ALSO BE FRUSTRATING BECAUSE GOD’S TIMETABLE AND IDEAS ON HOW TO LEAD PEOPLE TO HIM DOESN’T ALWAYS MATCH WITH OUR IDEAS OR OUR TIMETABLE...**
5. Why does “seeing Jesus rightly” also mean “seeing ourselves rightly”? **FIRST, WE SEE THAT WE HAVE SINNED AND ARE DESERVING OF GOD’S WRATH. THEN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS IS PRECIOUS AND VALUABLE TO US. WITHOUT FIRST OF ALL KNOWING OUR NEED, WILL WE SEE HOW OUR NEEDS ARE FULFILLED IN CHRIST! TO DIG DEEPER: HOW DOES MARK 2:15-17 APPLY TO THIS? —HEALTHY DON’T NEED A DOCTOR, THE SICK DO! ETC...**
6. When we “see” Jesus, we see our true and only Savior. What does the Bible say that Jesus did for us? **WE TRACE ALL OF OUR BLESSINGS BACK TO HIM! ALL GOOD THINGS COME FROM HIM! BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK HE CARRIED OUT FOR US IS: (ACTIVE OBEDIENCE) HE OBEYED THE LAW ON OUR BEHALF AND (PASSIVE OBEDIENCE) HE DIED ON THE CROSS AS THE SACRIFICE FOR OUR SINS, AND (VICTORY!) HE ROSE AGAIN, ASSURING US OF OUR JUSTIFICATION AND SALVATION. THIS IS THE WORK THAT JESUS IS ALL ABOUT—IT IS THE PRIMARY PURPOSE AND WORK OF OUR SAVIOR... THIS MUST ALWAYS COME FIRST! THIS IS WHY WE PUT OUR FAITH AND TRUST IN HIM! HE SAVES US.**
7. What did Jesus mean when He told Nathanael, “You will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man”? **IT MEANS THAT THROUGH JESUS, TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN, THE WAY TO HEAVEN IS OPEN TO US AND ALL WHO BELIEVE IN HIM... TO DIG DEEPER: WHAT DOES THIS REMIND YOU OF? WHERE IN SCRIPTURE DO PEOPLE SEE “HEAVEN OPENED”? SEE JACOB’S LADDER: GENESIS 28:12; ALSO JESUS BAPTISM: LUKE 3:21... WHAT DOES THIS TELL US ABOUT JESUS? HE IS THE CHOSEN, ANOINTED, LONG-PROMISED, DIVINE SON OF GOD!**



CONNECT to Life

8. How does Jesus' promise to Nathanael about seeing "greater things"—also apply to us? Where do we get to see "Heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man"? **WE TOO ARE PROMISED "GREATER THINGS" THAN WE "COULD IMAGINE OR ASK FOR" (EPHESIANS 3:20) BECAUSE WE ARE CHRIST'S DISCIPLES. WE TOO HAVE HEAVEN OPENED UNTO US AS JESUS HIMSELF COMES AND MAKES HIS HOME WITH US—IN OUR HEARTS—THROUGH WORD AND SACRAMENT. AS WE COME TO CHURCH AND HEAR THE WORD, AS WE ARE BAPTIZED AND REMEMBER OUR BAPTISMS, AS WE RECEIVE CHRIST'S OWN BODY AND BLOOD IN THE LORD'S SUPPER, WE ARE GIVEN FORGIVENESS, SALVATION AND ETERNAL LIFE! GLORY BE TO GOD!**
9. How did the hymns, other lessons, parts of the service, etc. fit together with the Sermon message and overall theme for the day? **VARIOUS ANSWERS—OBVIOUSLY THE WHOLE SERVICE IS DESIGNED TO BE A COHESIVE UNIT/SINGLE THEME...**

CONNECT in Prayer—*In closing & throughout the week!*

- PLEASE OFFER PRAYERS that our continued efforts to invite others to "Come and See!" might be blessed—especially our recent outreach and evangelism efforts at the Fun Days and Tator Days parades.
- PRAY for another successful season of Connect Groups—that this might continue to be a blessing for each of us and each other.
- PRAY for the ongoing work of our Building Project and for those working on our project. PRAY that the financial support needed for our Project and for our Church Budget might continue to be provided.
- PRAY for our sister in Christ Linda Teigen as she continues in Hospice Care. Be with Vicar Jacob and his wife Anna Kempfert and their newborn daughter Haddaseh especially as we look forward to "Haddie's" baptism next week! PRAY for our expecting mothers and their children.
- PRAY for the Lutheran Youth Association Conference that will be meeting at Bethany Lutheran College this week, and for the safe travels of all who will be attending.
- *(If you have ANY prayer requests, please let Pr. Ulrich know, we will happily add them to our list!)*

