**Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael**

**43**The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”

**44**Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. **45**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.”

**46**“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.

“Come and see,” said Philip.

**47**When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

**48**“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

**49**Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.”

**50**Jesus said, “You believe[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A43-51&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26095a)] because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.” **51**He then added, “Very truly I tell you,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A43-51&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26096b)] you[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A43-51&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26096c)] will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A43-51&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26096d)] the Son of Man.”

Our Gospel reading this morning is **Jesus Callings Philip and Nathanael**

As our childlren’s sermon pointed out, God knows our name.

Our all knowing, all seeing, ever present God knows as the Psalmist says God has “searched me..and knows me.” (v 1)

That “You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.  You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.  Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely…Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.’ Psalm 130:1-3

And goes on with his lips full of praise to say

“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
    your works are wonderful,
    I know that full well.
**15**My frame was not hidden from you
    when I was made in the secret place,
    when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
**16**Your eyes saw my unformed body;
    all the days ordained for me were written in your book
    before one of them came to be.  Psalm 139:14-16

Indeed, God knows it all.  Humanity seeks to journey with Him during this time/ season of epiphany and indeed the rest of the year, because He knows us fully, and we seem to act as though we don’t know Him at all.

Even though we falter, God still calls out to us.

Even though we fail to meet His standard of perfection for us, God still reaches out to us.

Ever patient, ever loving, wise and eternal Master God yearns for us to desire a relationship with Him that He wants to have with us.

And John opens our reading this morning with Jesus, deciding to go to Galilee.

And John is lavish in his description of the divinity of Jesus.

From the first verse of the gospel John 1:1 establishes who Jesus is.  That Jesus is no ordinary man, but he is God’s very own eternal Word made available to an underserving humanity in the life of the Word made flesh.

John’s gospel makes use in just a few verses of many of the names that we will come to know Jesus by.

The very volume of names poses the question “What’s in a name?”

John’s gospel uses the names such as Jesus, son of Joseph; Jesus from Nazareth; Jesus the Eternal Word, Jesus the Incarnate Word of God.

The gospel seems to understand that we too as human beings will be known by many titles.

For example, a woman can be Jane the wife, Jane the daughter, Jane the mother, auntie Jane, Jane the working professional, Professor Jane, Dr. Jane.

Each of the names are all accurate, and none of the names makes the other names obsolete, or somehow inaccurate.

What a name does is introduce and inform us of the individual we are addressing.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth tells us something about the earthly Jesus.

Jesus Christ The Living Word tells us something about His divinity.

A name with a description or a title indicates a familiarity with the person.

The Psalmist says God knows it all.

The name, the circumstances of our lives.

He knows the hurts and hopes and dreams.

So when Jesus addresses Nathaniel, Jesus demonstrates just how familiar he is with Nathaniel as a person.

Jesus upon seeing Nathaniel, says of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

What a wonderful thing to be said about a person!

A man “in whom there is no deceit”.

Jesus knows that Nathaniel is a man of good reputation,  Since Jesus knows our hearts, he knows something of Nathaniel’s virtue, s man without guile.

 After all, a man with honesty is a man with integrity.

And Christ knowing the heart, knows this of Nathaniel upon their first meeting.

Before Nathaniel even has the opportunity to show who he is

And what a wonderful thing for the Living Word to say of any of us.

We should all strive to live  lives of such integrity that we would be worthy of that comment from the Lord.

He finds Philipp and says just two words, “Follow Me”

And Philip acts in automatic obedience that every disciple of  Christ should display.

He does what Christ instructs.

 And Philip acts in automatic obedience that every disciple of  Christ should display.

He does what Christ instructs.

See there is something in a name, especially in the name of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:9

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
    and gave him the name that is above every name,
**10**that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
    in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
**11**and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
    to the glory of God the Father.

Isnt it wonderful to know that the one who’s name means so much, knows the names of you and me.

He sees our hearts. Knows where there is deception and truth, love and hate.

We are told in explicit detail in Corinthians that we are a part of Christ in such a way that we are united with Him, and when we commit sin, here the sin of fornication, we literally defile the temple of the Holy Spirit.

We are made different when we become a part of Christ, in accept the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

We are made new people.

Even if we are “good people” to begin with like Nathanial, of whom Jesus declared ‘here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit”.

Here God takes a person who is humanly praiseworthy, even known to Christ as a “virtuous person”, and makes of him something more. Isaiah declared to us that even our righteousness is like “filthy rags” when we come before God’s holiness.

We are still sinners in need of a savior. And we can be assured that our savor knows and loves us.

When we see the young Samuel at first mistook the voice of the Lord for that of Eli, who then helped Samuel realize who was calling him.

Even when confronted with the Divine, it is possible for people to be oblivious to God’s presence in their lives.

The boy Samuel lived in the temple, serving God in that capacity, yet in this moment he didn’t quite recognize the voice of God.

John 10:27-28 Jesus says of recognizing his voice,

**27**My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. **28**I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.

The God who reveals himself to us, beckons us to come to him and reveal ourselves in prayer and a daily walk with him.

We can only benefit from the intimate4 relationship that God wants to have with us if we develop that relationship with him.

It is a joy to know that Jesus knows our names, but it is an ever better joy to know that Jesus knows us and wants to be known by us.

In 1 Samuel 3:11-12, the Lord says to Samuel “See I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.”

Tingle with excitement. Tingle with utter joy at the actions of the divine yet close to us God.

The same 1 Samuel passage says that the word of the Lord was rare in those days, yet God chose young Samuel to deliver the message to Eli who was, according to the Books of Samuel, a High Priest of Shiloh.

Eli, who had walked with God and had served for some time pleasing the Lord in that capacity, had two sons named Hophni and Phineas, who were wicked. They served in the tabernacle but didn’t really know the the Lord (1 Samuel 2:12)

The bad behavior of Eli’s sons was apparently widely known and was told to Eli. Eli rebuked his sons but failed to make them stop and continued to allow them to profane the tabernacle (1 Sam 2:25)

Apparently there was some lack of zeal on Eli’s part, some part of Eli just couldn’t bring himself to deal with his sons and have them removed from the temple.

The priest God raised up was a boy named [Samuel](https://www.gotquestions.org/life-Samuel.html), who was dedicated to the tabernacle by his mother, [Hannah](https://www.gotquestions.org/life-Hannah.html), a formerly barren woman who had prayed for a child. Hannah spoke her prayer in Eli’s presence, and he had blessed her: “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him” ([1 Samuel 1:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam%201.17)). God answered Hannah’s prayer, and she had a son. After Samuel was weaned, she gave him to the Lord’s service ([1 Samuel 1:24–28](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam%201.24%E2%80%9328)).

Such a stark contrast between two parents who loved God and their children.

One, Hannah, gave her child over to the service of the Lord, and the other father, Eli, seems unable to correct his sons behavior and turn their hearts to God.

Later, when Samuel was a little older and Eli’s eyes were so weak that he could barely see, the Lord Himself spoke to Samuel. In the middle of the night, the Lord “came and stood” in Samuel’s room ([1 Samuel 3:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam%203.10)) and told the young boy to deliver to Eli the message that it was almost time for the prophesied judgment to fall upon his family (verses 11–14). Eli humbly accepted God’s decree, and Samuel was eventually confirmed as a prophet of the Lord in Shiloh ([1 Samuel 3:19–21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam%203.19%E2%80%9321)).

God calls each of us by name to be in relationship with us.

God like the friend we all need and the only filler of the God shaped hole in our lives and hearts, wants to be more than the Sunday morning God of the church hour.

He calls to us.

In John, we find Philip as Christ says to him “follow me”

Philip then excitedly, probably tingling as our first Samuel fortold, excitedly tells 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… Come and see”

When we do connect with God as He wishes us to, we will become so excited about the discovery that we will tell others anbout the one who saved our souls, and gave our lives meaning, and made us new and whole.

Beloved of God, Jesus, calls to you during this season of Epiphany, this season when our spirits are quickened to seek Him out and discover what God has in store for us on the next step of the way.

Epiphany, that sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something’ was what we just marked last week.

God wants to manifest something new in you.

When He calls you, will you answer?

When He sends someone in your path and brings the message “Come and See?”, will you move towards Him?

He knows your name. He knows everything about you.

Like Eli, not following Him with enough zeal to do what he says, can lead to cracks in your relationship with God, and those around you.

There was a commercial a few years back for a mobile phone company where the people in the commercial had poor reception and they kept asking the person on the other line “Can you hear me now?”. They’d ask louder. They’d ask with greater emphasis on different words. They’d tilt their cell phones to the left and the right and hold their cells over their heads, each time asking “Can you hear me now?”

God does that with us, much like He did with young Samuel, God just kept calling until Samuel finally settled in and was able to listen.

Perhaps you haven’t sensed an audible call from God. That’s okay. God will often stir us with a feeling, or bring us to a scripture we need just at that right moment, or he will speak to us through a friend or confident with just the word we need at just the right time. In those cases think of ‘the call’ as a metaphor. The point is we have to be in such relationship with God and His word that our hearts are ‘quickened’ to His presence in our lives.

Maybe you’ve been a little further away from God than you’d like. Maybe you haven’t reached out to God like you would like to. Maybe there is sin blocking your reception of God.

If that’s where you are, God will still reach out to you. He will still call you and say ‘follow me’ and He will still send others with message to ‘come and see’ what He is about to do.

Beloved of God, be aware of God’s call in your life.

It’s the one call you really don’t want to miss answering.

Amen.