

“Come And See Jesus”

Luke 4: 14 -30; 1st Corinthians 1: 26 -31; Ephesians 3: 1 - 12; **John 1: 43 – 51 (Sermon)**

Today is Epiphany Sunday.

The Word Epiphany means: *“to show”*; *“to make known”*; or *“to reveal”*.

We celebrate Epiphany to remind us that God does reveal Himself to people.

Epiphany Sunday is often linked to the Magi following the star to find the Christ-child.

That is why we give out Epiphany Stars on Epiphany Sunday.

However, there are many other epiphanies recorded in the Bible and today we will look at Nathanael’s epiphany.

We do not know much about Nathanael.

Nathanael was from Cana in Galilee, which is eight miles from Nazareth.

Nathanael had a preconceived opinion about Nazareth and could not believe that anything good could come out of Nazareth.

That is why in verse 46 he said; ***“Can anything good come from Nazareth?”***

However, from verse 47 we know Nathanael was a righteous Israelite.

Tradition suggests that Nathanael is the same man referred to as Bartholomew by the other Gospel writers.

Perhaps he had a double name like Nathanael Bartholomew or Bartholomew Nathanael.

But it is not what we know or do not know about Nathanael that is important.

What is important is what Nathanael did and what Nathanael saw that is important; important to Nathanael and important lessons for us today.

This account about Nathanael is about seeing and about being seen.

It is about Nathanael being able to clearly see what was right in front of him after Jesus sees Nathanael.

At first to Nathanael, Jesus appeared to be simply a carpenter from an obscure place.

However, after meeting Jesus Nathanael is able to see things in an entirely different way.

Remember when Philip first told Nathanael about Jesus, Nathanael said, ***“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”***

Nathanael’s preconceived view of Jesus prevented Nathanael from seeing who Jesus really was.

But after meeting Jesus Nathanael saw Jesus for who Jesus really is.

In verse 49 we have Nathanael's statement of faith. ***"Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."***

Even though Nathanael had a preconceived opinion, Nathanael accepted Philip's challenge to come and see Jesus.

So I ask you; *"did you come here with an open mind today"*.

"Did you come to church expecting to have a personal encounter with your Savior today"?

"Did you come here today expecting Jesus to reveal Himself to you in a new way?"

You see, when we have a personal encounter with Jesus we have the ability to see things as they really are.

When we respond by coming to see Jesus, Jesus gives us new vision; we have the ability to see God at work in our life and we have the ability to see The Lord in our neighbors' lives.

That is what Epiphany is all about; God revealing Himself to us.

In this Epiphany season we are the ones who are invited to come and see Jesus.

You are invited to discover who Jesus really is and you are invited to experience the transforming work Jesus wants to do in your life.

However, you must be willing to make the commitment to find out more about Jesus and to find out how Jesus wants to use you in 2018.

Staying in the presence of The Almighty also takes the same kind of curiosity and commitment that we see in Nathanael.

So the question for each of us today is how do we ensure that we do not miss the experience of Epiphany?

How do we ensure that we do not miss experiencing God revealing Himself to us today?

Our text from John today provides us with several things that we all need to do so we do not miss out on the wonderful things God is doing in our world today.

First of all we, like Nathanael must be looking for evidence of God at work in our lives.

Secondly we need to be spiritually pure in order to receive God's light and for us to participate in God' redemptive work in the world we live in.

Thirdly, we must take the time and made the effort to find out more about Jesus our Messiah.

We all need to ask ourselves; *"am I willing to take time out of my busy schedule each day to discover Jesus at work in my life."*

“The story of Nathanael challenges us to persevere so that we too will experience the same joy that Nathanael did when he came face to face with The Lord Jesus Christ.”

This text also reminds us that often we find joy and peace from an unexpected person or in an unwanted experience.

When Nathanael came to Jesus with an open mind and came with expectation Jesus opened Nathanael’s spiritual eyes.

Then Nathanael was able to clearly see who Jesus was and what Jesus wanted to accomplish through him.

That is what Epiphany is all about. Seeing God at work in you world.

Nathanael’s hope of The Messiah was met when Nathanael met Jesus.

When Nathaniel came to Jesus, Nathaniel found out that Jesus knew all about Him.

Jesus knew the real Nathaniel and Jesus knew everything Nathanael had ever done.

Jesus also saw the Nathanael’s potential and that is why Jesus called him to be one of The Twelve Disciples.

Jesus also knows everything about you and me.

That is the amazing good news of Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus loves you and Jesus wants you to be with Him throughout eternity even though He knows about all of your doubts, all of your shortcomings, and all of your past failures.

The story of Nathanael challenges us to look for God at work in our world.

You see our life on this earth is designed to be a time to get to know, to love, to serve, and to enjoy our creator God.

It is a time to show us what God is doing in our world; a quest of discovering The Lord’s abiding presence with us.

That is what epiphany is all about.

What about you?

Are you willing to make the effort to come and see Jesus in a different way?

Are you willing to take the time and make the effort to come and see what God wants to reveal to you?

If Jesus could transform this disbelieving, skeptical, ordinary man named Nathanael into a professing disciple, Jesus can certainly transform you and me.

You see when we come and see Jesus with an open mind, and when we come with expectations, Jesus will transform us and Jesus will use us in advancing His Kingdom.

Now let look at Philip.

Soon after Philip made a decision to follow Jesus, Philip went to his friend Nathanael and said; ***“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.”***

Notice Philip did not have a theological debate with Nathanael. Philip simply stated what he knew.

Then Philip challenged Nathanael to ***“come and see Jesus.”***

We all need to learn some lessons from Philip.

As believers we are called to share our faith with our friends.

And secondly as witnesses there is no need to debate or for us argue.

There is no need to force our beliefs on others.

Our job as Christians is simply to state what we believe about Jesus and to invite them to ***“come and see Jesus”***.

You see Nathanael might not have ever known Jesus if Philip had not talked to him about Jesus.

Many of you, like Nathanael owe your salvation to a friend introducing you to Jesus.

So the question for each of us today is: *How many of my friends have I introduced to Jesus?*

Each of us has been called to openly profess our faith in Jesus Christ.

We have all been called to share what we have experienced.

If Jesus could transform this disbelieving, skeptical, ordinary man named Nathanael into a professing disciple, Jesus can certainly transform any of your unbelieving skeptical friends.

You see if we are truly a disciple, Jesus will use us in advancing His kingdom.

Think how you are going to feel when you find out that some of your family and friends are not in heaven because you did not tell them about Jesus?

This account about Nathanael is about God revealing Himself to us as well as about the need for us to tell the unbelieving people God has put in our lives about Jesus.

Epiphany is about God revealing Himself to us and Epiphany is about God revealing how He wants to use us.

Each year we give out Epiphany stars.

The Epiphany Stars give us an opportunity to go on a spiritual journey to see what God wants to reveal to each of us.

A spiritual journey of studying and seeking; a journey of following The Lord's leading; a journey of asking and questioning; and a journey of listening and responding.

To complete the journey will require commitment on your part.

So when we pass out the Epiphany Stars in a few minutes I challenge each one of us to make that commitment to ourselves and our Lord Jesus The Christ.

Are you willing to take the time and to make the effort to find out more about your Savior and Lord and to find out how The Lord wants to use you in 2018?

AMEN