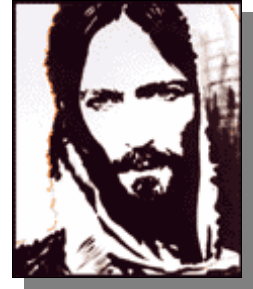


Son of God

Nathaniel - *John 1:43-51*



series: The Jesus I Follow

week 1

When a man or woman first encounters Jesus Christ and the reality that He is alive—really alive, not just a lesson in ancient history - it normally causes an impact in his or her life of seismic proportions. New values flood our minds and hearts, a new awareness that we are not alone but in the company of a holy and loving Father. New discoveries rush in almost daily; new impulses crop up like green plants in a barren, lifeless desert. However, as weeks become months, and months then become years full of conversations where Jesus is casually referred to, we can get used to Him being around. We find ourselves followers of a leader who is somewhat out-of-focus.

John 1:43-51 The Message

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. When he got there, he ran across Philip and said, "Come, follow me." (Philip's hometown was Bethsaida, the same as Andrew and Peter.)

Philip went and found Nathanael and told him, "We've found the One Moses wrote of in the Law, the One preached by the prophets. It's *Jesus*, Joseph's son, the one from Nazareth!"

Nathanael said, "Nazareth? You've got to be kidding."

But Philip said, "Come, see for yourself."

When Jesus saw him coming he said, "There's a real Israelite, not a false bone in his body."

Nathanael said, "Where did you get that idea? You don't know me."

Jesus answered, "One day, long before Philip called you here, I saw you under the fig tree."

Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi! You are the Son of God, the King of Israel!"

Jesus said, "You've become a believer simply because I say I saw you one day sitting under the fig tree? You haven't seen anything yet! Before this is over you're going to see heaven open and God's angels descending to the Son of Man and ascending again."

That's what this series is for: to re-focus our vision on the One who called us to leave our old lives behind and follow Him into the great unknown adventure He called the kingdom of God. And in the process of looking, perhaps He will re-calibrate our minds and priorities, maybe he will remind us that a clear image of who He is gives us the only clear picture of who we are.

The first scene we'll look at takes place early in John's Gospel, the very first chapter. John, probably knowing of Matthew's and Luke's accounts of Jesus' birth, skips right to the beginning of His ministry and the choosing of some key followers:

Who was Nathaniel? (consult a Bible dictionary)

- We know that Jesus had twelve disciples. Yet Nathaniel is mentioned only in John's gospel. Who is he?
- What did the Jewish name "Nathaniel" mean?

Names can mean a lot. Going back to verse 35, and then on through verse 51, how many different ways is Jesus referred to?

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

God involves us in His work.

- In the process of gathering these 4 disciples—Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathaniel, what pattern do you see?
- Who was your Andrew, or your Philip?
- Did Andrew & Philip use intricate arguments to win over their brothers? If not, what did they do?

Nathaniel's first response.

- How did Nathaniel first respond to Philip? What was his estimation of Jesus? What kind of attitude did he exhibit?

Nathaniel's second response: he "repents".

When most people hear the word "repent" they tend to think of someone emotionally saying "I'm sorry" or steadfastly promising to change their behavior. While those things may accompany repentance, the Greek word is "metanoia", which literally means "to change your mind". When we repent we "change our minds" about who Jesus is. For instance, in 2 Corinthians 5:16, the apostle Paul says that he used to see Jesus as a mere man, from a worldly perspective, but that his mind was changed on the road to Damascus when he encountered the risen Christ, and now he sees him as Who He really is, the Lord of Lords.

- How does Nathaniel "change his mind" about who Jesus is, and why?

Old story, new insight.

- What Old Testament event is Jesus referring to in verse 51? (read Genesis 28:10-17)
- What did it mean to Jacob in that context?
- What new meaning was Jesus giving to this?

LIFE RESPONSE

- When you think of Jesus as the Son of God, what response do you have? How does it feel to know that you can have an intimate, personal relationship with God who came in human form?

They [the disciples] were inclined to judge Jesus by His earthly father, Joseph. They were trying to measure His worth by His earthly home, Nazareth. He opened up to them the truth that any earthly setting at which He is present becomes the gateway to heaven."

- Ravi Zacharias,
Jesus Among Other Gods

He is the
Image of the
invisible God...

For in Christ all
the fullness of
the Deity lives in
bodily form..."

- Colossians 1:15, 2:9

SON OF GOD

One of the primary titles of Jesus in the NT. His claim to this title was the principal charge that the Jewish leaders made against him (Matt 26:63-64; Mark 14:61-62; cf. John 5:17-18; 19:7). The confession that Jesus is the Son of God was basic to the teaching of the apostles and the faith of the early church (2 Cor 1:19; Gal 2:20; 1 John 4:15; 5:5, 13). The title is to be understood both as a synonym for Messiah (Ps 2:7; Matt 16:16; 26:63; 27:40) and as implying deity through a unique relation with the Father (John 5:18).

The filial consciousness of Jesus and his unique relationship with the Father are particularly emphasized in John's Gospel. Jesus is God's only Son (John 1:18), one with the Father (10:30), always doing the Father's will (4:34; 5:30; 6:38), and being in the Father as the Father is in him (10:38). He speaks what he hears from the Father (12:50), has unique knowledge of the Father (10:15; cf. Matt 11:27), and possesses the authority of the Father (John 3:35; 5:22; 13:3; 16:15). Thus, only in and through the Son is God's salvation given (3:36; 5:26; 6:40).

Outside the Gospels, God is called "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," suggesting a particular intimacy between Father and Son (Rom 15:6; 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3; Col 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3; Rev 1:6). By his resurrection and ascension Jesus is designated Son of God (Rom 1:3) and preached to be so (Acts 8:37; 9:20; 13:33; 2 Cor 1:19). The distinction and difference between Jesus and the great prophets of Israel is that Jesus is the unique Son of God (Heb 1; 3:6). Finally, there is the trinitarian formula in Matthew 28:19.

- NIV Bible Dictionary