

COME AND SEE
20TH SUN. AFTER PENT./LWML SUN.

JOHN 1:43-46
OCT 2, '16

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. 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 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

When you are excited about something new,
new project you have just finished, new car or house,
new baby who has been born,
it is natural to share excitement by saying to others,
"Come and see."
No wonder Philip, who has just met Jesus
and become his disciple says, "Come and see."
But even after something is no longer new,
there are reasons for others to see what is important to us.
Parents and grandparents are invited to come and see
when children have a presentation at school.
Any with child hears, "look at this!" dozens of times daily.
Another reason to say "Come and see"
is when something may be hard to explain
to another who is unfamiliar with it
and it is easier to just say, "Come and see."
Today, we observe Lutheran Womens' Missionary League Sun.
think about various reasons we all have
to encourage others to come and see
what God does for us through Jesus.

OTHERS CAN COME TO SEE JESUS THROUGH US
WE SEE OTHERS AS PEOPLE WHO NEED JESUS
WE SEE GOD'S GOODNESS IN SURPRISING PLACES

OTHERS CAN COME TO SEE JESUS THROUGH US
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."

Philip is not a disciple we hear a lot about in Bible.
Gospel of John mentions him more than others.

John mentions it was Philip who said to Jesus,
“Show us the father.” to which Jesus replied,
haven’t you seen me? If you have seen me,
you know what the Father is like.
Maybe Philip himself was one who had a hard time
understanding things and needed to be shown.
John mentions that it was Philip who once was approached
by some Greeks who wanted to meet Jesus
so he goes and gets Andrew and together
they introduce them to Jesus.
Maybe Philip didn’t feel he could do it by himself.
But why would the Greeks approach Philip first.
Philip is Greek name. Likely like Timothy in 2nd reading,
he had a Jewish mother but a gentile father.
So, there may be various reasons to ask,
when it comes to being disciple, sharing the gospel,
why Philip? He seems unlikely.
We may feel the same way about ourselves,
who, me? How can I bring others to Jesus?
I am not sure I see things clearly myself.
I can’t do it on my own.
Why us? Because, like Philip, we know people
who do not yet know Jesus,
and we have something in common with them.
We may know what it is like to have struggles they have
but we also know how Jesus helps us with ours.
We may not feel we have all the right words
but sometimes even more powerful than words
are the ways we show in our lives
the peace that comes from being forgiven,
the love that comes from being loved
the hope that comes from knowing God’s promises.
Like Lois and Eunice in 2nd reading, women of LWML
have important role in passing on the faith
and set an example for us to follow
One way they do this is by things they do, serving food,
such as meals at church and for funerals,
taking care of the nursery, beautifying the church,
doing projects around the world through their mites.
These things can speak volumes
and create opportunities to talk about Jesus too.

Unlike Philip, we can't take people to Jesus in person,
but they can come to see Jesus in us
and we can invite them to come and see,
come meet my Christian friends,
come with me to worship, or a Bible class.
But one reason we may hesitate
besides seeing ourselves as unlikely ones to do this,
is seeing others as unlikely, until...

WE SEE OTHERS AS PEOPLE WHO NEED JESUS

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Nathaniel was skeptical of Jesus because he was from Nazareth, a small town in the hills of Galilee. Galileans were considered uncultured, backwards people. and the hills were especially full of rough characters. Nazareth was backwoods, hillbillies. Nathaniel himself is from Galilee, but at least not Nazareth, you know how it is with towns that are rivals. We too may have tendency to look down on others who seem different, or maybe even for ways they are like us. We may think, "If I was them, I wouldn't be interested in Jesus" Maybe they seem too rough to care, too backward to get it. Maybe it would be too hard to explain things to them, they are too poor to be a good addition to the church. Maybe we assume they have their own religion or they don't know English well, is hard to communicate. Or, on other hand, they seem too successful to want a savior, too high class to care about what we have to share. or to tuned in to popular culture to pay attention. Or, as tends to be when people are marginalized in society, we just don't see them at all. We look right past them. We can come up with no end of reasons not to share Jesus with those we don't feel connected with in our community or around the world, but there is one good reason to do it, that is seeing that no matter how different from us they may appear, they all have in common with us a need for Jesus, his forgiveness for our failures and his faithful love. This is why Philip did reach out to his skeptical friend, Nathaniel,

and why this unlikely pair did join the other unlikely disciples
in following the unlikely savior.

So do we when...

WE SEE GOD'S GOODNESS IN SURPRISING PLACES

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 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

This conversation takes place in Jerusalem.

That is where the temple is, where important people are,
where holy things are done.

But, contrary to what was assumed,
it was not people in important positions
or any holy thing people could do that saves us.

All those priests, ceremonies and sacrifices were only shadows
helping people to see what God would ultimately do himself
by humbling himself to take our place in person of Jesus.

He is the one all the O.T. law and prophets pointed to.

As Paul wrote to Timothy in 2nd reading,

God saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of
our works but because of his own purpose and grace,
which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began
and which now has been manifested through the appearing
of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death
and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel

It is only through Jesus that we come to see

how much God loves us, enough to be born a helpless baby
that shepherds & sages were surprised to see in manger;
and we see what he wants to do for us, as Jesus helps
the poor & sick & unpleasant that people were surprised
to see Jesus touching and associating with.

and we see how much we need salvation from sin
because we deserve the suffering and death
that he endured in our place

when an innocent man was surprisingly hung on cross;
and we see the power of God to help and transform us
when one who was dead and buried is surprisingly seen
alive again and ascending into heaven.

So we can see it is never too late for him to change even us

and he can forgive even our hidden sins
and the terrible looking sins of others;
and he can help us with problems that look impossible
and he will be with us in future that looks frightening.

He shows us this in some strange ways,
by having us baptize little babies with water,
by having us eat his body & blood with bread & wine,
by having a pastor declare that our sins are forgiven,
by having us gather to hear words from an ancient book
and sing hymns, some of which are ancient too.

Sometimes God's ways and blessings are hard to see.

But when we do come and see, like Nathaniel,
we look past ourselves and any human
understanding or accomplishment
to the surprising wisdom and power of what comes
through little Nazareth but from God himself.

Then we come to see that...

OTHERS CAN COME TO SEE JESUS THROUGH US

and things we do and invitations we share,
even when we may feel inadequate.

WE SEE OTHERS AS PEOPLE WHO NEED JESUS

just like us, even when they may seem different from us

But they can also become like us when

WE SEE GOD'S GOODNESS IN SURPRISING PLACES

in the humble suffering and death of God in our place,
in the curious work of his word and sacraments,
in the blessings he gives even in the midst of our troubles,
and in the amazing glory of those brought to faith
from every nation and language
who will come to see God face to face in heaven.