

Morning Sermon 8/28/2022 –
“Jesus: Jacob’s Ladder, Our Mediator” John 1:43-51

I. The foundational challenge from Christ to all Christians, “follow Me” –

⁴³ The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” John 1:43 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Matthew 4:19 (NKJV)

1. In these verses, from John 1:35-51 we see the beginnings of Christ’s Church:

- A. The first two disciples were Andrew and probably John (the author of this Gospel) – John 1:35-40
- B. Andrew finds his brother Peter, and that makes THREE – John 1:41-42
- C. Jesus finds Philip – John 1:43
- D. Philip finds Nathanael - John 1:44-45
- E. Nathanael “believes” – John 1:50 --- so at this point Jesus has 5 definite disciples, if you count John the Baptist 6! Include Jesus as the head of the Church 7!

2. The key, the foundation, the most important ingredient for real church grow is following Jesus –

Churches may increase their numbers in many ways, some legitimate, some sinful, yet what is most necessary in regard to our influencing people’s potential salvation is our following of Jesus –

- A. The pharisees were zealous evangelists / missionaries but they were not following Jesus, their hearts were not right, so what did their “evangelism” do? It did not “save” no it destroyed -

¹⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. Matthew 23:15 (NKJV)

- B. Following Jesus means living according to His teachings, taking up His cross, by God’s grace becoming more like Him – Romans 8:28-29 – when we do this; He makes us “fishers of men”.

II. Nathaniel the Anti-Jacob, won to Christ –

How this happened:

1. Philip’s faithful witness -

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.” John 1:44-45

- A. :43 Jesus found Philip

- B. Philip found Nathanael – John 1:45 A
- C. Philip told Nathanael, he and others “we” have found Him - “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” John 1:45
- D. What Philip is doing here may be in fishing terms a kind of reeling Nathanael in ...
 - 2. But Nathanael you might say, is STILL FIGHTING -
⁴⁶ And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” John 1:46 A
 - 3. But Philip keeps reeling, he would reel right to Jesus Himself –
 Philip said to him, “Come and see.” John 1:46 B
- Philip said, “Come and see” David says, “Taste and see” –
⁸ Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Psalm 34:8 (NKJV)
- 4. Jesus takes Nathanael off the fishing hook, Nathanael believes –
 - A. Jesus knew Nathanael, just like He knew Peter, even before they physically met –
⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!”
 - B. Nathanael asks, “how?”
⁴⁸ Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” John 1:48 A
 - C. Jesus answers, displaying His omniscience –
 Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” John 1:48 B
 - D. This fully convinces Nathanael –
⁴⁹ Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” John 1:49
 - E. Jesus rewards this FAST FAITH –
⁵⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” John 1:50 (NKJV)
- This is an example of what we were taught earlier –
¹⁶ And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. John 1:16 (NKJV)
- Nathanael believed in Jesus because of His display of omniscience, Jesus promised Him, vision of greater things!
- 5. Application: See glory, joy and fulness in Jesus’ non-specific, plural language - You will see greater things...” John 1:50 (NKJV)
 - A. Greater meaning even more impressive, more important
 - B. Things, plural meaning MANY GREATER THINGS ...

6. Don't miss Jesus knowledgeable description of Nathanael -
"Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" John 1:47 B

- A. Calling Nathanael an Israelite indeed is saying he is the changed version of Jacob, who's name "Jacob" meant a manipulator, supplanter, deceiver, and even betrayer –

³⁶ And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" Genesis 27:36 (NKJV)

- B. Now, Jacob grew in grace and eventually became Israel, (meaning power with God) but these verses seem to indicate Nathanael had this grace almost from the start, in fact the NAME Nathanael means – God-given.
- C. "No deceit" - :47 Probably means, "no Jacob" no Jacob DNA left in him ... it could have been a description of who Nathanael already was; or as Jesus foresaw, like Simon becoming Peter, who Nathanael prophetically 'would be' --- I believe it is a combination of BOTH!

One commentator argued, but 'Nathanael is not even converted yet' because of his "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" comment. However, I say, God works in mysterious ways, and not always the same in each person's life, I think it is possible, because of the Spirit's work, Nathanael may have been converted, even before meeting Jesus in the flesh, and even despite his protest to Philip, we hear the wind's sound meaning we KNOW Nathanael was converted, but we cannot always discern its motions –

⁸ **The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."** John 3:8 (NKJV)

7. Nathanael was honest about his doubts and views "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" but willing with Philip to "Come and see." John 1:46 B

- A. Some may have been LOST for stubbornly holding mistaken views not knowing everything they should have about Jesus –

⁴¹ Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? ⁴² Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" John 7:41–42 (NKJV)

- B. Application, beware of stubbornly held viewpoints, you may be correct, if so, you should aim to convince others / or you may be wrong, so should be willing to be convinced, especially by those who you know to be friends –

⁶ **Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.** Proverbs 27:6 (NKJV)

III. Jesus the True Mediator of Grace –

⁵¹ **And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."** John 1:51 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹ So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place

and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. ¹² Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. ¹⁴ Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. ¹⁵ Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.” ¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” ¹⁷ And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!” Genesis 28:10–17 (NKJV)

1. *Wake Up! Jacob! –*

- A. *Jacob had just deceived his father and stole his brother's blessing*
- B. *His mother told him to leave home because his brother Esau was ready to kill him*
- C. *Walking in the wilderness he is forced to use a stone as a pillow – Genesis 28:11*
- D. *In this circumstance he has the most amazing God-given (Nathanael-type) dream –*

¹² Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

2. *This dream symbolized God's invisible grace to Jacob, and to all of us who are believers –*

- A. *Despite Jacob's sin God is still ministering to him*
- B. *Despite Jacob's sad circumstance, in the wilderness, a stone for a pillow, running from a brother who wanted to kill him, God was still gracious and ministering to him!*
- C. *God's words to Jacob, verses :13-15 of Genesis 28, communicate that God would indeed bless him and others through him, despite his sin –*

3. *In John 1:51, Jesus is claiming that the Ladder in Jacob's dream is Jesus, the Son of Man, Jesus' most used title for Himself –*

⁵¹ And He said to him, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.**” John 1:51 (NKJV)

A. *Heaven opened means Nathanael also will see heavenly, spiritual, normally invisible things –*

B. **“...angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”** is a reference to Jesus being our Mediator –

⁵ For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, 1 Timothy 2:5–6 (NKJV)

C. *This is something we should all desire to see, which we see only through God's blessing and power – John 3:3*

D. *It is a truth we see in the Lord's Supper, Jesus is the Mediator of heavenly grace to us, John 1:16, through His death on the cross – Revelation 12:11.*