

John 1:35-51

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[0:00] Well, good morning. It was about a decade ago that we recognized that as a church, but as a church, in our regular song repertoire, we didn't have very many songs for the suffering, for the brokenhearted on Sunday mornings.

And so we set out to find those songs and sing those songs more regularly together. I'm grateful for the guys that lead our music and them leading us in songs like I ask the Lord that I might grow.

So our text for today is John chapter one, verses thirty five through fifty one. So if you'll please join me there. John chapter one, verses thirty five through fifty one, which is the end of the chapter.

Last week, our attention was on verses nineteen through thirty seven, as we considered the faithful witness of John the Baptist. We divide our thoughts into three points that followed John the Apostle's narrative arc through three consecutive days.

On the first day, John the Baptist is questioned and clarifies who he is. I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.

[1:15] Verse twenty three is fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. The record of the second day begins in verse twenty nine. There we read the next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And then in verses thirty five and thirty six, the third day we see the same proclamation. The next day again, John was standing with two of his disciples and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, behold, behold, the Lamb of God.

The remainder of this chapter and our text for today concludes this third day, speaks of a fourth day and perhaps the events of a fifth with a focus on the calling of Jesus' first disciples.

Jesus had twelve apostles during his earthly ministry. I state the number in that way because it depends on whether or not you care to count Judas as an apostle and then add Matthias who replaced Judas and then Paul later on.

So the resurrected Christ in his heavenly ministry could be said to have twelve or thirteen apostles. But I digress. Twelve apostles.

[2:38] We'll stick with that number for today's purpose. The five men we will see in our text today are the first of those twelve.

And before we read the text and begin to work through it, I want to make two observations worth noting. So some some filters, just some things to notice before we read the text together.

Firstly, John never calls them apostles all throughout this gospel account. He always uses the term disciple.

Now, I admit that I want to spend more time considering why this may be. But I think just in a precursory fashion, I think that John is hoping that his readers will journey with Jesus and adhere to his teaching, which is what a disciple is, is one who follows.

So that, chapter 20, verse 31, you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

[3:44] I think that John means for us to see the disciples following Jesus, so that we will be disciples of Jesus. I think he's trying not to put them in a different category, but merely saying these were men that followed Christ.

Secondly, John doesn't mention the calling of any other disciples. It's just today's text. I don't think that means that he thinks these men to be of particular value.

I will highlight what I believe is his particular humility, but I think he means for us to note a pattern in the ministry of Jesus' calling of disciples.

So let's work together to see if we can understand that pattern. John, chapter 1, beginning in verse 35. Beloved, this is God's word to us, written for his glory and for our good, that we might believe its promises, obey its commands, and have affection for its author.

May we hear it and respond accordingly to it. The next day, again, John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, Behold, the Lamb of God.

[5:02] The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, What are you seeking? And they said to him, Rabbi, which means teacher, where are you staying?

He said to them, Come, and you will see. So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and follow Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

He first found his own brother, Simon, and said to him, We have found the Messiah, which means Christ. He brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, You are Simon, the son of John. You shall be called Cephas, which means Peter. The next day, Jesus decided to go to Galilee.

He found Philip and said to him, Follow me. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 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.

[6:15] Nathanael said to him, Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed in whom there is no deceit.

Nathanael said to him, How do you know me? Jesus answered him, Before Philip called you when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, you are the son of God. You are the king of Israel. Jesus answered him, Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.

And he said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, You will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the son of man. Now last week we had a pretty simple outline. It was day one, day two, day three. This week, similarly simple, Number one, we'll follow the disciples calling Andrew, And I'm going to add plus John.

[7:21] Number two, Simon Peter. Number three, Philip. And number four, Nathanael. So firstly, Andrew plus John.

So we're picking up, We looked at this text in brief last week, But we're picking up there again. It's on this day in succession, The third day that we see John the Baptist standing with two of his disciples.

And let's deal first with the names of these two disciples. At this point in the narrative, we don't know who they are, But we find out in verse 40 that one of them is Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

I believe that the second unnamed disciple is John himself, our author. John the Apostle, our author. When I introduced this book to you, I spent considerable time on its authorship.

This gospel nowhere mentions its author, Neither does it mention the Apostle John. But the case has been well made that this was an expression of humility on his part.

[8:27] He doesn't entirely exclude himself from the narrative, But just never mentions himself by name. I'll gladly speak more to this if you'd like to talk to me At a later time about it.

Some have suggested that the unnamed disciple is Philip, Which may be true, But I find the evidence what little there is, That this is John omitting his own name, Just a more convincing argument.

These two disciples of John the Baptist, Who would have been convicted of their sin, Remember that John the Baptist was teaching of the need for repentance, For both Gentiles and Jews to repent.

His baptism was a baptism of repentance. This is the way he's preparing the way for the Messiah. Teaching people that they need the Messiah to come and deliver them, Not from Roman captivity, But from captivity to their sin.

So these two disciples of John the Baptist, Knew they needed a Savior. So they respond in the most reasonable of ways, To John's declaration, Behold the Lamb of God.

[9:50] They would have understood all the Lamb symbolism. They would have known that they needed a sacrifice to be made for their sin. And as John applies this title to Jesus, They get who Jesus is, The one who could take away their sin.

So what do they do? They follow him. Now we have to be careful at this point, We don't want to suggest at this point, That they are in fact disciples, Just by the mere following. They're walking down the road after him.

And we know that because Jesus in verse 38, Turns and sees them, And asks them a question. The very first recorded word of Jesus in John's gospel, Is an extraordinarily important question. First time Jesus has spoken in the narrative so far. And he asks this very important question, What are you seeking?

Jesus knew that they were after something. In fact, the embodied Jesus was omniscient. So he already knew the answer to the question.

[11:03] But the question is an extraordinarily important question To be asked for their sake. In their pursuit of Jesus, he asks them, What do you want from me?

I know many of you, And I know why you are here this morning. But I don't know all of you half as much as I would like to. You have gathered today with disciples of Jesus Christ.

I assume, for those of you that I don't know well, That you are seeking something. Why else would you spend this? Why would you be doing this on a Sunday morning?

Of all the things that you could be doing, What are you seeking? What do you want from Jesus? Not all the possible answers to this question Are good, right answers. Perhaps you are seeking Jesus Because you want comfort or ease.

[12:09] You think he will relieve your trouble in this world. Coming to Jesus, obeying God, Will somehow make life go smoother for you.

Maybe you are following, You are seeking after Jesus Because you are looking for some sense of community. You are lonely, And you have noticed That communities of faith Tend to be fairly devoted to one another.

They tend to love each other As they are commanded to. You think a church is the answer To alleviate your relationship challenges.

As a side note, I can tell you if that is why you are here, You are going to be disappointed at times Because we are not perfect people. Perhaps you are seeking after Jesus For the alleviation of your guilt.

You recognize that you are sinful And you know that you need something To come in and take care of your guilt Before God. And that is a good motivation.

[13:13] But often we do that And we don't expect it to cost us anything at all. We don't want to take up our cross And follow Jesus. We want the guilt taken away. But we want to live however we want to live after that.

And so we show up on Sundays Thinking that we are somehow putting weight On the scale of our iniquity. If we just do the good things God has asked us to do enough of It will outweigh those bad things that we do.

We are not seeking the kind of forgiveness Offered in the gospel. We are seeking a forgiveness That liberates us to live how we want to. What are you seeking?

Now the two disciples' response Seems to sidestep the question. But I suggest to you that it doesn't. They said to him Rabbi And you'll notice these Parenthetical insertions On the part of John He's translating For his Greek readers.

Here he's recording a Hebrew word He's translating it into Greek. Rabbi Which means Teacher Where are you staying? To call Jesus Rabbi Was a term of great respect.

[14:30] They were expressing That they had much to learn from him And I think so much to learn from him That the question expresses a desire To tarry with him.

They so respect him as teacher They know they need to spend time With Jesus. It is getting late in the day The next verse tells us. And they want to stay with Jesus And learn.

I think their answer to his question What are you seeking? Is You. I think that's what they say In response. Jesus says What are you seeking?

And they say You. Teacher Where are you staying? We want to be where you are. They knew that they needed The forgiveness of their sins To be sure.

They had been told by John the Baptist That this man was the Lamb of God Which they knew meant He could take away their sins Which is wonderful And it is necessary.

[15:32] But what they really desired What they were really seeking Was Christ himself. In chapter 6 Just a few chapters Into this narrative After some teaching That was difficult to understand John records in verse 66 And following After this Many of Jesus' disciples Turned back And no longer Walked with him So Jesus said to the twelve Do you want to go away As well?

Simon Peter answered him Lord To whom shall we go? You have the words Of eternal life And we have believed And have come To know That you Are the Holy One Of God Jesus Himself Where else would we Go If we can be With you?

From time to time We sing a song together I think we sang it last week Which is probably why It was in my head As I prepared these notes Called Come unto Jesus And one of the verses I think it's the third one We read Come Taste the bread of life Broken for sinners Drink from the cup Of his promise Made sure Feast at his table As sons And as daughters Grace Overwhelming Is yours Evermore And then the chorus Come unto Jesus Come unto Jesus Lay down your burdens He is enough Come unto Jesus Rest In his love And I think That's their answer I think that's what They're Looking for And so in verse 39 Jesus says to them Come And you will see He invites them To come along with him He doesn't even answer The question Where he's staying He says come with me And you will see Where I am Staying And the rest of that verse Says so they came And saw where he was staying And they stayed with him That day For it was about The tenth Hour Now this is Late in the day It was a time When preparations Would be made For a meal For spending The night And so there's Some conjecture Perhaps They stayed with him Overnight Or perhaps They returned And headed out Late After that But we can see Verse 40 One of the two Who heard John the Baptist Speak And follow Jesus Was Andrew Simon Peter's Brother Right We see him introduced As Simon Peter's Brother Andrew doesn't seem To be very significant In the narrative Certainly Simon Peter Plays a more Significant Role

Before we move on To consider Peter I want to note In the next verse Verse 41 That Andrew Through whatever Conversation Was had With Jesus Believed That he Is Anointed One Which means Christ John Inserts For us So the two Disciples Either left Jesus at the end Of the day Or stayed With him And left The following Morning Which is Why you May have Noticed My uncertainty In my introduction About the number Of days I said a fourth Perhaps a fifth I'm not sure But either way John doesn't leave us Guessing what Andrew does Immediately Upon leaving The presence Of Jesus Christ Right He has Believed He says in Verse 41 This is our Second point Which is Simon Peter He first Found His own Brother Simon It's the very Next thing That he does

[19:31] He goes And finds His brother Simon And said to him We have Found The Messiah Which means Christ He brought Him to Jesus And there's no Sense here That it was a Forceful bringing But rather he Led him He showed him Where Jesus Was Jesus Looks at him And says You are Simon The son Of John You shall Be called Cephas Which means Peter James having Been brought To Jesus By the faithful Witness of John the Baptist Now becomes A faithful Witness To his Brother And what Happens in This text Is Important Jesus Gives Simon A nickname Again he says You are Simon The son Of John Or you might Read in some Places Maybe your Translation Says Or Simon Barjona Son of Jonah Or son Of John You are Simon

The son Of John You shall Be called Cephas Which is Aramaic And then he Inserts Which means Peter Which is the Greek And this word In either of Those languages Means A rock Or a Stone You might Be familiar Already with This concept You might Have some Idea of This Already But do You know That it was A nickname Given to Him By Christ At their Meeting This is What he Says To him So I Want to Read to You Briefly From John MacArthur's Commentary In which He's Quoting A book He wrote Called Twelve Ordinary Men So If you Want to Original Source This It's From Twelve Ordinary!

Men It's Also Quoted In his Commentary On This Section He Says Those Were Apparently The First Words Jesus Ever Said To Peter And From Then On Rock Was His Nickname Sometimes However The Lord Continued To Refer To Him As Simon Anyway When You See That In Scripture It Is Often A Signal That Peter Has Done Something That Needs Rebuke Or Correction The Nickname Was Significant And The Lord Had A Specific Reason For Choosing It By Nature Simon Was Brash Vacillating And Undependable He Tended To Make Great Promises He Couldn't Follow Through With He Was One Of Those People Who Appears To Lunge Wholeheartedly Into Something But Then Bails Out Before Finishing He Was Usually The First One In And Too Often He Was The First One Out When Jesus Met Him He Fit James Description Of A Double Minded Man Unstable In All His Ways Jesus

Changed Simon's Name It Appears Because He Wanted The Nickname To Be A Perpetual Reminder To Him About Who He Should Be And From That Point On Whatever Jesus Called Him Sent A Subtle Message If He Called Him Simon He Was Signaling Him That He Was Acting! Like His Old Self If This Young Man Named Simon Who Would Become Peter Was Impetuous Impulsive And Overeager He Needed To Become Like A Rock So That Is What Jesus Named Him From Then On The Lord Would Gently Chide Or Commend Him Just By Using One Name Or The Other Pretty Phenomenal The Way That Happens In John's Gospel John The Apostle Always Refers To His Dear Friend And Fellow Apostle As Simon Peter Notice Denies

[23:40] Christ And He Speaks Those Restorative Words To Him And He Uses Simon In All Of Those Cases But Otherwise John When Referring To Him Calls Him Simon Peter I Like To Imagine That Peter Was Very Pleased With John Consistently Reminding Readers Of His Frailty By Referring To Him As Simon Joined With His Grace Imbued Contention For The Truth By Referring To Him As Peter So as We Read Through This Narrative And See That Simon Peter We See Both Some Some Element Of His Old And His Grace Imbued New Self On Display Thirdly We See Philip Verse 43 We Know Now At Very Least This Is A Next Day Verse 43 Says The Next J So It's Either The

Fourth Or Perhaps The Fifth Jesus Decides To Go To Galilee Where He Finds Philip And Says To Him Follow Me Of All Five Disciples Mentioned In Our Text I Think That Philip Is My Favorite Very Short Little Ink Is Used To Introduce Philip To Us Our Disciples To This Point Have Learned Of Jesus Through Someone Else This Is Often Perhaps Most Often The Way Our Lord Works If You Have Believed In Christ It Is Probable That Someone Shared Him With You A Parent A Friend A Coworker Maybe You Were Invited To Church Or An Event Where Someone Preached The Good News And You Believed Most Of Us Owe Much Gratitude To Those Who Invested The Truth Into Our Lives John Gives Us No Record Of Anyone But Jesus Himself Seeking Out Philip All Of Us Ultimately!

No Matter How The Truth Was First Shared With Us Ultimately Our Gratitude Belongs To Christ Fully Belongs To Christ Philip Especially Reminds Me Of This I Am Grateful For Believing Parents Who Regularly Shared The Gospel With Me I Am Grateful For Believing Parents Who Took Me To A Church That Gathered Regularly To Hear The Gospel Preached These Are The Means By Which I Came To Faith In Christ But Ultimately I Am Grateful For And To A God Who Used Those Means To Bring Me To Himself I Would Not Have Done It On My Own Jesus Will Say In John Chapter 6 Verse 44 No One Can Come To Me Unless The Father Who Sent Me Draws Him It Was After This Teaching That A Of

His Disciples Abandoned Him By The Way That I Read To You Earlier And The Jesus Adds Later In The Narrative John 15 Verse 16 You Did Not Choose Me But I Chose You And Appointed You That You Should Go And Bear Fruit However You Construct Your Understanding Of God's Saving Work It Cannot Be Claimed That You Have Any Power To Save!

[27:24] There's Gosh A Decade Ago And A Dear Friend Named Ash Harris Was With Us On This Particular Trip And Just As a Matter Of Curiosity The Man Who Was Leading The Opening Had Us Stand Up And Just Asked Us About Means How Do We Come To Faith In Christ And So The First Question He Asked About A Room 10,000 People Largely Full Of Pastors How Many Of You Came To Faith Through The Means Of Your Parents Sharing The Gospel With You And I Had To Have Been 80% Of The Room Sat

Down Praise God And I Hope That's An Encouragement To You Parents Who Are Working Day In And Day Out To Share The Gospel With Your Kids When He Went Through A Litany Of Other Of Other Possible Means Ways That People Could Have Come To Faith And Our Dear Friend Ash Was Still Standing He Was Getting Rather Lonely In This Now Seated People Standing! By Himself And Finally The Person Leading The Opening And He Was In The Military And He Was In Iraq And A Chaplain Had Handed Him A Bible And He Got Back From A Deployment Saw Some Things That Were Disturbing To Him And And He Was Moved To Take Up That Bible And Read He Sat I Sat In The Shade Leaning Up Against A Tire The Shade Of A Humvee And I Started Reading The Gospel Of John And By The Time I Got Done I Placed My Faith In Christ Means Praise God But God Saves Asher Did Not Go To Iraq To Find Jesus Jesus Came And He Found Him This Reality Should Cause Great Humility And Gratitude To Spring Forth In Our Hearts And It Should Bring!

Out A Desire To Make This King Verse 16 You Do not Choose Me But I Chose You And Appointed You That You Should Go And Bear Fruit And That's Exactly What We See Happen With Philip Just This Little Tiny Little Bit Of The Story Jesus Finds Philip And He Says!

Follow Me And We Know That He Does Because In Verse 45 We See The Calling Of Nathanael Philip Found Nathanael And Said To Him We Have Found Him Of Whom Moses And The Law And Also The Prophets Wrote Jesus Of Nazareth The Son Of Joseph And Nathanael Clearly Had Some Understanding Of The Scripture Notice How Philip Addresses Him Right He Says To Him We Found The One That The Scripture Speaks About So You May Wonder Why Does Nathanael Respond With The Question Can Anything Good Come Out Of Nazareth Now Matthew Chapter 2 In Verse 23 After Jesus' Family Returns From Egypt We Can Read And He Went And Lived In A City Called Nazareth So They Returned So They Returned From

[31:00] Egypt So That What Was Spoken By The Prophets Might Be Fulfilled That He Would Be Called A Nazarene It Is Debated What Matthew Is Referring To Here There Is Much That Can Be Said But I Spare You The Details At This Point!

It's A Lot Of How How Is It That Matthew Is Deriving! But Matthew Without A Doubt Understood The Bible To Teach That Jesus Would Come From Nazareth That He Would Be A Nazarene Nathanael At This Point Is Unaware Of This Which Is Why He Asks The Question That He Asks Nazareth Was A Nothing Town How Could Anything Significant Come From Such An Insignificant Place But Philip Is Unmoved By His Question He Just Simply Replies Come And See Come And See The Good Thing That Came Out Of Nazareth And We Read That As Nathanael Is Coming Toward Him He Already Knows Him Behold An Israelite Indeed In Whom There Is No Deceit And Nathanael Responds

How Do You Know Me Nathanael Must Have Been Known As A Man Who Was Upright Who Didn't Have Deceit In Him How Do You Know Me And Jesus Answered Him Before Philip Called You When You Were Under The Fig Tree I Saw You He's Omniscient This Is Likely A Place That He Would Have Sat To Study The Scripture Philip Knows Where To Find Him He Goes And Find Him And Said We Found The One That The Scripture Speaks Of And Jesus Saw Him There And This Is Enough To Move In Nathanael Rabbi Then Teacher You Are The Son Of God You Are The King Of Israel That Anointed One So Moved By Jesus Omniscience That He Immediately Believes And We Know That Because Jesus Responds To Him Because I Said To You I Saw You Under! The Fig Trees Than These And Jesus Said To Him Truly Truly I Say To You You Will See Heaven Opened And The Angels Of God Ascending And Descending On The Son Of Man It Is Likely That Jesus Is Alluding To Jacob's Dream Found In Genesis Chapter 28 The Emphasis Of This Statement Though Is That Knowing That Philip Was Sitting!

Under A Tree Is A Minor Thing Compared To What Philip Would Witness Jesus Is The Revealer Of Heavenly Truth To Men Chapter 1 And Verse 17 Later Chapter 14 And Verse 6 Ephesians Chapter 4 And Verse 21 Jesus Is The One True Mediator Between God And Men 1 Timothy Chapter 2 Verse 5 Jesus Is The Mediator Of A New And Better Covenant Hebrews 8 6 And 9 14 And 12 24 All Of This Would Come Into Clearer Focus As Nathaniel Spends More Time With Jesus I Don't Think Jesus Is Calling Into Question Whether Or Not He Believes He Is Simply Saying You Already Believe Oh Wait For What I'm Going To Show You About Myself Now I Mentioned In My Introduction That I Think John

[34:43] Means For Us To Note A Pattern In The Ministry Of Jesus Calling Of Disciples So Let's Look At That Briefly And Then We'll Close The Idea Of Calling Is Presented In The Bible In Only Two Ways Unfortunately We Use It In A Lot Of Ways There's A Particular Phrase If You're Ever Around Me And You Tell Me That You Feel Called To Do Something You're Going To Hear Me Say What Does That Feel Like In The Bible Two Ways Number One We Are Called To Be Disciples Of Jesus You Can See This Language In Our Text Itself Right Where Jesus Says To Him Before Philip Called You You Run To The Fig Tree I Saw You Also Elsewhere Second Timothy Chapter One And Verse Nine God Who 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

Right We're Called To Be Disciples That Calling Goes Out To Us Respond Repent And Believe Respond In Faith To The Gospel Of Jesus Christ Be Christ Followers Disciples Of Jesus And So It Follows As Christ Followers We Are Called To Make Disciples To Be Disciples Means That We're Going To Make Disciples We See In Our Text John The Baptist A Faithful Witness Andrew And John Andrew A Faithful Witness To Simon Peter Philip A Faithful Witness To Nathaniel Paul Writes In 2 Timothy Chapter 2 Verse 2 What You Have Heard From Me In The Presence Of Many Witnesses Entrust To Faithful Men Who Will Be Able To Teach Others Also Four Generations In 2 Timothy 2 2 Paul Timothy Faithful Men Others Also Paul

Writes In Romans Chapter 10 Verse 14 And 15 How Then Will I Call On Him In Whom They Have Not Believed And How Are They To Believe In Whom They Have Never Heard And How Are They To Hear Without Someone Preaching And How Are They To Preach Unless They Are Sent As It Is Written How Beautiful Are The Feet Of Those Who Preach The Good News Most Typically! Paul in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Jesus is going to build his church. He's declared this. He's going to build his church. The gates of hell will not prevail against it. He has all authority in heaven and on earth. That means right now, seated at the right hand of the Father, Jesus has all authority to accomplish everything that he was set to accomplish.

[38:11] And then he says, go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Just do Christ. And then he says, just in case we miss that he has all the authority in heaven and on earth, and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

Jesus calls people to himself to believe and then to walk in his ways by calling other people to follow him. John gives us this pattern in this text as we see these first five disciples of Jesus begin that journey.

And I hope we'll continue to see that grow and develop across our study of this book. Let's pray together. Let's pray together.