

**1/15/23**

**Sermon: Convincing People to Behold**

**Scripture: John 1:31-51, CTW: Psalm 40:1-11**

**Hymns: 696, 343, 641**

**Theme: It is perhaps the Christian's greatest fear. What is it?... personal evangelism, sharing one's faith with another person. After all, I may not know what to say. They might ask me a question I cannot answer. I might fail. I am not gifted in evangelism. That's the pastor's job, isn't it? I am afraid.**

**I. Witnessing is one of the most neglected commands in all of Scripture.** While Bible reading and prayer are also disregarded by the average Christian, I dare to say that witnessing has to be the least practiced of the Christian disciplines. When we consider the fact that Jesus' final words to the church were a challenge to spread the gospel to all the world, it seems ironic that most Christians have never personally led another individual to Christ or shared their faith with an unbeliever.

**A. You say, "Pastor Keith, I am afraid. I cannot think well on my feet."** You know what? There is not a Christian witness alive who has not felt the same fear at one time or another. We all have feelings of anxiety when we share the gospel with an unbeliever. So, fear is no real excuse.

**B. You say, "Pastor Keith, I do not know what to say. I am afraid they will ask me a question I cannot answer. What do I say to someone?"** We learn in today's sermon a very basic method of evangelism. It is perhaps the simplest of all witnessing tools. I call it the "come and see" method of personal evangelism. What is it? Before we get into the principles themselves, let's examine our text together.

## II. Important Points in Today's Text

In the first part of John's Gospel, we are introduced to the Gospel's first witness of who Jesus is. We heard the testimony of John the Baptist, and we learn that Jesus is: the Lamb of God; the Pre-existent One; the One who baptizes with fire; and the Son of God (anointed by God). We also find out that the Baptizer defined his role as that of a forerunner. He was one called to prepare the way for Jesus. He was a voice of preparation.

**A. Today, we discover that John the Baptist displays the ultimate aim of the proper witness when he directs his own followers to Jesus.** There is a **transfer** in the text from John to Jesus. John simply wants others to see Jesus, not him. Look at this first section (**verses 35-37**).

In v. 37, we observe this transfer take place when the text states: "and they followed Jesus." John accomplished his goal. He got his followers to follow Jesus.

**B. In v. 38, as these two disciples approach Jesus, he turns and asks them a penetrating question, "What do you seek?"** (Jesus' first words in the Gospel).

The two disciples answer Jesus' question with a question: "Rabbi (a title given to the most learned scholars), where are you staying?" Their question-answer reveals their true desire—they seek to spend time with Jesus, to get to know Him better. They seek to become better acquainted with Jesus. Their motives appear pure and genuine.

**C. Jesus' response? Come and see.** This is an open invitation for them to spend time getting to know Jesus. **Come with me and you will see.** The call to come is a call to relationship. It is a call to discipleship. It is a call to have your eyes opened to God's truth. The call to come is a call to transformation through following Jesus Christ. The disciples answered the call and came, and sure enough, their lives were

transformed. You spend time with Jesus and you will not be the same.

**D. As a result of this time with Jesus, one of the two disciples, Andrew, realizes that he must share his good news with his brother, Simon.** Immediately (“first”), he finds his brother to share with him the wonderful news: We have found the Messiah.

Every time we see Andrew in John’s Gospel, he is helping others get to Jesus: here; **6:8**—brings a lad to Jesus; **12:22**—brings Greeks to Jesus. Andrew was an aid/helper to bring others to Jesus.

We need some Andrews, some people who will be committed to bringing others to Jesus. We need some older Andrews, and some young Andrews, and some teen Andrews, and some mom and dad Andrews, and g-mother/g-father Andrews. We need some Deacon Andrews and SS teacher Andrews. We need people that are committed to bringing others to Jesus.

Being an Andrew does not involve fancy evangelism methods or memorizing lots of Scripture so you never make a mistake. Being an Andrew means getting them to Jesus. “Come and see.” Allow Jesus to make the transformation. You just be faithful to bring them to Jesus.

**E. We cannot change people, but Jesus can.** We cannot make unfaithful spouses quit cheating, but Jesus can. We cannot make alcoholics quit drinking, but Jesus can. We cannot make drug addicts quit using, but Jesus can. We cannot make abusive parents quit their violence, but Jesus can. Our job is to get them to Jesus. **Come and See!**

This “come and see” evangelism continues the next day (intimate evangelism creates a chain reaction...each one reaches one). On the third day, Jesus seeks out Philip, evidently a friend/acquaintance of Peter & Andrew, and Jesus bids him,

“Follow me.” Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and here he seeks out Philip and calls him, and Philip follows.

**F. Once again, notice Philip’s immediate response...he finds Nathaniel and testifies of the same thing, “We have found him,** the one about whom Moses and the prophets spoke—Jesus of Nazareth.” We have found him.

Now, Nathaniel is a little more skeptical. “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” he inquires. Nathaniel’s scathing question reveals the Galileans disgust with Nazarenes. Nathaniel has some prejudice issues. He does not respond in immediate faith. So what does Philip do? Give in? Shy away? Throw in the towel? Absolutely not! He does the only thing he knows to do...**he replies, “Come and see.”** I don’t have all the answers, but come and see. Your skepticism will not prevent my witness. Come and see.

**G. And once again, Jesus is in control.** As skeptical Nathaniel approaches, Jesus identifies him. “Behold the Israelite in whom is no guile.” I know you Nathaniel for who you are. Nathaniel seems taken back, “How do you know me?”

And Jesus draws him in, “I saw you before you even came. You were sitting under the fig tree (could be a sign of studying the OT).” Jesus says, “Nathaniel, I know who you are. I know everything there is to know about you. I know what you think and where you go and what you do. Nathaniel, I know you. And I want you to follow me.” **Jesus asks this of all of us!**

How do you think Nathaniel responds? That’s right, he places his faith in Jesus: You are the Son of God, the King of Israel. Only the Son of God could know this. You must be Him.

And when we bring people to Jesus, we are privileged to see God work on earth. We are given the opportunity to witness God working in the lives of His creation. God is revealed through His people. What a testimony!

### **III. What are the basic principles of come and see evangelism?**

#### **A. Recognize a Prospect (who should come?).**

If you are a believer, you have a prospect. For John the Baptist, it was his disciples. For Andrew, it was his brother. For Philip, it was Nathaniel. For you, it is someone different. It may be a family member (which is where I suggest beginning). It may be a friend. It may be a co-worker or a neighbor. But there is someone for everyone.

Recognize them. Think about them right now. Think about who God is placing on your heart right now. Recognize your prospect. That person may be a seeker, someone searching for the answer. That person may be a skeptic.

Whoever they are, and whatever their attitude may be, recognize them. They are your prospect. Each Christian has one. As a matter of fact, each Christian probably has many. But I want you to think right now of that particular one.

The first step in come and see evangelism is to recognize your prospect. Think about them. Is it a spouse? A child? A brother or sister? A relative? Is it a neighbor or co-worker or acquaintance? A friend? Recognize your prospect.

#### **B. Refer a Person (who should they see).**

Recognize and refer. After you identify your prospect, your task is to point them to Jesus. **Your words are simple, "come and see."** Many are searching. Many are skeptical. But whatever the case may be, your responsibility is simple: point them to Jesus.

John the Baptist did it: **"Behold the Lamb of God."**

Andrew did it: **"We have found the Messiah."**

Philip did it: **"We have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote."**

**And you can do it. Point them to Jesus!**

Point them to the Rabbi, the Great Teacher who has the answers to **life's problems**. Point them to the Messiah, the King of Israel, the one who came to provide hope for His people.

You must refer them to the person of Jesus Christ. Programs are good, but they do not change lives. A moral lifestyle is good, but it does not change a person internally. Church is good. SS is good. But they do not change lives.

**C. Point people to Jesus.** If we point them to Church and fail to get them to Jesus, we have failed. If we encourage them to live a good life and fail to point them to Jesus, we have failed. If we feed their hungry stomachs but fail to get them to Jesus, we have failed.

There was a little boy attending SS for the first time. His mother asked him "Who was your teacher?" He replied "I don't know but she must have been Jesus' grandmother. She didn't talk about anyone else!"

We must refer them to Jesus. "Come and See." That is the testimony of the believer. Refer them to a Person.

**D. Remember a purpose (why they should come and see).**

What is the purpose of come and see evangelism? Why is it important? As our text illustrates, it is important b/c Jesus is the only way. He is the Way, Truth, and the Life. **No one comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ.** It is important to point people to Jesus b/c there is no hope of eternal life outside of Him.

But there is another reason, it is important. We have another purpose. We should get people to Jesus b/c Jesus changes lives.

Jesus takes Cephas and makes him Peter. Jesus takes the sinner and makes him a saint. Jesus takes the drunkard and makes him sober. Jesus takes the prostitute and makes her clean. Jesus takes the spiritually sick and makes them well. Jesus takes the

spiritually blind and makes them see. Jesus takes the dirty and makes them clean. Jesus takes the unclean and makes them pure. Jesus changes lives.

I believe that is why Andrew had to tell Simon and Philip had to tell Nathaniel b/c Jesus changes lives. And when Jesus changes your life, **you want to tell others**. Remember your purpose!

#### **IV. Come and see Evangelism. It is very simple: Recognize a Prospect. Refer a person. Remember a purpose.**

**A. We need some Andrews and Philips.** We need some believers who will determine: "By God's grace, I will bring one person to Jesus." Can you imagine how Andrew felt seeing his brother come to Christ?

Can you imagine how he felt when Peter preached at Pentecost? Philip compels us to remember that God uses ordinary people to bring others to Christ. Others who may make a huge impact for the cause of Christ.

**B. Determine this morning: I will bring one.** I will invite my prospect to come and see. Evangelism is usually advanced one person to one person. One at a time reaching one at a time. Like Dawson Trotman and the Navigators..."Each one, teach one!"

Edward Kimbrall, a SS teacher, led DL Moody to Christ in the back of a shoe store. I have been there, it is not a very special place...**they were back in the stock room!**

A Salvation Army worker led Billy Sunday to Christ on the curb in Chicago. John Wesley was led to the real Jesus by Moravians!

A lesson taught by a deacon on a snowy wintry night led to the surrender of CH Spurgeon to Christ.

Are you a seeker? Are you a skeptic? Come and See! Pray that God reveals your evangelism talent to you! Amen? Let's pray!