

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, January 26th, 2025
Rev. Gerry Gallant

The Son of Man
Third Sunday After Epiphany
John 1:43-51

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

In mystery and grandeur,
We encounter the God of all creation.

In renewed justice and the promise of new life,
We know deep love of Christ.

In the wonderful diversity in every community,
The Spirit of God moves among us.

Let us worship the God of beauty, love, and wisdom.
We will praise God, ever Three and ever One, now and always.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

O God, our guide and guardian,
you have led us apart from the busy world into the quiet of your house.
Grant us grace to worship you in spirit and in truth,
to the comfort of our souls
and the upbuilding of every good purpose and holy desire.
Enable us to do more perfectly the work to which you have called us,
that we may not fear the coming of night,
when we shall surrender into your hands
the tasks which you have committed to us.
So may we worship you not with our lips only at this hour,
but in word and deed all the days of our lives,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Children's Hymn

Call to Confession

Prepare the way of the Lord!
 Let us make our confession to God.

Prayer of Confession

God of grace and unity,
 we confess we can be divisive when you have called us to unity,
 quarrelsome when you call us to seek peace, and
 critical rather than caring.
 We have grown used to our own ways
 and cannot imagine you would ask us to change
 even for the sake of the Gospel.
 Forgive us when we mistake our familiar traditions for your truth.
 Show us how we can witness to your love
 through working and worshipping together.

Assurance of Pardon

God's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.
 It shines into the world and scatters the darkness.
 Know that you are forgiven and forgive one another.
 Be at peace and walk in the newness of life, led by God's light.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
 Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.
 For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,
 Forever and ever. **Amen.**

Hymn: "Blessed Be Your Name"**Responsive Reading****Psalms 19:7-14**

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect,
 reviving the soul;
 the testimony of the LORD is sure,
 making wise the simple;
⁸the precepts of the LORD are right,
 rejoicing the heart;
 the commandment of the LORD is pure,

enlightening the eyes;

⁹ the fear of the LORD is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules of the LORD are true,
and righteous altogether.

¹⁰ **More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.**

¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² **Who can discern his errors?
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.**

¹³ Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;
let them not have dominion over me!
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ **Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.**

Anthem (Music Ministry): "The Waters of Grace"

**Prayer for illumination
(Congregant Prepared)**

Scripture

John 1:43-51

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." ⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸ 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." ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰ 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." ⁵¹ 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."

Sermon

Last week we started exploring the first 4 days of the ministry of Jesus Christ and the people who came forward to witness the truth that he was the Son of God. In verses 19-28 we saw John the Baptist answering the questions from the Sanhedrin and finally him telling them that he was the 'voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said.' In verses 29-34 we were given the testimony of John the Baptist in regard to the baptism of Jesus Christ, where we saw God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit all present in the event.

Then we moved onto the witness of the first followers of Jesus Christ, Andrew and the unnamed second man, who were followers of John the Baptist, but left their master to go follow Jesus and learn more about him after hearing John the Baptist refer to him as the 'Lamb of God.' After learning more about Jesus, Andrew heads off to find his brother Simon and brings him to the Lord, and Jesus renames him to Peter.

Over three days we have three accounts all which point to Jesus Christ. And in today's Scripture we begin the fourth day of the earthly ministry of our God.

The fourth day begins with Jesus Christ and his new disciples travelling to Galilee.



I want to give you a rough overview of the land of Israel at the time of Jesus Christ, so you can get an idea of his travels. Basically, it can be broken into three regions from north to south. The most northern region is comprised of the land that surrounds the Sea of Galilee. The land that was in the middle region was known as Samaria, and then finally in the south was the region of Judea.

So, Jesus travels from the river Jordan where he was baptized, which is down by the dead sea to up near the sea of Galilee to begin his ministry in that region. He was from this area, as you can see Nazareth is on the lower edge of the region of Galilee and Nazareth was in a region that many of the Jews looked down upon.

What is interesting is that we see Jesus moving from a place where that is the religious center of the Jews to a place that is known for its down to earth work ethic, a place of fishermen and others who made their living by their own hand.

Jesus actually will headquarter his ministry at this time in the city of Capernaum on the northern edge of the Sea of Galilee and that is why he is often referred to as the Nazarene, he was not from their city, but from the despised town to the southwest.

It is in this region that Jesus Christ calls Phillip, a man from Bethsaida, the same town from which Andrew and Simon-Peter were from. We are told that Jesus simply said to Phillip, 'follow me.' And he did.

And what does Phillip do? He goes to Nathanael and tells him, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'

Nathanaels' response was probably one that you would have heard come from the lips of many in that region, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?'

Phillips' response however is different. He does not try to say "Yes, something good can come out of Nazareth.' He did not argue with Nathanael or debate the merits of Nazareth. He did not chastise or criticize Phillip for his dismissal of Nazareth or the negativity of his comment. He just said, 'Come and see.'

'Come and see.' Who Jesus Christ is, Come and see who he can be in your life, come and see how he can change you. The same invitation that was given to Andrew and the unnamed disciple who chose to go spend some time with Jesus. It all starts with that simple invitation, come and see.

Which Nathanael did, and when Jesus sees him approaching, he said, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!' Which baffles Nathanael a little, after all Jesus has no idea who he is, so why would he say such a thing?

What we have in the calling of Phillip and Nathanael is special, and important for us to understand.

In the verses we looked at last week, we saw John the Baptist point to Jesus Christ as the Messiah. John points to Jesus as the Son of God to the Pharisees there to question him, he points to Jesus as the Lamb of God to the gathered crowds and to his disciples. Andrew and the other disciples have become followers of Christ because John the Baptist pointed the way to salvation out to them.

However, with Phillip, something different happened. No one pointed to Jesus! Jesus instead goes directly to Phillip!

Think about that for a moment. Phillip was not pointed to Jesus by anyone, not John the Baptist, not other disciples, not even by strangers. Instead, Jesus Christ goes to him directly and says 'follow me'.

God chose Phillip and Phillip became one of the disciples, known for his practical approach to things. He is the one who is constantly looking at things through the lenses of logic, reason and practicality. He is the one who says it will cost way too much to feed this crowd so let's send them off to find their dinners.

And it is Phillip who is used to call Nathanael. Do you see what is happening? God is using different people in different ways to call people to follow him. The message is the same, come

and see', follow me' but the people are called in different ways. Some are pointed to Christ and some are sought out by the Lord.

God calls people in all different ways. Some people will have a moment of clarity in crisis and come to God, others will have a slow walk in their lives which brings them to the Lord. Some are born Christian and live their whole lives in faith, while others have a sudden realization that their faith foundation was weak and needs to be strengthened.

God can call someone to 'come and see' at any time and any place through any means. It could be while you are in the shower, or driving, or in the hospital. Sometimes it is through the witness of others, sometimes it is through a shared experience, sometimes it is through the tragic brokenness of this world. Sometimes it is in the pursuit of an intellectual explanation of life, or it is a result of chasing away fears and doubts.

The truth is that we all have had different walks in our faith, and we are all at different levels of our faith, and that is ok. Not everyone has that sudden full realization of God like the Damascus road experience, for some it is more subtle. The only thing that matters is that you have indeed become a follower of Christ, you have been born again and changed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, beginning your walk with the Lord.

Jesus Christ says 'follow me' to his people in so many different ways. The key is that when he says follow me, he does not mean for a short time or even a long while. The Greek is in the continuous tense, meaning follow me forever.

Phillip then does what all Christians do, he shares the knowledge of who the Messiah is with the world around him. He goes to Nathaneal.

'We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'

While everyone might come to God by different ways, one of the only things that is the same is that it comes through the hearing the Word of God. The Bible tells us that faith comes from the hearing of the Word of God, and most times it is a friend, family member or co-worker that share the Word of God with the Lost.

Here we have Phillip telling Nathanael, that the one Moses and the Prophets wrote about in the Scriptures is Jesus Christ.

To the Jews of the time that was the classic division of the Old Testament. So, Phillip is saying that the one whom the whole of Scriptures tells of is here among us now and he is a man from Nazareth.

This is a reminder for us today that in our own evangelism, it is not just about our relationship with God that we speak about, we are also to use the Scriptures to point to Jesus. The Bible is a

necessary component of our faith. We are meant to use the Word of God to teach people about God, so that the Holy Spirit can convict them and begin its work in their lives.

This is one of the blessings of the Bible study that Walter is leading, Dust to Glory by R.C. Sproul. In the study R.C. Sproul shows you how every book of the Bible, whether it is in the Old Testament or the New points to Jesus Christ.

From the Garden of Eden, when after Adam and Eve first sin and an animal must be killed to create clothing for them, a picture of something dying to pay the price of sin, to the prophecy of Jesus, the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent.

All of the sacrifices that are described in the books of the law, all pointing to the Lamb of God, the last sacrifice to be made.

The tabernacle was located at the center of the tents that the Israelites traveled in, and the fact that the inner curtain was plain on the exterior and beautiful on the interior. All points to Jesus Christ. The High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, the one all of the prophets spoke of in their prophetic books.

This is who Phillip is speaking of when he tells Nathanael that the one, 'of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote' Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Which Nathaneal balks at. How could Nazareth, the city that they all thought so lowly of, the slums of the region? How could the prophesied Messiah come from such a place?

'Come and see' Phillip does not bother with arguing, convincing or disagreeing. He just invites Nathanael to come and see for himself. It is not our job to convince people of the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord, we just need to point him out and invite them to come and see, then we pray for the Holy Spirit to begin its work in their lives. I hope that saves you all a lot of the stress you feel when you witness to people. Tell them who Jesus is and invite them to come and learn more, you do not have to have the answer to every question they ask, you just need to invite them to start asking questions by telling them the truth of who God is in your life and theirs.

Nathanael has never seen Jesus, has no clue who he is, but he decides to go with Phillip to see who this man from Nazareth is, to see if he really could be the Messiah.

And the first words out of the mouth of Jesus to Nathanael are about his character, he is a man without deceit. God knows you; he knows everything about you. He knows the number of hairs on your head, so of course he knows about your character. Jesus knew everything about Nathanael, and he could have said anything he chose about Nathanael, but he chose that specific character trait for a reason.

‘How do you know me? How do you know me?’ Nathanael is confused by what Jesus says. How could this man whom he has never even seen, know the truth about his character? Because Jesus is God, he looks into the very hearts of people, we will see him do this again later when he meets the woman at the well.

Jesus’s response however is even more interesting, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’

The Jews of Jesus’s day would often sit under fig trees with their back up against the tree as they read the Scriptures. Nathanael, an Israelite without deceit, was sitting under a tree reading his Scriptures.

Jesus is making a reference to the Old Testament story of Jacob, a man who was full of deceit, a man who tricked other to get ahead in life. Do you remember that Jacob tricked his brother Esau to steal his birthright? And that was not his only trickery and deceit.

It is not until he met God, and his name was changed to Israel that Jacob’s life changed. Israel which means governed by God. So, when Jesus says that Nathanael is an Israelite with no deceit he is making a direct reference to the story of Jacob, which very well may have been the verses that Nathanael had been reading while sitting under that tree.

This could be why Nathanael declares so quickly his witness to the truth. ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God!’ Without hesitation, he declares Jesus ‘the’ son of God, not a son of God but the one and only, son of God. Speaking directly to the deity of Jesus Christ.

To this he adds the ‘You are the King of Israel!’ using another term to describe the Messiah which comes from the prophet Zechariah and the Psalms.

Jesus response to Nathanael once again has an Old Testament reference, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.’

In his dream after tricking his brother Esau, Jacob is shown a ladder to heaven on which angels are ascending and descending, and God spoke to Jacob from atop that very ladder. Jesus once again alludes to the changes that occurred in the very character of Jacob as he became the man called him to be in Israel.

It is as if Jesus is telling him wait until you see the things I am about to do. Jacob was God’s chosen one. He was the one who would receive God’s blessings. Jesus is telling him that God is with you at all times, in all things and that his hand is on him, the same way that it was upon Jacob.

Jesus is saying to Nathanael, come and see what I am about to do, because whether you realize it or not, I am that ladder. I am the one who connects man to God. In me you will get a better

understanding of God, the power of God and the presence of God. I will reveal God to you in ways that you cannot even begin to imagine.

So how do we get to heaven, through Jesus Christ, he teaches us that no one gets into heaven except through him.

Jesus is the revealer of God to man; he is the mediator between man and God, and he is the ladder that exists between God and man in all things, the blessings we receive and the experiences we have.

So here in this very first chapter of John we are left with a clear picture of Jesus Christ as God.

He is given seven separate titles in this chapter. He is called.

The word of God, the LOGOS

The true light

The lamb of God

The Messiah

The son of God

The king of Israel

And The Son of Man

That last one, the son of Man, is the one that Jesus uses most often to refer to himself. It is his favorite it would seem. Jesus is referred to as the Son of man 83 times in the Gospels and that term comes from the book of Daniel,

Daniel 7:13-14

**¹³ "I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.**

**¹⁴ And to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.**

Jesus is the Son of Man, he is the Messiah, the Son of God and the Son of Man, he is full humanity and full God all in one person, our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the one who we are meant to share with the world around us. This is the one who we are called to point to in our thoughts, words and deeds. This is the one who we are told to invite others to come and see as we walk as the Salt and Light of God's Word in this broken world.

Let us pray,

A Prayer of Thanksgiving and for Strength

We give you thanks upon thanks,
 O Lord our God,
 Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
 by all means, at all times, in all places.
 For you have sheltered, assisted,
 supported, and led us on
 through the past times of our lives,
 and brought us to this hour.
 O good and loving,
 grant that we may pass this holy day,
 and all the times of our lives, without sin,
 with all joy, health, salvation,
 sanctification, and fear of you.
 O Lord God, drive away from us
 and from your holy Christian and apostolic Church
 all envy, all fear, all temptation,
 all the working of Satan,
 and all conspiracy of wicked men.
 Supply us with things good and profitable.
 In whatever ways we have sinned against you,
 in word, deed, or thought,
 pass over in your love and goodness.
 Do not forsake us, O God,
 for we hope in you.
 Lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from the evil one
 and from his works;
 by the grace, compassion, and goodness
 of your only Son. **Amen.**

Source: **The Divine Liturgy of St. Mark, in Bright's *Ancient Collects*,**

Hymn #452: "Jesus, Stand Among Us"

Jesus, stand among us in your risen power;
let this time of worship be a hallowed hour.

Breathe the Holy Spirit into every heart;
bid the fears and sorrows from each soul depart.

Thus with quickened footsteps we pursue our way,
watching for the dawning of eternal day.

Invitation to Offering**Offering****Offertory Prayer****(Congregant Prepared)****Closing Hymn #410: "Joyful, Joyful We Adore You"**

Joyful, joyful, we adore You,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before You,
Op'ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!

All Your works with joy surround You,
Earth and heav'n reflect Your rays,
Stars and angels sing around You,
Center of unbroken praise;
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain
Praising You eternally!

Always giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living,
Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Loving Father, Christ our Brother,
Let Your light upon us shine;

Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the joy divine.

Pastoral Prayer

God of life, God of love.
You created us and set us in relationship with each other:
In families and neighbourhoods,
in churches and communities,
in cultures and nations.
We give you thanks for the rich gifts of arts and culture,
of home life and community celebration
which bring meaning and encouragement to our lives.
Help us contribute our gifts
to the traditions and imagination that sustain the best of our common life
from one generation to the next.

God of mercy and forgiveness,
You call us to live together in peace and unity.
we pray that your Spirit will create understanding and co-operation
among all who bear Christ's name.
Help us share our gifts with each other
so that churches within our community may flourish
and our common mission will find new energy after months of challenge.
May we be a blessing in the world you love.

God of healing and hope,
We pray for our neighbourhoods and our nation.
Where people are divided and bitterness turns into resentment,
show us how to work for reconciliation.
Inspire our leaders at every level of community life
to work together for the care of the most vulnerable
and to restore the goodness of our common life.
Make us generous citizens and careful stewards
of the land you entrust to us together.

God of justice and mercy,
We pray for the world you love, the world Christ died to redeem,
so deeply divided by religious and political animosities,
by ancient bitterness and current conflict.
Encourage world leaders to work for peace and understanding,
especially in places torn by violence,
and areas still struggling with the effects of the pandemic,
by poverty, hunger, and the effects of natural disasters.
May the hope Jesus embodies encourage us all to work for positive change.

God of courage and comfort,
We remember those of our congregation and community
in need of your special attention today....
Use us as agents of your healing and hope
as we offer ourselves as your humble servants in Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

Benediction

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
remain with you always.
Amen.