

“When A Good Man, Meets A Great Friend”

John 1:43-51

8/23/11

Introduction: The story is told of two women who were reminiscing about their past. One said to the other, “I want to thank you for introducing your brother, James, to me. We have been married now for over 37 years. We have had our shares of ups and downs, but he has really changed my life for the better. You have been a good friend to me.” The other woman replied, “You have been a greater friend to me. The day you introduced Jesus to me was the day I received complete joy, love and happiness. Although my brother James is a good man, he does not compare to my great friend Jesus!” In our lesson tonight, we are going to see when a good man meets a great friend and his life was changed forever.

Verses 43-46

The Connection

These verses show us there was a connection between these men. They were probably **friends**, considering they were from the same town of Bethsaida. *Bethsaida* means fishing house, which would be appropriate since they were fishermen (**John 21:1-3**). But, what is so marvelous is the fact that it was important for each of them to lead their friends to Jesus once they became **followers** (**Matthew 28:19-20**). It was Andrew who brought Peter to Jesus (**John 1:40-42**). Verse 45 tells us that Philip wants Nathanael to know Jesus so he finds him to tell him about the Messiah, the Christ, who the prophet wrote about. Philip said He was Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Many people have asked the question if Jesus was born in Bethlehem, why does scripture say He was from Nazareth. Jesus was called “Jesus of Nazareth” because that is where He grew up. Jesus was born in Bethlehem as an emergency measure because His parents (**Mary and Joseph**) were **traveling** at that time. After Jesus was born, His family had to flee to Egypt for safety because King Herod wanted to kill Jesus (**Matthew 2:16-23**). Notice in verse 46 Nathanael asked, “Can there be any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Nazareth was an insignificant village that appeared to have no importance, but this is where Jesus grew up. It is not where we come from that is important, but who we are connected to that matters (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). The way we behave ourselves in front of the world tells them what we believe and who we belong too. We must remember we are ambassadors for Christ. An ambassador doesn’t **represent** himself, but rather the one who sent him (**2 Corinthians 5:20**). Remember, we may be the only Jesus people see! We are supposed to bring light to this dark and dying world.

Verses 47-48

The Conversation

These verses show us the conversation between Jesus and Nathanael. Notice Jesus greets Nathanael in a **different** manner. Nathanael (also called “Bartholomew”) literally means “Gift of God”. He was considered the good guy in the group because he was an honest and decent man. Nathanael teaches us that even the finest example of **humanity** must still come to Jesus Christ to receive eternal life and forgiveness of their sins. All the good deeds in the world cannot save you, only Jesus can do this (**Ephesians 2:8-9**)! In verse 48, we see that Nathanael is alarmed because Jesus knew he was an **Israelite**. Jesus knows everything about everyone and Nathanael was no exception. Jesus’ display of supernatural knowledge caught Nathanael off guard. Jesus reveals something about his life that only Nathanael knew (**Psalm 121:4**). Has the Lord ever revealed anything in your life that only you knew about? Jesus tells him, before Philip called you I saw you. Not only does the Lord see us but He knows all of our thoughts. Once again, Jesus knows everything all the time (omniscient) and He knew where Philip found Nathanael. Nathanael was under the fig tree physically and **spiritually**. He was there physically, but lost spiritually. Do you know anyone who is lost and still hanging under the trees of this world? Have you ever held a conversation with them?

Verses 49-51

The Confession

These verses show us the confession from Nathanael. Nathanael suddenly realized it is true, this is the **Messiah**! He calls Jesus Rabbi (teacher), but quickly adds that Jesus is the Son of God, King of Israel. This revelation of Nathanael was similar to the time when Jesus asked the disciples, who He was and Peter said, “Thou art Christ, the Son of the **Living** God” (**Matthew 16:16-17**). This is not “a” son, but “the” Son. Jesus tells Nathanael he will see greater things than these. The Lord has greater things planned for those who have been born again (**1 Corinthians 2:9**). Nathanael would see Jesus open blinded eyes, make the lame to walk, open deaf ears, feed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish, speak to the sea and have it obey and even raise Lazarus from the dead. Nathanael confessed and believed in the Lord (**Romans 10:9-10**). In verse 51, Jesus uses the phrase “verily, verily”. This means it will happen. Nathanael would be privy to seeing some things that he never would have seen if Philip had not **brought** him to the Lord. When we receive Jesus, we have access to the very throne of God through Jesus. This good man received greatness and a Great Friend because his friend brought him to Jesus. What are we doing for our friends? If we want to be wise, we need to win souls for Christ (**Proverbs 11:30**). Some will come and some will not. Our job is to introduce and let the Holy Spirit **intervene**.

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