

**Portrait of a Disciple – Part III**  
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**John 1:35-51**  
**February 20, 2011**

Please turn with me in your Bibles to the first chapter of John. We come to our third and final message on this section of John, verses 35 to 51, actually, 17 verses which present to us a portrait of a disciple. What is it that distinguishes a true believer, a true follower of Jesus Christ? We see that in these verses as we encounter the first five disciples, the call of the first five disciples, we see characteristics that are to be evident in the lives of all those who will follow in their train. We saw last time that there are two key words in the passage, the word *follow* and the word *find*, and that really sets up for us the two main characteristics of a disciple. A true disciple is known by what he follows after, and what he follows after is knowing Christ. It's not religion. It's a relationship, and it's knowing Jesus. That's what defines a disciple.

That's really the quintessential characteristic of a disciple, as that's the one thing Jesus would say to sum up His call was, "Follow Me." We have that in this passage and we'll read it in just a moment. He said to Philip those two words: *Follow Me*. It's an imperative, a command. *Follow* is the present tense Greek present which means continuous action. "Follow and keep following Me." So a disciple is known by what he follows after, and the disciple who's following after Jesus, the second characteristic flows from the first. If you're following after Jesus, the second key word is *finds*. A disciple is known by what he follows after and by what he finds out. As he follows Jesus, he's finding things.

We said last time there are three things that he finds in the passage, and we're going to begin to look at the last two. We saw last time that a disciple who's following after Jesus finds His glory in an ever-increasing way, and as we read the passage, look at that again how they find Christ, and that's their testimony. "We have found Him." But we're also going to see that the disciple not only finds His glory, but he also finds himself. That's going to be the first point we're going to look at this morning. A mark of a true disciple is that what he finds, he finds His glory (last time), and he finds himself, and he also finds the lost. Those are the two points this morning. He finds himself and he finds the lost. Let's read the text together.

## *John 1:35-51*

*35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?” 39 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. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He \*found first his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).*

*43 The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.” 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of 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 any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to 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 and said to 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 and said to him, “Because I said to you that 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 the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”*

Let’s pray...

*Our Father, as we open Your word and begin to look at it, we ask that Your Spirit might open our hearts and open our minds that we might think Your thoughts after You, that we might truly in Your word encounter the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we pray this in His Name, Amen.*

So the quintessential characteristic of a disciple is that he is about following after Jesus. He's seeking to know Christ, and then if he's seeking to know Christ, he has a pattern in his life of finding. He's finding. He's discovering. He's discovering more and more of the glory of Jesus, the inexhaustible riches of His Person, the majesty of His work, and as he sees more, and more, and more, he also finds some other things, and the first thing that we're going to look at this morning is he finds himself.

### 1) A Disciple Finds Himself:

A true disciple finds himself, that to find Jesus is to be found by Him. We see this dramatically demonstrated in the passage twice, first in Peter's encounter with Christ, and secondly in Nathanael's. In both cases, as they come to Jesus, they're coming to see, right? They're coming to see, and what they find out is that they are the ones who are being seen. In fact, there are really two realities under this first point of *A Disciple Finds Himself*. You find yourself because you find that Jesus sees you, and you find yourself because you see that Jesus knows you. Those are the two sub-points, here. Jesus sees and Jesus knows.

#### A) You find yourself because you find that Jesus sees you:

The first thing we see as we look at these encounters is Jesus sees. In verse 42 when Simon is brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew, the text says:

***John 1:42 ~ Jesus looked at him and said,...***

Jesus looked at him. This is a place where the word underneath the English word *looked* is much stronger a word than *looked* kind of conveys. I can use the word *looked* in a very casual way. "Oh yeah, I looked at that. Patti asked me to look at something, and yeah, I looked at it." That may mean I just barely glanced over it, right? This word *looked* here is translating an intensified Greek verb. It has a preposition on the front of it which intensifies it. It means to look in the face, to fix the eyes upon, to stare at, or to look intently upon with a meaning of contemplation and consideration. Jesus looked at Peter intently so that Peter knew he was being looked at. You know the difference, right, when someone looks at you like that? And what it must have been like to have seen the eyes of the Son of God looking at you, and one day we shall. Peter saw Jesus looking at him, and there is an irony about this.

One of the key words in the entire passage, or one of the key concepts, is the idea of seeing. It's mentioned twice in the text that we're told to come and see. Jesus tells those first two disciples when they say, "Where are you staying?" He says, "Come and see." Then when Philip goes to his friend Nathanael and says, "We've found Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth," Nathanael says, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and what does Philip say? He says, "Come and see. Come and see for yourself." But as they come and see, they find out that they've *been* seen, because another one of the themes throughout this is Jesus looking, Jesus seeing, Jesus saw—over, and over, and over again. You see it first of all here: Jesus looked at Peter. But you also see it three times in His encounter with Nathanael. In His words to Nathanael after Nathanael says, "How do You know me?" Jesus says:

***John 1:48 ~ ...“Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”...***

He repeats it two more times. In Verse 50 He says:

***John 1:50 ~ “Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe?”***

And Verse 47:

***John 1:47 ~ Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and \*said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”***

There were three times it said, "Jesus saw." Verse 47 is the first time. Verse 48 is the second time, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." And then Verse 50, "Because I said to you that I saw you..." Each one of those "saws" in English translates—there are a couple of different verbs that are used normally, actually several in Greek to say *I see* or *I saw*. We have *see*, *looked*, and that kind of thing in English, but they have a little more variety in the words that are used in the Greek language, and this is the word that doesn't just mean to see, to have your eyes experience sight of something. It means to see with perception. The three times the word is used is the Greek word ὁράω (horaō) which means to see with perception, to understand, and so it's saying, "I saw you. I perceived you." It's implying the beginning of what we'll look at in the next point, "I knew you." Three times He says that. In the text it's repeated for emphasis.

Look back at Verse 38. We saw that Jesus looked intently upon Peter when he came. He saw Nathanael, but look back at the very first two disciples who begin following Jesus. In Verse 38, remember when John says, “Behold the lamb of God,” and they follow Jesus? And it says He turned and saw them following. Now, this word *saw* translates a third Greek verb for looking at something, which is really the most emphatic of all, the word *θεάομαι* (theaomai), which means to behold, to view attentively, to deliberate, to consider, to wonder at. It’s not that He just turned and saw them. “Oh, there they are following Me.” He turned and looked intently at them. He studied. He thought about it. He beheld them. So you see, every encounter with Jesus, He’s looking, He’s staring, He is perceiving. There’s a sense of real intensity in encountering Jesus. You don’t just come to see Him, He sees you. Not only does He see you, but He knows you. That’s the second sub-point under this heading. A disciple finds himself because he finds that Jesus sees him and that Jesus knows him.

B) You find yourself because you see that Jesus knows you:

Look what He says to Peter, back to Verse 42. Peter’s brought to Jesus in Verse 42.

***John 1:42 ~ He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said,...***

He said that without introduction. Now get the picture here. Jesus is standing there. Peter is led up by Andrew to meet the Messiah, and before Andrew can say, “This is my brother Simon,” Jesus says:

***...“You are Simon the son of John;...***

“I don’t need an introduction. I know who you are.” Wow. We don’t have Peter’s response quite as dramatically as we have Nathanael’s, but we see the same thing in Nathanael’s life, don’t we? We see it even more emphatically. When Nathanael meets Jesus, Verse 47 says:

***John 1:47 ~ Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him,...***

And even before he kind of gets there, you know, as you come up to meet someone, you know we learn over time there are certain patterns? You come up to somebody and you begin speaking when you get to a certain distance. Like, I’m going to come meet you. If you want me to meet somebody, I don’t say, “Hey, how are you doing?” from a distance. I’ll walk up and say, “Hey, good to meet you,” right? I mean, it’s just sort of normal, human interaction.

It seems that what Jesus does here is before Nathanael can even begin to get really close to Him, He kind of calls the guys around Him and says, “Look, behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.” And what is Nathanael’s response?

***John 1:48 ~ Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?”***

Apparently that statement hit the mark. It hit the mark for a number of reasons. I think it was a statement about Nathanael’s character. It shows that Nathanael was one who was looking for the Messiah and had already been born again in that sense of the Old Testament sense of the word. He had a lot more to learn, though, Jesus says, a lot more to experience. So it hit the mark because of that, but it also said something about how Jesus knows us, and I think there’s in the text the indication that Nathanael’s response when he comes to the moment of, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel,” the emphasis is upon Jesus seeing him and seeing him under the fig tree, that there’s something a little more below the surface going on here. I mean, first of all, think about just the flow of the passage. Jesus says, “Behold, an Israelite indeed,” or really, “Behold, one who is truly an Israelite. He’s a genuine Israelite.” Now, when you put that together with the fact that the first thing Jesus taught after Nathanael, you know, says, “You’re the Son of God,” He says, “You’re going to see more than this,” and then He alludes to Jacob. Remember we talked about this last time. He says in Verse 51:

***John 1:51 ~ ...“Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”***

That’s clearly a reference to Genesis 28 and Jacob’s ladder when he’s at Bethel and he encounters the Lord there. I think what’s happening here is it’s clear that when Jesus says Nathanael an Israelite in whom is no guile, Jesus is connecting with Jacob as well, because Jacob was the first man ever called Israel, remember? He was the one whose name was changed. His name Jacob meant heel-grabber, interestingly enough. I love how they were naming their kids and they came up with the names they came up with. They gave Jacob the name Jacob because he was grabbing onto Esau’s heel as they were born. Remember, they were twins. He was the second born, but he had his hand on Esau’s heel, and so the word means heel-grabber or supplanter. They just named him. Can you imagine that? “We had twins and we named our second one Heel-grabber.” We don’t have the tendency of naming names that have meanings, right? We just use labels we like the sound of, but they had meaning with their names, and it could have some positive sense of, “He’s really a go-getter,” or whatever.

So for whatever reason, Isaac, obviously in the providence of God, he named him Jacob, and the Lord tells him in Genesis 32 later on in his life when he encounters the angel, or apparently the pre-incarnate Christ, and he wrestles with Him until dawn, He says, “Your name is Jacob, but now you shall be called Israel, one who strives with God, a prince with God. You have a new identity,” and this is the name that now the nation is going to carry forth—Israel, the princes of God, the people who strive with God, the people who walk with God. And it’s in contrast to the old name Jacob. The old name Jacob, supplanter, meant deceiver.

In fact, if you read the story, and I think what’s going on here—A. T. Robertson points out that the phrase *under the fig tree* which is repeated twice in the story, Jesus says, “When you were under the fig tree, I saw you,” and then He says in Verse 50, “Because I said that I saw you under the fig tree.” The emphasis on *under the fig tree* and the particular grammatical construction seems to lend weight to the fact that it was very common practice, and rabbis talked about this, some of them, going out to study and meditate under the fig tree.

So when Jesus said, “I saw you under the fig tree,” I think the implication is Nathanael was praying or meditating or reading the word of God, and I think that what he was reading or meditating upon was the story of Jacob. He was thinking about, maybe reading through that entire passage, the story of Jacob in Chapter 27:35, where remember he steals his brother’s blessing? He fulfills his name by stealing first his birthright and then his blessing. And that blessing was really a tricky thing. Remember his mom helped him out? They put skins on his arms so he’d feel hairy like his brother Esau, because he was kind of a smooth-skinned fellow. While Esau was out hunting for game, his mom fixes one of the kids, spices it up a little bit to make it taste like game, and brings it in, and he gets the blessing. Then Esau comes in and says, “Father, I’m back. I’ve prepared the meal the way you like it,” and Isaac says, “What? I’ve already eaten. Your brother Jacob came and deceived me and stole your blessing.” That’s Chapter 27.

Then in Chapter 28, you have Jacob running for his life, in a way, to Paddan-aram, and on the way he meets God, and the Lord in spite of Jacob’s supplanting nature is working in his life and promises, “Yes, you do have the blessing. You are the one I’m going to bless. I will be with you and I will protect you,” and he sees the heavens opened, God standing at the top of this ladder, and angels ascending and descending. And then of course in Chapter 32 when he’s coming back into the Promised Land, you have the account of him being renamed as he wrestles with the angel, pleading for God’s blessing. Jacob says, “Don’t leave until you bless me. I

won't let you go until you bless me," and he says, "I'm going to give you a new name. It's one who strives with God."

All of that is in his mind. He's been meditating and reading, Nathanael has. Thinking about this, he walks into the presence of Jesus and He describes his character in a way that initially connects with what he's been reading. He might have been praying, "Lord, make me like Israel," and he hears that, and that's why he says, "How do You know me?" But at this point he's not completely sure, but when He says, "When you were under the fig tree before Philip called you, I saw you," He's saying, "I saw your heart. I saw your thoughts. I saw what you were meditating on." At this moment he is overwhelmed and undone. He knows he's not come into the presence of an earthly messiah merely. He's come into the presence somehow of One who possesses divine knowledge, and he blurts out from his heart, "You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."

The point is that Jesus knew him supernaturally. He didn't just see, He knew. He perceived down into the essence of who he was. You even see that with Simon. I mean, he sees us and he knows us. He knows Simon's weaknesses. In fact, it's neat how first of all you see He knows our weaknesses, and you see then His grace extended. He says, "You're going to be called Peter. You're going to be called Rock." It's really something to think about this. Jesus, knowing all things, He knows that Simon is actually, though he's a firebrand, he's a zealot, he's always ready to claim, "I'm ready to fight, I'll cut off the guy's ear, I'm ready," and he had a sword with him, he's carrying a weapon. So He meets him for the first time, and He knows all that about him, and He knows he's going to deny Him three times. He's going to waver in the wind. He's going to be sifted like wheat by Satan, but Jesus loving Simon the sinner as he comes into His presence, says, "Your name is Simon, son of John. I want you to know I already knew about you. You will be called Cephas," translated Petros, Peter, literally Rock. "You are going to be a rock in My kingdom."

That's not unique in that. Among all of us we're living stones. Peter talked about in his epistle in 1 Peter 2 about how we're all living stones being built up into a temple. Jesus was saying, "You have a special place in among My disciples. You are going to be one who's going to be a rock after the Spirit's given to you." You see Him seeing not so much what Peter was, but what He was going to make out of the man." That's the two-fold reality. When you come to meet Jesus, and as you follow after Him and you see more of His glory, what you find is you cannot see more of His glory without first seeing yourself, so that to come into His presence is to come into the gaze of Jesus and to find out that He knows all about you.

In fact, it's interesting about Peter that when you put together the Gospel accounts in Luke 5:8, we have a second encounter. I mean, the disciples are with Jesus. They've been fishing during the night trying to fish. For Peter, James, and John, that was their business that they had been in, and so Jesus has been teaching in the area up near the Lake of Gennesaret, and they're out fishing, and they've caught nothing. And Jesus that morning is teaching, the crowd presses in, and He gets in one of the fishing boats and He begins to teach for awhile. He teaches the word of God, and after He's taught for awhile, He gets out of the boat and He says, "Simon, go out and cast your nets," and Simon says, "We fished all night, Lord. There's just... Okay, I'll go do it." He goes out and he lowers his nets, and so many fish are in the net that he has to call the other guys to get the boat out there to help him pull it in. There are so many fish that the nets are about to break, and the text says that he (in Luke 5:8) goes to Jesus and he says, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" Verse 9 says:

***Luke 5:9 ~ For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken;***

This man, this apostle, they were continually seeing His glory, and the more they saw His glory, and the more they were around Him, they see He is governing the fish in the lake. He has corralled all the fish in the lake right here! And in seeing His glory, what does he see? He sees his own sin. "I'm unworthy." That is what a disciple of Jesus Christ experiences. You follow after Christ, and the more you see Him, the more you see yourself. In fact, you cannot know yourself until you come to know God. There is no true knowledge of self without true knowledge of God. But to know God is to come to know yourself.

I mean, think about Isaiah. Think of the words he says. In the year King Uzziah died, what? I saw the Lord. He sees God high and lifted up, the train of His robe filling the temple, the foundations, the thresholds of the temple were shaken. There was a filling with smoke. He sees the train of the robe. Just the very bottom of God's robe is all he can see, and the angels though he sees beside that, he can't see any more of God than just the train of His robe, but he sees the angels, the seraphim, crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory." And what is the first thing Isaiah says? "Woe is me!" Because to see the Lord is to see yourself, and he saw something that he hadn't seen when he went into the temple that day. "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the Lord." He saw that he had unclean lips.

I don't think he went to church that day, to the temple that day, with a burden about his unclean lips. I don't think he was praying about that when it happened. I think he saw the Lord and he saw his unclean lips. He saw a new level of his sin, and the reality is as a Christian, one of the things that should happen if you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, if you're pressing on to know the Lord, you're seeking to know Him in His word, when you gather together with other Christians, when you come to worship, when you read your Bible at home, when you pray and meditate, when you memorize Scripture, if you're seeking to know the Lord, you're going to find yourself more, and more, and more, and you will find the ugliness, so that those who are truly disciples are those who humble and grow in humility. *How can it be that the Lord would save me?*

How can Paul say, "I'm the chief of sinners"? He's been ministering as an apostle. There's no pride. "I am the chief of sinners," Paul says. Why? It's because he's seeing more, and more, and more of himself. Like layers of an onion, we never get through. He cleans up a layer and we're actually more clean than we were before, but the next layer as we see it, it is so ugly that we have the tendency to want to say with Peter, "Go away from me, Lord," but then we see the grace of Jesus Christ, because like He said, He looked at Peter who was just that filthy when He first met him as he was the second time. Not that He met him. He was hanging out with Him. He was following Him. Hanging out with him doesn't sound right to talk about the disciples that way, but anyway, they were following after Him, and in that moment of His glory being revealed, he sees himself. He sees more of His glory and sees more of himself.

That's what's going to happen, but it's not just for the purpose of exposing our sin. The Lord exposes our sin to restore us to more fellowship, to restore us to fuller service, to actually purify us, to make us more like Christ, to move toward the day when we will be totally sanctified and glorified. It's all about the process, and Jesus sees the end from the beginning, so that when you come into His presence and you encounter your sin, it's never to put you down. It's not to rob you of dignity like unbelievers think, that we're just sitting around talking about how bad we are. They think that Christians are those who have so little dignity and so little self-confidence. Well, we don't have any self-confidence, and we know they should have no more than we do, because they're every bit as filthy as we are, but we have come to know that the most dignifying place on the planet is at the feet of Jesus.

He says, “Simon, son of John, you shall be called Rock. Nathanael, you’re an Israelite in whom is no guile. You’ve got lots of problems. You were skeptical about Me. You were even putting Me down because I’m from Nazareth, but I’m telling you, I see the man that you are and are becoming.” It’s something to realize, though, that to come to Jesus, you don’t come expecting that you can hide anything from Him. You can fool me, you can fool the elders, you can fool your biblical counselor, you can fool your parents, but you cannot fool the Son of God, so stop trying. He sees everything.

In Revelation 1, the apostle John, the same one who wrote these words, sees the glorified Christ. He sees Jesus more clearly as He is than he ever did in his earthly ministry. John sees Him, the veil taken away, and he sees His feet of burnished bronze. He sees His head and His hair white like wool, and he sees His eyes. Do you remember how he described His eyes? His eyes are like a flame of fire burning away all dross, burning away all deception, piercing through to the soul, to know *I know you*. He knows you. He knows your sin. He knows your need, and He knows what you can become if you surrender to Him. He sees that and He loves you in spite of your unloveliness. That is the wonder of it.

In our relationships we always learn to hide things. When you start dating someone before you get married, or you start courting someone, you hide your faults. You don’t say, “Hey, I’ve got all these faults. I just want you to know. I’d like to see if you’d like to consider a relationship with me. Here are all my bad problems I have.” No, you hide those things. It’s just second nature to us. But when you come to Jesus Christ, He already knows. There’s no need to hide. His eyes penetrate your soul, and He sees you as only God can. Nothing in all creation is hidden from His sight, and one day you’re going to stand before Him, you’re going to see Him, and He’s going to perceive you, and the question is: Have you done business with Him ahead of time? Are you His friend or are you His enemy? One day we shall all have to give an account and stand before the One who sees all.

I love 1 Corinthians 13 when Paul is talking about love, and he says, “Now we know in part, we see in part, we see through a glass dimly.” He’s talking about our apprehension of who God is, our apprehension of who Jesus is. It’s murky, it’s veiled, but then shall I know even as I am known. There’s no murkiness for God. Right now He knows you as well as He will ever know you. But one day we’re going to know Him like that. What a glorious hope, and the disciple is the person who finds the joy of seeing His glory, seeing himself in his sin, and seeing the cleansing power of Christ, because our hope is that we come to Jesus.

He sees what we are, He sees our mixed motives, and He exposes suddenly an area that we've not even been aware of. "I didn't even realize that I had this agenda operating, and now I see it that I'm always concerned more about what people think about me. That's why I get frustrated with the situation. I thought it was because I was zealous for truth. Maybe a little bit of that, but mostly it was about me," and you see that. You see how ugly that is. You see how awful that is as you come into the presence of Christ, and then you find Him loving you and forgiving you, and saying, "I've already paid for that. I just am pointing it out because I want you to turn from it and walk in My power." That's the glory of the Gospel. It keeps on becoming more precious every day.

The fact is that Jesus Christ on the cross paid for your sins, every one of them, past, present, and future, all of them, every thought, every wrong motive. He has paid the full payment for it. So when you see your sin, you run to the cross, and you find love, and acceptance, and you're able to run into His throne room always, because of who Jesus is. The more you see how ugly you are, the more you see how wonderful Christ is. That's why we can learn to say to each other, "You know, I'm a mess, you're a mess, but isn't Jesus wonderful?" That's really what should dominate the kind of discussion and interactions we have as Christians. Yeah, I know the closer you get to me, the closer I get to you, the more we're going to see the faults, right? It's inevitable, and the challenge is to see the fault in someone else, see the fault in myself, but to keep looking at the faultless One of God. Isn't He wonderful that He can use people like us? And it gets sweeter, and sweeter, and sweeter. That's what a disciple is, is a person who's following after Christ and finding Him, and finding himself. And the joy and the wonder of this leads also to the third element of what he finds (the second point in this message), which is:

## 2) A Disciple is One Who Finds the Lost:

Look in the passage. Andrew's response to finding Jesus in Verse 41 is he found first his own brother. Philip's response to finding Christ or really being found by Christ—it's interesting Jesus finds Philip directly, the text says:

***John 1:43 ~ The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael...***

What this tells us is that it's normal and natural for disciples of Jesus Christ to share Him with others. I mean, they go to their brother. They go to their friends. Andrew goes first to Simon his brother. Philip goes first to his dear friend Nathanael. "I've got to tell you about the wonderful man that I met. We've found God's Man!" This is to be a normal, natural part of the Christian life. So we need to ask ourselves, "Am I sharing Jesus with others? Have I sought to share my joy in Him with those I love?" Now, this is important, too, because it gets at the essence really of evangelism, I think, a right way of looking at it. So often calls to evangelism, if I say we're going to have a meeting or seminar on evangelism, many of you would come, because we have an exceptional church that wants to be taught, and I'm very grateful, but by and large, one of the things that pastors talk about that's one of the ways you can diminish your crowd overall is to say you're going to talk about evangelism, because people feel like they're failing at it and they don't want to hear about it, and this is kind of a common thing.

The text is saying that it ought to be normal and natural, and so, so often what the problem is we use things like guilt motivation, and too often people use, and I have used, guilt motivation. "You really ought to be sharing Christ with everybody around you. What are you doing? You really are a sorry excuse for a Christian." That's not what we find here. There are definitely challenges to evangelism, and it's here, but it's not a guilt motivation. God never uses that kind of technique. His motivation is always love, and we see that in the passage.

Now, evangelism, it's important to talk about it. It's important to be willing to confront one another, "How are you doing?" in our relationships and to ask one another. Accountability is important. It's a key part, but it's not the essence. A mastery of techniques and training, things like apologetics, or conversation starters, or understanding and being able to articulate the clear plan of salvation—all of these things are important. The use of the law in bringing about conviction of sin—all of these things are very important, and we ought to study and to show ourselves approved to learn these things.

That's something we're going to be doing this year. We're planning. We're going to share next week in our business meeting some plans for some additional training in evangelism and more corporate outreach opportunities, opportunities to be involved, but listen to this—the one essential component in evangelism, we might say the root of effective evangelism, is unbridled joy in Christ. That is the root. You may deal with the techniques, and like I said, there's a place for that. They're important. I'm not saying they're not important. I'm saying they're secondary. They're necessary but secondary.

The primary thing is to have an overflowing, effervescing, bubbling forth of joy in Christ that cannot be contained. That's what we see here. These two men cannot contain their joy, and they're compelled to go. That's why Andrew goes. It's not because of a guilt trip. John didn't say, "You really need to go share Christ with somebody." He says, "I've got to tell my brother!" It's the same thing with Philip. "I've got to tell Nathanael. I've got to tell my friend." It's the marvelous joy of discovery that should be the sap flowing up from the roots of our lives that extends itself into the fruit of evangelistic encounters and witnessing for Christ.

When you have a problem with your fruit, too often the way we deal with it is when we don't have fruit, we think the way to handle it is to go get a stapler and some plastic fruit, or maybe even better, go get some fruit from Whole Foods or Fresh Market or Publix, and then just staple it onto the tree. When you have a problem with the fruit, where you go is the root, and what needs to happen is more joy in Christ. So when I see that I'm not sharing Jesus like I ought, I need to say, "Am I following after Him like I ought? Am I finding the treasure that He is like I ought?"

Now, I said there are other things we have to have. We need accountability relationships, yes. We need encouragement, yes, but don't forget the root. Don't forget the foundation. Don't forget what's primary. It's not guilt motivation. It's not even primarily the peril of the lost that motivates true evangelism. In Scripture you certainly see that that's a biblical principle. It's something that we're told to be considerate of and to pray for the sake of the lost. It is a part, but it's still secondary. The primary thing that motivates evangelism is the desire to praise so excellent and so marvelous a Savior. That is the essence of evangelism.

You see that in John in the way that he uses over, and over, and over again, more than 40 times—we mentioned this awhile back—forms of the word μαρτυρέω (martyreō), or testify, or witness, or testimony. That's how we translate those words in English, that to evangelize is to testify. It's not first and foremost rescuing. It is that. God is rescuing through it, and it is, and we're to be concerned about these people. Absolutely, because God is, but the primary essence if you want to get to the heart of it, is seen in the word *witness*, and Jesus used the same word in Acts 1:8. We saw this a few years back when we were looking at the book of Acts. He said, "You shall be My witnesses. The Spirit's going to come upon you and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth."

*My witnesses* really would be translated better as *witnesses of Me*. When you look at the context, what He's saying is He has shown them His resurrected glory, He had proven to them He was resurrected by many convincing proofs, He had proved to them His identity, and now He says, "Go and testify about Me to them." You see, evangelism is essentially testifying about Him. We read earlier how Paul defines his preaching ministry. Remember we read in Colossians about how He's the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation? By Him all things were created, visible and invisible, and Paul says, "And we proclaim Him." We don't proclaim methods. We don't proclaim a philosophy of living. We proclaim Jesus Christ. It's Him. Keep looking at Him, personally encountering Him when you read the Bible.

We're given one methodological secret here in the passage. What's evangelism? How do you do it? Look at Verse 42. After Andrew finds his brother Simon, what does he do? ***He brought him to Jesus.*** That's the method. If you want to see someone saved, bring them to Jesus. Now, what does that look like? In that day, it was bringing them literally to Jesus, wasn't it? "I know where Jesus is. You and I need to go where He is." Now today, it's a little different, but it's really not. To bring someone to Jesus, you need to take them to where He is, and He's in this Book. To bring someone to Jesus means to teach them the word of God. It means to speak to them the word of Christ, to take biblical principles, to share a plan of salvation, but in doing it, to be lifting up Christ. Look at Him. Not so much look at even your need to be saved. Yes, look at your need to be saved, but don't stop there. Look at Him. Jesus Christ, look to Him. Go to Him.

One of the reasons that we don't have an altar call at this church—we stopped about 9 years ago—was not because that we don't want to see people saved. Of course it wasn't that. We could spend a lot of time on that. We'll just quickly say this. Altar calls have only been around for about 170 or 180 years. The church didn't start out calling people to the front. It's something that was invented by Charles Finney and people in *The Second Great Awakening* as a method. But we feel like that in America in recent decades, and the last hundred years, people have seen getting saved as going to the front, when getting saved is going to Jesus. It's going to Jesus, directly to Him, and you can do that sitting down or you can do that at the front of the church, and it really doesn't matter, but the thing that must not be forgotten is you must go to Jesus. So in our evangelism, if our joy is in Christ, we should be finding that we can't contain ourselves, and we're looking for opportunities to tell people about our wonderful Savior.

Listen, the best training ground—in meditating on this because we want to be a church that’s more effective evangelistically, it’s a burden of our hearts, our outreach ministry and our elders and deacons, but you know, one of the things I think we’ve got to do to become even more effective no matter where you are—different ones of you are very effective and others of us are in different places—is we’ve got to learn to start talking about Jesus and how wonderful He is among ourselves, and do a better job of that. We need to be bubbling up and effervescing over how wonderful Christ is in the fellowship of the saints. That’s what’s supposed to happen. That’s what all these “one anothers” in the Bible talk about. Admonish one another. Encourage one another. Talk about Him, how wonderful He is. What’s He doing in your life?

We get together in relationships and we’re supposed to have *koinonia*. We use the word *fellowship*, and I use the word fellowship in ways that are not really biblically accurate. It just sort of happens that we develop fellowships anytime we get together and eat or have fun with Christians, right? And that’s always good to eat and have fun. I mean, there’s nothing wrong with that. God gave us both, and it’s good to do it with Christians, but fellowship biblically, the word *koinonia*, means sharing in, and it doesn’t just mean sharing in an experience. It means sharing in the things that we have in common. And what do we have in common? What do all of us have in common? We have varied backgrounds. We have varied circumstances, but if you know Him, we have Jesus in common, and we should be sharing in the wonder of who He is.

If we can learn to talk and discipline ourselves—we get in the habits of talking about weather, and I need this as much as anybody here, and it’s easy to say on the surface, but let’s help each other gently and lovingly to talk about Him. And you know, it’s amazing how sometimes if you have an accountability relationship and you’re getting together, and you’re talking, sometimes you don’t want to ask the questions, because you don’t want them to ask you the questions back. If I ask you how your marriage is going, you’re going to ask me how mine is. If I ask you how your quiet time is going, you’re going to ask me how mine is going. “Let’s just talk about the Braves.” But we need to learn to go ahead and ask those things and go realizing, “Hey, we’re sinners.” Why should I expect—it’s stupid for me to think I’m going to go to my accountability relationship and say everything’s great. I’m a sheep. I’m dumb. I need accountability. That’s why I need it is because I’m dumb. I forget.

So I go and I say, “I know we’ve got to talk about these things, but I’ve had a bad week, but how’s your week been? I haven’t really had fruitful times in the word. I’ve been in the word but it’s been dry.” And the other guy says, “Man, I want to tell you about what the Lord’s been doing in my life,” and he just starts picking me up. And even if both of us had a bad week and we’re sitting there saying, “Wow, isn’t it amazing how empty we are?” well let’s just start talking about Jesus right now, because isn’t it amazing that He still loves us? When we start talking about Him like that, in fact, this is one of the ways that we really become powerfully, evangelistically effective, because when you and I are learning to interact in ways where we’re celebrating Christ, loving each other warts and all, that’s when our evangelism is empowered. Jesus said this in John 13:

***John 13:34 ~ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.***

And then He says:

***John 13:35 ~ By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”***

What He’s saying is when they see that you are loving one another, they will know that you’re followers of Christ. They will see you. It will become an invisible testimony, a visible testimony, but a spiritual testimony that we’re followers of Jesus, and they’re seeing the reality and the wonder of Jesus in that moment. They want to get in on what we have, and then we’re ready to tell them right then, “It’s Jesus. We found Him.” Let’s keep the root primary. Let’s keep following after Christ. That’s what makes a disciple. You may have quit following lately. The message to you today is: *Come on and follow.* Come and see how wonderful He is. You may have forgotten. Get out of the dirt pile that you’re in and follow Him now. Seek Him in His word. Seek Him together. Let’s talk about Him. Let’s do everything we can to be with Him, and then we will find more and more how wonderful He is. We’ll find more and more how much we need Him when we see ourselves, and we will begin finding more and more unbelievers to lead, to bring to Him.

Let’s go to Him in prayer...

*Our Father, we magnify Your great Name. You are more wonderful than our minds could ever have conceived. The more we see of Your Son, the more awed and overwhelmed we are. You are so good. Lord, we ask Your forgiveness for forgetting to seek You, acting and believing at times like other things are worth more than the knowledge of Christ. So Lord, our joy gets dulled and we find ourselves stagnant. We ask You to look at us, and look upon us, and see us, and know that You know us, and still have mercy on us, and we rejoice that You are a God who always says, “Come. Come and see,” and You’re saying that even now. “Come and see. Come and see how merciful I am. Come and see how meek and gentle I am. Come and see how loving I am. Come and see how mighty I am.” Lord, we want to come. We want Jesus Christ to be magnified in our lives. We want Jesus Christ to be magnified in this world, and we long for the day when we’ll be through battling against our flesh, and we can just stand before You in the presence of Your glory, knowing as we are now known, and we can praise and honor You for all that You’ve done. We pray these things for Your glory and in Your Name, Amen.*

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