

Go and Tell

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[0:00] If you have your Bible, would you please stand with me as we read chapter 1 verses 43-51 in honor of the reading of God's word together.

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 and the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 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.

[1:21] 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 open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the son of man.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Lord, would you please be seated. In 1 Corinthians 1, verses 26-31, the Apostle Paul, in speaking to the believers of that church about what true wisdom is, wisdom that is from God that also appears to be foolish to the world, uses them as an example to communicate that truth.

This is what he said to them. For consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful.

Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are.

So that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

[2:52] So that as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. So we see that the Lord calls those whom the rest of the world sees as being nothing.

As being nobodies. And it's through these insignificant people that the gospel was launched and it continues to spread to this very day.

There's a well-known Christian youth ministry organization that has been successful, at least in the world's valuation of success.

And what they've done is that they've sent their directors, their workers, their volunteers into the high schools when school is over for the day.

So they go to wherever the students meet after school and there they are there to interact with them. Now that's definitely not a bad thing. I think that that is actually a good thing.

[3:51] I think it's good for pastors and youth pastors to be visible at our schools. However, it's their method that's troubling. Their method involves recruiting the star football player and the head cheerleader first to be a part of their ministry because they have the assumption that if we get those two, then all of the rest of the kids will follow them.

So they're looking to the influential kids. The ones whom they deem to have the most sway in the schools.

The one whom the other kids follow. And let me tell you that that method does not match Scripture. Now I'm not saying that the gospel should be shared only with a certain group of people.

That also doesn't match Scripture. Yes, we want the star football player and the head cheerleader to know Christ savingly. But let me tell you that the kid who sits alone at the lunch table and who is at the bottom of the social hierarchy of his school is loved by God.

And God can use that boy or that girl to do a mighty work. A work that no one thought possible.

[5:15] And so on that note, I encourage you to keep that in mind when you're interacting with our youth and our children here in our church. That child who always acts up in Awana or in Sunday school or in youth group.

God may have great plans for that kid that you're totally unaware of. So don't ever give up on them. Because you have no idea what God is capable of doing through them.

From the beginning, the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, of who he is, of what he's done, has spread through humble, unknown, uninfluential, powerless, and timid people.

We see that truth exemplified right here at the start of Jesus' earthly ministry. Common, ordinary, uninfluential men who are known to one another but to few others in that society will be called and they will be commissioned by the Lord to launch Christianity.

To spread the gospel. To establish his church. Now think about this. If we were the ones behind the steering wheel, if it was up to us to be able to determine whom those first disciples would be, we'd probably do things differently.

[6:41] We'd probably seek to endorse the gospel the way that the world endorses products today. Recruiting the powerful and the well-known and the wealthy and the beautiful.

To make our product known. You know, I think of Wheaties. Wheaties is terrible. Wheaties is so gross. Now you might like Wheaties.

I do not. But here's the thing. If they put the right athlete, the right person who is hot at the time on that box, people will buy it.

People will buy it. They will see it. And they will think that since it looks so good on the outside, that the inside must be just as good.

And if they've ever ate Wheaties, they've been terribly disappointed by that. As I was as a child. The ones whom many would have assumed that Jesus would have chosen to be His first disciples were those who were a part of the current religious establishment.

[7:51] They would have thought, well, He'll choose a Pharisee or a rabbi or somebody from the group of the priests or the scribes or the Sadducees. They had influence. They had power.

They knew the Scriptures. They were supposedly close to God. And supposedly they were helping others to get close to Him as well. However, Jesus revealed that while the packaging looked good on the outside, the inside was corrupt.

Like a box of Wheaties. Matthew 23, verses 27 through 28. Yeah, I guess I'll never be on the box of Wheaties. Okay, enough about that.

Matthew 23. Jesus speaking to these scribes, these Pharisees, this religious established order.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.

[8:56] So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. None from that group was chosen.

Rather, it was some rural, inconsequential fishermen whom Christ chose to be His first followers. They will become the first witnesses for Him.

They will become the first witnesses for Him. And it is from their witness that the gospel has continued to spread to this very day. From one person to another person to another person, the kingdom of God has increased, has advanced one soul at a time.

If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, if you are a follower of His, then that means most likely you heard the gospel from someone else.

Now maybe you picked up the Word of God and you read it and people have been saved definitely through that, but most likely you heard the gospel from somebody else.

[10:08] Someone else invited you to come and see. God used that person to go and tell the gospel to you, and He enabled you to believe it and to receive it.

The person who shared the gospel with you heard it from someone else. Who heard it from someone else. Who heard it from someone else.

And we could go down that line all the way back to this group of disciples who heard it from Jesus Christ, from His mouth.

So why did Jesus choose these inconsequential men? Why does He call those who are nobodies according to the world's standards? Well, because the advance of the gospel cannot be attributed to the power of the people.

It can only be attributed to the power of God. This is what God does. And He uses us as His instrument to accomplish it.

[11:15] You as a follower of Jesus Christ have been commanded by Him to go and to tell. To go and make disciples. Now you might think, as many do, that you don't have what it takes to do that.

And so my hope is that after this sermon you will think differently about that very thing. And so here's the main idea for this morning's message.

John 1, verses 43-51 present us with four aspects of evangelism. If your going is intentional and our message is clear, the fruit will come and the end result will be well worth the effort.

And so by evangelism, I mean sharing the gospel. Who Jesus is. What Jesus has done. With unbelievers. With those who have yet to hear it.

So the first aspect we see of our evangelism here is that we must go. Beginning of verse 43 and the beginning of verse 45, it says there the next day Jesus decided to go.

[12:32] Then we see Philip found Nathanael. He goes to him. There is intentionality in both Jesus and Philip's going.

Just as there was with John and Andrew's going after Jesus and then Jesus inviting them to come and see. After that we saw that Andrew goes to Peter and does the same thing.

And that pattern continues throughout the rest of this gospel and throughout the rest of the New Testament. As a matter of fact, if you've read the Bible, if you've read through the gospels, you see that Jesus was always on the move.

He was always going. After his ascension into heaven, the disciples followed that same pattern.

Yeah, for a while they were stationary in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit moved them out, but they were always on the move.

They were always going. Always proactive. Always seeking to share the good news of Jesus Christ with as many people as they could. So we have to understand that we must go because Jesus commands us to go.

[13:44] Matthew 28, verses 16 through 20. Before Jesus ascends into heaven, after his resurrection, he's gathered his followers around and this is his instruction to them.

It's instruction for us today too. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I command you and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

So notice here what Jesus didn't say. He didn't say all authority has been given to me. Now stay. Stay and wait for people to come to you.

That's not how it works. And here's the thing. As a church today, if we think that all we have to do to reach our unbelievers and to have an impact for the Lord in sharing the gospel with our community, if we think that all that's required is that we open our doors and expect that people are going to come in and hear the gospel, if that's our goal, if that's how we think it's going to work, then let me tell you that that message is not biblical.

[15:25] That method does not work. It's not the way it's supposed to be. So that's why as a church, we send people from our congregation to places like Latvia.

That's why we have a missions team, a prison ministry team, that goes to Dick Connor Correctional Facility. They can't come to us. We can go to them.

That's why we go to the lighthouse once a month. We go to them. That's why we go to Sunfest and share the gospel out there with our community. That's why all the different engaged type events that we do, that's why we do them.

It's us going with the intention that we will share the gospel and that people will see Christ through our words and through our actions and through our lives.

We are going to seek to make disciples just like Jesus did and just as He's commanded us to do. Because here's the thing.

[16:31] We've been commanded to go, but also, if we don't go, they won't hear. Romans 10, 14-15. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in Him in whom they have not 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.

It's our feet as followers of Jesus Christ. We carry the message with us wherever we go. Here's the thing.

There is no off-season for Christianity. There is no off-season for a follower of Jesus Christ. Every encounter, every interaction is an opportunity for us to deliver the message that we have been called and commanded to carry and to bear and to share.

In His infinite wisdom, God has decided to use you. didn't have to, but has chosen to use you as His instrument through which His gospel is shared and is spread.

[17:53] And so we should view that as an exciting opportunity, not as a chore. And if you've ever had the privilege to share the gospel with someone and ever had the privilege to experience God using you as His instruments to share that good news with them and you've seen the Holy Spirit take them from spiritual death to spiritual life, maybe even right before your very eyes, if you haven't experienced that, then you're missing out.

Man, you're missing out. It's a remarkable thing to be used by God to build His kingdom. I've shared this story before, but it's just the story every year just seems, there just seems to be another layer that's added to it.

We had a girl in our youth group back in Leavenworth who came and she would dress all in black and you could tell that she was there because her grandparents really wanted her to be there. Her not so much herself. Not really sure what Christianity was about, hadn't heard the gospel, wasn't really sure what we were about and so she came for a while and then she was willing to come with us on our mission trip that we took to Minnesota and it was an interesting week for her. We would all gather together, we had different youth groups there at the end of the night and worship and she would always kind of sit over by herself and then one night we were giving testimonies, the group was giving testimonies about how they saw God using different people throughout the day and one of the leaders said to her, her name was Mia, she was learning how to play the guitar and she led a worship service in a place where they were at and there was something in that moment, just him calling her out, she was sitting over by herself and it was just like her countenance just completely changed.

[20:03] You know, she had been invited to come and see and she was seeing and that night she went with Danny, my wife, afterwards, after the lesson and she had questions and more questions and she became a follower of Jesus Christ that night and let me tell you, it's transformational.

It totally is. She went from the old Mia to the new Mia. excited to be in church and in youth group inviting other people to come and see and so that's the next layer of the story is you know our youth group from Calvary comes to help with our VBS.

Well, she came and guess what? This time she brought somebody from her school that she invited to come with her to youth group who was saved and who invited his family to come and watch him be baptized and who came to this mission trip so you see it's adding, it's growing, it's awesome and only God can do it but he's willing and he wants to use us in doing that.

Man, that excites me. It's an awesome thing and I share with you from my own personal testimony of my family, my brother who died well before I was born.

He was sick in the hospital and there was a man from a church who was visiting another person in his church who was sick and he came downstairs and his wife was interacting with my oldest sister and my father in the waiting room while my brother was receiving treatment and they just started to talk and they found out what was going on.

[21:45] He cared. Found out that my brother was sick and he said, hey, can I pray for you? Can I get your phone number? And he called my dad every week and my brother died but God used his life to get my family to see the gospel, to believe it and they've gone to that church ever since.

More than 40 years later and it was all because of a guy named Gail Milhoff. That's a guy who worked with his hands but was willing to go and tell.

God has done great things through his witness and he does great things through yours. If you're not doing this you are missing out. You are the missionary of your block.

You are the missionary in your neighborhood, in your workplace, in your family. That is your mission field and you are the light that God has chosen to use to shine, to share the gospel.

How are your family members or your neighbors or your coworkers going to hear unless it's you that shares this good news with them?

[23:09] Don't you see that God wants to use you to do that? You are His person in that place at this time to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

So again, if you approach this as a monotonous chore, you won't be of much use. Again, we look back and we see how excited these men were. These first disciples to see Jesus, to hear Jesus. They couldn't contain themselves. They had to go. They had to go to their friends that they would see Jesus and hear Him as well.

Jesus doesn't issue commands to us that He's not willing to follow Himself. He commands us to go just as He was willing to go.

To leave heaven behind. To humble Himself. to endure the cross. To purchase our salvation and accomplish His Father's will.

[24:19] He's not asking you to do anything that He hasn't done Himself. He is the example that we must follow. Hebrews 12, 1-2. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely.

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us looking to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

God, you know, one of the hardest adjustments that I've had to make as a former athlete is going from being on the field to sitting in the stands.

That's hard. Going from playing to spectating. And so, I've really come to enjoy helping out with Jack's sports teams to help coach those teams because it puts me back down on the field.

However, right, I can't play as much as I've got to resist that urge sometimes, right? That's not my place anymore. My place is to spectate.

[25:43] I'm closer to the action but I'm still a spectator. And so, while that may be the case for athletes, washed up athletes like myself, no Christian should be a spectator.

No Christian is called to be a spectator. So, in that scripture that I just read to you, Hebrews chapter 12, you know, those who are watching, those who are cheering on, they are those who have run the race.

They weren't spectators. They were those who had completed the race. and they're encouraging those whose job it is now to race, to run well.

So, my encouragement to you is that you get yourself involved here. Here. Let me tell you, we want you here.

We want you to serve here. You have been given spiritual gifts and they have been given to you to use, to give to others in this church and collectively for us to use them together.

[26:57] Sure. To advance, though, the kingdom of God in our community, we need to be united. There is no spectator in church.

There should not be. So, let's make the most of our lives that we've been given to make much of Christ together.

He who came to us, who enabled us to hear and believe the great news that there is salvation for sinners.

We have to go. And when we go, we see the second aspect is that we must tell. We have something to share. Verse 43, he found Philip and said to him, follow me, Jesus says.

Then Philip, in verse 45, 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 then in verse 46, Philip said to him, come and see.

[28:02] So again, if you've read the Gospels, you see that a statement that Jesus often makes is follow me. He said that repeatedly. This is important for us to remember.

Our job as Gospel messengers is to tell others to follow Jesus. Well, what does following Jesus entail? Well, we see through the Scripture that we've read, Philip witnesses to Nathanael telling him we've found him.

Then he goes back to the testimony of Scripture. We've found him, this one, whom the Word of God, the Bible, the law of Moses said and the prophets wrote about.

It's him. So your words are good, certainly, but understand that God's Word is better. Share your testimony. Point people to what Jesus has done for you and then point them importantly to what Scripture says and how all of that testimony is backed up by the Word of God.

And remember, you aren't the hero of your testimony. The hero of your testimony is Jesus Christ. If people are following you, then that's the beginning of a cult.

[29:25] That's not good. We want people to follow Christ. Sure, they can follow our example, but ultimately the example that we are giving to them is an example of Christlikeness.

Philip's message to Nathaniel is clear. Just as Andrew's message was clear to Peter. Just as John the Baptist's message was clear to Andrew and John. We go and we tell others to follow Jesus and we invite them to come and see.

A few years ago, Lifeway conducted a poll and they made two startling conclusions about the state of evangelism in the church in our country.

The first conclusion said that only 2% of church members invited non-church members or unbelievers to church within a given year.

Only 2%. Secondly, the other number that was startling, 82% of unchurched people, of unchurched peoples who were asked if they would go to church if invited, 82% said that they would.

[30:47] 82%. Now, I'm not sure how accurate those numbers are and I kind of question them a little bit but I do believe that they portray a great problem in our churches and in our culture that I think that we all are aware of unfortunately.

And it's that unbelievers are interested in what the church has to say but Christians aren't interested enough in sharing with unbelievers the truth, the good news of Jesus Christ.

That's a big problem. The world wants to hear but we're not willing to say. Amazing things happen if we will just pay more attention to others than we do to ourselves.

you know, Jesus did that. He paid attention to others and if we do that too you'd see that people want to have these conversations and it's easy to have them.

Something happens in their life something hard for them to go through and you simply say do you mind if I pray for you? People are really responsive to that like my family was and then you follow up with that.

[32:14] You have conversations and you ask people where do you go to church if they don't go to church you have plenty of opportunity right there for dialogue to exist to talk to them about that very thing ultimately seeking to steer them back to the gospel.

These are the kinds of questions that lead to the conversations that we must be having. however we see that sometimes we are met with skepticism when we share the gospel.

So the third aspect is that we will sometimes be met with skepticism. So Nathaniel's there Philip is sharing the good news with him we found him come see come follow and Nathaniel's response is can anything good come out of Nazareth?

He is skeptical of what Philip has to say. And so I think that Nathaniel's skepticism is prompted by two different presumptions that he has made up in his mind about who the Messiah should be.

First we know from Jesus' testimony of Nathaniel that he was well versed in the scriptures. He says of him behold an Israelite indeed whom there is no deceit.

[33:32] How could he say that unless he knew the scriptures well and was seeking to follow what the law said. Right? So he's well versed in the word of God.

Paul says in Romans 2 that a Jew is a Jew inwardly. It's a true believer of God. Such was the case for Nathaniel. During a time when most of the religious establishment was plagued by hypocrisy and the blind were leading the blind, Nathaniel stood out as being a man of integrity.

Being genuine and honest. But again being a student of scripture he knew that Nazareth was not the prophesied birthplace of the Messiah. Now he'd find out later that Jesus was actually born in Bethlehem but at this point in his mind he's skeptical of what Philip is saying to him.

He's also skeptical I think in his heart as evidenced by his sarcastic speech saying can anything good come out of Nazareth?

So secondly he's skeptical because of his disdain for the town and the people of Nazareth. His questions followed this line of thinking how could anyone important now the Messiah has to be important how could anybody so important ever come from a place like that?

[35:01] How could a nobody from nowhere ever be the Messiah? Nazareth was a small town that was looked down upon by the Jews in a similar way people looked down upon our region of the country right?

If you live on the coast you know what they call us? The flyover states what do they mean by that? They say well nothing really important happens there right? All the movers and the shakers the important people they live on the east or the west coast and so that's the kind of attitude that Nathaniel has towards the people of Nazareth he's skeptical in his heart he's skeptical in his mind he can't believe it or he doesn't believe it that Jesus is the Messiah as many people continue to be skeptical of our claims that he is today as a matter of fact Jesus was met by this skepticism during his earthly ministry time and time again people from his own town of Nazareth took offense to so scripture says that we too will encounter that same kind of opposition for our relationship to Jesus Christ we will be met at times by those who are skeptics of what we believe because the message of the cross is foolishness to them 1st

Corinthians chapter 1 verses 18 through 24 for the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God for it is written I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and of the discernment of the discerning I will thwart where is the one who is wise where is the scribe where is the debater of this age has God not made foolish the wisdom of the world for since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe for Jews demand signs and Greeks!

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God so you see every person is either in the process of salvation or the process of destruction and that is determined based upon how they respond to the cross though we are at times met with skepticism the answer isn't to say or think something like well forget you forget about you who cares about you anyway or to engage in an argument that's unproductive and it's never ending and it's unfruitful Philip is convinced that Jesus is the Christ and he responds to Nathaniel's skepticism by continuing to extend that invitation to him won't you come and won't you see now there does come a time when we must stop casting our pearls before swine but until that line of dialogue becomes unproductive we must keep the lines of communication open with those who are skeptical seeking to answer their questions not losing patience but praying and hoping that they will see as we've been made to see that

Jesus is the Christ and the cross isn't foolishness but it's the instrument by which we have been saved the fourth aspect of evangelism is that the effort we expend on going and telling will be worth it so Nathaniel comes and Jesus sees him and Nathaniel says to him right and Jesus says that I saw you under the fig tree he said how do you know me Jesus answered him before Philip called you I saw you under the fig tree Nathaniel answered him Rabbi you are the son of God you are the king of Israel and 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 truly I say to you you!

[39:28] will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the son of man now I think it's interesting here because Adam and Eve when you remember when they sinned against God they covered themselves with fig leaves and here in a similar way we have Nathaniel who's searching and he's under a fig tree and just as God did for Adam and Eve he came he performed a sacrifice the first one he clothed them right so now Jesus the ultimate sacrifice had come the one who would give his life to clothe us in his righteousness and so Nathaniel is impressed by Jesus omniscience his ability to know all things but Jesus tells him that that's nothing that's nothing compared to what is to come now there's some debate on what exactly Jesus is referencing here and we could have a whole other sermon about that but here's what

I have come to believe Jesus meant by it in this imagery that he uses he refers back to two Old Testament passages the first is Jacob and his dream the night before he met his brother Esau if you remember and the other goes to Daniel chapter 7 and his vision of the son of man I want to read that vision with you 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 and to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people's nations and languages should serve him his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom is one that shall never be destroyed see Nathaniel wasn't at Christ transfiguration certainly he saw him perform many great miracles but I believe that

Jesus is speaking to something even beyond that here something that we will see his triumphant return when the heavens will be open when we will all behold Christ in his coming and when we see that it will all be worth it it will all be worth it we won't regret one moment of how we spent our life in service to the Lord when we see him in that moment sometimes I go home during the day at times when when my daughter isn't expecting me to be home you know she kind of has a schedule she knows when I leave for work she knows when I come home sometimes I come home for lunch and I love it because she'll be playing or watching

TV or doing something or eating and I walk in the door and she drops everything and she says daddy right she's got this big smile and and let me tell you in that moment it doesn't matter if I've had a good day or the worst day that is the greatest feeling that is the greatest feeling and if you've ever been a kid and you were in that position when it was your mother or your father who came home and like for her she just drops everything you're home let me tell you that when Christ comes back for the follower of Christ that's going to be our reaction oh thank you that you're back oh it's been hard but it's been so worth it because you're here and now all of these troubles all of these trials they're gone but they were worth it all of the effort that we expended in trying to share the good news of

Jesus Christ it's worth it you're here what a glorious day that will be so don't waste your life don't waste the precious time that God has given you here to make much of him we must decrease he must increase and when that happens when that day comes we'll all experience it we'll be willing to drop everything you're here take us home right I want to close with one last verse Matthew 16 19 through 20 Jesus saying to us take this to heart do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal don't waste your life don't waste your time be the disciple that

[45 : 10] God has called you to be go and tell invite people to come and see