



The Nourishing Vocation Project

Engaging the Living Word

[John 1:35-46](#)

What is this particular text?

- Call story
- Prophecy—"Here is the Lamb of God!"
- Evangelism
- Invitation

How does the text function within the scriptural story?

- Marks the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry in John's Gospel
- Jesus begins to gather disciples
- There is a transition from John the Baptist to Jesus
- Immediately after gathering disciples comes the story of Jesus' first miracle

How can this text function in the church today?

- What are people looking for in a church community?
- How do we invite people to "come and see"?
- In John, Jesus chooses some disciples, but it seem that a few of them rather choose him. A reminder that we do not get to control those who seek God. The church is not invitation only
- A reminder that we are called to point others to Christ
- Jesus does not send away the ones who follow and seek him

What does the text do to you? How do you react to the text? What feelings does this text engender in you?

- In all the disciples' call stories in each Gospel, I struggle with how easily the disciples follow
- I am gladdened when Jesus calls Peter by name and knows him
- Nathanael makes me anxious; I don't like conflict and I wouldn't want to be Philip
 - Brings up a fear of rejection
 - brings up doubt or uncertainty that Philip might feel when he is challenged
- I know I do not invite others to follow as freely as those first disciples do

What do you have to say to the text?

- I want Nathanael to chill out. Or Philip to leave him behind after his initial negativity.
- Jesus asks the first two followers a very difficult question
- I like that word of mouth between people who know and care about one another appears to be the most efficient evangelism method in this text
- Jesus doesn't really do much in this story, he is not as active with choosing his followers

What do you see through this text from the story itself?

- John the Baptist points his disciples to Jesus at the expense of losing his own followers

- Jesus didn't necessarily choose each of these men, but he knew them by name and appeared to be ready for exactly them.
- Philip did not give up on Nathanael when he expressed doubt
- The disciples each say something different when they tell others who Jesus is

What do you see from within your church/community/world? (2022)

- Evangelism often becomes a competition between churches with the most resources
- We often unwittingly (or sometimes intentionally) turn away followers when they don't seem like the "right kind" of disciples, or when they do not look or act like us
- No one really knows what they are looking for in today's world; or, we think we know, but we either cannot find it or finding it doesn't give the answers we expected or wanted
- Our questions about what we are looking for are becoming more urgent in the face of economic, political, and environmental turmoil
- Philip told Nathanael to "Come and SEE"—people see how the church acts and what the church does; today's Nathanaels are quick to leave when we don't model who Jesus is
- The disciples asked Jesus "Where are you staying?" They knew that they could not ask questions and seek answers in a passing moment—they needed to linger over a conversation in a physical place. We like quick solutions and want to get things over with. We want to ask Google or Siri and move on in a moment.
- Philip gives Nathanael the opportunity to see for himself rather than convince him with his own words—how many of us would jump immediately into an argument with Nathanael? Our world puts too much stock in being "right."
- Crises of today:
 - What in the world are we looking for and does it even matter when the world is changing so quickly around us?
 - Institutions competing with each other over people's time...and money
 - We value information more than relationships

What do you see within yourself?

- Fear of rejection or conflict that prevent invitation
- Times that my words and actions have not pointed to Jesus
- Times when others have led me to see who Jesus is

What is the context – textual and historical?

- Follows the famous opening of the Gospel of John, and the introduction of John the Baptist
- Comes right before Jesus turns water to wine at the wedding of Cana, his first miracle in John's Gospel
- Is where the Gospel of John begins the story of Jesus' earthly ministry

What questions does this text raise for you?

- Why did John the Baptists' disciples trust his words about who Jesus is?
- What are we looking for? How do we answer Jesus' question?
- Was Jesus looking for disciples before the two began following him?
- What did they talk about when they were visiting with Jesus? How did they come to believe that John was right about Jesus?
- Why doesn't Nathanael trust someone from Nazareth?
- Did John the Baptist know that he would lose his disciples to Jesus? How did he feel?

What words/themes seem of particular importance?

- Look
- Come and see
- Follow
- Found

What is the Gospel / transforming Good News within this text?

- Jesus invites us to see who he is
- Jesus invites us into relationship with him
- Others can show us who Jesus is
- We can show others who Jesus is
- God's grace and love can come from unlikely sources
- Jesus knows we are looking for him, even when we do not

What is the as-over-againstness of this text?

- Invitations to "come and see" can be rejected
- We do not always know what we are looking for
- Relationships take time
- We sometimes scoff at the good news, especially when it comes from a person or place we do not expect
- Our actions do not always point people to Jesus
- It is difficult for us to point people to Jesus without wanting to keep some of the "credit" for ourselves; but John the Baptist shows us there is no place for selfishness in this work

Who does this text say that Jesus is, or if not Jesus, then who does this text say that God is? What does this text say about God?

- Jesus draws people to himself
- Jesus invites and does not turn people away
- Jesus knows his followers by name
- Jesus is relational
- Jesus inspires his disciples to share the good news

What have others said about this text?

- ["One disciple after another"](#) encounters Jesus and has a transformative experience that leads him to tell others, so they too will "come and see" this man from Galilee and be changed by that experience. In John, the way the community of disciples grows is more like the "sleeper hit" whose box office success results from "word of mouth" than from a well-funded advertising blitz." by Gilberto Ruiz
- ["Bearing witness is part of what it means to be the Church."](#) To witness to Jesus is always with the invitation to "come and see" (1:39, 46), without use of force or threats or manipulation. It is an open and gracious encouragement to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8). We might well ask what it means for us to bear witness to Jesus in our community, in both words and deeds." by Dorothy A. Lee

What will I teach or proclaim?

- We don't get to choose who might follow
- John the Baptist was called to lead people to Jesus, we are called to do the same
- Jesus spent time with those first disciples—relationships (with God and with others with whom we live in community) are an important part of discipleship
- We do not have to “prove” who Jesus is to those who might doubt; just keep pointing to Jesus
- Jesus' call to follow leads to the called inviting others to follow
- Who shows us who Jesus is or leads us to him? Who are the John the Baptists of today? Of your community?
- The disciples found what they were looking for in Jesus, we can also
- We might not always know the answer to Jesus' question “What are you looking for”
- Real invitation to follow Jesus is not a competition between churches or communities or leaders; John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and then got out of the way
- Jesus called the first disciples into relationship with him and with each other—discipleship is not an individual activity
- We show people who Jesus is with our actions more than our words—Jesus said “Come and SEE” not “come and hear”