

John 1:35-51

35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. 36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?" 39 He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now 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 first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).

43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and 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 And 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 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 and said to 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, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51 And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Warranties are something that are pretty common these days. If you buy a car you usually get a 100,000 mile warranty. If your car breaks down before 100,000 miles, you're guaranteed free repairs. If you buy a computer it usually comes with a 2-year warranty, that says if anything happens to it the manufacturer will fix or replace it. When I was buying some hiking gear from an outfitter a few years ago, they backed everything up with a lifetime guarantee. If at any

time, for any reason, I was unsatisfied with my purchases, I could bring that stuff back and they would either give me back my money or replace it.

I've often wondered how a place like that could make any money. But it's a reassuring claim, isn't it, a guarantee like that? There's no risk involved whatsoever, so I'm inclined to believe that these are some high quality items before I ever even use them. The company is so sure that you will be satisfied with their product that they guarantee it for the rest of your life.

What if I told you there was an even bigger guarantee than that? One that instills more confidence and applies to a far superior product than any car, clothing item, or piece of technology. I'd imagine many of you would not be surprised, because you have already come and seen what God's Word offers. You have already looked over the promises, the prophecies, the product and, as our epistle reading for today said, you have "tasted that the Lord is good." What a wonderful comfort we have for ourselves and what a wonderful message is ours to share. And so this mission festival weekend we will take a look at **GOD'S "COME AND SEE" GUARANTEE. He offers this guarantee to you, and He also offers it through you.** May the Spirit grant us wisdom in our meditation.

Our text for this weekend comes from the beginning of John's Gospel, when, you guessed it, Jesus was just starting His ministry. He had been baptized by John the Baptist just the previous day, and the forerunner to the Messiah doubles down on what was made abundantly clear to him and the observers of Jesus' baptism. "Behold! The Lamb of God!" And we read that two of John the Baptist's disciples, Andrew and John the Evangelist, are compelled to follow Jesus.

When the Bible says that they followed Jesus, they didn't immediately dive right into being his disciples, they were literally just following him around apprehensively at this point. Could this be the LORD's Anointed? This normal looking carpenter's Son? And Jesus turns and asks them, "what do you seek?"

Now, that's a pretty big question. What were these men after in following Christ? Did they expect, as many other Jews did, the Messiah to deliver Israel from their Roman oppressors? Were they seeking a good moral teacher, who would help them to be the best version of themselves? Were they hoping to have some sort of an extraordinary experience, perhaps a miracle or a powerful, spiritual experience? Did they want wealth or fame?

Unfortunately, these are things that many people in the world are looking for in following Christ. And unfortunately, there are many churches in our world that are more than happy to promise these things that God never promises His people. Christ as the defender of our nation,

who will never allow evil to befall America. Christ as a man who does little more than set a good example for us to follow. Christ as a dotting benefactor, who wants nothing more than to stuff your wallet.

What do you seek in Christ? Do you seek a Savior who is there when you need Him to help you out of a pinch but who mostly leaves you alone to do what you want? Do you seek someone to pat you on the back for what a good job you are doing at being a Christian? Do you seek someone who is going to back you up and show just how right you are and how wrong they are? These are the temptations we all face. To think not that Christ calls us, but that we call Christ when we need Him and it's convenient. That Christ owes us His service, and not the other way around.

We can only speculate about what Andrew and John were seeking in following Jesus, because they answered His question with a question: *"Rabbi, where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).*

It's worth noting that the Greek in verse 39 could be translated *come and see for yourself*. When the disciples went to where Jesus was staying, Jesus made His role as Messiah clear to them. By His Words and by His actions, Jesus called them to faith in Him as His disciples. In fact, this was such a life-changing occasion that the Evangelist recalls the very hour that Jesus called Him to learn exactly who the Christ was, and what He was about. And He calls to you as well. He offers you that **COME AND SEE GUARANTEE**.

Whether you were raised in the faith, came to faith later, or are still looking for answers, God offers you to come and see. When the temptations of the world and of your own heart lead you to doubt, Jesus calls to you, *come and see*. Look at the prophecies fulfilled. Look at the promises kept. Look at the promises He still is keeping each and every day. Look at the blessings that He has bestowed on you. Look behind you at the winding path of your life, where you have strayed and God has returned you to Him. Where you could not walk one step further and Jesus carried you. Look at the power of God's Word in your heart, which has created in you a clean heart to do His will and to bear the easy burden of Christ's forgiveness. Come and see who Jesus is. Come and see what He has done.

Come and see how Jesus was born true God and true Man. How He lived His life in perfect obedience to the will of the Father. Come and see how he carried out His Father's will in humble obedience, asking that the cup of suffering might pass from Him in Gethsemane yet

drinking that cup for our sakes. Come and see your Savior nailed to a cross for your sins. Behold the Lamb for sinners slain; behold your King!

And then heed the invitation of the angels at the tomb that Easter morning, *“He is not here, He is risen! Come and see the place where He laid.”* Come and see the empty tomb as recorded in Scripture and attested to by many infallible proofs, for these things did not happen in a corner. They were not done in secret. Our redemption, the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, was done openly so that the whole world, you and I, could come and see. Just as the tomb was empty, so too have our sins vanished, washed away in Christ’s blood.

Come and see God’s guarantee to you in our Old Testament reading, Isaiah 43 *Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.* In our Epistle reading: *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

God has offered His “Come and See Guarantee” to you to taste and see that the Lord is gracious. **And now He offers it through you as His witnesses.** When Andrew had gone to where Jesus was staying and heard His Words, the first thing he did was run and tell His brother, Peter. *“Come and see! We have found the Messiah!”* The following day, Jesus called Philip, who went to tell Nathanael. *“We have found Him of Whom Moses and the prophets wrote!”*

But Nathanael was skeptical. And he had pretty good reason to be, there were many false Messiahs parading around. It had been four-hundred years since God had last sent a prophet to Israel. And that the Messiah comes from Nazareth? Give me a break. That unsavory, backwater village? Surely the Messiah would come from somewhere **a little** more prestigious. After all, there was no prophecy explicitly stating that the Messiah would be from Nazareth.

Philip faced a situation that we are all familiar with: skepticism. How are we to convince people that Jesus is Lord? What can I say or do that will change this person's skepticism into faith? Great news, you don’t have to do any of those things, nor can you change hearts. Take a page from Philip’s book. *Philip said to Him, “Come and see.”* Come and see who Jesus is. What he says, what He does. Come and see in the Word the forgiveness of all your sins. Though they are

like scarlet, they will be white as snow. Come and see the peace which surpasses all understanding, even in such uncertain times as this.

We would be remiss this Mission Festival if we didn't look to Paul's approach to mission work. Arguably one of the greatest missionaries of all time, Paul went about proclaiming Christ in this manner, recorded in 1 Corinthians 2 *And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.* And again He says in 2 Corinthians 4 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*

We are earthen vessels, mere clay pots. There was nothing special about the twelve disciples that made Jesus call them. And there is nothing inherently special about us that He calls us to offer His "Come and See Guarantee" to others. But the message we carry is life-giving water in a sin-parched desert. It is life to those who are perishing, sight to the blind, forgiveness for all. Don't believe me? Come and see. **God offers this guarantee to others through you.**

May we all be emboldened by the Holy Spirit to extend the invitation to "come and see" to family and friends. Neighbors and co-workers. Acquaintances and strangers. Because there are many products out there that come with a satisfaction guarantee, but none like the Gospel. None like **GOD'S COME AND SEE GUARANTEE**. He offers it to you to calm your fears, assuage your doubts, and assure your forgiveness. And he offers it through you, so that the world might "come and see" that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God and its Savior from sin.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.