

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS AND SERMON**

### **Second Sunday of Epiphany**

**January 17, 2021**

#### **Psalm 139:1–10, 14 (ESV):**

1 O LORD, you have searched me and known me!

2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from afar.

3 You search out my path and my lying down  
and are acquainted with all my ways.

4 Even before a word is on my tongue,  
behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.

5 You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is high; I cannot attain it.

7 Where shall I go from your Spirit?  
Or where shall I flee from your presence?

8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!  
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

9 If I take the wings of the morning  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

10 even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me.

14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;  
my soul knows it very well.

#### **First Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1–10; 11-20 (ESV):**

##### **The Lord Calls Samuel**

3 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

4 Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" 5 and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

6 And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy.

9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears."

11 Then the LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. 14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

15 Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 16 But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." 17 And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." 18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him."

19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD.

## **EPISTLE: 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 (ESV):**

### **Flee Sexual Immorality**

12 “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. 13 “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

## **THE GOSPEL - John 1:43–51 (ESV):**

### **Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael**

**43** The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. 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** 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 there is no deceit!**” **48** 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.**” **49** Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” **50** 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.” **51** And he said to him, “**Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.**”

## Sermon 3 – Second Sunday of Epiphany

### “Come and See”

#### John 1:43-51

Dear friends,

We have themed lessons today, except for the Epistle lesson, Paul is as always content to do his own thing, but the Old Testament and the Gospel lessons are records of calling. God calling us is a phrase we use in Christianity from time to time. We say it in reference to things we feel compelled to do, and that's fine. Sometimes it is quite literal, God was undeniably the one who called me to be at this church for example, often though we use it when there isn't as much physical evidence, and it is just something we feel God wants us to do. In the Gospel lesson, we have another literal example, and this is the man Christ Jesus calling the men he wants to serve as disciples of his church, and their reactions to this. So today we will talk about calling. What does God call on you to do? What does God call on these men to do? Is there a difference?

Since the Gospel of John is written by John, that means that absolutely nothing follows format and even though everything makes sense, it only makes John sense, and John sense is different than Luke and Matthew sense. John records before this that Jesus sources His very first disciples from those who were following John the Baptizer, then our text starts when he turns to Galilee. He invites them to “come and see.” This idea of seeing is quite contrary to how we absorb our faith, faith comes to us after all by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ, but the disciples were unique in that regard. The job of the disciples was to witness, to see, and then to report and testify as to what they had seen. So when Jesus calls them, He tells them, come and see. This takes a twist in what comes next.

**“43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”** This is a variation on the same. Follow, Jesus calls to Philip. He makes the same call to every Christian. Follow. Now Philip had a man to follow, a body to follow, He had a physical path to walk, blessings to see, and hardships to suffer. It was all very straightforward. He had a person to do it with, but so do you. As I said, Jesus tells you the same thing. Follow me. Yet Jesus is in heaven, how do we follow Him? Well, the disciples

heard His voice, we do the same when we read the Scriptures, when we gather here today. You hear His voice today. It says to you, I forgive you all your sins. It says to you that you are welcome at His table. It says that He will never leave you or forsake you. He gives you my voice to be His voice to you. I wish that He wouldn't, and would just do it Himself, but that is how He does it. The church is God's voice to you, just as it is God's voice to the world.

**“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 Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”** Come and see. This seeing is something that's easy to envy. I would've loved to have seen the things Philip saw, to see Jesus in action, to hear His human voice and catch a glimpse of those miracles. It feels like it would be such a boost to my faith, my trust, to have that real presence there. Come and see. I want to, God, but you went back to heaven. You left us. Philip gets it immediately, but Nathanael's response never fails to make me laugh, capturing not just his humanity but showing how little we've changed. We don't know where exactly Bethsaida was, but Nathanael talks about it like we would talk about Dubois, Riverton, or even somewhere farther like Douglas. You can hear the dismissive snort. Nazareth. But Philip says, come and see. Philip actually gets specific this time, though, telling us that Jesus is the one Moses and the prophets promised.

This is important to remember. Jesus has been promised in the Old Testament for a very very long time, from the beginning. Moses promises Jesus to people as a prophet greater than any other, because unlike every other prophet, who simply speaks God's Word, Jesus will *be* God's Word, and will rewrite the human heart into something that worships and honors Him as He ought to be. Jesus doesn't offer just words, He offers God's Word that changes us, remakes us, transforms us. This is why the Old Testament is still so important. It tells us the long history of God's keeping His promise, of the little blessings that God gives to forecast the big blessing of Christ. God unfolded Jesus' story gradually, through millennia, through the rise and fall of kingdoms and the turning of history. He unfolded it through violence, death, kindness, and compassion on a scale we can't even comprehend. Yet it is all there. Jesus promised. Heaven promised. God

delivering His people. The Old Testament isn't just their story it is ours, and Philip reminds us of that. This is the one we've been waiting for. This is what we've been fighting for. This is the one who is going to make us new people. He's not just going to talk to us or say some nice things or challenge us, He's going to transform us completely into something totally new.

**“47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward 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 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 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, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”** I love that Nathanael gets this treatment. Not Philip, not Peter, just Nathanael. Jesus calls Him out and demonstrates very aptly that this is a true Israelite, this guy doesn't lie, he sees clearly. Jesus doesn't in any way call out Nathanael for being a small-minded regionalistic little man, He sees through to His heart and sees this is a straightforward, honest man who sees clearly things as they are. Jesus sees through Nathanael's sin into the good that He will become, and never ever take for granted what a blessing that is.

You and I are both sinners. As sinners, we are accustomed to compensating for this. Every relationship we have is built on this. You know your friends and the ones you love aren't perfect, you know they might be thoughtless and stupid and hurt you, but you see past that to the goodness of your relationship. We're used to this. God, though, is perfect, absolutely so, and He demands the same from us, but He doesn't demand what He isn't willing to give. That is not deserved, not at all. That is Him being incredibly generous. God looks through you and does not see your sin, He sees the good that He can nurture in you. He sees the could that He can create you to be. That's awesome. He doesn't see the evil, the flaws. He doesn't see how selfishly and awfully you use your good. He looks at you, dusts His hands, and says, yep, I can work with this one. It'll shine, just give it some water and some faith.

God's call isn't just to apostles. It isn't just to those wonderfully down-to-earth dirty dozen that He invites to come and see. God's call isn't to prophets like Samuel, who will one day guide the fate of an entire nation. It isn't just to disciples that will one day lead the church, build it, and make it sing across the world. It is to you as well. What great mission does He call on you to do? What vast and massive undertaking is God challenging you to do today? He calls on you to be His child, to receive His gifts. He calls on you to be you. He calls on you to be better, to want better, to do better, and by that call He makes you better and more than you ever could be all by your lonesome. Whether you are young or old, hungry or happy, tired or energetic, shy or outgoing, He takes you as you are. He doesn't reject you, He isn't here to grade you, He isn't disappointed that you're too old or too tired. He doesn't ask you to be smarter or stupider, He doesn't criticize your sins. He doesn't call on you to put aside your fear, your loneliness, or your worry. He takes all of it, He takes you in His arms, and He says to you the same thing He says to His disciples. Come and see.

Then He shows you. He shows you His kindness through His words and promises. He shows you what your destiny is, an eternity by His side, with your family, free from the foolishness of men, free from sin and death. He shows you who He really is, a loving Father who wanted the best for you all along. He shows you who you really are, His forgiven child who wanted to be better, to do better, and for everyone else to have better too.

Come and see.

Amen.