



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Jesus Is Worthy of Following (John 1:35-51)

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A cacophony of voices calls to us through our lives asking for our attention and allegiance. We have so many options to which to give ourselves: money, power, relationships, religion, careers, education. All offer something, but none fully satisfy.

Jesus calls us to follow Him as He called the first disciples in our passage today. In these verses, we can identify several of the reasons Christ is worthy of giving our lives fully to Him.

1) HE IS THE ONLY FORGIVER OF SINS

John 1:35-37— Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

When John the Baptist called Jesus the Lamb of God, he was saying that Jesus is the only One who can take away the sins of the world. Since we are all sinners, this need for forgiveness is innate in all of us. Jesus is worthy of following because we have no other One to turn to for the cancellation of our debt of sin. We are all guilty – Christ is the only One with the authority to acquit because He paid the penalty for us.

2) HE IS TRUSTWORTHY

John 1:38, 39— 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?" 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.

There was an interesting dynamic of trust that started building between Jesus and these two disciples. They immediately followed Jesus and stayed with Him to hear His message. It is comforting to see here the fact that even though Andrew and John didn't know all they were getting into by following this man from Nazareth, they trusted Him.

They didn't know He would later say things to them like, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take

up his cross and follow Me", or "You will be hated by all because of My name." They also didn't know He would later say, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you". Still, they followed because they saw His attractive nature and trusted Him even though the future with Him was unknown to them.

3) HE COMPELS HIS FOLLOWERS TO INVITE OTHERS

John 1:40-46— One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). 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). The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. 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." Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

In these verses, Andrew and Philip were both so overwhelmed with who they had met, they had to tell others. Here were normal Jewish young men who knew the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament Scriptures, but there had been a 400-year gap between the end of the Old Testament and the coming of Jesus as a person. All of a sudden, they are face to face with the promised Messiah with His call to come after Him. Andrew had to tell his brother, Simon, and Philip had to tell his friend, Nathanael.

It is abnormal for a true follower of Christ to be indifferent to telling others about Him and inviting others to follow Him as well. Since He is infinitely loving and forgiving, why would we withhold letting others know? The gospel is to be proclaimed. John wrote in his first epistle:

1 John 1:3 - ...what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

BIBLE STUDY

LEGISLATIVE AIDES (DURING INTERIM): TUESDAYS @ 11:30AM, HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING (ROOM 218)

Maryland

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4) HE SEES WHAT WE CAN BECOME

John 1:42— Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

The story of Peter is a life-long study with many encouraging applications for us. Here, at his calling to follow Jesus, this rough uneducated fisherman's name is changed and his adventure with Christ begins. This nickname which Jesus gives him is significant because it proves how Jesus sees what we can become.

Simon was a common Jewish name, probably derived from Simeon. Jesus gave him a nickname that expressed his character, which was not uncommon. It is interesting that Simon Peter originally had the same rash and impulsive character as his ancestor Simeon, the second son of Jacob. Cephas is Aramaic, the common language of Palestine, and means "Rock." Peter is the Greek translation of Cephas. As the record of Peter unfolds in the Gospels, he appears as anything but a rock; he was impulsive, volatile, and unreliable. Yet Jesus named Peter in view of what he would become by the power of God.¹

I AM NOT WHAT I OUGHT TO BE. I AM NOT WHAT I WISH TO BE. I AM NOT EVEN WHAT I HOPE TO BE. BUT BY THE CROSS OF CHRIST, I AM NOT WHAT I WAS.

~ JOHN NEWTON ~

5) HE IS ALL-KNOWING

John 1:47-50— Jesus saw Nathanael coming to 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 and said to 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." 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."

The primary purpose of John's Gospel is to establish the deity of Jesus Christ. In these historical narratives, he often relates Jesus' actions that display the nature of God Himself. This happens

when Jesus meets Nathanael for the first time and shares information that only Nathanael would have known. Immediately, the omniscience of Jesus convinced Nathanael that He was the Messiah and truly divine.

Jesus knows all about you. Things that only you know, He knows too. Doesn't that compel allegiance? He is a God who knows us so well yet still loves us, is patient with us and has made it possible to know Him and fellowship with Him now and through eternity.

6) HE BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

John 1:51 - 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."

As Son of man, Jesus is the "living link" between heaven and earth. Christ is God's "ladder" between heaven and earth. "No man cometh to the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). Often in this Gospel, you will find Jesus reminding people that He came down from heaven. The Jewish people knew that "Son of man" was a name for their Messiah (John 12:34).²

Sin put a barrier between us and God. Jesus is worthy of following because He sacrificed Himself to bring us near to God (Ephesians 2:13).

A WORD OF WARNING

Saying that Jesus is worthy of being followed does not mean that we can simply compare Him to other options as equally valid choices. His beauty, desirability and capacity to fully satisfy are true whether someone chooses to follow Him or not. In fact, anyone who chooses to follow any path other than Jesus Christ will never be completely satisfied and will, according to the Bible, eventually forfeit eternity with Him and suffer punishment. God help us all to see Jesus for who He really is and follow Him with our whole being.

¹ Tom Constable. (2003; 2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Jn 1:42). Galaxie Software.

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Jn 1:50). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.