

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“FOLLOWING JESUS: PART 2”

For individual study or group discussion

Previously, the Gospel of John detailed how the first two disciples became followers of Jesus: they are prompted by the testimony of John the Baptist. In John 1:43–51, it is Jesus who takes the initiative and calls Philip to “*Follow me*” (v. 43). The theme of **following Jesus** is common to both accounts. But today’s passage points us to the very personal nature of Jesus’ call: it is God who calls us into a relationship with him. As theologian Edward Klink emphasizes, “*As important as the theme of witness is in this chapter, it is nevertheless clearly secondary to the foundational activity of God as the true initiator.*”¹ (cf. John 1:13)

Being found by Jesus entails bearing faithful witness. (vv. 43–46)

Jesus calls Philip with the simple command, “*Follow me,*” and Philip immediately shares what he has found with Nathanael. He describes Jesus as the one foretold in the law and the prophets, echoing from Deuteronomy 18:18 the promise of a coming prophet like Moses. Philip wisely begins where Nathanael’s interests already lie: messianic hope. As Frederick Dale Bruner notes, “*We most naturally want to approach people at their point of greatest interest.*”² Faithful witness is not about clever persuasion, but about honestly pointing others to Jesus from within their existing questions and hopes.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “*When Christ calls a man, he calls him to come and die.*” Read Luke 9:23–26. Why is daily denying one’s self necessary for following Jesus?
- What might it look like to bear faithful witness to Jesus by starting with the questions, longings, or interests people already have, rather than trying to persuade them with arguments? (See Acts 17:22–34.) How does this reshape the way you think about sharing your faith?

Being found by Jesus entails bringing honest questions. (vv. 46–49)

Nathanael’s skeptical question, “*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*” reveals his expectation for a more kingly pedigree for the Savior. Nazareth was a small, backwater town, hardly a fitting birthplace for Israel’s Messiah. Rather than argue, Philip responds with an invitation, “*Come and see.*” His is a model for gracious evangelism. Tim Keller explains, “*Taking the time and effort to answer hard questions gives believers the opportunity to deepen their own faith while creating the possibility that doubtful people may become open to the joy of Christianity.*”³

- In John 20:24–29 we read of another incredulous disciple. Again, Jesus does not shame Thomas for his skepticism. Instead he invites him to examine the evidence and calls him into deeper faith. What might it look like to create space in your faith as well as your community where honest skepticism is welcomed as a pathway toward deeper joy in Christ?

Being found by Jesus entails beholding more of Jesus. (vv. 50–51)

Nathanael confesses Jesus as the Son of God and King of Israel, drawing from royal and messianic hopes found in passages like Psalm 2:2–7 and Isaiah 9:7. Yet Jesus promises an even greater revelation: the opening of heaven and “*angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.*” The allusion recalls Jacob’s vision of a ladder bridging heaven and earth and God rehearsing his promise to Abraham (Genesis 28:10–17). In verse 51, Jesus is claiming to be the ladder between God and humanity, or as Klink puts it, “*Jesus is heaven open.*”⁴

- Read John 14:1–11. It took some time for even the disciples to truly understand Jesus’ identity. How might continually “coming and seeing” Jesus reshape the way you live, worship, and behold him as the one who reveals the Father to us?
- Is there anyone in your immediate sphere of influence that you could invite to explore Jesus further through conversation, studying the Bible together, dinner in your home, as a small group, or some other means?

DATE: January 18, 2026

SPEAKER: Chad/Wil

SERIES: The Gospel of John

PASSAGE: John 1:43–51

Family Dinner Table

Come and See

Tim Keller

In John 1:43–51, the simple invitation to “*Come and see*” becomes the quiet heart-beat of discipleship. Tim Keller reflects on the passage’s central theme by showing that encountering Jesus is rarely a solitary event: “*‘Come and see’ means think! Examine the evidence. And ‘Come and see’ means follow; change your life. ‘Come and see’ means to process God’s Word with friends. John the Baptist leads Andrew and the other disciple to Jesus; Andrew leads Peter to Jesus; Philip leads Nathanael to Jesus. But when Philip says, ‘Come and see’ to Nathanael what he means is ‘Let’s go together.’ What you have here is a very important application. There are exceptions, but generally, the way to find Jesus and to know him personally is almost always through a friend. You’re not going to find Jesus unless you’ve already been found by a friend who’s already found Jesus. Most of the time, you won’t be able to process what you’ve read in Scripture or hear on a Sunday morning unless you get together with friends. Since Christianity is an encounter with a Person, one of the main ways you really find Jesus is through friends. And unless you have a community to process your faith with, it will be really hard to ‘Come and see.’*”⁵

- What might it look like for you to “*Come and see*” Jesus with friends at school or church, and how could having people to ask questions with and walk alongside make following Jesus feel more real and less intimidating? (cf. Eccl. 4:9–10)

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

RUF at University of Georgia,
denominational partner ministry

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Phil & Amina, supported missionary
partners

^{1,4} Klink, Edward W. *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. 2016. Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan. 149, 154

² Bruner, Frederick D. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. 2012. Grand Rapids, MI. Eerdmans. 109

^{3,5} Keller, Tim. *Come and See*. November 15, 1998. Gospel in Life <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qAxkOb02aA>