

2008#3GOS OF JOHN-INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP

JOHN 1:35-51

This is the word of the Lord: THANKS BE TO GOD.

Today we continue our study of the Gospel of John.
We're looking at effective ways of inviting people to follow Jesus.

There was a little six-year old boy who struggled to listen to a rather long sermon. After the service, the little boy asked his father a question. "Dad what does the preacher do the rest of the week?" The dad replied, "Son, he's a very busy man. He takes care of church business, visits the sick, studies the Bible, work on his sermon. You see, preaching in public is not an easy job." The little boy thought about that and said, "Well, listening ain't so easy either!".

When you look at the religions of the world
You will notice that they usually turn us to a set of teaching, or rules,
As their method of reaching God.
If we follow these certain steps we will reach nirvana,
Do this, do that, and hope and pray that God is in a good mood
And you will get to paradise.
Many offer no assurance, no forgiveness, no confidence of victory.
Just work hard enough, follow the rules strict enough.
Maybe...

When we come to Christianity,
We cannot take out Jesus,
Everything he taught revolves around himself.
Christianity is about Christ.
Colossians tells us

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity live in bodily form and you have been given fullness in Christ who is heard over every power and authority. Colossians 2:9

He is the man whom other men follow.
This morning we want to look at how
The first disciples came to follow Jesus.
Because they found in him all they hoped and desired.

The first disciples followed because John the Baptist pointed them to Jesus

I. JOHN'S WORSHIP REACHED DISCIPLES FOR JESUS

³⁵The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" John 1:35

The first disciples to follow Jesus were those
who had come to the river and had been baptized.
Sometimes people come to Jesus through a worship service,
Or a religious experience,
The early believers had listened to John's preaching by the river,
They were touched by God,
They were interested in going deeper.
They wanted to experience the Savior themselves,
And grow in their faith.

John the Baptists ministry pointed them to follow Jesus.

That is why it is so important for us to go to church,
 And bring our family and our children.
 Because sometimes in the service of worship,
 God speaks to our hearts like no where else, and we come and follow him.

I knew a young man by the name of Jerry,
 He lived outside the Christian lifestyle.
 He didn't know Jesus as his personal savior.
 But he was brought up in the church
 And so every Sunday he brought his family to church.
 It was the thing to do.
 But one Sunday he was sitting in the second row from the back.
 And at the end of the service when there was a invitation for Discipleship.
 And follow Jesus as his savior,
 Somehow this Sunday Jerry Got it.
 Jerry told me "I couldn't hold onto the hymn book because I was shaking so bad,
 So I just clung to the pew in front of me,
 And finally I couldn't take it any long and I came forward
 To make Christ my own Savior and Lord.

We don't always know what is going on in worship.
 and sometimes the Lord touches us in a unique way in worship,
 This was the case of Jesus first disciples.
 In his preaching John pointed Jesus out to his people.
 He said: **Look, the Lamb of God**

Where did you meet Christ?
 For many of you it was camp, a youth meeting,
 a Sunday school class, perhaps an old revival meeting,
 or maybe it was a crusade with Billy Graham,
 or a service you watched on Television.
 But you came to Christ because of the ministry of the Church
 And its preachers, teachers, counselors or youth worker.

**³⁷When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"
³⁹"Come," he replied, "and you will see." John 1:37-39**

A worship service can point you to Jesus.
 But another reasons people follow Jesus is that

II. FAMILY BRINGS PEOPLE TO JESUS

⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).

⁴²And he brought him to Jesus. John 1:40-42

If you were fortunate in your life,
 You had a father or mother who brought you to Jesus,
 Or a Grandfather or Grandmother, an uncle or aunt.
 Or maybe a bother or sister.

That's what it was for Peter.
 Peter was a smelly lost fishermen,
 A salty old fellow with temper and language to match.
Not the typical person you would put on your witness list.
But family is blood,
And Andrew went to get his brother.

I just finished reading the book "90 minutes in heaven."
 It's the story about a man who was coming home from a
 Convention and drove over a narrow bridge.
 His car was hit and run over by a semi,
 Not only was his car totaled.
 Completely destroyed
 So was his physical body in the car.
 He was so broken up that the bone in his leg was missing and never found.
 He died.
 He went to heaven.
 He said: that as he came toward the gates of the Holy city,
 there were hundreds of people coming to greet him,
 Those lives who in some way had been touched by his life on the earth.
 By his loving attitude, his life, his kindness, his caring.

They greeted him to tell him how much he had done for them.
 It was a marvelous reunion,
 Lives of people he never remembered touching.
 But they were there partly because of him,
 What a celebration it was.
 All because he was faithful in sharing his life with other
 Even his family.

Sometimes the toughest looking
 Have the softest heart.
 And Jesus is just waiting for someone to bring them to him.
 It doesn't have to be a dramatic invitation,
 But like Jesus: Just "come and see."

Too often, we think that giving our lives to God is like taking a \$1,000
 bill and laying it on the altar, saying, "Here's my life, Lord. I'm giving
 it all to you." But the truth of the matter is that God sends us to the
 bank and tells us to cash that \$1,000 bill in for quarters. And then we go
 through life giving away twenty-five cents here, fifty cents there, and a dollar there.
 Instead of watching a ball game, we spend some time visiting a lonely
 person in a nursing home who has no family.
 Instead of sipping coffee and reading the newspaper,
 we get dressed and go to teach Sunday school.
 Instead of playing on the computer,
 we listen to a friend tell us about her problems,
 Even when we have problem of our own.

There in those 25cents worth of greetings, God works
 Through us to help another human being,

Our invitation to “come and see”,
Brings a brother or sister to Jesus.

III. JESUS CHOOSES AND TOUCHES HIS OWN DISCIPLES

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." John 1:43

Sometimes an individual is touched and invited by Jesus himself.
Maybe its because they have been stressed,
Or their lives have become a great burden,
Or their sin has overwhelmed them,
Guilt has broken them,
Divorce has shattered them.
Their children have shamed them.
Death has grieved them.
They are weary and worn,
Looking for an answer.
Jesus comes and touches them.

Some of you have been touched like that.
In the quiet of your dorm room, or bedroom,
Some in the hospital, or treatment center,
Or in your apartment, on your knees you said:
“Lord Jesus help me,
Come into my trials and troubles,
Come into my heart and make me whole.”

What a wonderful experience you had.
Filled with the joy of the Lord.
And the abundance of his grace.

What confirms and sustains us in the faith is
that we share our experience with someone else.

God's message is near you, on your lips and in your heart--that is, the message of faith that we preach. 9 If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved. 10 For it is by our faith that we are put right with God; it is by our confession that we are saved. 11Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed. Romans 10:8-11 GN

That IS what Philip did.
He was called by Jesus,
But he didn't remain silent,
He ran and found his brother Nathanael
And he witness to him.

⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." John 1:46

Nathanael reacts like most brothers,
⁴⁶"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. Rather than arguing Philip simply said: "Come and see," said Philip. John 1:47

Philip repeats the words of Jesus himself.

Come and see.

Friends, we don't have to argue anyone into the kingdom of God,

It doesn't work anyway.

We just have to bring them to Jesus.

Open our mouths and tell what we have found.

And let the Holy Spirit open their hearts.

⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." ⁴⁸"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." John 1:47-49

What was your invitation to discipleship?

Was it the call of Christ himself?

Was it a friend or family member?

Or was it in a worship service?

perhaps today you are hearing it in this worship service.

One of you is hearing that call for the first time.

God isn't asking for any effort of self improvement,

Or wanting you to try to improve or correct yourself.

God call is simple and clear: COME AND SEE.

And he makes a new creation of our lives.

London businessman Lindsay Clegg told the story of a warehouse property he was selling. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and strewn trash around the interior. As he showed a prospective buyer the property, Clegg took pains to say that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, and clean out the garbage. "Forget about the repairs," the buyer said. "When I buy this place, I'm going to build something completely different. I don't want the building; I want the site."

When we come to Christ,

God doesn't want our efforts of self improvement.

He just wants us to give him our life.

When we become God's children

The old life is torn down, it is over.

He makes all things new.

All he wants is your permission to rebuild.

Will you let God make you a

Fully devoted follower of Jesus

Who serves him willingly and well?

Gracious Lord, I pray this morning that we would hear the invitation of your Holy Spirit to come and see. We haven't done a good job with self improvements, with our family, our job, or our world. We have allowed our self indulgences to destroy us, and to We need you help. Give us courage to trust you today, and to open up our hearts to "come and see" and discover that we become a whole new creation in the hands of the living God. Thank you for you invitation. I give you praise in Jesus name. Amen.