

Good morning and thank you Lord for your presence here with us.

This morning we read John's account of the calling of the disciple Philip. Jesus says follow me and Philip follows. Then Philip tells Nathaniel the news but Nathaniel is not convinced. Come and see is the call that is issued by Philip. Philip declares that he has found the messiah, the anointed one. this reading of John offers us a lesson about our call to discipleship. Philip is the only disciple where the call is initiated by Jesus in John's gospel. The telling of the first two is recounted just before our reading for today. Beginning at verse 35. ³⁵The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!"

³⁷The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed

Jesus. ³⁸When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” ³⁹He said to them, “Come and see.”

So, these two men, one is Andrew and one remains unnamed, are disciples of John the Baptist and follow Jesus because of what John says. Jesus responds to them by issuing an invitation to ‘come and see.’ Philip issues an invitation to Nathaniel to come and see after his calling by Jesus to follow. I think in a way Nathaniel gets it because he is not attracted to Jesus because of who Philip says he is. He goes questioning and is found by Jesus. So, what is so significant for us about the way that John tells the story of discipleship? In all of the Gospels the image of following is employed. It is a physical as well as a spiritual following. This is what we do as Christians. We say yes to Jesus and we follow both physically and spiritually.

Physically we come to church, we give of our time, our talent and our treasure, and we live our lives in a manner that attracts the attention of others to want to come and see. Spiritually, we pray and study, and live in a relationship with God that encourages us to continue on our physical journey. And really it's a cycle isn't it? Sometimes it is our physical journey; our relationship with our church and our church family that sustains us when our spiritual journey is desert like. The disciples teach us about this as we read about their ups and downs, their successes and failures in their 'following' of Jesus. but John adds another dynamic about our relationship with Jesus. See, these men declared that they had 'found the messiah' when in reality if you spend just a bit more time considering John's story, you will realize that no one found the messiah. The messiah found them. True discipleship comes through the initiative of Jesus. Philip declares "I have found the

messiah” to Nathaniel, but he found by Jesus first. So, what is the good news in this? the lesson for us today is the good news is that we don’t have to find God. God finds us. God finds us. When we are lost, God finds us. It is through spiritual and physical acts of discipleship that we are able to respond to his seeking us out. Attending worship, being involved in the community, giving of our time, talent, and treasure, prayer, study are all ways that equip us to recognize God when he seeks us out. To say that ‘I know God’ is inaccurate without first saying ‘God knows me.’ God knows me therefore I know God.

And that is the call that we are to issue to the world. God seeks you out; Come and see what the good news of Jesus has in store for you. This is the theme for us for Epiphany. We are called to issue the call to the world “Come and see.” We can be an Epiphany, a showing forth, for others. We can witness to the

fact that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. That within each of us is a brushstroke of the portrait of who God is. Others can get a glimpse of who God is by knowing each of us. Knowing God is not a collection of facts. Knowing God happens in relationship with God and with one another. It is through this relationship that we can understand how God knows

us. It is through embracing and studying God's grace and mercy and love for us that we gain insight into who God is.

So, some questions to consider during Epiphany. Who are you as a child of God? Who do you want to be as a disciple? How can who you as the person God created become an effective disciple?

How do we answer these questions? We Come and see. We Abide with God; we come to know God through seeing and hearing and touching and tasting and speaking. Finding God, following God, seeing God, speaking God.

Being called is not about being ordained. Each of us is called to be a disciple. We answer the call through our baptism. *Story about sage. Last Sunday...Sage did not seek Jesus.* We read in the Bible how people who meet Jesus are forever changed. Jesus meets the deepest needs of those whose lives he touches. Was your life forever changed when you met Jesus? Does he fulfill your deepest need? When people meet Jesus in you are they forever changed? One definition of Epiphany is 'an immediate and meaningful understanding of something. Surprising. Sudden. Profound.' Can you be the conduit of understanding for someone? Can you be surprised by God and then share that joy?

Tomorrow we celebrate the life and ministry of Dr. Martin Luther King. He issued a powerful invitation to all of us to come and see Jesus. He 'had a dream' a dream in which we could all live together in harmony, a dream to live out our baptismal

covenant to 'protect the dignity of every human being.' I pray our hearts can capture the same dream, the dream of the kingdom of God.

It is not our call to prove the truth of Christianity, it is not our call to convince someone to become a Christian. Our call is to invite people to 'come and see.' I have learned in my short time here that you, the family of St. John's are doing it right. You are doing the work of Christ in the community. The joy and reverence with which you serve and care and worship is inspiring. I see Jesus in you. Thank you.

Now we will continue by declaring the words of our faith in the creed and the prayers. Then I will invite you to come to the table and see the manifestation of God's love for us as we celebrate and remember what Jesus did for us.