

THEME FOR SUNDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2011

“COME AND SEE!”  
JOHN 1: 43 – 51

Has someone ever approached you with the enthusiastic invitation, “You’ve *got* to come and see...”? Early in His ministry Jesus invited Andrew to “Come and you will see”. Jesus led Andrew to see Him as the Messiah. Andrew responded by exuberantly bringing his brother Peter to Jesus. When Jesus called Phillip “to follow”, Philip was “blown away” by this Jesus and boldly invited a hesitant Nathanael, “Come and see”.

Have you heard Jesus’ invitation to “come and see”? What has the Holy Spirit led you to see in Jesus? May the Holy Spirit move us to use our faith encounter with the Lord Jesus to “help unbelievers connect with Christ.”

**Introit**

**Psalm 66: 1 – 8**

- L: Shout for joy to God,  
**C: All the earth;**  
L: Sing the glory of His name;  
**C: Give to Him glorious praise!**  
L: Say to God, “How awesome are Your deeds!  
**C: So great is Your power that Your enemies come cringing to You.**  
L: All the earth worships You and sings praises to You;  
**C: They sing praises to Your name.”**  
L: Come and see what God has done!  
**C: He is awesome in His deeds toward the children of man.**  
L: He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot.  
**C: There did we rejoice in Him,**  
L: Who rules by His might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations—  
**C: Let not the rebellious exalt themselves.**  
L: Bless our God, O peoples;  
**C: Let the sound of His praise be heard!**  
**ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**First Lesson**

**Acts 1: 1 – 8**

(As Jesus prepares to leave earth and ascend to heaven, Jesus promises His disciples the power of the Holy Spirit – not to restore the glory of Israel, but to empower His witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.)

<sup>1</sup>In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, <sup>2</sup>until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3</sup>He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

<sup>4</sup>And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; <sup>5</sup>for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

<sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup>He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

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### Epistle Lesson

Acts 26: 1 – 2, 9 – 20

(St. Paul shares with King Agrippa how the resurrected Lord Jesus transformed him from being a persecutor of Jesus' followers to bringing the Good News to the Gentiles.)

<sup>1</sup>So Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: <sup>2</sup>"I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews...

<sup>9</sup>"I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>10</sup>And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. <sup>11</sup>And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

<sup>12</sup>"In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. <sup>13</sup>At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. <sup>14</sup>And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' <sup>15</sup>And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup>But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, <sup>17</sup>delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles— to whom I am sending you <sup>18</sup>to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

<sup>19</sup>"Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, <sup>20</sup>but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance."

### The Holy Gospel

John 1: 43 – 51

(Philip's excitement in accepting Jesus' invitation to "follow Me" prompted him to invite his reluctant friend, Nathanael, to just "come and see" Jesus.)

<sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." <sup>44</sup>Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup>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." <sup>46</sup>Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." <sup>47</sup>Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" <sup>48</sup>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." <sup>49</sup>Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" <sup>50</sup>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." <sup>51</sup>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."

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## CONNECTING POINTS: OUR VISION IN ACTION

Philip's response to Jesus' command to follow Him was not only to follow, but to ask his friend Nathanael to come along! Nathanael, however, was not so quick to follow – he needed “proof” before he recognized Jesus as Lord. Jesus rebuked him for it, too! Take a good look at your own life to see if there's any of Nathanael's attitude lurking around. Confess it and rejoice in God's forgiveness!

Invite a friend, neighbor or coworker to “come and see” our Lord and Savior Jesus – either to a worship service, a Bible study, or perhaps our Ablaze community service event. See the Messenger for information to share regarding these activities.

*CONNECTING PEOPLE TO CHRIST NOW AND FOREVER*