



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AT THE VILLAGES

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## First Baptist Church At The Villages

The Gospel/Who's Your One?

When God Collides with your Destiny

John 1:43-51

For use by small groups Jan. 19, 2019 - Jan. 25, 2019

### MAIN POINT

God's call on our lives through Christ is often sudden, surprising, and always life-changing.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Have you ever received unexpected news that changed your life? Perhaps that you and your spouse were expecting a baby? That your children got a full scholarship? Or maybe you got a job offer you did not expect?**

Life often seems dull and routine. We get up, get dressed, head to work, look forward to lunch break, look forward to going home, eat supper, watch a little TV, and go to bed. We do this kind of thing almost every day. Then one day, something changes. We meet the person of our dreams. A husband finds out his wife is expecting. We receive a promotion that means we have to move across country. One bit of news and nothing is the same again. Jesus surprises us like this. We do our thing every day, and He sees us. One day, when we least expect it, He interrupts our routine with a plan of His own. It can be a plan that is not on our agenda or in our schedule, but it will always lead us to difficulty, to joy, and to adventure when Christ sets us on a new journey.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 1:43-45.

**How did Nathanael find out about Jesus? Why do you think Philip sought him out to tell him about Jesus?**

**Can you imagine what Nathanael's day must have been like up to that point? Do you think he had any idea that his friend was about to tell him that the long awaited Messiah was here at last, that He was in town, and that He was from Nazareth?**

**Think about your own relationship with Jesus. Describe a time when Jesus showed up unexpectedly and redirected your life. What changed?**

Jesus can show up and amaze us and change us just as He did Philip and Nathanael. Philip found Nathanael because Nathanael was probably a friend. When we meet Jesus, the most natural impulse is for us to share the good news about Him with all of our friends and loved ones. Jesus changes us like that. One day our agenda is about ourselves, and after meeting Jesus, our agenda changes to His. Sometimes, that might mean seeking out an old friend and telling him what you have learned about Jesus.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 1:46-49.

**What do you think Nathanael meant by his question, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" What does that tell us about how Jesus chose to live among us?**

**How is your relationship with Jesus different than you thought it would be before becoming a Christian?**

**Why do you think Jesus' mention that He saw Nathanael under the fig tree had such a profound affect upon him?**

Nazareth was a sort of backwater little place in Jesus' day. It may have been known as a place where unsophisticated folks came from. Needless to say, Nathanael, nor anyone else, expected the Messiah to come from such a place. After all, the Messiah was prophesied to be the son of David the King, and kings don't come from little villages in the middle of nowhere. But Jesus did, and somehow when He told Nathanael He saw him under the fig tree, Nathanael knew Jesus was the Messiah. We do not know how Jesus' words affected Nathanael so strongly. Perhaps Nathanael could have been praying there? Maybe Nathanael had asked God for a sign? We don't know, but whatever it was it must have been personal because Jesus' words had a profound affect upon Nathanael.

**Why is it important for us to understand that Jesus knows us and hears us? What is one situation in life where you need to cling to this truth today?**

Jesus' knowledge of us is complete. He knows what we need to hear, and He knows when we need to hear it. In one sentence, Jesus convinced Nathanael that He was the

Son of God and the King of Israel, and by that knowledge, He changed Nathanael forever.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 1:50-51.

**What greater things do you think Nathanael would see?**

**Have you seen greater things that Nathanael?**

Nathanael would see many amazing things as He followed Jesus. He would see the lame walk, the blind see, and even the dead raised back to life. Besides this, he would see thousands of lives changed by the teaching of Jesus. Most of all, Nathanael would see the Messiah of Israel, the King of the world, die on the cross for sinners. He would then see Jesus defeat death and rise from the grave.

**What do you think Jesus meant in verse 51 about angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man?**

**What are the implications of this truth in our lives today?**

Jesus' mention of angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man probably refers to Jacobs dream in Genesis 28:12 where Jacob saw a stairway that reached to heaven and saw angels ascending and descending it. Jesus tells Nathanael that He Himself is the bridge between heaven and earth. We may not personally have seen the kinds of miracles that Nathanael saw, but we know far more of the story than he ever knew. We know of the endurance of the church for two thousand years. We know of the millions whose lives have been changed by the gospel, and we know how Jesus has changed our own lives as well. Who knows what we might yet see?

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What is one way you have been challenged by today's discussion about Jesus changing your destiny?**

**How can we help one another open our eyes to the ways Jesus is working in and through us?**

**Are you prepared for Jesus to change your life again? The only way to prepare is by prayer and by loving Christ. Pray this week that the Holy Spirit will prepare you to do whatever the Lord might ask you to do.**

## PRAYER

Take time to close in prayer as a group. Ask the Lord to help us be like Philip and introduce people to Jesus the Messiah. Pray that we will be open and aware of opportunities to tell others about Christ. Also, ask the Lord to open us to having our

life's direction changed by Christ and to help us live according to His plan and not our own. As a group pray for Christ to reveal the "one" who He wants you to share Him with.

**Take time to share from the "Who's Your One" prayer guide and pray specifically for your "one."**

## COMMENTARY

John 1:43-51

1:43-49. Philip went off to find another friend, telling Nathanael about their discovery, and mentioning Nazareth in his announcement. Nathanael asked a question which, though probably intended quite innocently at the time, has become a cliché among Bible students: Can anything good come from there?

Philip wasted no time arguing the point. He took Nathanael (also called Bartholomew in the New Testament) directly to Jesus. Again Jesus stunned a future disciple with his first words. He affirmed Nathanael as a genuine student of the Torah—a righteous Jew taught to live in accordance with all the light he had.

Upon learning about the Lord's omniscience—having known his exact location even before Philip found him—Nathanael, like John the Baptist, declared Jesus the Son of God and added, "You are the King of Israel." The phrase under the fig tree was used in rabbinical literature to describe meditation on the law. Nathanael had apparently been reading Genesis 28. Jesus contrasted Jacob's guile with Nathanael's integrity.

1:50-51. The last two verses of chapter 1 seem difficult to understand. Had Nathanael been reading about Jacob's dream under the fig tree? Is this why Jesus referred to the open heavens? Should we view this as a future prophecy? Whatever the interpretation, Jesus indicated that Nathanael's old covenant faith must now center in him, the focus of the new covenant. Jesus referred to himself as the Son of Man, a term he used more than eighty times. This title emphasized his humanity and suffering as well as the perfection of his human nature.

John 1 describes five men who met the Lord and the Lamb. All different. All believers. All models. What great lessons they teach us. We learn that witnessing is everybody's responsibility. We also learn that witnessing begins at home, either in one's own family or hometown, not necessarily by going to another country. A third lesson is that witnessing promotes the Lord, not ourselves or some personal agenda. And finally, these early disciples show us that witnessing is both verbal and specific.