

w/b 26 April 2015

THEME: FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM - LIFE APPLICATION (DWP)

INTRODUCTION: On Sunday we had a great celebration as a number of our young people were baptised. Toby Wood also did a great job in preaching the gospel.

Despite a great attendance, probably the most significant challenge facing the church today is reaching out to a world around us with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Friendship evangelism is one of the key ways we do this.

John 1: 29-51 gives an excellent example of this relational approach.

John 1:29-51 New International Version (NIV)

John Testifies About Jesus

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" ³⁰ This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

³² Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³ And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."^[a]

John's Disciples Follow Jesus

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

³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

³⁹ "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

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

⁴⁴ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵ Philip 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."

⁴⁶ "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

"Come and see," said Philip.

⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

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."

⁴⁹ Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

⁵⁰ Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." ⁵¹ He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' ^[b] the Son of Man."

LAUNCH

- Over the last week who has had the greatest influence in your life & why? (This does not necessarily need to be a spiritual influence).
- Who had an influence in you becoming a Christian? What were the most important things about that influence?

DISCOVERY

- What thoughts and feelings do you think John the Baptist's statements aroused in the two disciples?
- What clues or advice can we gain about friendship evangelism from reading this passage?

UNDERSTANDING

- The two disciples follow Jesus because they want to know more about him but also seem hesitant to question him directly. How can we help our friends to feel free to ask us about God?
- Jesus used a 'come and see' approach with the disciples. Why would this be more effective than simply telling them who he was? How can we help our unbelieving friends to watch Jesus in action?
- Time with Jesus seemed to be a key part of the equation (verse 3). Do you agree that lack of time is one of the biggest barriers to effective relational evangelism? If so what can we do about this?
- Nathaniel is fairly sceptical about the Messiah coming from a dump like Nazareth. What sort of scepticism do you come across when people find out you are a Christian?
- Interestingly, Jesus lets his disciples hang around for months before asking them to make a decision about who he was. Why is it important not to pressure people too early about making a decision?
- Throughout this passage it seems entirely natural for one friend to tell another about Jesus. Why do we often find the same process so unnatural?

APPLICATION

- What ideas or inspiration does this account give you for spending time with and reaching your friends or family members who have not yet met Jesus?
- Pray that these ideas and plans become a reality.

Ref: *Evangelism - A Way of life*. Rebecca Pippert & Ruth Siemens