

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**1 Samuel 3:1-10**

**Psalm 139**

**John 1:43-51**

## **Come and See**

Please Note: The majority of this reflection is not written by me, it is taken from David Lose <http://www.davidlose.net/2015/01/epiphany-2-b/> (I was ill this week and found this reflection one I appreciated and so I am sharing it with you).

Come and see.

“Think, for a moment, about the effect of those words might have on you were you to hear them in an everyday context. Would they generate a certain sense of excitement about whatever it might be you were being invited to witness? Perhaps curiosity? Or maybe gratitude that someone thought to include you?

Come and see.

The words are both simple and warm, issuing an invitation not only to see something, but also to join a community. To come along and be part of something. Come and see.”<sup>1</sup>

Words like these and calls like these are found throughout scripture. Some hear the call and recognize the Lord right away while others like Samuel take some time, but once they discover the call they are there with all their heart. I love call stories in scripture because they remind me of how close God is if we are willing to listen. It's true we may not hear an audible voice, and we likely will not have Jesus standing before us but I believe if we open our hearts, minds and souls we will hear the call of the spirit on our lives, and if we listen we will be amazed at the direction we might be taken.

David Lose writes “These words, this invitation, form the heart not simply of this opening scene but much of John's Gospel. John's story is structured around encounters with Jesus. Again and again, from these early disciples, to the Pharisee named Nicodemus, to the Samaritan women at the well, to the man born blind, to Peter and Pilate and eventually Thomas, characters throughout John's Gospel are

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.davidlose.net/2015/01/epiphany-2-b/>

encountered by Jesus. John structures his story this way, I think, to offer us a variety of possibilities, both in terms of the kind of people to whom Jesus reaches out and the kinds of responses they offer...and we might offer as well.

And so across the pages of John's Gospel there are women and men, Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, powerful and vulnerable, people of all shapes and sizes and varieties that Jesus meets. And to each one, in one way or another, he says the same thing: come and see. Come and see God do a new thing. Come and see as your future opens up in front of you. Come and see the grace of God made manifest and accessible and available to all.

In response, some take up that invitation and follow, while others are puzzled, confused, or simply do not believe Jesus' offer. And some not only follow but invite others to do the same."

Right before today's reading in John, Andrew and Simon Peter are also called to "Come and See" by Jesus. Just before this event John the Baptist had testified that Jesus is the lamb of God, the one appointed to take away the sin of the world. He baptizes Jesus and then he instructs his own disciples to go follow Jesus. Several do, including Andrew, who also finds his brother Peter. "Jesus then comes to Galilee and bids Philip, who perhaps also was one of John's disciples and who lived in the same town as Andrew and Peter, to "follow me." Philip not only does, but he also seeks out Nathaniel to invite him to do the same. And even in the space of these few verses we have folks who run the gamut from eager to downright skeptical (to the point of being insulting). And yet each is invited – some by Jesus, others by each other – to come and see Jesus and, eventually, to follow him.

Come and see.

Such easy, warm, and hospitable words. The heart not only of John's Gospel but Christian evangelism, as we are called not to cram our faith down another's throat or question their eternal destiny or threaten them with hellfire, but instead simply to offer an invitation to come and see what God is still doing in and through Jesus and the community of disciples who have chosen to follow him."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the Samuel, and the Psalmist and the disciples follow God so easily because it is so easy to see, hear, feel and sense his love. I believe there had to be something very powerful in the Spirit of Jesus that so many would simply follow and listen and believe. There had to be something different because we are still talking about it thousands and thousands of years later. The intimacy of being known and loved by the holy, by the creator is something that is beyond

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.davidlose.net/2015/01/epiphany-2-b/>

description. Last week we had an opportunity to revisit our baptisms, to be blessed and reminded of how deeply we are loved. Are you carrying that love with you? Are you living in it. If you are you must long for others to know such depth and care.

As simple and as non-threatening as the words “Come and See” are, I wonder how many of us ever uttered them, or anything remotely like them. I don’t ask this question to point fingers, but rather to highlight the reality that most of us, aren’t comfortable inviting others to learn about our faith, our God, our church. Which is a challenge. “You probably know as well as I do that the key factor influencing persons to attend a church for the first time is a personal invitation. It’s not the size or reputation of the church; it’s not the beautiful or simple building; it’s not the service times, style of worship, or quality of the music; it’s not even the brilliant preaching of the minister. All those things have value, but the number one reason people give for coming to a church for the first time is that someone invited them personally. Just as Philip said to Nathaniel, that is, someone said to them, “Come and see.” Which means that the future of the church depends greatly on ordinary, everyday Christians summoning the courage to invite someone to come and see what they have found in the community of the faithful that is their congregation.”<sup>3</sup> Now for me what is more important than anyone coming to church - any church let alone one I minister with is that they experience Holy love, abundance and grace. Each one of us here is a disciple. Each one of us here has at some point heard the call “Come and See” otherwise you wouldn’t be here. Some of you have been coming a long time. Others this may be you tenth or even your first so lets take a moment together and ask some questions as present-day followers of Jesus.

First - When did you hear God first call you? Or when did you first sense God?

Second - When have you felt blessed by God?

Third - What is your favourite thing about the life we share in this faith community?

Fourth- Would you be willing to invite someone you know to come and see and share this aspect of our congregational life that you enjoy?”

Now I know these are personal questions for some of you and so I have put some cards in the pews and I am going to invite you to take a moment or two to answer them privately. I would then like to encourage you to put them into the offering plate when it goes around. (And I’m going to ask that the plate be passed to each and every person this time - a little slower than our usual rush). You don’t have to

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put your name on it but perhaps it is a bit of an offering you are giving to God, a thanksgiving and a offering of a task you might choose to take on.

David Lose “said earlier that the future of the church may rest on our ability to invite others to come and see what we have found in our congregations. I should clarify that. In a culture that no longer has a vested interest in encouraging congregational participation, the future of our faith communities will, I believe, be greatly determined by our willingness to invite others to share what we have found. But the future of the church is without a doubt in God’s trustworthy hands. And the same Spirit who descended on Jesus at Baptism is still working among us. Indeed, the Spirit that inspired Philip and Andrew, who reached out through their efforts to others, and who overcame even the skepticism of Nathaniel is still offering all kinds of people all over the world an invitation to “come and see” and creating in them the desire to do just that.

So let us end with this simple prayer: “Come, Holy Spirit, that we may see and taste the grace of God afresh. Come, Holy Spirit, that we might share the grace of God with others. Come, Holy Spirit, that we might bear witness with our whole lives to the grace of God made manifest and available to us in Jesus. Amen.”<sup>4</sup>

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