



Calvary of Albuquerque

Finding the God Who Found You - John 1:43-51

From the Series, Believe:879

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

When the first disciples encountered Jesus, they chose to follow Him--only to discover that they had already been chosen by Him! Without getting drowned in that theological tide pool, let's consider and marvel at how both of these realities work together. The Bible teaches that God sovereignly elects people for salvation while at the same time teaches our responsibility to believe in Christ. Let's see how both Philip and Nathanael encountered Jesus for the first time.

OUTLINE

I. The Divine Perspective--*God Chooses People*

- A. Preference (v. 43)
- B. Omniscience (v. 47)
- C. Providence (vss. 50-51)

II. The Human Perspective--*People Choose God*

- A. Investigation (v. 46)
- B. Belief (vss. 48-49)
- C. Revelation (v. 45)
- D. Adventure (v. 50-51)

For Home Fellowships:

1. How did you come to Christ? Learn to briefly state your personal testimony: the main factors that contributed to your coming to Christ, your spiritual upbringing, and what changed in your life once you believed in Jesus.
2. What kind of adventure has Jesus taken you on? What are some of the "greater things" you have seen?
3. How does it make you feel to realize that God picked you for His team?

DETAILED NOTES

When the first disciples encountered Jesus they chose to follow Him--only to discover that they had already been chosen by Him! Without getting drowned in that theological tide pool, let's consider and marvel at how both of these realities work together. The Bible teaches that God sovereignly elects people for salvation while at the same time teaches our responsibility to believe in Christ. Let's see how both Philip and Nathanael encountered Jesus for the first time.

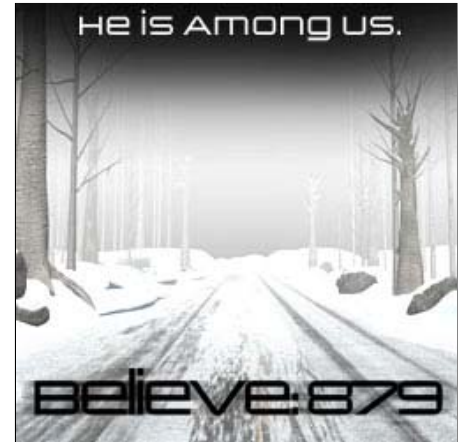
Some things are tough to understand. When divine choice intersects with human choice it is difficult for us to understand, but the bible says both are true. God elects us, but we must follow. God predestines us, we must decide to believe. It seems impossible to grasp. Like a plane...its destination is decided, its course is set, but the passengers on board made choices. They have freedom on board the plane but they are being carried to a predetermined destination.

In this text the disciples are being called, first Andrew and Simon Peter, now Nathanael and Philip. Men are making decisions to follow Christ, but Jesus seems to anticipate their choices. Which is it? Did they choose to follow Him? Or did He choose to have them follow Him? It's a matter of perspective; it depends on your point of view. We'll look at the passage from 2 perspectives, God choosing people and people choosing God.

I. The Divine Perspective--*God Chooses People*

It is evident that Jesus is part of the choosing. 3 divine attributes involved:

- A. Preference (v. 43)



1. Jesus makes His choice.
 2. It was against the norm for rabbis to choose disciples. It was protocol for students to opt voluntarily after hearing a rabbi. Rabbis did not invite someone into the inner circle, but Jesus took the initiative.
- B. Omniscience (v. 47)
1. Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, He knew in advance that Philip was from Bethsaida. (vs. 44)
 2. Jesus knew where they lived, their character, and their secret hangouts. (vs. 47-49)
- C. Providence (vss. 50-51)
1. Providence is the supernatural arrangement of natural events.
 2. It is not the miraculous which is the intervention of the supernatural upon the natural.

In these verses we have a crash course in theology.

God sees, knows and chooses. People come to Christ because God seeks them. Ultimately salvation begins with God's choice and predestination. John 15:16 Jesus said, "you did not choose Me, I chose you."

Found is a repeated word in this text. Andrew told Simon Peter he found the messiah, Philip told Nathan he found the messiah, but it also says Jesus found Philip. Who finds whom? Two perspectives: We say I found Jesus, but he wasn't lost. We were lost, He finds us. These are heady theological topics of election and predestination.

We are commanded to make a decision. John the Baptist and Jesus said, "Repent..." we are commanded to engage our free will and make a choice. Matt 11, "Come to me...take My yoke..." John 5 "You are not willing to come to Me," John 7, "If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink..." Paul said in Acts 16, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved..." These are commands to respond to the Lord by faith, to exercise a choice. We cannot do it on our own. Whatever choice we make a choice has been made before we get there. We are selected by God out of this world system. Our salvation began before we were born. John 6 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent Me draws him..." Eph 1:4, "He chose us in Him before the creation of the world," "...predestined according to the counsel of His will."

Charles Spurgeon said "It's a good thing God chose me before I was born. He never would have chosen me afterward." Sovereign election and human decision together seem to be opposite, seem irreconcilable. Cannot be reconciled in our finite minds. Seem opposed that we are called to make a choice, yet God selects. JI Packers, book Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God", p.18 antinomy - an apparent contradiction of two equally true conclusions. Like light. There is evidence that light exists as wave and evidence that light exists as particle. It's not apparent how they same substance can be both wave and particle at the same time, but they are two equally true conclusions.

Should we argue over it? Calvinist argue election and many won't evangelize lest they witness to the non-elect. Arminians elevate human choice over divine election. We should allow the tension to remain. Like a suspension bridge, two opposing forces pull on the bridge so we can go over it. These are truths held in tension.

Jesus allowed these truths to remain in tension. He addresses both perspectives sometimes in the same sentence. John 6:37, Luke 22. These perspectives harmonize. Like a rope to a drowning man. Man must grab the rope. We need the rope, the drowning man must grab it, but someone must pull him in. God throws out the rope by election, we grab it by choice, and He draws us in.

God picked us, we should enjoy it. Get over what you don't understand and enjoy that He picked you.

II. The Human Perspective--*People Choose God*

Philip obeyed, believed and immediately told Nathanael about it.

A. Investigation (v. 46)

1. **Philip** Philip's faith was easier, no barriers or roadblocks, like some people it isn't hard for them.
2. **Nathanael** Philip found Nathanael and Nathanael asked, "can anything good come out of Nazareth?" It's the question of a skeptic. He isn't quite sure. Others need room like Nathanael. Need to work through some issues. Don't force someone to say with their mouth what they don't believe in their heart. "Anything good...?" Judeans saw Galileans as backward hicks. Even those in Galilee looked down on Nazareth. Nathanael is from Cana, they were rival cities.

B. Belief (vss. 48-49) Divine election and human choice meet. Jesus told him in essence, "You are a true blue Jew" Nathanael asked, "How do you know me?" this is where it was the moment of belief for Nathanael. The fig tree was a private place a place where he had an experience with god that no one knew about. Jesus knew. He was the Son of God. Nathanael understood that and turned to Christ.

C. Revelation (v. 45)

1. There comes a point in the believers live where they fall in love with the Bible. They see how it addresses life's issues, and cannot get enough of it.
2. Growing in the Word-
 - a. "A bible that is falling apart usually belongs to someone who is not"-Charles Spurgeon.
 - b. "The Bible has hands- it grabs hold of me and feet -it runs after me."- Martin Luther.

D. Adventure (v. 50-51)

1. When you become a believer you are entering into something you've never dreamed about. It ends in heaven. Stick around you haven't seen anything yet.
2. Nathanael - Soon Jesus will turn water into wine in Nathanael's home town. The disciples will be witness to 36 other miracles, the blind will see the deaf will hear, the dead will be alive again.
3. Jesus reaches back into history, Genesis 28. (Could this have been what Nathanael was meditating on under the fig tree?) He alludes to when Jacob fell asleep on a rock in the wilderness and had a vision of angels going up and down on a ladder to heaven Jacob wakes up and says, "God is here and I knew it not." Jesus is saying "Nathanael, I'm the link, the ladder between God and man."

There is only one way to God, through Jesus. Wake up! You are on the adventure of your life! You will see such things as if heaven has opened to you. There will be potholes and trials along the way, but enjoy the ride. What scenery! The worst thing that can happen to you is you die and go to heaven. Jesus know you, your questions and your thirst. When you come to Him you'll discover He's been waiting for you! If you come you'll discover you're chosen. If you won't come, maybe you aren't! If you come he will in no wise cast you out. Like the great artist Michelangelo sculpted David from a flawed stone, God can shape you into something wonderful.

Latin Terms: provideo(to provide advance planning; to foresee)

Greek Terms: Aletheos: truth

Figures Referenced: Charles Spurgeon, John Calvin, Jacobus Arminius, Martin Luther, Michelangelo

Publications Referenced: Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, by J. I. Packer.

Cross References: Genesis 28Matthew 11, Luke 22, John 5, 6:37, 7, 15:16, Acts 16, Ephesians 1:4,