

**“Sharing the Jesus who finds us” (Jan 15, 2012)**

**John 1:43-51**

**“What are you looking for?”**

**Jesus asked the two disciples and I would ask you.**

**Why have you come here?**

**What prompted you to get out of bed on this cold winter day,**

**Get all dressed up, struggle to find a parking space,**

**And walk around to find an open door and come here?**

**What are you hoping to hear? Who are you hoping to find?**

**That’s what Jesus asked those first disciples and that’s what Jesus**

**Is asking each one of us today. What are you looking for?**

**And the answer is not just one pat answer.**

**Jesus is called by 10 different names in the opening chapter of John:**

**“Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (v.29)**

**“Son of God” (v.34); “Lamb of God” (v. 36)**

**“Rabbi or Teacher” (v.38)**

**“Him of whom Moses wrote” (v.45)**

**“Son of Joseph from Nazareth” (v.45)**

**“Son of God” (v. 49); “King of Israel (v. 49) :**

**And “Son of Man” (v. 51)**

**It seems that every person Jesus encounters  
has different expectations of who Jesus is to them  
and those expectations constantly are changing,  
even sometimes in one sentence, or encounter.  
And that is good news for us who have come to this place seeking  
Jesus, because that means that we don't have to have it  
All figured out- but rather we can discover together  
Who this Jesus is to us, and to the world.**

**At our last session meeting I gave our elders homework-**

**To go to people in our church and the community and ask them:**

**“What do you hear when I say the name Jesus?”**

**“What do you hear when I say the word church?”**

**“What do you hear when I say the word Christian?”**

**There are a lot of stereotypes with each.**

**There is the misconception that we have to all answer the same.**

**But the Gospel of John, the Word of God to us today says**

**That this living God is not static but dynamic and**

**That our understanding of God revealed in Jesus**

**Is constantly growing and changing-**

**And that's ok- even those early disciples were growing and changing.**

**And the good news is that we don't have to have it all figured out  
For be found by Jesus.**

**I love today's text which says clearly "Jesus found Philip."**

**But when Philip goes to share this good news with Nathaniel**

**He says: "*We have found him of whom Moses in the law***

***And the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph***

***From Nazareth.*"**

**Philip thinks he has found Jesus when really it's Jesus who found him.**

**Isn't that the way it is so often for us as well.**

**We think it's what we do that brings Jesus to us but really**

**Jesus finds us in our struggles, our sadness, our joy,**

**our busyness, our complacency, our doubt...**

**And Jesus brings us what we need at that time- hope, strength,**

**Peace, comfort, challenge, companionship, healing, clarity,**

**And so we know Jesus by who Jesus is to us at that time-**

**Savior, Great Physician, Comforter, The Truth,**

**The Way, Friend, Brother, Teacher,**

**Lamb of God who takes away our sins.**

**This is not to say that Jesus is anything we want him to be.**

**-Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, our Lord and Savior-**

**Jesus is the constant, the Rock, the foundation, the cornerstone  
but we are always evolving in our understanding**

**Of who Jesus is to us and to the world.**

**Check out Philip. He knew Jesus was Josephs Son, lived in Nazareth**

**And that somehow Moses had referred to him**

**in law and prophets, but Philip wasn't theologically precise  
when he went off to share Jesus with Nathaniel.**

**But he did it anyway!**

**And are you surprised by Nathaniel's response:**

***"Can anything good come out of Nazareth."***

**This is the first negative response to Jesus in John's gospel**

**But it's helpful for us when we are exploring**

**Why it's so hard for us to share the Gospel,**

**What it's so hard to share Jesus Christ.**

**We think our friends won't believe us,**

**Or maybe they will ridicule us or our faith,**

**Or think that we are religious zealots,**

**Or somehow make fun of Jesus or us.**

**And that's exactly what Nathaniel does to Philip.**

**But Philip is undaunted. He doesn't try to defend Jesus.**

**He doesn't try to justify his faith.**

**He just says "*Come and see*".**

**It's the presence of Jesus that wins Nathaniel over,**

**But it is the willingness of Philip to share Jesus**

**Even as Philip is just discovering who Jesus is**

**That is the turning point in the story.**

**WE only ever hear of Nathaniel on other time is all the Gospels.**

**When Jesus shares breakfast with the seven disciples**

**After his resurrection on the shore of the Sea of Tiberius**

**Nathaniel is one of those disciples along with**

**Peter, Thomas, Sons of Zebedee.**

**Did you notice that these were all disciples who misunderstood Jesus**

**At one time: Peter denied Jesus; Thomas Doubted him;**

**James and John wanted power (at his right and left hand);**

**And Nathaniel questioned Jesus origin- Nazareth**

**And yet Jesus restored each of these disciples**

**In relationship to himself.**

**And there are two other disciples in that final story just as there were two other disciples in the original call story, so there is room for you and me: to seek the teacher, be found by Jesus and to dare to share him with a friend. "*Come and see*" the son of Joseph, Son of God.**