

## Sermon for the Second Sunday after Epiphany

1 Samuel 3:1-20

Psalm 139:1-10

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

John 1:43-51

### Epiphany Moments

Grace, Peace, Mercy from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

Have you ever had an epiphany? An “ah, ah,” moments. A time when the light bulb went on. Suddenly you are no longer in the dark.

Epiphany means to “Make Known.” To bring light on something revealing what it really is. Last Sunday the epiphany at the baptism of Jesus light was shed on Jesus' identity when the heavens opened, a voice from heaven declared, “You are my Son, the beloved, with you I am well pleased.” Have you ever seen your baptism in the same way? The heavens opening, receiving the Holy Spirit, declared 'Child of God.' You are brought into a faith relationship with God. For those who discovered for the first time that about their baptism, and are moved to learn more about it, they have had an epiphany.

There are all kinds of Epiphanies in the Bible. This morning's first lesson is one such example. This was during time in Israel's life that had not had an epiphany for some time. Everyone was doing what was right in their own eyes. It takes the old priest three times before the light goes on that it is the Lord who is calling Samuel to a greater ministry. As Samuel's spiritual mentor Eli is able to give him counsel in what way he should respond. “Here I am, I am listening.”

In our second lesson the Corinthians had been living in darkness. They had figured that their bodies were theirs and they could do anything they pleased to give them pleasure. It took a pastor to preach God's Word to them. “You cannot use your bodies as you please. You are one with Christ, and laying with a prostitute you become one with the prostitute.” For many the light bulb went on in their heads and their hearts. I suppose the response of many that congregation would be, “I did not know that.” or “Oh my, I have really blown it.” Or “Pastor, thank you for shedding light on this.” Then the pastor would offer the forgiveness of sins, and remind that their bodies are the temple for the Holy Spirit. What an “ah ah” moment. That is an epiphany. And it brings a transformation of life into the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

For some the light goes on faster than others. Don't ask me why. There are some who just remain in the darkness a long time, even after proclaiming the love of God in Jesus over and over again.. So we pray that they may catch it or the light does go on one day. Then we have run into others who think they are enlightened and fail to see Christ in their neighbor. That their neighbor is actually more gracious and than they are. So we pray that they will someday get it.

Our gospel this morning is an example of these kind of epiphanies. Jesus sees Phillip and says, “Follow me.” For Phillip, that is all it took. For Nathaniel, it was not so easy. Phillip found Nathaniel and said, “We have found Him about whom Moses and the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth,”

Nathaniel responds like a true skeptic. “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Nathaniel had searched the scriptures. He knew his Bible. It is not that he had anything against people from Nazareth,

but in searching he had not found anything about the Messiah coming out of Nazareth. Phillip said to Him, "Come and See."

That is simple evangelism right there. It does not take big programs and lots of money to do evangelism. Nor does it take a lot of training. Nor is it as hard as one might think. You see we don't need to have the answers to every objection or question that one may have. Just extend to invitation, "Come and See."

Later in the Gospel of John, Jesus will meet a woman of Samaria who is coming to draw water from a well. Jesus asks for a drink and the woman wants to argue. Jesus he tells her stuff about her life that he should never know, unless he were the Christ. He is the Christ. She has an Epiphany. What does she do? She runs to town and says, "Come and See." "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did." It is like they had been waiting for someone to ask. They go and they see. They go back to her and say, "It is no longer that we believe because of what you said, but that we have seen and heard for ourselves, that this is indeed the savior of the world. They too had an Epiphany.

Phillip said to Nathaniel, "Come and See." Nathaniel said, "OK." "Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward Him and said, "Behold an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." Jesus had known Nathaniel long before he ever saw Him. Even before Phillip told Nathaniel about Jesus. Jesus had seen Nathaniel under the fig tree. Not only does Jesus know where Nathaniel was He knows his character. An Israelite with no deceit.

That is compliment, deceit is nothing to be proud of. In the Old Testament, the master of deceit is Jacob. He deceives his brother Esau and his father Isaac. Later He gets a new name. You are no longer be called Jacob, the deceiver, you will be called Israel, meaning one who struggles with God. A man of no deceit. Suddenly a light goes on for Nathaniel. That Jesus knows about him, his study of Scripture and his striving with God to know His ways so that he could taste the sweet fruit of faith.

Nathaniel replies, Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel." Nathaniel's Epiphany, and his amazement nearly echos King David whom we heard in the Psalm for the day. "O Lord you have searched me and known me. You know when sit down and when I rise. You discern my thoughts from far away...."

Nathaniel's eyes are opened. Once in in the dark about Jesus or Nazareth and now the light of Jesus floods into His life. Jesus is the Son of God. However, In Jesus' eyes this is just little epiphany for Nathaniel, "Very truly, I tell you, you will heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Meaning, "You will see greater things. The dream that Jacob had of angles ascending and descending between heaven and earth as link between heaven and earth, is replaced by something greater. By Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection on the third day becomes the Nathaniel's and our link between heaven and earth. Jesus has opened heaven through promises won for us on the cross.

Our Lord has greater things for us who strive to know God's will for our lives. Our little epiphanies we experience in this day and time, Our Baptism, insights into God's ways in the preaching of scripture, our reception of Holy Communion are just a foretaste of the things to come.

When see heaven opened and taken in the twinkling of an eye, We will see that Christ has been with us all throughout our lives. The times we have been delivered for evil and danger. Every mouthful of food was given by God's almighty hand. Every blessing, large and small, and even those taken for granted

carefully shaped just for me. Every question answered, every doubt resolved, swallowed up in pure joy. Let us celebrate our little epiphany moments, in our Baptism, in the proclamation, and in this communion, until we see greater things than these.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding guard our hearts and Minds in Christ Jesus.

