

Introduction

- Looking for Larry Bird's shoes in Quincy Market. I asked people who worked there, who lived there, and no one could tell me. They were in plain sight, but no one seemed to know where they were.
- Why weren't people able to help me? Didn't care about Larry Bird? Passed by so many times that they took for granted that the bronzed shoes of one of the best basketball players to ever play were right in front of them?
- We live in a city where there's a church on every corner, and we offer the invitation for people to come and experience the Good News of Jesus, but thousands pass by every week overlooking the reality that the God of all creation is at work right in front of their eyes.
- Or, it could be that you sit in these chairs every week. You hear the stories of Scripture over and over again, but you take for granted that the God who loves you is present and speaking to you. You overlook that God desires a relationship with you.
- Jesus offers the greatest invitation ever: "Come and see..." Why do we take that invitation for granted? Why do many not respond to the invitation? Why are many unwilling to step into a life of faith? Why do many take the invitation for granted?
- Maybe people don't respond to the invitation because we're the kind of people who want to know where Jesus will take us before we decide whether or not to follow Him.

- In [John 1:35-51](#), the story of men who did not take the invitation for granted. They responded to the invitation, and it forever changed their lives. They didn't know everything Jesus was asking of them when Jesus said, "Follow me," but they were compelled to respond to the invitation. Why?
- From this passage, I want to show you three realities about following Jesus.

You must know what you are seeking.

- vs. 35 - "The next day..." John's Gospel opens with a seven-day week in the life of Jesus culminating with the wedding at Cana, the first miracle of Jesus in John's Gospel.
- This may be an intentional echo of [Genesis 1](#). "In the beginning..." First week in Genesis, God revealed who He is. First week in John's Gospel, the Son of God being revealed.
- John the Baptist has testified that Jesus is the Lamb of God. John is not the Messiah, but a voice in the wilderness who makes the path straight for the Messiah.
- vs. 35 - John testifies a second time, "The Lamb of God," but this time to two of his disciples. One was Andrew, the other unnamed. The unnamed disciple may be John the Gospel writer.
- They leave John the Baptist and follow Jesus. John the Baptist doing his job - pointing others to Jesus and not himself.
- vs. 38 - Notice the exchange. They start following Jesus and Jesus asks, "*What are you looking for?*" An honest question. Why were these men following Jesus? Because they believed John? What did they believe about Jesus? What did they believe that Jesus would do for them?

- vs. 38 - Their response - “Rabbi...” A title of respect and honor - they don’t know everything about Jesus, but they know He’s superior to them.
- “Where are you staying?” They want to spend time with Jesus to learn who He is. Same word used in [John 15](#) - abide in Christ. [John 1](#) - Jesus came to dwell with His people.
- vs. 39 - “Come and you’ll see.” A call to faith - Jesus doesn’t give them all the details. They were simply told to follow Jesus, and He would show them along the way.
- They got time with Jesus (vs. 39). What it must have been like to spend the day learning from Jesus! Surely, in those first hours that these new disciples were with Him, Jesus was teaching them about Himself.
- For you: “What are you seeking?” How you answer that question will likely determine how you will respond to Jesus.
- **Examine your “why” for following Jesus.** Are you seeking after Jesus because you expect something from Him? To fix your family? To give you happiness? Healing? Peace when life is chaotic? To get out of hell?
- Will you still seek Jesus when He doesn’t give you exactly what you want? When the diagnosis doesn’t change? When your marriage doesn’t improve?
- We follow Jesus NOT to get what we want but to get Jesus. To abide with Him.
- **Examine Jesus’ “why” for calling you to follow Him.** Your “why” and His “why” are likely very different. *These two men had no idea what Jesus was going to do in their lives.* They knew Jesus was the Messiah because of John’s testimony. Your “why” for following Jesus is probably much smaller than Jesus’ “why” for calling you to follow Him.
- Jesus didn’t call these two men to follow Him to simply give them something, but to make them into something - men who would imitate

His character and carry on His mission. Jesus has called you to Himself for the same reason.

- Living in New Orleans - made me into something - 10 years - even more significant - a lifetime with Jesus has made me into someone.

You must know who Jesus is seeking.

- Simon Peter follows Jesus because his brother Andrew tells him that Jesus is the Messiah. (vs. 40) Every time John's Gospel gives an active role to Andrew, Andrew is connecting someone to Jesus.
- Jesus changes Simon's name to Peter - Rock. His new name takes on even more significance later in Jesus' ministry at Caesarea Philippi when Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ. Jesus told Peter, "On this rock I will build my church."
- Jesus knew from the beginning who Peter would be, but Peter had no idea what following Jesus would entail. Peter had not yet heard, "Cast your nets on the other side." He had not yet walked on water or confessed Jesus as the Christ. He had yet heard the resurrected Lord say to him, "Feed my sheep." He had not yet preached at Pentecost. Peter had no idea where following Jesus would take him, but Jesus already knew what He intended to make of Peter.
- Vs. 43 - On Jesus' way to Galilee, Jesus "found Philip." Jesus takes the initiative. Andrew found Peter, but Jesus found Philip. Then Philip will find Nathanael. Notice the pattern John is showing us: Jesus seeks people, and people who have been found by Jesus begin seeking other people. None of these men were looking for Jesus. Jesus either issues the invitation Himself, or someone who was following Jesus extended the invitation.
- Jesus simply says to Philip, "Follow me." Philip doesn't know where Jesus is going to take him. He doesn't know what following Jesus will

cost him. He doesn't know everything Jesus is going to ask of him. But Jesus knows. Jesus isn't merely inviting Philip to believe something about Him. He's calling Philip into an entirely new life centered around Him.

- Who is Jesus seeking and calling to Himself? People like you and me. People who need to know him. People who are lost. People who need hope. People, like the first disciples, that you would never expect to follow Jesus.
- **Following Jesus is always walking in faith.** “Follow me...” Jesus never gives us all the details, but He does extend the invitation. We never know the journey He’s going to take us on, but we know where the journey ends: glorification. In what areas are you waiting to obey Jesus until you get all the details?
 - Waiting to forgive until you know how the person will respond?
 - Waiting to share your faith because you want to know how that person will respond before you share?
 - Waiting to put away a certain sin until Jesus proves to you that life is better without that sin. A sinful relationship that you aren’t sure you can live without or a sinful behavior?
 - Where do you need to obey Jesus just because He told you to and you know that God knows what He’s doing? That’s faith.
- **Following Jesus is always inviting others to walk in faith.** In [John 1:35-51](#), the Good News of Jesus travels through relationships. You can’t change anyone, but you can invite people to follow Jesus.
 - Share what you know. Jesus died and rose again. Be solid in your understanding of the Gospel.
 - Share what you’ve experienced. Your testimony is NOT the Gospel but a wonderful way to share the Gospel because you have a

personal experience with Jesus. Can you share what Jesus has done in your life? Can you tell others how the death and resurrection of Jesus changed you?

You must know what you will see.

- vs. 45 - Philip found Nathaniel. Philip convinced that they had found the one that Moses and the prophets wrote about - Jesus from Nazareth.
- Nathaniel's disbelief: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nazareth was an obscure, lowly town. How could the Messiah come from a place like Nazareth?
- Philip's response: "Come and see..."
- vs. 47 - Jesus identifies Nathanael as a true Israelite without deceit. Nathanael is sincere in his desire to seek Jesus.
- vs. 48 - Nathanael amazed that Jesus knew him. Nathanael understands that Jesus had a supernatural ability to know that Nathanael had been sitting under a fig tree. Nathanael had come to see Jesus, but Jesus had already seen him. This small insight into Nathanael's life was enough for Nathanael to confess that Jesus was the Son of God and King of Israel.
- But, Nathanael hadn't seen anything yet! He would see far more! vs. 51 - a reference to [Gen. 28:10-22](#). In [Gen. 28](#), Jacob was running from his brother. God appeared to Jacob in a dream. Jacob saw a stairway connecting heaven and earth, with angels ascending and descending. When Jacob woke up, he realized he had encountered the presence of God. Named the place Bethel = house of God.
- Jesus tells Nathanael that he will see something even greater. He will see

e heaven

opened and angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

Jacob encountered God at a place - Bethel. The disciples would encounter the presence of God in a person - Jesus Christ. Jesus is the One in whom heaven and earth meet. He is God dwelling among His people. We have access to the Father because Jesus is Jacob's ladder - because Jesus paid the price for our sins and defeated death through His resurrection, we have access to God.

- Nathanael would see and experience for more than Jesus telling him that He saw him under a tree. He would see Jesus perform mighty miracles that no ordinary man could perform. Ultimately, he would see Jesus rise from the dead.
- In this moment, Nathanael had seen enough to believe in Jesus, but he hadn't yet seen the fullness of who Jesus was. There was more.
- **You have seen the work of Christ.** Nathanael had experienced the supernatural work of Christ, and he believed. Think of what you've experienced. Your sins have been forgiven. You have gone from death to life. You have been given a new nature with new desires. You've seen God at work in your life, proving His faithfulness time and time again. You have seen His work. You can testify to it. If you think about it, you have far more reason to trust Jesus than Nathanael did.
- Just to remind yourself of the work of Jesus, what if when you're around the lunch table this afternoon you took a few moments to share with your family or your friends three specific ways you've seen God at work in your life just as an encouragement to keep on trusting the Lord.
- If you are not a believer, today is the day to experience the work of Jesus. Jesus knows you and loves you. He came to live the life you could not live, die the death you deserve, and rise again so you could be given the gift of life. Today, repent of your sins and trust Him as Lord.

- **You will see more of the work of Christ.** And, Jesus is not done. You know what you WILL see because you know who HE is, and you know His promises. You will see Him face to face. Some day, your faith will become sight. Some day, you will see the skies open up, and you will see the Son of God return for His people. You will see the resurrected and ascended Lord in all His glory.
- If you know what you will see, you can trust Him today even if you don't have all the details. You can trust Him even if you don't now every circumstance you will face. You can trust Him even if you don't know what obedience will cost you.
- What step of obedience have you been delaying that you can take in the next twenty four hours to demonstrate your trust in the Lord? Identify it, ask for the Spirit's help , and do it.
- You don't have to know everything Jesus will do tomorrow to obey what He's told you to do today.
- This morning, however God is calling you to respond to Him, submit to Him.