

Being Found

John 1: 43-51 (January 14, 2018)

John 1: 43-45, 51

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth."

⁵¹And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Historical Context

Both this book and Genesis begin with "In the beginning"; Genesis 1 is the first (seven day) creation story. John then works its way chronologically through seven days. The days (after the first) begin at 1:29, 1:35, 1:41, 1:43 and 2:1; in 2:1, "on the third day" means two days later (in ancient times, counting was inclusive). On Day 5, Jesus invites Phillip to follow him. V. 51 is like Genesis 28:12 (read today) but different: the angels ascend and descend "on the Son of Man" rather than on the ladder from earth to heaven. In the Genesis passage, the ladder is the means of communication between heaven and earth; in this passage, Jesus declares that he is the medium of communication, the mediator between God and humankind.

Theme: Being Found

What does epiphany actually mean? One definition states -- an immediate and meaningful understanding of something. Surprising. Sudden. Profound.

We tend to expect that Epiphany is about the revelation of Jesus. About finding Jesus, witnessing Jesus in various "epiphanic" moments. It's not supposed to be about being found ourselves.

But John's Gospel invites us to imagine that these can be one and the same. That is, finding Jesus in those revelatory moments or those unexpected moments, is also when you find yourself -- who you are, who you are called to be. .

What is revealed is what it means that God became human. That God entered into our world, no longer satisfied just to be with us but now has to be one of us. I think when that happens, we change too. Our humanity changes. Suddenly, who we see ourselves to be can be no longer remain the same because we have seen God in who we are. That just has to change the perception of ourselves.

Maybe this epiphany season might take on a mirror effect. That is, when you hear these texts, when you look for Jesus, when you experience these revelatory moments of Jesus, you simultaneously see something about yourself.