

Church of Our Saviour  
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

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The Second Sunday of Epiphany  
January 17, 2021

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Text: John 1:43-51

Title: Philip Found Nathaniel"

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***In the Name of (+) Jesus our Lord. Amen.***

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Philip and Nathaniel! Old names! New Testament names!  
In our day we give our sons and daughters splashier names! It's  
a trend!

Philip found Nathaniel the Gospel of John tells us! Even  
though Philip came from Bethsaida and Nathaniel came from  
Cana, two cities about 27 miles apart! How did Philip find  
Nathaniel? We do not know!

They could have met one another at a religious festival!  
Or, in a marketplace? They could have been two guys fishing at  
some river or on some lake! And if they lived now, Philip and  
Nathaniel, in our time, they could have eaten hamburgers  
together! They could have sat, six feet apart, in a tavern  
drinking a beer! They could have mourned the loss of a mutual

friend to COVID! They, could have even been involved in a fender-bender accident at the intersection of Main and Johnson avenues! And rather than cursing and beating one another up, they talked, restrained, wanting to work things out!

They are Philip and Nathaniel! That's who they are! Not prominent in Bible history! And, if they lived now, we would call what took place between the two of them, witnessing! Philip told Nathaniel "we have found him," We have found the One about whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote!" "Come and see for yourself!"

Witnessing!

It's what Christians and church members sometimes do! We tell others what we have found! Without ramming it down the throats of others! We tell others what we believe! Without any sort of personal pride! We tell others about our fellowship, our brothers and sisters within the congregation, because of our common faith in the Lord and we do not brag! God found us, we Lutherans like to say, we did not find God!

And, so there is a faith! A faith we live for and can share with others! Believing and having faith is, as Martin Marty describes it, "one of the most private acts of life!" It occurs "in the deepest recesses of the heart!" And, because it is so private and so deep down inside us, we aren't always comfortable, at least I am not comfortable, talking about it!

Why do we follow the path of faith when most other ways of living are more profitable? Why do we live in ways strange and unfamiliar to the power world? Why do we follow the path

of faith when it runs mostly against the way the rest of the world lives? Why do we follow the path of faith which causes us to follow after a God we do not understand fully? Why do we embrace love as the single, great and best motivator in our lives when love is sneered at by so many? It's weakness, they say!

Invading our Capitol building, the peoples' house, said it all! Windows broken! Furnishings destroyed! Leaders threatened, hiding in bunkers! People, beaten up! People, overwhelmed! People killed! People all around our land, and me too, shocked! What is happening to us a nation, as a people? What will fix it?

We cannot let hatred win the day! We just cannot! We cannot give up on mercy and love! We cannot give up on truth and honesty! We cannot give up on the fact, the God-given fact, that the life of every human being, even those different than us, must be valued!

Not much is known of Philip and Nathaniel! Except to say, Nathaniel was skeptical about Jesus and discipleship when Philip first talked to him about Jesus! "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathaniel asked! Snobbish, wouldn't you say?

Both Nathaniel and Philip gave the ultimate sacrifice for the cause! Both were crucified! As Philip died, tradition tells us, he continued preaching!

We live today! Where the events of life today, disturbs and bothers and distresses us! I ask! What, do events like the invasion of our Capitol building, and COVID, and vaccines

delayed, and political chaos, and fires, and storms do to us? What does climate change, and shootings almost every day, and wrong religion getting most of the attention, and distrust and anger between too many of us, do to us?

In a world as messed up as our world is there is need for assurance and a faith that fastens us on what gives us what we need for the road ahead! The events of life keep coming at us and they are real, they are painful! And if you are overwhelmed, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually, you are not alone! Where to go? What to do?

Go to the Word, the Word of the Lord, the Psalms! And, think, and pray, and learn we cannot run away from God, and should not! The Psalms express, without looking away from the bad, the ugly, the unthinkable, that God is with us!

God is everywhere! Psalm 139, tells us! And, I'm all ears! We cannot flee from the presence of the Lord, the Psalm says! God knows when we sit down and when we rise up! God discerns our thoughts from afar! If we ascend to heaven, God is there! If we take the wings of the morning and settle in at the farthest limits of the sea, God is there, and there, even there, God holds us fast!

There is another source of help and direction! It's with the people who are in congregations, members, friends, like here, in the Church of Our Saviour! Honorable people! Dedicated people! Faithful people! Giving people! Above all, loving people! I'm sort of new at serving this congregation! I am getting to know them better! But I am totally impressed by them! And, while we cannot be with one another, face to face,

because of COVID! We know, we understand, there is a blessed friendship we share here! How good!

Philip brought Nathaniel to Jesus! That's what friends do! That's' what Christians do! They help us see and understand the real hope in God's Word and in God's presence in our lives! And, that's what, as I see it, we all need now more than ever!

AMEN