

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 22, 2014 3:00 PM

**Subject:** Last Nite's MOB Session

Men--Last nite we got into Lesson #6, about "the first disciples" of Jesus, beginning with John's account in John 1:35-51. But like Jesse's message last Sunday about the resurrection of Christ, from Mark 16--and the unwinding tale from different witnesses of Bob Hartman's "Braddock Road traffic mishap"--there's more pieces to the story that you need to hear! As Jesse said: you only get the "full picture" of the resurrection when you tie together the accounts of all the Synoptic gospels as well as the Gospel of John.

So it is with the "calling" of the first five--well, really six--disciples of Jesus! We began our search in John (beginning in verse 35) with the account of John the Baptist seeing Jesus and proclaiming: "Behold, the Lamb of God!"--whereupon two of John's disciples (Andrew and the other unnamed, but obviously John, the son of Zebedee), "hearing him speak, followed Jesus." And then, Andrew, according to the writer, John--after spending time with Jesus--"found" his brother, Simon (Peter) and said: "We have found the Messiah" (Christ), and "brought him to Jesus." And the next day, Jesus "found" Philip and simply said, Follow Me"--and he did! Then Philip "found" Nathanael, and said, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." But Nathanael questioned "whether any good thing could come out of Nazareth," at which point Philip, the ever-practical apostle, said, "Come and see"! Then Jesus, John writes, "saw Nathanael coming to Him and said: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile (deceit)." Nathanael was, apparently, so astonished that Jesus "knew" him--particularly after telling him that He had seen him earlier "under the fig tree"--that he somehow was able to respond: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel!"

Well, that's obviously only part of the story! There's got to be more! And we learn much more when we read further accounts in the Synoptic gospels! Just ask Jesse!

Matthew also records the baptism of Jesus, including the account of how "the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended upon Him as a dove" when He came up from the water--and then a voice from heaven saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." He then tells about Jesus "being led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan," then "withdrawing into Galilee and beginning His teaching ministry! Then, in 4:18-22, how He saw Peter and Andrew "casting their nets...as He was walking by the Sea of Galilee"--and said: "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of Men!" And they did! Then, the same experience for James (our #6 disciple!) and John, the sons of Zebedee! And that's all Matthew gives us!

Mark essentially gives the same sequence of events and account as Matthew, but adds, in Mark 3:13--obviously at some point later on--how Jesus "went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him." And He "appointed" (officially one might say) the 12 disciples!

Luke, "having investigated everything carefully from the beginning...so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught" (as he claims at the beginning of his gospel), offers more information. He too discusses the ministry of John the Baptist, including the same account of the baptism of Jesus, and the temptation of Christ. But then he gives more details

(ch.4-5) about the early ministry of Jesus, including his rejection in Nazareth and his going down to Capernaum, later "entering Simon's home where He healed his mother-in-law by "rebuking her high fever"! Then more about His ministry throughout Galilee and, in particular, an incident by the Sea of Galilee where He apparently borrowed Simon's (Peter's) boat to preach to a crowd of people on the beach who had come to hear Him! It was after this incident that He instructed Peter to take the boat out into deeper water and "let down your nets"--and you all know the rest of that story! How many fish were caught, much to the astonishment of Peter and Andrew and probably James and John! Here again is where Jesus said that from "now on you will be catching men." And so Luke records that "when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him!"

And so, there's more to the story of those "first six disciples"! I particularly like the story of Nathanael! He was the "visionary apostle," according to a book I once read, called "13 Men Who Changed the World," by H.S. Vigeveno. And the "fig tree" thing! Micah, the prophet, wrote (in Micah 4:1-4) about how "...it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established... and the nations...will hammer their sword into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks..." and how "each of them (God's people) will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one to make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken."

I think that may have been what Jesus was referring to, and what Nathanael perhaps was able to grasp, when Jesus saw him under the fig tree! Nathanael responded as all of Israel should have responded to Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah! Jesus called him a "true Israelite indeed" in that he somehow recognized who Jesus really was--called Him the "Son of God"--and submitted to the "King of Israel"--demonstrating a heart that was open and prepared and tender toward Him!

A.W. Tozer spoke of "living in this fleshly existence, in this corrupted world... with a sense of God"! Francis Schaeffer wrote: "The end of man is to stand as a finite personal being in a personal relationship with the infinite personal God who is there!"

Well, the first disciples saw and heard, up close and personal, what Jesus did and said--and they "believed and followed" Him--although there were many rough roads ahead (as we'll be learning about in the weeks and months to come as we study this great book).

John said there were "many signs that Jesus performed, in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

And--just like the disciples--when you read the account, in the inspired Word of God, and get the "rest of the story," and realize who Jesus is and what He has done for us, how can you not believe? And then you want to follow Him, and share Him with others!

Next week--Lesson #7 and the "first sign": Jesus turning water into wine!

May God bless your week!  
Lowell Mininger