

Remembering Whose we are—Finding and being found
1 Samuel 3:1–20; John 1:43–51

Jesus found Philip. Jesus *found* Philip and called him, “Follow me.” Philip, in turn, *found* Nathanael saying, “We *found* Jesus. We found the Christ.” When Jesus and Nathanael see and meet each other, Nathanael too *finds* Jesus. And Jesus *finds* Nathanael. (There’s a lot of finding and being found in this story!)

When Jesus calls these disciples, he isn’t randomly calling individuals to follow him; rather, it’s a calling that grows out of Jesus *seeing* and *finding*. It is an active, engaged, and reciprocal call: Jesus *found* Philip. And Philip *found* Jesus.

We need to hear and talk about this story through the story and lens of last week, of being named Beloved. In this season, as we’re *remembering Whose we are*, we are first of all named Beloved. That is who we are. Before we are born, it is who we are. And Whose we are. And while the name is already given to us, we, in turn, must also choose it. We have a choice to embrace...or not...our naming. For Christians, it is in baptism that we choose to claim this name. And every day since our baptism, we have been choosing...or not...to claim being Beloved.

Being called and saying Yes to Jesus’ invitation to “Come and see” also involves choice. Following Jesus...going and seeing isn’t passive. It’s bodied and intentional. Following Jesus is a response to *being found*. We have all had the experience of being lost...lost in the chaos of the world, lost in pain, lost in fear. And because God is a God who is always coming toward us—a God who opens the heavens to come to us—in the lostness of our chaos and pain, we look up one day and there...there God is. Here...here in the mess and muck of it all, God finds me. And when God finds us, we find God.

This finding and being found doesn’t just happen once. Or twice. It happens repeatedly, daily even. Because let’s be honest, it’s easy to lose God. It’s easy to lose sight of the One

who opens the heavens to come to earth to name us, Beloved. This...this is why Jesus says, “Come and see.” He doesn’t just say, “Come.” He doesn’t just say, “Look.” But, “Come *and* see.” Being found by God...and finding God is about where we place our bodies. And about seeing and being seen by God wherever our bodies are. Wherever *any* body is.

We often talk about being called by God as vocational, a calling into a particular vocation. A career path. But I wonder. Actually, this morning I’m saying that our vocation as God’s beloved is not about careers. God didn’t call Philip and Nathanael and the other disciples into a meaningful work; rather, he called them to an identity. He called them to live letting themselves be found by God. And finding God. Our vocation, as beloved of God, our first “work” is to be found *by* God and to find God. Our vocation to is see God and to be seen by God. No matter what job we are or aren’t doing, as beloved of God, we are called to see and to find God. To be seen by and found by God.

We know that Jesus never climbed a career ladder. In fact he rejected the ladders of power and prestige when they were offered him. Instead, moment by moment he remembered Whose he was. And moment by moment he chose to claim his belovedness, letting himself be found by God, and finding God. So that everywhere he went, he, in turn, was seeing and finding God. In story after story of Jesus’ encounters, we watch Jesus going from place to place, looking for and finding God’s beloved. As we watch him, again and again, we witness the joy of those who are being seen by God. The release of those being found by the One who names us, Beloved. The liberation and healing when they—bodies and souls—remember Whose they are.

But this finding and being found isn’t just between me and God. It isn’t like a two-lane highway that “my God and I” travel by ourselves. Instead, it’s multi-dimensional and multi-directional and multi-layered. We are finding God and being found by God *in and through each*

other, in and through our bodied encounters and relationships. I find God when I find and see you and other bodies as God's beloved. And I am found by God when you find and recognize me as God's beloved. Finding and being found is a joining, a participation with God's creativity and aliveness in the world. It is heaven coming to earth when we find and see each other as God's beloved.

One of the ways we can imagine this participation is in what Jesus tells Nathanael, "You will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending." In the season of Christmas we experienced the heavens opening when God came to us, to be with us and stay with us. And again at Jesus baptism, we watched as the heavens were torn open for the Spirit to descend and stay with Jesus...and in turn, into us. And here, in Jesus finding and calling disciples, he speaks about a reality that earth has access to heaven...and heaven has access to earth. The heavens open whenever we as human beings "come and see." The heavens open when we, as siblings of the Son of Humanity, when we find and are found. Heaven comes to earth when we see and are seen as beloved. When we live into our vocation as God's beloved, truly we are living on earth as in heaven.

Beloved, our God has torn open the heavens and is coming to us...always coming toward us.

Beloved, God has called you...called us...to be partners in finding and being found. We are called to experience and witness the joy of heaven opening as we and those we encounter are found and seen.

Beloved, God's angels are here, ministering to us so that can we live into the fullness of our God-given vocation. May we give ourselves to being found and finding, to seeing and being seen by God in others and for others.

May it be so.