

John 1:35-51: Be Ready

Good morning everyone! Please turn with me in your bibles to John 1:35. We'll be going through to the end of the chapter this morning. John 1:35-51.

Once again I want to thank you for filling out the connection cards. Our time of Pastor's prayer was once again one of the highlights of my week last week. Just want to encourage you to keep filling those out.

Many of your prayer requests that you wrote we were already aware of, but it just helps us to remember to pray for you, and it's an intentional time we're setting aside to pray for you. So even if the same thing is on your heart this week as it was last week, write it down and we will continue to pray for you.

I also wanted to let you know something that's coming up in a couple months. One thing we want to do better at is helping people see how they can get involved and serve the body. The bible tells us that the body of Christ is made up of many different gifts, and we want to make sure we are helping you guys use your gifts to build up the body of Christ.

So on March 15, we're going to have Serving Sunday. We'll take a week off of John and I will preach on serving. Then after church we will have tables set up in the lobby that show every way that people can serve. Many of you serve faithfully in a bunch of ways. We are really blessed as a church to have so many people who serve. But for people who are newer or aren't as plugged in, it can be hard to figure out how to get involved. So on March 15 we're going to take a whole Sunday to talk about it.

Alright we have a pretty long text this week so instead of reading it up front we're going to pray now and walk through it verse by verse.

Let's pray.

Father, we praise you this morning. Your faithfulness is far beyond what we can imagine. Your grace is inexhaustible. We confess to you ways that we have sinned and fallen short of your glory this week. And we profess that apart from Christ, we would all justly and rightly

deserve death. But the beauty of the gospel is that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ, and because of his sacrifice, because of his death, we can live as righteous sons and daughters of the king. Help us to believe that if we are in Christ, you see us as righteous. And we pray that you would continue to chip away at the areas of our heart that are still rebellious to you, and help us live like we're adopted into your family. Help us as we look to your word this morning to see what you want us to see. And help me as I preach. In Jesus' name, amen.

I have a confession to make. It's something I've been trying to hide because I want you guys to like me, but I might as well just come out and say it: I am a coffee snob. There. It's out there.

There's no way around it. Somehow, I've become one of *those* people. I wish it wasn't true, but it is. In fact, if you came to my house and looked around in our kitchen, you would find probably 6 for 7 different kinds of coffee makers. It's a problem.

It wasn't always like that. My parents aren't coffee drinkers, and I didn't even *like* coffee while I was in high school. It all started in college. My hall director's name was Jake Drake, and he owned the coffee shop on campus. One night he invited me down to his apartment in the dorm, and he had this funny looking contraption that I had never seen before called a French press. And out of that French press came something I had never experienced before, really good coffee. And I was hooked.

All it took was that one encounter, and I was forever changed. And now, as much as I hate to admit it, I have an almost Nick Cox level obsession.

Sometimes in life you have an encounter that changes everything. And you have to be ready for what's to come.

(SLIDE)

In our passage this morning, we see a handful of men encounter Jesus for the first time. And that encounter changed them in ways beyond what they could have imagined at the time. Through this

John 1:35-51: Be Ready

passage, we are able to see some of the effects of an encounter with Jesus. Things you need to be ready for once you meet him. As we walk through our passage, we'll see four things we need to be ready for once we have an encounter with Jesus. Here's the first.

(SLIDE)

Be Ready to Follow Him

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

Last week our passage closed with John the Baptist giving testimony to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah who had come. Remember, Isaiah prophesied that the Holy Spirit would descend onto the Messiah, and John the Baptist says, "I actually saw that happen!"

In verse 29 of chapter 1, John the Baptist sees Jesus coming toward him and says, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Now in verse 36 he says the same thing. He's hanging out with a couple of his disciples, he sees Jesus walking by, and he uses the same exact phrase, "Behold the lamb of God."

And verse 37 tells us what happened next, "The two disciples heard him say this and they followed Jesus."

Last week we talked about the humility of John the Baptist, that he didn't rest on his credentials as the one whose birth was prophesied by Gabriel, he didn't try to build a big following for himself, he just tried to prepare people to meet Jesus.

Here in verse 37 we see that humility come to life. These two guys are his *disciples*. They're his *followers*. His *people*. We don't know how long they had been with John, but they were surely close. And the very moment he points to Jesus and says, "There he is," the disciples are like, "see ya John." They were ready to follow Jesus. They didn't hesitate. They didn't delay. They followed him.

One of our three year old Owen's favorite games to play used to be "stop, go" which is exactly what it sounds like. The kid loves to run. If you stopped by our house at any given moment outside of nap time there's like a 65% chance that he will be sprinting laps around our living room and dining room.

And he used to love it when he'd be getting ready to run and you would say, "Stop!" And he would freeze. And wait there in anticipation. And then you'd say "Go!" And he would take off like an absolute rocket and he wouldn't stop until you said stop again.

That's what I want for us. When I preach, what I want more than anything is to get you ready to follow Jesus. To fall more in love with Jesus. So that when you hear his voice say, "Go", you're ready to take off like a rocket because you want to follow him wherever he leads.

My job is to do everything I can as one of the people who God has called to shepherd this church to help you recognize the voice of Jesus, and help you follow him wherever he's leading. Whatever he's calling you to do.

Sometimes he leads us to places that can seem kind of scary. We just prayed for Noah Brandon who is following the Lord's leading into the Air Force. He's following the Lord's calling, and his family is following the Lord's calling by releasing him to this new phase of life. There's nothing easy about that. Sometimes the Lord calls us to do really hard things!

And if we're not ready, if we're not in a place like John's disciples were where we are willing to drop everything if Jesus calls us to, we will never be able to follow where he's leading.

Maybe the Lord is leading you to foster care, to care for the vulnerable in our community. Or adoption, to be a father to the fatherless and a mother to the motherless. Or maybe, like the 18 people going to Guatemala, maybe he's calling you to spend some time in another country to see him at work among the nations.

Maybe there's a sin in your life that's been a continuous stumbling block, and you need to take radical steps to cut it out. Jesus said if your right eye causes you to sin, cut it out. That's pretty radical!

Or maybe it's something as simple as you've been coming to church here for a while but you haven't been truly connected in a really long time, and the Lord is calling you to join a Life Group, or to finally jump in and decide to serve on Serving Sunday.

The point is, we need to be ready to follow Jesus, no matter what. No matter where he leads. Because he's the only one worth following. And he will never lead you astray. When you encounter Jesus, be ready to follow him.

Second, when you encounter Jesus, be ready to be changed. Verse 38:

(SLIDE)

Be Ready to be Changed

³⁸ Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. (About 4 in the afternoon).

So they ask him where he's staying, and he tells them to come and see. Verse 40 continues.

⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). ⁴² He brought him to Jesus.

He went home right away and told his brother, "We found the Messiah!" And then he brought him to Jesus immediately!

I picture him out of breath, "Simon, you have to come right now. We just met this guy named Jesus and he's the Messiah. I promise you you have to come see him right now!

So he did. And the rest of verse 42 tells us what happened next:

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

Jesus changed his name. He calls him Peter, which means Rock in Aramaic, the language Jesus was speaking.

Jesus looks at Simon and says, "I'm going to call you Rock". D.A. Carson says this wasn't a prediction, but a declaration of who Jesus would change Peter to become.

Jesus knew who Simon was, and he also knew who he would become, that his confession Jesus would eventually declare in Matthew 16 would be the rock on which Jesus would build the church.

After Simon's first encounter with Jesus, everything changed. When you encounter Christ, you need to be ready to be changed. Jesus doesn't want you to stay where you are. He wants you to change. He wants you to become more like him. And the amazing thing is, he's the one working to do just that.

Jesus sees the heart. He sees who you are, and who he's making you to be. He knows what the final product looks like. You're not done yet. It doesn't matter if you're 9 or 90. Don't think of yourself as a finished product. Jesus is constantly molding you, constantly shaping you into who he's calling you to be.

I hope that encourages you. It encourages me. Jesus' posture to you isn't sitting back with his arms crossed and an angry look on his face waiting for you to change so he can love you. He loves you so much that he's the one doing the changing. And he sees where you are right now and who he's shaping you into becoming. Praise the Lord for that.

When you encounter Jesus, be prepared to be changed. From the inside out.

Third, when you encounter Jesus,

(SLIDE)

John 1:35-51: Be Ready

Be Ready to Share It

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (I love that) Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

Just like earlier, we see a man compelled to follow Jesus, and the first thing he does is run and tell someone. First it was Andrew running to tell Simon. And here it's Philip immediately going to tell Nathanael.

These guys had known Jesus for one day. And the first thing they wanted to do after meeting him was go tell someone!

Which should really knock any idea that you're somehow unqualified to share your faith right out.

Yet what happens so often in our hearts when the Lord gives us a nudge to go talk to someone about our faith? We get that voice in our head, “Oh you'll probably just be awkward. They'll ask a question you don't know the answer to and you'll look stupid. You haven't been to bible college, you're not qualified. Don't worry, if you don't talk to them someone else who's probably better qualified will take care of it. Just forget it.”

Can anyone relate to that? Yet this passage and many more in scripture take a sledgehammer to that idea. What qualifies you to share your faith? Following Jesus! Whether you've followed him for a day or a decade or longer, it doesn't matter. When you encounter Jesus, you need to be ready to share it.

Our vision at Rock Prairie, which you see in your bulletin, is to make Christ known Truly, Deeply and Widely. Let's talk about widely for a second. When we talk about making Christ known widely, there are

4 of 6

three words we use that are derived straight from scripture: Missions, service and evangelism.

That last one, evangelism, is one that I want to see us grow in as a church. Evangelism is a spiritual gift. I've talked about it before, but it's amazing to see someone with the spiritual gift of evangelism in action. However, evangelism isn't just something for those who are gifted to do. It's for everyone.

We're all called to evangelize. And we can all grow in evangelism. So as we look forward to Serving Sunday coming up, one thing we want to develop is an evangelism team. Not to just *do* the evangelism, but to equip the body to know how to share their faith.

If you have a passion for evangelism and would like to be part of that, please talk to me or one of the other pastors, or write it on a connection card.

When the disciples first met Jesus, they couldn't wait to tell someone. When you encounter Jesus, you need to be ready to share your faith. And I'm praying that as a church we grow in our ability and passion to do just that.

Finally,

(SLIDE)

Be ready to see great things

⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” ⁴⁸ Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

When Jesus sees Nathanael for the first time, he looks right into his heart. Remember, Nathanael just was wondering, “Could anything good really come from Nazareth?” Now before he can get a word in, Jesus sees right inside of him.

John 1:35-51: Be Ready

Nathanael is rightly taken aback. So he replies, “how do you know me?” Jesus says, “Before Philip came and got you, I saw you under the fig tree.”

And this blows Nathanael away. He answers, “You are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel.”

I was wondering why just seeing him under the fig tree was so amazing to Nathanael. One commentator I read said that Nathanael was probably having some kind of spiritual experience between just him and God, where nobody else was around. Yet Jesus knew about it.

Jesus had just demonstrated omniscience, which means knowing everything. Nathanael knew that only God knows everything. And so Nathanael’s response is to declare, “You are the Son of God!” This was Jesus’ reply: Verse 50:

50 Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”

51 And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

In other words, “You ain’t seen nothin’ yet.”

If you think seeing you under the fig tree was something, just wait till you see what’s coming next.

In fact, the ‘you’ in verse 51 isn’t singular, but plural. As in, he’s addressing everyone around him. So he’s not just talking about what Nathanael will see, but what his disciples will see.

And what he’s referring to, in poetic language, is the story of Jacob’s ladder in the Old Testament.

In the story of Jacob’s ladder, there’s a ladder that angels use to move between heaven and earth. What Jesus is saying is, incredibly, “I’m the ladder! I’m the way to God! I’m the way into God’s presence!” What we now know that the disciples didn’t know at the

time, was that the cross was going to make a way to God. He was referring to the cross.

Jesus, through the cross, has made a way to the Father. And Jesus tells Nathanael here, you’re about to see the greatest thing that will ever happen. Heaven itself is about to be opened!

My question for you this morning is, are you ready to see great things? When you encounter Jesus, heaven opens. You now get to have a relationship with the God of the universe. There’s nothing greater than that!

I fear too often we can get bored in our faith. We lose all expectations for what God is going to do. What God is able to do. Listen, sometimes you get stuck in your faith. Sometimes you have desert times. But you can’t stay there. Because through the cross you’ve seen heaven opened and you have a relationship with the God of the universe! Who loves you! You’ve already seen great things, and you ain’t seen nothin’ yet!

When you encounter Jesus, you need to be ready to follow him, wherever he leads. You need to be itching to hear that voice say, “Go”, and run as fast as you can after it.

You need to be ready to be changed from the inside out. Recognizing that Jesus doesn’t just see you where you are right now, he sees who he’s shaping you into becoming. Don’t resist it. Don’t resist what he’s doing in your heart. Be ready to be changed.

When you encounter Jesus, you need to be ready to share it! Don’t slip into the mindset that someone more qualified, someone smarter, someone better spoken can share so you don’t have to. If you’ve been changed by Jesus, tell someone!

And you need to be ready to see great things. I firmly believe that the Lord wants to do a mighty work here at Rock Prairie. He wants us to be a people so on fire for him that the effects of it are going to radiate all the way through Tipton county to the ends of the earth. Not because there’s something special about us, but because there’s something awesome about *him*.

John 1:35-51: Be Ready

6 of 6

Jesus made a way for us to have a relationship with the Living eternal creator God of the universe. Don't be complacent. Be ready to see great things.

Lord's Supper

In just a few moments the deacons and their wives are going to come forward to pass out the elements for the Lord's Supper. I'm going to leave these 4 things on the screen. As you receive the cups, hold on to them and spend some time in prayer. Ask the Lord if you're really ready to follow him wherever he leads. Ask him where he wants to change you, and confess any sin in areas you don't want to give up. Ask him to bring to mind someone who you need to share the gospel with, and ask him to make you ready to see great things because of what Jesus did on the cross.

Anyone who has repented of their sin and confessed Jesus as their Savior is welcome to participate. If you haven't done that and you're still trying to figure out what this Jesus stuff is all about, I would ask that you would let the cups pass. This is something that the Bible says is for believers. If you don't know Jesus as your Savior yet but would like to, then I would urge you to come forward after the service and pray with me, or with one of the people who will be up here to pray with you after the service.

Servers please come forward. The cups are stacked on top of each other, so take one stack of two and wait, and then in a few moments I'll lead us in eating and drinking together.

In 1 Cor 11:23, Paul says – For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. IOW this broken piece of bread is symbolic of the sacrifice he made on our behalf. Do this [he said] in remembrance of me.

(Eat)

25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. IOW this cup and what it contains, represents the blood of Jesus, the life he gave – to secure the promise of salvation, the new covenant Do this [he said], as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. As often as we eat and drink at The Lord's Supper – we proclaim his offer of salvation, the gospel, until he returns and makes it complete

Let's do that now.

(Drink)

Let's pray.

Father, you have indeed done great things already in sending your Son. We praise you for the gospel. For Jesus making a way to have relationship with you. Thank you. Help us to be ready to follow you wherever you lead. In Jesus' name, amen.