

Come and See Jesus

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[0 : 00] Would you take your Bible and turn to John chapter 1, 4th gospel, the first chapter 1, and let's read about our Savior.

He was there again with two of his disciples, and when he saw Jesus passing by, he said, Look, the Lamb of God. When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.

Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, What do you want? They said, Rabbi, which means teacher, where are you staying? Come, he replied, and you will see.

So they went and saw where he was staying and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.

The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, We have found the Messiah, that is the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus.

[1 : 24] Jesus looked at him and said, You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas, which when translated is Peter. The next day, Jesus decided to leave for Galilee.

Finding Philip, he said to him, Follow me. Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law, and about whom the prophets also wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Nazareth, can anything good come from there? Nathanael asked. Come and see, said Philip. When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, Here is a true Israelite in whom there is nothing false.

How do you know me? Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you. Then Nathanael declared, Rabbi, you are the son of God.

You are the king of Israel. Jesus said, You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.

[2 : 45] He then added, I tell you the truth. You shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the son of man.

The Grand Canyon doesn't have and it doesn't need any sort of advertisement agency working for it.

I don't believe and I don't think there are commercials for the Grand Canyon. They don't need that kind of thing.

There's no come on down to the Grand Canyon. There's no fancy slogans. Better ingredients.

Better canyons. It's not that. But every year, year after year, millions of people every year line up on that edge, look out on that canyon and are amazed.

They're amazed and they wonder at it, at its vastness. And then, they go home and they say, you have to go see that. And someone might say, well, it's 2,000 miles away.

[3 : 59] Well, it's worth it. You have to go see it. It's definitely worth it. It's worth the trip. The Grand Canyon has the holy grail of advertisement. It has word of mouth and that is what advertisement agencies love and that's what they're trying to generate.

Word of mouth. mouth. I try it and I love it and so I tell someone else, you need to try this. You need to come and see what this is all about. You should really go to this restaurant.

You should try this product. Well, this morning, I'm going to be absolutely shameless and I'm going to try to sell you, if I could speak crassly, on Jesus, on giving him your life, of turning over the keys to him, of humbling yourself before him and owning him as your Lord and your Savior.

And, I know it's a huge step. It's not 2,000 miles. It's bigger than that. I know it's a huge step because I've made it myself.

And, it is the greatest, the most life-altering, trajectory-changing move that you can make, that a human could take.

[5 : 17] But, I am shameless this morning. I do want you to come and see Jesus. Have dealings with him. And, that's it.

Come and see. Come and see. Two times in this passage, someone says, come and see. The very first passage, the pastor, in the very first part of the passage that Pastor John read, someone said, come and see.

And, first it was Jesus to these two disciples. Andrew, and probably John, the person writing this account, this book.

John doesn't like to refer to himself. He keeps himself in the background. So, it's probably Andrew and John. Now, Andrew and John had been disciples of John the Baptist.

They had been following him. But, when John the Baptist saw Jesus, he said, now, look at that. Look, it's the Lamb of God.

[6 : 19] And, Andrew and John instantly took the exit. You know, you've seen that when someone's all of a sudden made a sudden exit. And, that's what they do.

They've been following John the Baptist and now they take the exit. They left John the Baptist and they start literally following, literally walking behind Jesus. And, John said, go look.

And, that's what they did. And, so Jesus turned to them. He saw them following. And, he said, what do you, what do you want? What do you want? Teacher, where are you staying?

And, Jesus said, come and see. Come and see. He wasn't just inviting them to his house. He was doing that. But, now he's, he's genuinely and really inviting them into his life.

Into following him. And, they came and they saw and that was it. That was it. They were sold. They were his.

[7 : 20] Some 70 or 80 years later, John, the person who wrote this book, was dropped on an island in the middle of the Mediterranean, exiled, for Jesus' sake.

He's an old man in a penal colony, in a Roman penal colony, for Jesus' sake. And, that's probably where he died. Away from friends, away from his family, away from everything he knew, home, church, but with no regrets.

80 years later, John is still saying, I'm his, and he's mine. No regrets. Well, we don't really know for certain, sure, what happened to Andrew.

According to church history, church tradition, Andrew didn't live as long as John did. Andrew, John was the only one that really lived out an old age. but Andrew traveled far and wide.

He probably traveled farther and wider than John ever did. They say that he was even up into Russia, on the Russian steps, talking to horsemen, the Scythians, about Jesus, risking his life, until he was arrested in what is present-day Greece, and he was crucified.

[8 : 46] God died. But, it was this day, this day that we just read about, that changed everything for Andrew and for John. This was the day they first came and they saw Jesus, and they found in him someone worth living for.

And they found in him someone worth dying for. No regrets. But there is a second come and see in this passage.

It was the very next day, as John has it, Jesus found Philip and told Philip, now you follow me. And Philip did.

And pretty soon, as Philip is having interactions with Jesus, as he's listening and talking and seeing what Jesus is all about, Philip had to call a time out and say, I'm going to be, I'll be right back.

Nathaniel has to hear about this. Nathaniel has to come and see this. Nathaniel's going to love this. And Philip found Nathaniel, and Philip says to Nathaniel, we found the one Moses wrote about in the law.

[9 : 54] And about the one whom the prophets had been writing about for all those hundreds of years. And his name is Jesus of Nazareth. He's the son of David, our son of Joseph. Nazareth?

Can anything good come from there? And Nathaniel's, or Philip's response is come and see. Come and see. And that's my message today.

Come and see. I believe that God has appointments. You see all the appointments in this passage. People meeting people.

People running into people. People going and seeing other people. Jesus meeting people. Other people meeting people. And none of it was an accident. God was orchestrating all of this, all of

these events, all of these appointments, all of this meeting.

And I think, and I know, that God brought you here this morning to hear this. To hear this message of come and see Jesus.

[10:57] Don't just sit there. Come and see. Come and see what Jesus is all about. But maybe, maybe you're skeptical. Maybe you're skeptical.

Nathaniel, in our passage, was skeptical, wasn't he? Philip, says we found him. We found the Messiah. And that would be hard to believe regardless of who was saying it.

we found the one Moses talked about. Moses, 1,500 years ago, talked about. We found him, the prophet, the prophet that Moses promised.

The last, the great prophet from God. It's been 1,500 years, but he's here at last. We found the one all the prophets had been writing about. And I don't know about you, but if someone told me that, I would be skeptical.

I would be skeptical. You have to understand, Philip, Nathaniel, Peter, Andrew, they are normal guys walking around on normal earth.

[12:07] They had jobs. They caught fish at night. They took long naps at the daytime and the day. It's not like supernatural heroes from the past just walked around all the time.

long promised people didn't show up in their world. And so I'd be skeptical. And Nathaniel was. The long awaited prophet is here at last and guess what?

He's from Nazareth. And Nazareth, can anything good come from Nazareth? Nathaniel's not only skeptical, he's a bit prejudiced.

Honestly. And he feels the same way. I mean, I feel about this town of Knox. I'm not being mean to Knox. I'm just being honest.

But if you told me a great teacher, a poet laureate, no, the most important person ever, God's anointed savior was from Knox, I don't think skeptical would quite cover it.

[13:18] And that's how Nathaniel feels. And so, are you skeptical? Well, Philip's response is, come and see. All your questions will be answered. All your skepticism, all your prejudice, it'll be answered.

Come and see. Philip wasn't afraid of what Nathaniel was going to find. Philip wasn't afraid of what Nathaniel was going to find. He says, come and see. Check him out for yourself.

There's nothing to hide. There's no tricks. This is the real thing. Well, maybe you're not only skeptical about that, maybe you're skeptical about all of religion.

And I say good, because most so-called religion is not worth a hill of beans. If you're skeptical about a lot of it, so am I.

If you're getting rich, getting famous, getting powerful because of your religion, then I am skeptical. Jesus said, the world will hate you because of me.

[14:24] And so, if you're getting rich and famous, and if the world ain't hating you, then something doesn't smell right. There's a lot of it that is fake.

There is a lot of fraud. And trust me, I hate it more than you do. I hate it because I know there's something real. And when the fake covers up the real, there's a true religion and it's Jesus and it's having a relationship with him.

It's a real, genuine faith with a living Savior. But when frauds come along and cover him up and cover that up, I hate it.

I hate it more than you do. Because I've tasted the real and a lot of people here have too. They've tasted it. They've come and seen. And it's not fraud. It's not a fake.

It's not a lie. And so, I'm shameless. Come and see. Come and see. Now, when someone wants you to come and see something, you kind of want to know what you're in for.

[15:37] What is this all about? What am I going to find? So, what will you find when you come and see? What is Jesus like? What are you going to find when you come and see him?

Well, I have just six things. There could be a lot more, but just six very brief things this morning. Number one, just from this passage, you're going to find someone that's far above you.

He's far above you. Jesus isn't your equal. Now, generally, when we say someone isn't my equal, we mean that they're below me and I'm above them.

But when I say Jesus isn't your equal, I mean, he's way above you and you're way below him. And I'm no con man.

Con men paint beautiful pictures. Con men say it's all roses. Con men flatter. They flatter their marks. It's in their best interest to flatter you.

[16:37] But I'm no con man. Jesus is not your equal. What did Nathaniel find? He went to Jesus and immediately Jesus knew him.

Knew all about him. Knew where he was, what was in his heart. Jesus showed that he knew Nathaniel through and through. He knew Nathaniel at a deeper, more personal, more intimate, more divine level than anyone else did.

So here's a true Israelite in whom there is nothing false. Nathaniel, you're no fake. Whatever you are, you're earnest, you're real, you're genuine. And Nathaniel says, how do you know me?

Do you hear it? How do you know me? What's the trick? The Gospel of John begins with a skeptical disciple.

And it ends with a skeptical disciple. It begins with Nathaniel and it ends with Thomas after the resurrection saying, I will not believe until I literally and physically see the proof for this.

[17:51] Both cases, Jesus gave it. Both of them are skeptical and Jesus answers them both. And here it is, I saw you.

I saw you, Nathaniel, while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you. Now Jesus isn't saying, I saw you over yonder.

I saw you over that way. This fig tree that is in question is not 60 feet away and Jesus saw him under that fig tree and then he saw Philip walk up to him.

Because that wouldn't have convinced Nathaniel of anything. I could see Nathaniel 60 feet away, 100 yards away. That's not the point. Jesus is here proving, Nathaniel, I'm God.

I'm the son of God. I saw you when you were not visible and I knew what you were doing before Philip showed up. Nathaniel wasn't in eyesight.

[18:56] Jesus is proving, Nathaniel, I'm God. I see everything. I know everything. I am no mere man. I'm not just the son of Joseph. Joseph. And Nathaniel knew it instantly.

He's convinced, Rabbi, you are the son of God. You're the king of Israel. And Jesus didn't say, no, no, no.

Let's not get ahead of ourselves. I'm not saying that. You're too far ahead of me. He didn't say any of that. But, he said, you believe, Nathaniel, but you're going to see even more than that.

Nathaniel came and he saw Jesus and what he found was God in the flesh. He found God in the flesh.

And Jesus wasn't something that he could just add to his life. Jesus wasn't something he could just manage. Jesus wasn't simply a good teacher.

[20:05] Jesus wasn't someone that Nathaniel could maybe use in his life and manipulate and control and put in his own box. Jesus wasn't going to have a nice little space in Nathaniel's life with Nathaniel up here and Jesus down here in one of his categories.

Because Nathaniel, when he came and saw Jesus, he found that Jesus was up here and he was down here. They're not equals. And I'm sorry, but I'm not sorry.

To say, when I'm inviting you to Jesus, I'm inviting you to come and see someone who's instantly going to take over your life. He's the king and he rules.

And it's what he does. It's who he is. And he isn't asking for your permission. And so if you need someone to take over your life, if you need someone to take the wheel while you get in the back seat and zip your lips, then Jesus is the savior for you.

Come and see. He's not your equal. He's so much more than you. That's number one. Now number two, what are you going to find? You're going to find someone who knows you and understands you through and through.

[21:28] So what could Nathaniel hide from Jesus? Nothing. Jesus has x-ray heart vision.

He sees right down to the bottom of every person. He knew Nathaniel through and through and he knows you too. Jesus isn't manageable. He's the savior.

He's the Lord and he knows you. And you can't hide from him. You have secrets. We all have secrets. You have hiding holes.

We all have those hiding holes in our heart. But it's all laid bare before him. He knows what you've done in secret. your secret sins and misdeeds dark.

I told you I'm no con man because this isn't all roses. Jesus knows. He understands you. He understands where you've been. He understands how and why the way you are.

[22 : 37] What you've faced. What's happened to you. Your hurts. Your scars. Your secrets. Your hopes. Your attitudes. Your prejudices.

Your skepticism. He knew Nathaniel through and through and he knows you too. You can't hide and the wonderful thing is you don't have to hide. You don't have to hide.

So you can come just as you are. Sins. Sores. Secrets. Come as you are. And he knows it all. He has it all. He understands it all. And still he says come and see.

I'll be your savior. I'll bring you to God. That's number three. What are you going to find? You're going to find that Jesus is able and is willing to bring you to God.

He's the latter. That's what you see next. Nathaniel's amazed at what Jesus has told him. And Jesus says to Nathaniel you've seen great things. you're going to see something even greater than this.

[23 : 40] And he says I'm the latter. He's the bridge from earth to heaven. From earth to the throne of God. He's the way to God. And that's what he's pictured here of this stairway or this ladder with angels coming up and down.

The foot of it on earth. The top of it in heaven. He's saying I'm the bridge. I'm the ladder. I'm what brings heaven and earth together. And that supposes that heaven and earth are separated.

Not just in distance but sin has separated you from God. Your sins have separated you from God. We saw this in Sunday school.

We're sinners. We know what is right and we don't do it. And we know what is wrong. And we continue to do the very same thing.

And we've ignored and we've belittled and we've rejected. We've rebelled against the Lord and we're separated. We're cut off.

[24 : 41] We're separated by our guilt. And it's not just you. It's not just you. It's me. And it's everyone.

None are righteous. No. Not one. We're all cut off from God. But Jesus says to Nathaniel, Nathaniel, you're going to see heaven opened and angels going up and down on me.

Jesus is saying, I'm the way back to God. I'm the connection. I'm here to bring men to God. Come and see. Come and see this.

You give yourself to Jesus and he'll bring you to God. He can bring you and God together. And you can't do it on your own. Because instantly, I know what everyone does.

When sinners here, I'm separated from God. There's this vast distance and my guilt and my sin have destroyed the closeness that God and I have. What men start to do is they start building their own ladders.

[25 : 50] They start building their own ladders. Okay. I'll get up there. I'll climb up there. And they hear about the Ten Commandments and so they make a ladder out of ten rungs with ten rungs.

But the ladder's broken. And every single one of those rungs is broken. And the ladder can't bear your weight. You try to climb the Ten Commandments to God and that ladder will fall on you and destroy you.

We've broken every rung. But if you have a one rung ladder or a ten rung ladder or a hundred rung ladder, none of your ladders can bear your weight.

None of your ladders can stretch so far. And Jesus says, but I can. I can not only bear your weight, I can take you from earth to heaven.

From where you are to God's very throne. And so, put all your weight on me. Climb on me. None on yourself. None on your shaky, rickety, broken down, handmade ladder.

[27 : 06] He says, I'm the door. I'm the gate. I'm the ladder. Climb on me. I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life.

Put all your weight on me. I can bring you and God together. Doubt me? Come and see. Come and see. He hasn't let anyone down yet.

Well, what will you find? You'll find, one, you're not his equal. Two, he knows you through and through. Three, he can take you. He can bring you. He's the way to God. Number four, what will you find?

You'll find a serious savior. A serious savior. Jesus came in the world to save sinners, real sinners. Not pretend sinners, not good people, but sinners. And he's serious about it. He's not trivial. He's not trivial. He's not half-hearted. He is serious.

[28 : 02] He takes your sins seriously. He takes your personal sins seriously. Jesus never once smiled on sin, belittled sin, swept it under the rug, said it was no big deal.

He doesn't trivialize it in the least. It's killing you. And it will damn you to hell. He doesn't joke about it.

He doesn't sweep it under the rug. He doesn't mask it. He doesn't hide it. He's serious about your sin and he's serious about God too. You know who spoke about hell more than anyone else in the whole Bible?

He did. Hell is not the scare tactic of old-fashioned preachers. Hell is the wrath of God, the anger of God, the righteous power of God poured out on sinners and Jesus took hell and he took God seriously and I understand you probably and maybe don't want to hear about it.

And you might walk out of here and say, I don't want to hear that. I don't want to hear that. But Jesus, again, he's not a con man.

[29 : 22] He's not a trivializer. He's serious. He's serious about God and about God's glory. He wants to see God glorified and he's serious about God's rights and how sin has violated God's rights.

And he's serious about saving sinners. He's dead earnest about saving sinners. Well, how dead earnest? Well, he's dead earnest about killing your sin.

If sin is like a cancer, it's stage four lethal pancreatic cancer and Jesus is a blood earnest doctor and he's going to save you. It might come close to destroying you but he can kill that sin and if sin is ruining your life, you can go to Jesus because he's a serious savior.

He's serious about saving your soul from death. What is at the very heart of the Christian message? What is at the very heart of Christianity? What is it all about?

It's not about us doing good things for God. It's not about us doing the rules. It is about a cross. It's about a crucified, beaten, bloodied, savior who didn't only take the wrath of man, he took the wrath of God that we deserved.

[30 : 49] He took that wrath and so the deepest stroke that dark Friday was from his father. The son was being the sacrifice for our sin. And so no one can look at the cross and say well Jesus wasn't serious.

He wasn't real. He wasn't in earnest. He wasn't taking everything as seriously as it ought to be taken. No, he said I am the good shepherd and I lay down my life for the sheep.

And there they are. They're trapped and they're ruined and they're in the greatest of dangers because they not only have their sin against them, they have their own God against them.

The wrath of God is against them. And justice is calling for their blood and God's power is all arrayed against them and his holiness can't abide them and his goodness is just in stark contrast to what we are.

Every single one of his attributes except for his patience. And even one day that will turn against them. Is against them.

[32 : 01] And what can we do? Jesus says, I lay my life down for the sheep. So the world is a superficial, trivial place.

Selling us endless novelties, endless entertainment. And like salt water to stranded people out in the middle of the ocean, we drink it and we're just thirstier and thirstier.

But Jesus is a serious savior for serious sinners. And so do you need real help? Come and see. Come and see. Number five, he's serious but he's welcoming.

Well, what are you going to find? I know all of this has been very stern. All of this has been very serious. But what you will find is a gracious, welcoming heart.

Yes, this is serious, but can I say you are never going to find a more gentle, kind, gracious, patient, compassionate, welcoming savior.

[33 : 10] Great sinners come to him. Great sinners have come to him. Adulterous women, evil adulterous women, violent religious men, great sinners, long sinners, sinners who've been in sin for years and years and years and deep sinners.

They've all come to him and to all who've come, to all who've come, they found a welcoming heart, a saving heart, a smiling face, Jesus ready to save.

He's ready to save you. He is so serious about all the things that I talked about because he's serious about actually saving you. And so at the moment when you come to him, is he going to actually turn you away?

No, this is what it's for. Bringing you in and saving you. And so if you come and you rest on him, he'll welcome you, he'll take you in. He's not going to die on a cross and then when you come pleading for mercy, reject you.

He died on the cross so that he could welcome you when you came. And I found him that way. Many people here have found him that way. And before I was a pastor, I was a Christian.

[34 : 29] And before I was a Christian, I was a rebel. Separated from God, going my own way. And I heard the gospel and I didn't care.

And I ignored him and I belittled him for years. And all my privileges only made my sin worse. More wicked, more grievous. I deserve nothing but vengeance.

That's what I deserved. hurt. But when I came, he welcomed me. He welcomed me, took me. And I told you I'm being shameless.

This is what I found. And this is what so many here have found. They came with all of their sin. And he took them. He handled it.

He saved them. So come and see. Number six, and last of all, what will you find? Well, you'll find no regrets.

[35 : 29] No regrets. I've regretted a lot of things in my life. I've never regretted coming to Jesus. If I had a hundred lives to live, I'd live them all with him.

I wouldn't spare a single one of those lives. If I lived 99 and one was wasted, I'd regret that wasted one. There's only one big thing I really regret in my life that I would really change if I could go back and turn around and do it myself and change it, and I wish I would have come sooner.

Because Jesus has been an endless wonder and goodness to me. And so if I couldn't live with Jesus, life wouldn't be worth living. And it's not just me saying that.

There's no regrets. Maybe you've come with someone, maybe you're here with your parents, if you're visiting and you're coming along with someone, if you're outside and you know someone that is inside Jesus, just ask them.

Ask them if there is any regret. Ask them, what has Jesus done for you? Ask them, is Jesus really worth it? Ask them, is this all real?

[36 : 45] And you know what they'll say? Yes. So ask them. But better than even that, why don't you come and see for yourself?

Come and see for yourself. Get off the sidelines. Jesus is calling. Today, come and see. Let's pray. Our Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are a mighty Savior.

We are great sinners, great sinners, but you are a greater Savior. No matter how bad we are, no matter how far we've wandered, thank you that your love and your grace can reach out and rescue us.

So, Holy Spirit, I would pray that you would throw your rope around some sinner's heart. and save them today.

Open their eyes and let them see what could be theirs in Jesus Christ and then put it in their hearts, put it in their feet, put it in their hands to run and to grab a hold of Jesus and to never let go.

[38 : 06] We found you all to be all together lovely and perfect and wonderful. no regrets. Thank you for coming into our lives. Please come into someone else's life this morning.

I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.