

Morning Service 17th January 2021

Welcome to today's worship from Cudham and Downe, unfortunately back online due to covid19. I'm Rev John Musson, vicar...

You'll find the words of the service on the church website pcd.org.uk, or if watching on youtube, why not pause now and turn auto subtitles on! There are moments for you to join in with if you would like to, and a couple of worship songs you can sing along with wherever you are.

Today we hear about two friends who have an unexpected encounter with Jesus and initially react in very different ways. Together, Philip and Nathanael help each other to understand who Jesus is and they begin a journey that will redefine who they are. How do we hear God?

The Greeting and opening prayer

Wherever we are, we have come together into the presence of our Lord. So, let us quieten our hearts and minds, put aside our concerns and distractions. Let us open ourselves to listen for God's voice, for the word God has for his people. We keep a moment of silence in the business of our minds. (pause) We still our minds as we hear our first song – be still, for the presence of the Lord.

(Vid)

As we continue to be still in the Lord's presence, we open our hearts and minds to hear his voice. Let's pray together:-

**Loving God,
speak to us through the words of the Bible;
speak to us
through the words of our friends and families,
that we may call others to come and listen too. Amen.**

Come, let us worship the Lord who made us,
who knows our every thought before it is formed.
See the one from whom nothing is hidden – hear him speak.
Come, let us worship and listen. **Amen.**

Often we fail to hear God's voice, and even when we do, we choose to go our own way, and make wrong choices. Yet we have a God who is ready to hear us when we come to him again to ask his forgiveness. Let's do that now...

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

**Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May almighty God,
who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,
bring you his pardon and peace, now and for ever.
Amen.

The prayer for today, the 2nd Sunday of Epiphany...
Eternal Lord,
our beginning and our end:
bring us with the whole creation
to your glory, hidden through past ages
and made known
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Now Leanne and George are going to bring us our bible reading – from the gospel of John chapter 1 verses 43-51

(vid)

Today's Bible reading is John chapter 1 verses 43 to 51.

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45 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."

46 "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

49 Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

50 Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." 51 He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man."

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God!

Thanks Leanne and George for our reading.

Talk

I wonder if you get easily offended. Someone, maybe even a friend says an offhand or even deliberate comment about us, our appearance, or something we've done, and we're threatening never to speak to them again!

Not so Philip, or maybe even more, not so Jesus!

In our bible reading Jesus is starting to collect a group of people around him who will share in his mission for people to discover the Good News about God. The gospel writer John introduces us to Jesus' mission one day at a time. On the previous day Andrew had met Jesus and finds his brother Simon, also known as Peter, bringing him to Jesus. Now Jesus finds Philip who follows too. There's a theme of finding going on – some find each other, others are found by Jesus. That's how they express their new relationship – 'we have found the Christ, the messiah', God's chosen one, as we saw last week at Jesus baptism as the voice from heaven spoke and the holy Spirit's presence like a dove descended. This finding is more than mere lip service or adherence to a set of beliefs, it's a profound change, deeply connecting with who Jesus is and what his calling means. The other gospel writers tell us these people left everything and followed Jesus. So far so good, no problems. I wonder what response Philip was expecting as he approached Nathanael? It's all been going so well-there's a formula – you say 'we have found the messiah etc' and the person you're speaking to simply leaves everything. Not so with Nathaniel. He doesn't accept the invitation, and to be brutally frank, makes a racist comment about Jesus origins – how can anyone come from that dump, don't you know what those small minded northerners are like?! Just pause for a minute, be honest with yourself – Nathanael has just insulted your new friend, more than a friend, someone you've decided to uproot for and follow. What would you say? What would you feel? Hurt, offended for Jesus sake, hoping he didn't hear? Wondering if Nathanael wasn't the person you thought he was, his comment revealing something you always suspected but weren't sure about? The end of a friendship? Time to storm off and leave Nathanael, he's not worth any more effort? Argue it out, challenge the racist slur?

Philip shows his God-given wisdom and says three words 'come and see'. The Greek word 'see' means more than 'take a look' more 'try to understand'. Such simple words – come and see – and somehow Nathanael is changed enough to begin to approach and have an encounter with Jesus. He discovers that Jesus knows more about him than he realised. Jesus can see beyond his words, into his heart. He praises Nathanael for his challenging words – to paraphrase 'Here's Nathanael – blunt, but honest about his feelings'. That's a good place to start. But then there's that puzzling conversation in verse 48 - how can anyone come to a living faith in Jesus by Jesus saying to them 'I saw you while you were still under the fig tree' – what? This coming Wednesday evening at our homegroup via zoom bible study we'll look at this passage again, time for you, if you're able to join us, to ask questions and to find out more. But for now, maybe it's simply that Jesus noticed him? Sometimes we don't like to be noticed – we don't want to stand out for being different, odd, ashamed. Not so with Jesus. When he notices us, when he noticed Nathanael, Nathanael could see something in the noticing of Jesus that softened his heart – here was someone who noticed him as he was, loved him for who he was, and wanted him to discover who he could become in a lifelong relationship with God. Following Nathanael's statement of faith, Jesus then goes on to disclose to Nathanael some of the deepest truths about the kingdom of God – Jesus is worth following - as Nathanael discovered.

The Creed

Now Let's declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Diane is going to lead our prayers:- (vid)

Drawing our prayers and praises into one, let's pray as Jesus taught us to:-

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Jesus still calls us to follow him today. Maybe we already know the call of Jesus on our life, and so the challenge might be to be like Philip – to speak to others about what we know, and invite them to come and see Jesus, in us... some of us might be like Nathanael – sceptical – but can we also like him just leave a bit of space for God to speak to us in Jesus? Our final song reflects on that call – will you come and follow me?

HYMN

**Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?**

**Will you leave your self behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?**

**Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?**

**Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?**

**Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.**

Here's a closing prayer I invite you to join in with

**Dear God,
help us to help others
to come to you,
to see you,
and to hear you.
Amen.**

Thank you for joining us in worship today. Details of our next services are found on our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/PCDChurches/> where you can watch the service live or catch up later, and you'll find this week's notice sheet and other useful information on the church website pcd.org.uk. There's also Sunday Club via zoom this morning too.

Please also contact me, Rev John Musson or Rev Rach Archer if you need any help or just for a chat! vicar@pcd.org.uk 01959540012

Here's a closing prayer of Blessing (*instru be still...*)

Lord, what we have learned this day – help us remember.

Teach us to recognise your voice.

Teach us how to see you in our lives and encounters.

Help us to give others space so that they may hear you too.

And may the blessing of God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Be with you and remain with you always.

Amen.