

HOW TO BRING YOUR FRIENDS TO CHRIST

John 1:35-51

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. All of us have family and friends who are far from God. Some of them are atheists, some agnostics, and some are caught up in false religions. Some of them are very moral people, and some of them very immoral. Some of them know all about the Bible, and some of them know nothing. But one thing is true about all of them. They need the Lord. Their sins are separating them from God, and if they die without Christ, they will spend eternity in hell. Today we're going to talk about what we can do, individually and as a team, to bring our friends to Christ.

II. TEXT: John 1:35-51

35 The next day, John was standing with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

37 The two disciples heard him say this and followed Jesus. 38 When Jesus turned and noticed them following him, he asked them, "What are you looking for?"

They said to him, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

39 "Come and you'll see," he replied. So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

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

When Jesus saw him, he said, "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which is translated "Peter").

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and told him, "Follow me."

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law (and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth."

46 "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael asked him.

"Come and see," Philip answered.

47 Then Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

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

"Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you," Jesus answered.

49 "Rabbi," Nathanael replied, "You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel!"

50 Jesus responded to him, "Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." 51 Then he said, "Truly I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

III. CHRIST'S IDENTITY IS DECLARED

- i. There are three things that I want to point out in this text. 1) Christ's identity is declared. 2) Christ's deity is displayed. 3) Christ's mission is demonstrated.
- ii. The first thing I want us to see is that Christ's identity is declared. There are a number of characters in is passage, and each of them declares something important about Christ's identity.

2. He is the Lamb of God.

- i. John the Baptist. **John 1:36** When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"
- ii. This is the second time John says this about Jesus. In verse 29 he said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."
- iii. John was probably referring to the Passover lamb (Ex 12). To rescue the Jews from the Egyptians God sent one final plague – the plague of the first-born. God told Moses that He was going to send the angel of death to every household in Egypt to kill every first-born son, and every first-born male from the flocks and herds. But God gave the Jews a way of escape. He told them to sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood on the outside of the door frame. If the death angel saw the blood of the lamb, he would pass over that house.
- iv. John the Baptist was saying that Jesus is our Passover lamb who came to shed His blood for our sins. If we will put our faith in the blood of Christ, God will not destroy us for our sins, but will forgive us.

3. He is the Messiah.

- i. Andrew. **John 1:41** He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated "the Christ"),
- ii. The word Messiah and Christ are the same word in different languages. They both mean the same thing – anointed one. The Jewish kings were called God's anointed ones, because when they were crowned, they were anointed with oil, which symbolized God's consecrating and equipping them for the

task. The OT prophets talked about a coming king who would be the greatest of all the Jewish king. He would rescue the Jews and kingdom would never end. By the time of Jesus the Jews were eagerly looking for the Messiah. The Jewish leaders asked John the Baptist if he was the Messiah, but he denied it.

- iii. So, imagine Andrew's excitement when he told his brother, "We have found the Messiah!"

4. He is the fulfillment of the OT prophecies.

- i. Philip. **John 1:45** Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law (and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth."
- ii. The OT is filled with prophecies about the coming Messiah. Moses predicted that God would raise up a prophet like him to reveal God's word to the people in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. And the prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi made predictions about the Messiah.
- iii. Floyd Hamilton found that there "are in the Old Testament 332 distinct predictions which are literally fulfilled in Christ."
- iv. We're talking about very specific predictions:
 - 1. He would be born of a virgin (Is 7:14).
 - 2. He would reach both Jews and Gentiles. Is 42:6
 - 3. He would be rejected by His own people. Ps 118:22
 - 4. He would perform miracles. Is 53:4
 - 5. He would face opposition. Zech 13:7
 - 6. He would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. Zech 11:12-13
 - 7. He would die for our sins. Is 53:6
 - 8. His hands and feet would be pierced. Ps 22:16
 - 9. He would remain silent before His accusers. Is 53:7
 - 10. His clothes would be divided among His executioners. Ps 22:18
 - 11. He would die among thieves. Is 53:12
 - 12. He would be buried in a rich man's grave. Is 53:9
- v. Philip was so excited to find the one written about in the Scriptures.

5. He is the Son of God.

- i. Nathanael. **John 1:49** "Rabbi," Nathanael replied, "You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel!"
- ii. Twice in John 1 Jesus is called the "one and only Son (14, 18)." The same term is used in John 3:16 (the KJV translates it as only begotten). The Greek term (*monogones*) means unique, one of a kind. The Bible says that everyone who believes in Jesus is adopted into God's family and becomes a child of God. But Jesus is the Son of God in a unique sense. He is unique in that He shares God's nature – He is divine, and we are not. He is perfect,

but we are sinful. He is almighty, we are weak. He is eternal, we are temporal.

- iii. **Hebrews 1:3** “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact expression of his nature”

6. He is the King of Israel.

- i. Nathanael. **John 1:49** “Rabbi,” Nathanael replied, “You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel!”
- ii. Nathanael was declaring that Jesus was the Messiah king that the Jews had been waiting for.
- iii. **Revelation 19:16** “And he has a name written on his robe and on his thigh: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

IV. CHRIST’S DEITY IS DISPLAYED

- i. The second thing I want you to see in this passage is that Christ’s deity is displayed. Twice in John 1, John very clearly declares that Jesus is God.
 - 1. **John 1:1** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
 - 2. **John 1:18** “No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father’s side—he has revealed him.”
- ii. These are the bookends of the prologue. Immediately after the prologue John begins to display Christ’s deity. He gives FIVE REASONS TO BELIEVE THAT CHRIST IS GOD.

1. Jesus knew Peter’s name before meeting him.

- i. **John 1:42** and he brought Simon to Jesus. When Jesus saw him, he said, “You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which is translated “Peter”).
- ii. After Andrew met Jesus, he brought his brother, Simon, to meet Jesus. He didn’t yet know Jesus, but Jesus already knew him. The text says, “When Jesus saw him, he said, You are Simon, son of John.” Before Jesus met Peter, He knew his name, and his father’s name.
- iii. Jesus was showing His omnipotence – He knows everything. He was showing He can do the same things as God, because He is God.

2. Jesus called Phillip to follow Him.

- i. **John 1:43** The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He found Phillip and told him, “Follow me.”
- ii. Jesus did not encourage Phillip to turn to God. He did not ask Phillip to join Him in serving God. Jesus called Phillip to follow Him.
- iii. A prophet or religious leader’s goal is to point people to God. Jesus’ goal was to call people to Himself, because He is God.
- iv. We see this throughout the gospels. Jesus commanded people to love Him more anyone else; to obey Him; to come to Him; to follow Him; to believe in Him; to give up everything for Him.

- v. His goal was to bring people to Himself. Either He was self-centered, or He was God.

3. Jesus knew intimate details about Nathanael.

i. John 1:47-48

47 Then Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

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

"Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you," Jesus answered.

- ii. This is another display of Christ's divine omniscience. He knows things that are humanly impossible to know, because He is God.
- iii. He knew Nathanael's character – He was a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit. Only God can see a person's heart.
- iv. He knew where Nathanael was sitting when Philip went to get him – under the fig tree. How could He know this? Because He is God; He knows everything.

4. Jesus claimed to be the stairway to heaven.

i. **John 1:51** Then he said, "Truly I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

ii. Every Jew was familiar with the story of Jacob, who had a dream of a stairway to heaven, and the angels going up and down on it (Gen 28:12). Jesus claimed to be that stairway. In other words, He claimed to be the way to heaven. If you want to have a relationship with God, if you want eternal life, then you need to believe in Jesus.

iii. **John 14:6** "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

5. Jesus referred to Himself as the divine Son of Man.

i. **John 1:51** Then he said, "Truly I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

ii. This is Christ's most common title for himself. It is found 81 times in the gospel. What does it mean?

iii. The prophet Daniel prophesied that God would appoint a king, and this king would reign forever. In other words, a divine king.

iv. Daniel 7:13-14

13 I continued watching in the night visions,
and suddenly one like a son of man
was coming with the clouds of heaven.

He approached the Ancient of Days
and was escorted before him.

14 He was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,

so that those of every people,
nation, and language
should serve him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that will not pass away,
and his kingdom is one
that will not be destroyed.

- v. Jesus claimed to be Daniel divine Son of Man.
- vi. Jesus Christ is God. There is no doubt about it. He claimed it. His followers believed it. And He proved it with His many divine acts.
- vii. **Colossians 2:9** "For the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Christ,"

V. CHRIST'S MISSION IS DEMONSTRATED

1. The last thing I want us to see in this passage is that Christ's mission is demonstrated.
2. Christ's mission is to seek and save the lost.
 - i. **Luke 19:10** "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."
3. He came to die for our sins, and He wants everyone to believe in Him and receive eternal life.
 - i. **John 3:16** "For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."
4. Jesus has called all of us to share that mission – to bring people to Jesus so that they can believe in Him and be saved.
5. Christ's mission is demonstrated three times in this passage.
 - i. John led two of his disciples to follow Jesus. Verse 35. Andrew is named as one of them, and according to tradition, the unnamed disciple is the apostle John, the author of this gospel. Both of them would go on to become apostles.
 - ii. Andrew then led his brother, Peter, to follow Jesus. His name was Simon, but Jesus renamed Him Cephas (Aramaic), or Peter (Greek), which means "rock." Peter would go on to become an apostle.
 - iii. Philip led Nathanael to follow Jesus. Jesus called Philip to follow Him, and immediately Philip went and led his friend, Nathanael to Jesus. Philip became one of Christ's apostles, and they both would later witness Christ's resurrection.
6. This pattern has continued for 2,000 years. First, someone leads you to Jesus. Then, you lead others to Jesus. Then, those lead even more to Jesus. It is called evangelism (sharing the good news of Jesus), and it is one of the central purposes of your life.

7. Let's look at about five steps to effective evangelism so that we can become better witnesses for Christ.

VI. FIVE STEPS TO EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

1. Knowing your calling.

- i. You must be convicted that God has called you to the work of evangelism. That it is not just the task of pastors and missionaries. Every Christian is called to reach the lost.
- ii. **Acts 1:8** "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
- iii. **Charles Spurgeon** Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.

2. Know the stakes.

- i. Without Christ people will spend eternity in hell. With Christ they will spend eternity with Christ in paradise.
- ii. **John 3:16** "For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."
- iii. There are only two possible destinations after death. Eternal life, or perishing – eternal separation from God in hell.
- iv. **Carl F.H. Henry** "The good news is only good if it gets there in time."

3. Know the gospel.

- i. For someone to get saved, they must hear and believe in the Gospel.
- ii. **Romans 1:16** "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes"
- iii. To reach people for Christ you need to know the Gospel. The Gospel can be remembered easily and shared quickly if you just memorize four words:
 1. Creation. God created you for an eternal love relationship with Him.
 2. Corruption. We all sinned, and our sin separates us from God. There is nothing we can do to atone for our sins.
 3. Crucifixion. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place for our sins.
 4. Conversion. We can be forgiven and reconciled to God and receive eternal life if we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus Christ as our only hope for salvation.

4. Know your target.

- i. Who are the first and easiest people for you to reach for Jesus? Those closest to you.
- ii. Who did Andrew lead to Christ first? His brother. Who did John the Baptist first lead to Christ? His disciples.

- iii. Your first target for evangelism are those closest to you – your spouse, children, parents, siblings, best friends, neighbors, coworkers, classmates, and teammates.
- iv. Start praying regularly for their salvation, and be on the lookout for opportunities to lead them to Christ.

5. Know the plan.

- i. Evangelism is not meant to be a solo act. God has created the church to win the lost as a team. It's called Team Evangelism. You do your part by witnessing to your friends and inviting them to church, and the church will do its part to be ready for them when they visit.
- ii. How can we get ready for company as a church? Remember that it is our mission to reach the lost. We are not a cruise ship, we are a rescue ship. We are not social club, we are a missionary operation. It's not "us four and no more." We are here to reach the lost for Christ. **Greg Laurie** "A church that doesn't evangelize will fossilize."
- iii. We can get ready for company by following five principles:
 1. The parking principle. Leave the best parking spots for newcomers.
 2. The seating principle. If we want newcomers to feel as comfortable as possible, we need to leave them the best seats – in the back, near the aisle.
 3. The five-minute principle. Spend five minutes after church introducing yourself to new people before you get to work or head to lunch. If there are no new people, then spend this time fellowshiping with each other.
 4. The ten-foot principle. Any time you come within ten feet of someone in the church, smile and say hello.
 5. The magnetic principle. You need to act like a magnet on Sunday to two kinds of people: Newcomers, and loners. When you see a newcomer, make a beeline, and welcome them. When you see a loner, go and talk to them. Go and sit by them. This especially applies to the outgoing extraverts in our church. Use your gifts!

VII. CONCLUSION

1. The message about Jesus is the best news in the world. It is better than the cure for cancer. It saves people from eternity in hell. Don't be ashamed of the gospel. Ask God to use you to be a bold, contagious, winsome witness for Christ.
2. **Anonymous** "Those on the road to heaven will not be content to go there alone."