

# ***Encounters with Jesus, Week 1***

## **Small Group Discussion Guide, week of Oct 30th**

### **OCTOBER 30<sup>TH</sup> SERMON SUMMARY**

#### **ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS: NATHANAEL (JOHN 1:43-51)**

Nathanael's initial response to an encounter with Jesus is doubt. It's okay for us to have doubts because God is the one who finds us, pursues us, and convinces us that He truly loves us.

1. We might have both intellectual and personal doubts (v. 43-47). Jesus encourages and affirms Nathanael with the gospel (Psalm 32:2).
2. We might doubt whether God truly knows us, that he sees our doubts, struggles, and sin – and still loves us (v. 47-51). Jesus demonstrates to Nathanael that He knows him AND still loves him, and promises to demonstrate even more love.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. When you meet or encounter someone new, what is one thing you usually notice?
2. If you encountered Jesus, what's one thing you think you might notice about Him?

#### **READ JOHN 1:35-50**

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

**37** When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. **38** Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

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

**39** "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

**40** Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. **41** The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). **42** And he brought him to Jesus ...

**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.

**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** 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.”

3. Look at Andrew (v. 41) and Philip (v.45), and how they responded to their encounter with Jesus.

a. How do you think they were thinking and feeling about meeting Jesus?

b. What surprises you about their response to Jesus, if anything?

4. What do you think would have impressed and attracted people about Jesus?

5. Think about the titles and descriptions of Jesus. Discuss as much as you can about each.

	How Jesus is described	What it means (i.e., what it tells you about who Jesus was, or about how people viewed Him)
v 36, see also v.29		
v 38		
v 41*		
v 45*		
v 49*		

\*these overlap in meaning and implication. See note on p. 3 *after* you answer this on your own.

6a. Why do you think Nathanael's initial response towards Jesus was doubt?

b. What did Jesus do and say that changed him?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

7. If you met Jesus face-to-face, would your response be more like that of Andrew and Philip, or more like Nathanael? Explain.

8. What kinds of things can cause you to doubt God's love?

- Is there anything going on right now that causes you to doubt?
- How would you like your group to support or pray for you?

9. How does Jesus' response of love and grace toward Nathanael – with all his doubts and questions – encourage, bless, or impact you?

\* Notes for Question 2:

v. 36 – John the Baptist is probably referring to Old Testament sacrifice, the Passover lamb, and Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross which brings forgiveness of sins.

v. 38 - They address him with a term of respect, which indicates they regard him as a teacher.

v. 41, 45, 49 - *Messiah* means "anointed;" to the Jews, it was the same as "Son of God". The reference to Moses and the prophets also suggests the Messiah, a king in the line of David. In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed and thereby set apart for special service. The Messiah would be the king who would come to deliver them and establish the kingdom.

Jesus is indeed the Son of God and King of Israel, but in a sense far beyond anything expected by Moses and the prophets. Nathanael is acknowledging his King, though His kingdom is not of this world. Each of Jesus' titles affirmed here is true, so the disciples have glimpsed something of Jesus' identity.