

Come and See

John 1:43—51 (v. 46)

Introduction

Prejudice. What comes to mind when you hear that word? Do you think of racism? Gender discrimination? We all have prejudices; we have all been the victims of prejudice. The word *prejudice* means to “pre-judge”, that is, to make a determination about something or someone before having all the facts. Prejudice presents itself as stereotyping, making false generalizations. Examples of this would be to say, “All black people are lazy” or “All white people are racists” or “All evangelicals base their salvation on their feelings.” None of these statements are true, but they are widely accepted in certain circles. Our Gospel lesson today deals with prejudice – “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Prejudice Against Galilee

Why would Nathaniel say something like this? There was a prejudice against Galilee since the time of King Solomon (Read **1 Kings 9:10—13**). The word “Cabul” sounds like the Hebrew word that means “good for nothing.” This gave rise to the stereotype that we read about in **John 7**, that *no prophet arises from Galilee* (**John 7:52**). Though widely known and quoted, it was false. But Nathaniel himself was from Galilee. His comment was about the town of Nazareth in Galilee.

Prejudice Against Nazareth

Nathaniel’s statement was based on what he understood from Scripture. Philip has just told him they have found *the one of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote* (**John 1:45**). Basically, he said, “We have found the Messiah!” However, Nathaniel, like most others, was under the impression that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem. He was surprised, “Could the Messiah really come from Nazareth?”

Philip’s Answer

Philip didn’t try to convince or persuade Nathaniel. He merely said, “*Come and see*” (**John 1:46**). He knew that if Nathaniel met Jesus, he would see it, too, that Jesus is the Messiah.

Prejudice Today

Society today has its own prejudices. Always has. This prejudice, this attitude toward Christianity has changed over the years. In ancient times, society persecuted the Church because it was new, and society was suspicious of it. Then, it became the state religion. This meant that if you were a citizen of the empire, you were automatically a member of the church. While this is called by some the “Golden Age” of the church, the Gospel got lost as the church was tied up in the empire. Things changed with the Reformation, as Christianity spread west.

Accepting

There is no state church in America. But, originally, church membership was common, and by-and-large, society was accepting of Christianity. The Gospel could be plainly and openly preached.

Skeptical

In the 60's the attitude toward Christianity became one of skepticism. Secular life began to crowd out religious life as people began relying on science. The message of the Gospel had to be defended.

Cynical

Today, the attitude is cynicism. The skeptic has doubts or reservations. The cynic has a negative and distrusting attitude. They want nothing to do with a Gospel that, to them, is outdated and does nothing but seek to hamper their lifestyle.

Come and See

Our Gospel message is once again like Philip's. “Come and see.” We can't change people's minds. They don't even want to listen. All we can do is say with David: *Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! (Psalm 34:8)*. We used to sing a song: *Jesus is the answer for the world today. Above Him there's no other, Jesus is the Way. Jesus is the answer for the world today. Above Him there's no other, Jesus is the Way.* If this Jesus we talk about seems too good to be true, **COME AND SEE** for yourself.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
