

# FOUND BY JESUS—AND FINDING JESUS

*“The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip, and said to him, Follow Me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

*John 1:43-45*

FOR a soul to come to Jesus is the grandest event in its history! It is spiritually dead till that day, but it then begins to live—and a saved man may reckon his age from the time in which he first knew the Lord. That day of first knowing Christ is important in the highest degree because it affects all the man's past life. It sheds another light on all the years that have gone by. If he has lived in sin, as no doubt he has, the transaction of that day blots out all the sin. The day in which a man comes to Christ—that very day—his transgressions and iniquities are blotted out, even as the thick clouds are driven from the sky when God's strong wind chases them away! Is not that a grand day, in which our sins are cast into the depths of the sea so that from then on it can be said of them, “They may be sought for, but they shall not be found; yes, they shall not be, says the Lord”?

I say that the day in which a soul comes into contact with Christ is the greatest day of its history because all the past is changed by it! And, as for the present, what a different life does a man begin to live on the day in which he finds the Lord! He commences to live in the Light of God instead of being dead in the darkness! He begins to enjoy the privileges of liberty, instead of suffering the horrors of slavery! He is started on the way to Heaven, instead of continuing on the road to Hell! He is such a new creature that he cannot tell how changed he is. One said to me, “Sir, the change in me is of this kind—either the whole world is altered, or else I am.” So is it when we are brought to know Christ—it is a real, total, radical change.

With many, it is a most joyous alteration. They feel like the man who had been lame, and who, when Peter spoke to him in the name of Jesus, and lifted him up so that his feet and ankle bones received strength, was not satisfied with walking, for we read, “He, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.” He was walking, leaping and praising God! Do you wonder at it? If you had lost the use of your legs for a while, you would feel like leaping and praising God when you had them all right, again! And thus is it with a soul when it first finds the Savior. Oh, happy, happy day when the miraculous hand of Christ takes away the infirmities of the soul and makes the lame man to leap as a hart, and causes the tongue of the dumb to sing!

The day in which a man comes to Christ is also a wonderful day in its effect upon all his future. It is as when the helm of a ship is put right about—the man now sails in a totally different direction. His future will never be what his past was. There may be faults. There may be infirmities and shortcomings, but there will never be the old love of sin any more. “Sin shall not have dominion over you.” This is God's own promise to us, given through His servant, Paul. When Christ comes to our soul, He so breaks the neck of sin, that though it lives a struggling, dying life and often makes a deal of howling in the heart, yet it is doomed to die. The Cross of Christ has broken its back and broken its neck, too, and die it must! Henceforth the man is bound for holiness and bound for Heaven!

Now, dear Friends, have any of you come to Christ? I know that you have, the great mass of you, and I bless God, and so do you, that it is so with you. But if there are any of you who have never come to the Savior, I wish that this might be the night when you should find Him. I am but a poor lame preacher—you are not often troubled with the sight of one sitting down and preaching—yet I think that if I had lost my legs and had always to lie on my back, I would like, even then, to preach Christ Crucified, and to—

*“Tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Savior I have found.”*

I do pray that some of you, tonight, made to think all the more by the infirmity of the preacher, may be led to seek and to find the Savior. And then it shall be a happy day, indeed, for you, as it has been for so many more.

I am going to talk to you about Philip’s conversion and first, I ask you to notice, in our text, the convert’s description of it—“Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” That is Philip’s description of it—“We have found Jesus.” It was a true description, but it was not all the truth, so, in the second place, we will notice the Holy Spirit’s description of it—“The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip.” Philip’s account of the incident is that he found Christ, but the Holy Spirit’s record of it is that Christ found Philip. They are both true, however, although the latter is the fuller. We will talk a little about both descriptions of Philip’s conversion.

1. First then, THE CONVERT’S DESCRIPTION OF HIS COMING TO CHRIST is given in these words, “We have found...Jesus,” and what he says is perfectly true.

If any of you is saved, it will be by finding Christ—by your personally making a discovery of Him, as that man did who found the treasure that was hid in the field. There must be a search for Christ, but if there is a search for Him, we may be certain of this one thing—there will first be a consciousness of needing Him.

Philip had sought Christ, or else he would never have said that he had found Him, but, before that, Philip knew that there was need of a Messiah. When he looked round about on the world and on the Church, he said to himself, “Oh, that the promised Messiah would come! There is great need of Him. The people need Him, the Church needs Him, the world needs Him.” When Philip looked into his own heart, he said, “Oh, for the coming of the Messiah! I feel that I need Him! I have urgent need of Him.”

Dear Hearer, do you feel that you need a Savior? You never will seek Him until you feel your need of Him. You must recognize that there is sin in you, sin for which you cannot make Atonement, sin that you cannot overcome. You must realize that you need another and a stronger arm than your own, that you need Divine help, that you need One who can be your Brother to sympathize with you, and be patient with you, and yet who can be the Mighty God to conquer all your sin for you! You need a Savior—that is the first thing that will prompt you to search for Him.

Needing a Messiah, Philip read the Scriptures concerning Him. He speaks about Moses and the Prophets and of what they had written concerning the promised Deliverer. O my dear Hearers, if you need to find Christ, you must search the Scriptures, for they testify of Him! Oh, that you did search the Scriptures, more, with the definite objective of finding the Savior! Probably the great majority of unconverted people never read their Bibles at all, or they read only just enough to satisfy their curiosity, or their conscience. Perhaps they read the Bible as a part of literature which cannot be quite ignored, but they do not take down the Holy Book and read it carefully and prayerfully, saying, “Oh, that I might find holiness, here! Oh, that I might find Christ, here!” If they did, it would not be long before they found Jesus. Well does Dr. Watts sing—

*“Laden with guilt and full of fears,  
I fly to You, my Lord,  
And not a glimpse of hope appears  
But in Your written Word!  
The volume of my Father’s Grace  
Does all my griefs assuage,  
Here I behold my Savior’s face  
Almost on every page.”*

He who reads the Bible with the view of finding Christ will not be long before some passage of Scripture will seem to leap up to attract his attention, as though it were set on fire—and then it will speak to him of Jesus, whispering to him of the great Sacrifice on Calvary and speaking to his heart of Divine Love and Mercy. Philip was a searcher after Christ in the place where Christ loves to be—in the pages of Scripture—and you must be the same if you desire to find Jesus!

But then Philip also gave himself to prayer. We are not told so, but we feel sure of it. He asked the Lord to reveal Christ to him, to guide him to where the Christ would be, to let him know the Christ. Oh, if you want to be saved, be much in prayer! I do not mean merely saying prayers—what is the good of that? I do not mean simply saying fine words of your own, merely for the sake of uttering them. Prayer is communing with God! It is asking the Lord for what you really feel that you need. What wagon loads of sham prayers are shot down at God’s door, as if they were so much rubbish thrown away! Let it not be so with your prayers, but speak to the Lord out of your very soul when you come to the Throne of Grace. I cannot give you a better prayer than the one we have been singing—

*“Gracious Lord, incline Your ear,  
My requests vouchsafe to hear!  
Hear my never ceasing cry—  
Give me Christ, or else I die!  
Lord, deny me what You will,  
Only ease me of my guilt.  
Suppliant at Your feet I lie,  
Give me Christ, or else I die!  
You freely save the lost.  
Only in Your Grace I trust:  
With my earnest suit comply—  
Give me Christ, or else I die!  
You have promised to forgive  
All who in Your Son believe—  
Lord, I know You cannot lie  
Give me Christ, or else I die!”*

With the open Bible before you to guide your understanding, kneel down and say, “O God, graciously reveal Christ to me by Your Holy Spirit. Bring me to know Him! Bring me, this day, to find Him as my own Savior!”

It is certain, also, that Philip realized that he might claim the Messiah for himself. One of the things that every man, who would find the Savior must do is to make sure of his right to come and take the Savior. The question that puzzles many is, "May I have the Savior?" My dear Friends, every sinner in the world is permitted to come and trust the Savior, if he wills to do so. "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "But," asks some troubled soul, "will Christ have me?" That is not the question—the question is, "Will you have Christ?" He says, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." It is you who cast out the Savior, not the Savior who casts you out! The bolt to the door is on the inside—it is you who have bolted it and it is you who must undo the bolt and invite the Savior to enter your heart. He is willing enough to come in—wherever there is a soul that wants Him, He comes at once! Therefore, do not raise any quibbling questions about whether a sinner may come to Christ, or may not come! Is he not commanded to come? We are told to preach the Gospel to every creature, and He who gave us our great commission also added, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned."

Philip accepted Christ as the Messiah. Do you ask, "What am I to do that I may find the Savior?" Well, what you have to do is, practically, this—accept Him! If you were sick and the doctor stood before you with the medicine ready prepared, you would not say, "What am I to do with this medicine, Sir? Am I to rub my hand on the outside of the bottle?" You know very well that there are certain directions as to how much is to be taken and how often. What you have to do with the medicine is to take it! "But I cannot make that medicine work for my restoration." Who said you could? All you have to do is to take it. It is just this that you have to do with Christ—take Him, accept Him, receive Him. Remember the 12<sup>th</sup> verse of this chapter out of which our text is taken—"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

That is it, you see, receive Him, believe on His name. "But surely I am to do some good works." Certainly, you will do good works after you have received Christ. But for your soul's salvation, you are to do no good works, but simply to receive Christ. "Oh, but I must lead a holy life!" Yes, and you will lead a holy life after you have received Christ. But in order to the leading of a holy life you must have a new heart—and to get a new heart—you have to receive Christ! He will change you, He will renew you, He will make you a new creature in Himself! What you have to do is to receive Him what I am saying! I fear that I am addressing many who will not believe, though I may put the Truth of God as plainly as it can be preached. You know that you may hold a candle right against a blind man's eyes and yet he will not see, even then. The Holy Spirit must open your eyes to see what is meant by this receiving Christ, or else you will not understand what you are to do. You are not to give anything to Christ—you are to take all from Him! You are not to bring anything to Christ—you are to come to Him just as you are—and He will bring to you everything that you need. Then, when you have accepted Him by the simple act of faith, you will say with Philip, "We have found Jesus!" That is the convert's description and a very good one, too—"We have found Jesus."

II. But now, secondly, what is THE HOLY SPIRIT'S DESCRIPTION? I will read to you the very words again. Here they are—"The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip." Jesus finds Philip before Philip finds Jesus. Philip finds Jesus because Jesus has found Philip.

Now, notice, that this is the previous work. It came before Philip's own finding. Jesus would go forth into Galilee to find Philip. Dear Friends, I remember very well that after I had found the Lord, I did not, at first, fully understand the Doctrines of Grace. I had heard them preached, but I had not comprehended them. I think at the time I would have been very much puzzled with the Doctrine of Election if anybody had spoken to me about it. But I was sitting down, one day, gratefully reflecting on what God had done for me. I knew that my sins were pardoned, I knew that I was accepted in Christ Jesus and I knew that I was renewed in heart—and in one moment the revelation came to me—"All this is the work of God!" The instant I saw that Truth of God, I said to myself, "Yes, that is the fact, and God be glorified for it! But why has this great work been worked in me?"

I knew that there was no merit in me before the Lord had dealt in mercy with my soul, so I said to myself, "This is the effect of Sovereign, Distinguishing Grace." Then I understood in a moment how it is that God begins with us and that it is God's will and God's eternal purpose, which, after all, lie deeper down than our will or our purpose—and God's will and God's eternal purpose must have the Glory! What a revelation it was to me! I saw the Doctrines of Grace immediately and I think that anybody who has been brought to find the Savior and who, prayerfully studies the reasons for his salvation, can see the same Truths of God that the Lord revealed to me.

Because, first of all, you began to be thoughtful, did you not? Who made you thoughtful? You would never have found the Savior if you had not become thoughtful instead of careless and indifferent. Who made you think of Divine things? What influence was it which worked upon you and caused you to feel that you must think about eternity, and Heaven, and Hell? Surely it was God the Holy Spirit going forth, in the name of Jesus Christ, and dealing with you in mercy!

Then you had a sense of your need and of your sinfulness. There was a time when you had no such sense. Who gave it to you? Where do you think that repentance, that sorrow for sin, that desire after Christ came from? Did all that grow in your own fallen human nature? Ah, believe me, that dunghill never brought forth such fair flowers as these! No, it was Christ who sowed the good Seed in your soul—it was He who made you feel your need of Him!

Next, when you read the Bible, you understood it. You perceived that Jesus was the only Savior of sinners. You saw His fitness to meet your case and you understood the plan of salvation. Who made you understand it? I know that it is plain enough for a child to comprehend, but no one ever understands spiritual things except by the operation of the Spirit of God! It was the Holy Spirit who gave you the spiritual power by which you were able to grasp the simple Truth concerning the way of salvation.

Then you began to pray. I have already spoken of that matter. But who taught you to pray? You had not been accustomed to real prayer—you had often had great mouthfuls of words—that was all. But now you began to cry, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" Oh, the groaning of your spirit and the anguish of your heart as you cried to God! Who gave you that anguish? Who broke you all to pieces and made every broken bone cry out for mercy? Who, indeed, but Christ who worked mightily in your soul by the power of the Holy Spirit?

And when you yielded yourself up to Christ, when you believed in Jesus and found salvation, where did that faith come from? Is it not always the work of the Spirit of God? Is not faith the gift of God and do you not confess that it is so in your case? Once, when I was a little child, I thought I saw a needle moving across the table and I would have been wondering who made the needle march as it did, but I was old enough to understand that somebody was moving a magnet underneath the table and the needle was following the magnet which I could not see. Thus the Lord, with His mighty magnet of Grace, is often at work upon the hearts of men, and we think that their desire after God and their faith in Christ are of themselves. In a sense, the desire and the faith are their own, but there is a Divine Force that is at work upon them, producing these results! It is Jesus finding Philip, though Philip does not know it. Philip thinks that he is finding Jesus, but behind the veil it is Jesus finding Philip! This was the previous work.

And, dear Friends, this was very delightful work for the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice how it is put—"The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip." O my blessed Lord, how He will go forth to find a soul! A journey is never too long for Him and He never wastes a day. "The day following Jesus would go forth, and He found Philip." Oh, may my Lord delight to come forth and find some of you! You are, tonight, in a place where He has found a good many. I pray that He may find some of you. Perhaps you do not know how it was that you came here. You did not mean to come out, tonight, but here you are in this crowd, in the thick of this great throng. My Lord has found many a precious jewel here—to itself it seemed nothing but a poor pebble, but to Him it was a diamond of the first water! O my Master, find some more of Your jewels tonight! Lord Jesus, come and find Philip, and find Mary, and then let Philip and Mary declare that they have found You!

When our dear Master goes forth to find a soul, it is very effectual work. He said to Philip, "Follow Me," and Philip at once followed Him. Christ did not need to preach a long sermon. His discourse contained only two words, "Follow Me." I will gladly end my sermon here if my Master will preach to some of you His two-worded sermon, "Follow Me," "Follow Me," "Follow Me!" "Come, poor Soul, you do not know the way! 'Follow Me.' You need someone to go before you, to be your leader, 'Follow Me.' You need someone to be your shelter, your companion, your all, 'Follow Me.'" That is what you have to do, good woman. You have been worrying about what you have heard from different preachers. Christ says to you, "Follow Me." That is what you have to do, young man! You have been reading those modern thought books till you do not know whether you are on your head or on your heels. Burn them! Jesus says, "Follow Me." I know that some of you have been distracted with all sorts of silly talk—let that go to the dogs. Jesus says, "Follow Me." The crucified Savior says, "Follow Me." Take Him for your Atonement! The risen Savior says, "Follow Me." Take Him for your life! The Savior on the Throne of God says, "Follow Me." Take Him for your joy! The Savior coming in Glory hereafter says, "Follow Me." Take Him to be your hope! "Follow Me." "Follow Me"—that is the text for tonight—and that is the sermon, too! Jesus said to Philip, "Follow Me," and Philip followed Him, directly. And he not only followed Christ, but he immediately began to try to get others to follow Him!

Please notice, also, that Philip was found by Christ in a very different way from the other disciples. Two of them had been found through the teaching of John the Baptist, but Philip had apparently had no teaching. Another of the little company had been found through the private call of his brother. Philip may not have had any relative or friend to speak to him, but the Savior just said to him, "Follow Me," and he followed Him! Dear Friends, do not begin comparing your conversion with somebody else's. If the Lord Jesus Christ calls you and says to you, "Follow Me," and you follow Him, if there never was another soul converted in exactly the same way, it does not matter at all! If you have come to Him, if you have trusted in Him, you are saved.

The pith of all that I have to say is this. Do not get to worrying yourselves, as some of you do, about God's eternal purpose and about the secret working of the Holy Spirit—and about how this can be consistent with your following Christ when He bids you. They are perfectly consistent! Some persons have asked me, at times, to reconcile these two things, and I have said to them, "Very well, tell me the difficulties, and I will reconcile them." It would be quite as easy to state them as to meet them, for, in fact, there are none! "Oh, but," says one, "you tell me to believe in Christ and yet you constantly preach that faith is the work of the Spirit of God!" I know that I do. "You say that God has a chosen people." Yes, I do. "And yet you say that men are to choose Christ?" I do. "Well, how do you reconcile those two things?" Show me that there is any difficulty about the two things and then I will reconcile them. You imagine the difficulty, for there is none in reality! There does not exist any in practical life!

I believe that God has predestinated whether I am going down to the Lord's Supper at the close of this service, but I shall go down as well as my legs can carry me. "Oh," you say, "you make it out to be a matter of your own free will?" Yes, I do. "And yet you believe it to be God's eternal purpose?" Yes, I do. "Well, then, reconcile the two things." Again I say that there is no difficulty in the case! There is nothing to be reconciled, for both statements are true! You might as well ask me to reconcile the land and the water, or to reconcile the dog-star, Sirius, and a farthing rushlight. There is no quarrel between them and I have no time to waste on needless argument. Come to Christ! And if you do, it will be because the Holy Spirit draws you! If you find the Savior, it will be because the Savior first found you! Perhaps, in Heaven, you may see some difficulties and get them explained. Down here you need not see them and you need not ask to have them explained. Salvation is all of God's Grace, from first to last—yet is it true that the Grace of God leads men to do what Moses did, according to our subject this morning [See Sermon #2030, Volume 34—Moses—His Faith and Decision—Read/download entire sermon at . ] to make a choice and to choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. God grant that you may make an equally wise choice!

I have done when I have said this one thing more. Philip, Peter and Andrew were all of Bethsaida—"Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter." These three good men, these three Apostles, were all of Bethsaida. That ought to be some comfort to many of you, my

dear Hearers, because there are numbers of you who are here, tonight, who are of Bethsaida. Sitting all round me, I see people who, I believe, are of Bethsaida. "Oh," you say, "we were never there in all our lives!" Listen. Bethsaida was one of the places in which Christ had done many of His mighty works and you remember that when the people repented not, Jesus uttered over them that sad lamentation, "Woe unto you, Chorazin! Woe unto you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, which are exalted unto Heaven, shall be brought down to Hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in you, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment, than for you."

Now, there are some of you here who have heard the Gospel for many years and have seen the power of the Grace of God in your families—and it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, and for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgement, than it will be for you, inasmuch as you have rejected the Savior! But, as there were these three men—Philip and Peter and Andrew who were of Bethsaida—and I should think that the home of James and John was not very far off from the same place—why should you not come to Christ? Why should you not become members of His Church and, if it is the Lord's will, preachers of His Word? God grant that it may be so!

Oh, how I long in my soul for the salvation of every one of you! Many of you who have come here, tonight, are strangers to me. I trust that you will not be strangers to my Master! Tonight, I pray you, here in the very heat of midsummer, before the harvest shall be past and the summer shall be ended, "Seek you the Lord while He may be found! Call you upon Him while He is near! Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Receive Christ! Trust in Him! God grant that you may do so, for Jesus' sake! Amen.