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"Come and See"
John 1:43-51

Opening

- In her book, "A Man Called Peter", Catherine Marshall tells how her late preacher-husband came to find his calling to become a minister.
- Years earlier, young Peter decided to take a shortcut across the Scottish moors of his hometown.
 - o He knew there was a deep deserted quarry in that area, but he was confident that he could avoid it.
 - o As he was walking along, suddenly he heard a voice- someone called, "Peter!"
 - o There was an urgency in the voice.
 - Marshall stopped and responded "Yes who is it? What do you want?"
 - But there was no answer.
 - o He walked a few more steps and then heard the voice calling MORE urgently, "Peter!"
 - Marshall paused in his tracks again.
 - o He started again, then stumbled and fell to his knees.
 - o He put his hand out in front to steady himself.
 - And he found nothing in front of him.
 - o He was kneeling at the very edge of an abandoned stone quarry.
 - One more step would have been his last.
 - o The voice he heard that night confirmed for Peter Marshall- that he was being called by God for a special purpose.
- It was a bit like that for the prophet Samuel.
 - o As a young boy, he heard God's voice.
 - o He didn't recognize it as God's voice, at first.
 - o But he kept listening and eventually, he got it.
 - And his response was simple "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Discerning God's call can be a struggle

- And wouldn't it be great if it were always that simple?
 - Wouldn't it be wonderful if God would simply speak to each one of us directly and just tell us what our calling is?
 - Why is it that for some, discovering God's calling is so easy, while for others it can be so difficult?
 - For some it may be as easy as it was for Philip.
 - Jesus walks up to him and says follow me and the next thing we know, he is out recruiting Nathanael, saying "We have found him about whom Moses and the prophets wrote"
 - But for others, it's more like it was for Nathanael.
 - You receive the SAME call.
 - Maybe you didn't hear a voice, but you felt a prompting.
 - And the reaction is one of skepticism, or doubt or reluctance.
 - And you ask yourself "can anything good come from this?"

All are called

- Still, just as it is for Samuel, Philip and Nathanael, we are called- each of us.
 - We may be skeptical.
 - We may have our doubts and weaknesses.
 - We may think there is nothing extraordinary about us.
 - But just like Samuel, Philip and Nathanael, God invites us to "Come and See."
 - We have an invitation to "come and see" just where we fit into God's master plan.
 - We may not hear a loud voice and that might cause us hesitation.
 - Whether we hear God's voice or not and whether we choose to follow or not, it does not change the fact that each of us has a calling.
- This morning's text from John 1 speaks to that.
 - Jesus has been out recruiting disciples.
 - Philip and Nathanael are invited to Come and See and each in their own way, respond- fulfilling God's plan for their lives.
 - There doesn't seem to be anything special about them.

- They seem rather ordinary.
- In fact, throughout the New Testament, there is little mention of them.
- And it's the same for each of us.
 - Whether we are old or young, we have a part in God's plan.
 - Philip and Nathanael were grown men when they received their call through Jesus.
 - Samuel was just a boy when he heard God's voice.
 - And perhaps that tells us something about where young people fit into God's master plan.
 - Early in their lives, young people are expected to make decisions about what they will do with their life.
 - As children we are asked, "what do you want to do when you grow up"
 - And as soon as they enter high school, young people are expected to know what they will do after graduation.
 - Will they get a job? Where will they go to college? What will they study?
 - They are expected to make important decisions that set their life's direction.
 - That is good- it's always good to plan your life and then live your plan.
 - And it would be well for God to have input into that planning process.

Promises of amazing things

- The great news here is that when we are won over to Jesus, we receive a promise that we will see amazing and wonderful things.
 - God said to Samuel "I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone tingle."
 - And Jesus said to Nathanael "I tell you, you are going to see heaven opened and the angels of God."
 - That's pretty wonderful stuff, don't you think?
- Now, we may look at our situation today and wonder just what is so amazing.
 - Have we seen the heavens open and angels of God anywhere?
 - But I'd have to ask, are we really looking for that? Are we expecting that?
- Eyes of faith see wondrous things happen- all the time.

- But first, you have to be willing to hear and accept the call.
- **Arthur-** Years ago, I received a call from the mother of a young man in my youth group.
 - He was facing some big challenges.
 - His illness had gotten and he had gotten into some trouble and been locked away in a facility.
 - She wanted to know if I'd go visit him.
 - I have to admit that I was anxious about that
 - But I remembered the words of Mother Theresa who said "Faith is a measure of what you will do, when you don't feel like doing it."
 - So, I agreed to the visit.
 - It was near Easter and over my lunch break I went and purchased an Easter basket and an assortment of snacks and candies to fill it.
 - I figured he'd enjoy the snacks and I wanted to remind this young man that Easter is about new beginnings and that new beginnings are possible with God.
 - I arrived at the facility and as I passed through door after door, the loud "ka-thunk" of the locks made me keenly aware of just how deep my friend was, inside this place.
 - I arrived to the visitation room, found him and I handed him the basket.
 - He put the basket down, came and embraced me and began to sob.
 - Now, this guy was a weight-lifter.
 - He was huge and he must have weighed 300 lbs.
 - His arms were as thick as tree stumps and he could have crushed me had he wanted to.
 - Yet inside this huge, manly frame was little boy who just cried.
 - In those tears, I felt his pain and his fears.
 - And in those tears, I felt his gratitude.
 - It meant the world to him, knowing that there were people outside of those walls who had remembered him.
 - That my friends, is the sort of wondrous experience God promises when you accept the invitation to "Come and See"

- In that moment, heaven was opened and Angels abounded.
- And another wonderous thing that God showed me was a glimpse of what it's like for people in those situations.
 - And it helped me develop a heart for people such as that.
 - And I'm not so nervous to visit places like that now.
- I am confident that God has a special job like that for you, right where you are, right now.
 - Be on the lookout for it, because you don't want to miss it.
- Eyes of faith see wondrous things happen all the time.
 - That's a promise from God.

How do you know?

- But just how does one know when God is calling?
 - The answer to that can elusive.
 - And I don't have the full answer, but I'll answer it with another question
 - Are you listening?
 - Do you make time each day, for those quiet moments, when it's just you and God?
 - Are you allowing adequate time, for you to listen for what God might be telling you?
 - **STAR-WORD:** Let me ask you, what "star-word" did you receive here at church this week?
 - Are you using that word- are you reflecting on it?
 - Did God perhaps "intend" for you to receive that word?
 - Could God be trying to tell you something?
 - If God is speaking, are you listening?
 - I don't mind sharing that my word is "Servanthood" and I'll admit that when I first received it I was wishing that Sandra hadn't made the rule that we don't get to pick our word, because I would have picked a different one!
 - I even toyed with the idea of giving that star-word to my wife and getting a different one, but that wouldn't be within the rules either.
 - But it's interesting, as I've reflected on that word this past week, it has been tremendously insightful.

- God has spoken to me about the joy of being a servant.
- And I have been reminded that anytime I'm having a bad day, I need only to go make a few pastoral visits to turn that around.
 - Because in there is great joy. <PAUSE>
- What might God be saying to you through your star-word?
 - Is there perhaps a "Come and See" message in there somewhere?

Wrap it up

- Nathanael had been a skeptic.
 - When first told of Jesus, he asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"
 - But Philip invited him to come and see, and Nathanael came.
 - And, when Nathanael met Jesus, he realized that this was the ONE.
 - And Jesus blessed him for his willingness to see.
- Jesus wants to bless us too.
 - He asks only that we come and see.
 - That we give him an honest chance.
 - That we step out in courageous faith.
- If we will do that, it's a promise that we will see Heaven opened, Angels abounding and many other wonderful things!
- All you have to do is "come and see."
- Amen!

Now may God the father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit be ascribed all might, power dominion and glory- today and forever. Amen