

The Episcopal Church in Parker County

Aledo, Texas

Sermon for January 18, 2015 ~ Epiphany 2B

The Reverend Ronald D. Pogue

[John 1:43-51](#)

When Jesus began his public ministry, the first thing he did was to form a community. Those disciples, walking with Jesus for two or three years, were formed and shaped to continue his mission after his death and resurrection. The calling of the disciples marks the beginning of that community of followers of Jesus we refer to as “The Church.” The Church was formed by Jesus Christ and continues to be empowered today as the delivery system for his message. The Church doesn’t have a message; the Message has a Church!

The experience of those first disciples set the pattern for those who would come after them. They did not volunteer for the mission. They were called. There is an important difference.

Take Nathaniel, for example. (Jn. 1:43-51) He was approached by Philip, who had already met Jesus and answered his call. Philip said to Nathaniel, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.” Nathaniel’s response is priceless. “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip was not at all discouraged by Nathaniel’s skepticism. “Come and see,” he said.

Nathaniel went and Nathaniel saw. His encounter with Jesus was profound. Jesus knew his name and seemed to understand him in a way that surprised Nathaniel. Nathaniel blurted out, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Whatever epiphany occurred in that initial encounter convinced Nathaniel that Jesus was for real and his own inner response compelled him to go with Jesus.

Those who have experienced a similar encounter with Jesus know that we did not initiate that relationship. We did not volunteer to love him and serve him. We found ourselves in a place where the invitation was so generous and personal and the presence so powerful that we could not resist. We knew in an instant that we would follow him anywhere and learn from him how to live life to the fullest. He would be the one to open heaven!

On occasion, we’ve had an opportunity to introduce others to him or to invite them to “Come and see.” More often than not, those invitations have been met with a certain amount of skepticism or resistance. But those who have accepted the invitation and met the Savior in Word and Sacrament, in an authentic community of his followers, in the signs and wonders his Church has been able to perform in his Name, often find themselves in the same place as Nathaniel.

In this season of Epiphany, as we read of those early encounters with Jesus, we have opportunities to reacquaint ourselves with the Lover of our Souls. As he calls us by name and invites us again to follow him, we are strangely compelled to go with him beyond the limits we have imposed upon ourselves. We find ourselves wanting to introduce others to him. They will come with us because they see in us an unmistakably authentic devotion. Does it make sense? Not always. As Blaise Pascal said, “The heart has reasons which reason cannot know.” But we all know what it is to love

someone and believe in someone so intensely that we will do whatever is necessary to sustain and enrich that relationship.

So it is with the followers of Jesus.