

Notes for Next Sunday

Second Sunday after Epiphany

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (1 Samuel 3:1-10). God's call comes through the Word. Samuel and the other prophets received a special call into the office directly from God in person (1 Sam 3:10). The call to all God's people also comes through the Word, but the gospel is mediated to them through the called prophets, apostles, pastors, and teachers (2 Thess 2:14). All those called respond by calling on God. The called apostle tells those whom God has called through him that they are "called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:2).

Epistle (1 Corinthians 6:12-20). Because Christ has united us with Him and with one another, immorality has no place among us. Freedom to live in Christ excludes living in opposition to Him. When we fall into sin, we can repent of the disunity we have brought. Jesus Christ will restore and renew us as His very own.

Gospel (John 1:43-51). These verses immediately follow the reading (Jn 1:29-42) in which the Baptist identifies Jesus as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29) and the one upon whom the Spirit of God descended and remained in his Baptism (Jn 1:33) and the Son of God (Jn 1:34). This preceding text also mentions Andrew and Peter as the first two "followers" of Jesus. They recognize that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ. This then leads into the Gospel for this day, wherein Philip "follows" Jesus, and then speaks of this one to Nathanael, who will also become a follower of the Son of God. When Jesus calls the first disciples, He reveals Himself to be the Messiah—the Son of God and Son of Man—the way to heaven. Today, people may still question Jesus' invitation to follow Him. Yet, Jesus overcomes unbelief through the Gospel testimony and graciously opens the way to heaven through His Word.

For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.

OLD TESTAMENT – 1 Samuel 3:1-10

The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions. ²One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." ⁵And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. ⁶Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." ⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. ¹⁰The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

3:1 boy Samuel. Samuel is now no longer a little child. The Jewish historian Josephus places his age at 12 years; he may have been older. (CSB)

3:1 visions. Implies that prophets typically received God's Word through visions. Although God's Word was still active in sustaining creation and was continually handed on in the Law and in sacrificial worship,

God did not frequently proclaim His Word through inspired prophets. His Word was not widely received in faith by the people. (TLSB)

3:3 temple. May mean Samuel was in the tabernacle courtyard, not within the tabernacle itself. The wording suggests that Samuel was ready for priestly service and that his character was fit to hear God's voice. (TLSB)

3:5 Eli said. Eli's failure to recognize at once that the Lord had called Samuel may be indicative of his own unfamiliarity with the Lord. (CSB)

3:7 did not yet know the LORD. Eli's sons did not "know" the Lord (2:12) because of their refusal to submit to God. Samuel does not yet "know" God because of his lack of experience with God's direct revelation. Samuel will "know" God through his submissive trust in God's direct revelation. (TLSB)

3:10 speak for your servant is listening. Isn't it interesting that when the Lord looks for someone to speak for him, the very first qualification is that the person be willing to listen when the God speaks. The secret of Samuel's success as a prophet was not that he excelled in speaking but in listening. (PBC)

EPISTLE – 1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

¹²“Everything is permissible for me”—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³“Food for the stomach and the stomach for food”—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. ¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

6:12 Everything is permissible for me. Paul is probably quoting some in the Corinthian congregation who boasted that they had a right to do anything they pleased. The apostle counters by observing that such “freedom” of action may not benefit the Christian. (CSB)

6:12 not all ... helpful. Freedom, however, includes the ability to make unproductive and destructive choices. (TLSB)

6:13 Food for the stomach and the stomach for food. Paul quotes some Corinthians again who were claiming that as the physical acts of eating and digesting food have no bearing on one's inner spiritual life, so the physical act of promiscuous sexual activity does not affect one's spiritual life. (CSB)

6:13 The body ... for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. The body is important to the Lord, who made it. It is a temple dedicated to God (v 19). (TLSB)

6:14 God raised the Lord ... us also. As an illustration of God's high regard for the body, Paul cites the resurrection of Christ's body and, eventually, the believer's body. A body destined for resurrection should not be used for immorality. (CSB)

6:18 flee from sexual immorality. Christians must run away from sexual temptations, as Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife (Gen 39:12). Christians should not dally with temptation, but “flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace” (2 Tim 2:22; cf. 1 Cor 10:8; 1 Tim 6:11). (CC)

6:18 he who sins sexually sins against his own body. The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (v. 19); thus to use it in prostitution disgraces God's temple. Furthermore, the prostitutes of Corinth were dedicated to the service of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and sex. (CSB)

6:19 your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Christian should value his body as a sacred place where God dwells and should realize that by the Spirit's presence and power he can be helped against such sins as sexual immorality (Ro 8:9). (CSB)

GOSPEL – John 1:43-51

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. "Come and see," said Philip. ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." 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 Then 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 shall see greater things than that." ⁵¹ He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

1:43 follow me. Philip is the first one, so far as we know, to whom Jesus said "Be following me." Very likely all five of these were disciples of the Baptist.

1:44 Bethsaida. All five were from Bethsaida which was known as the "house of fish."

1:45 Philip found. Philip, in turn, driven by the joy of his new discovery, of the faith of his heart, feels urged to tell his friend Nathanael (or Bartholomew) of his happiness.

1:45 Nathanael. In Hebrew this name means "gift of God." Nathanael's guilelessness is a gift of God, so is his confession later. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 1)

1:46 come and see. Philip did not argue with Nathanael. He merely invited the skeptical Nathanael, as Jesus had invited Andrew and John, to come and see. There is no other way. We can't argue or force someone into faith in Jesus. We can only show Jesus as He has revealed Himself in His Word and the leave the rest to the Holy Spirit. We today can do no more and must do no less than Philip. We can invite all who will listen: "Come and see." (PBC)

1:48 fig tree. Its shade was a favorite place for study and prayer in hot weather. (CSB)

1:50 You shall see greater things. Even though a believer is without deceit, acknowledges the God-man as the Son of God and King of Israel, Jesus is always promising him that he will see greater things. Just think of our many sins, doubts and weaknesses! Even the most brilliant theologian must listen to this promise from Jesus. The longer he lives the more he must realize his own selfishness and unworthiness but also the wonders of the person, Word and work of Jesus.

1:51 heaven open. Heaven opened in Jacob's dream at Bethel and also at Jesus' Baptism. God has revealed and continues to reveal the way to Himself through Jesus, the Word made flesh. (TLSB)