

Come and See
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John 1:40-51

Opening: Before you make a purchase, book a hotel, or try a new restaurant do you go online and read the ratings and reviews? Do you ever post a rating or review? A Pew Research study from several years ago tells us “82% of U.S. adults say they at least sometimes read online customer ratings or reviews before purchasing items for the first time, including 40% who say they always or almost always do so.” “In addition to reading online reviews, many Americans watch online videos to help them with purchasing decisions: 55% of U.S. adults say they have watched product review videos online (68% of those under 50.)”ⁱ What would motivate someone to leave a rating, a review, or do a video about a product or service?

When we become excited about something, our tendency is to share that news. *“Come and see this beautiful rainbow; this sunset; this mama deer in the yard with her baby!”* We’re even more enthusiastic when we’ve discovered something that had a positive impact on our lives. That’s why we recommend hairdressers, mechanics, doctors or dentists.

There is a biblical word for that: **euaggēlizō**, *yoo-ang-ghel-id’-zo*; [which means] to *announce good news* (“evangelize”) to bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (the gospel).ⁱⁱ

It has been said that, “Evangelism is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.”ⁱⁱⁱ I’ve always liked that quote! If you found life-giving food and drink in a wasteland of hunger and thirst you would likely tell others.

In the first chapter of John’s gospel we see how this truth played out as Jesus began his earthly ministry and called his first disciples. It all started when a Baptist named John said, “Look! This is the one we’ve been waiting for.” Then Jesus Himself said to of John’s followers, “come and you will see.” From that point on those who have “tasted and seen” that the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8) have been saying to others, “come and see how Jesus has changed my life.”

The point of this text is a question for us: In a world of ratings, reviews, and recommendations, are those of us who have followed Christ saying to others “come and see” or are we keeping the “good news” to ourselves?

John 1:35–51 (ESV) — 35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, **36** and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” **37** The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. **38** Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you

seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” **39** He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. **40** One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. **41** He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). **42** He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter). **43** The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” **44** Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. **45** Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” **46** Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” **47** Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” **48** Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” **49** Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” **50** Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” **51** And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

- This story began with a preacher (John the Baptist) and two of his faithful followers. If they were following John and had perhaps been baptized “with water” they were sensitive to their need for forgiveness of sin.
- “*Rabbi, where are you staying?*” seems like an odd question. Perhaps it was their awkward way of saying, “*Can we hang out with you?*”
- Scripture indicates that Andrew was a natural “sharer” of good news.
- Wiersbe writes: “*Whenever you find Andrew in John’s Gospel, he is bringing somebody to Jesus: his brother, the lad with the loaves and fishes (John 6:8), and the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus (John 12:20–21). No sermons from Andrew are recorded, but he certainly preached great sermons by his actions as a personal soul winner!*”^{iv}
- Verse 41 says, Andrew “first found his own brother.”
- What is the message for us in those six words?
- “*We have found the Messiah.*” The conversation was no doubt longer, but as our lesson writer says, “*these five words...were enough.*”
- Verse 42: “He brought him (Simon) to Jesus.” What does that tell us?
- Jesus said, “Your name today is Simon, but one day you shall be called Peter” which means rock.” Let me paraphrase: “*This is who you are today but I’m going to change both your name and the trajectory of your life.*”
- **John 1:12 (KJV 1900)** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
- Wiersbe again: “*It took a great deal of work for Jesus to transform weak Simon into a rock, but He did it! “Thou art ... thou shalt be” is a great*

encouragement to all who trust Christ. Truly, He gives us the “power to become” (John 1:12).^v

- Another old quote: “God loves us the way we are, but too much to leave us that way.”^{vi} If we’ve truly followed Christ, the change will be evident!
- In the case of Philip, Jesus sought Him personally saying, “Follow me.”
- Some come to Christ through a sermon, some through the witness of a friend or family member, but all are ultimately drawn by the Spirit of Christ.
- Like Andrew, Philip took the good news to his friend Nathanael.
- Nathanael’s response can make us smile: “*Can anything good come from Nazareth?*” Nathanael was a natural-born skeptic. This injects some reality into this narrative about evangelism. Not everyone follows immediately.
- What stereotypes about Christ prevent people from trusting Him today? How would you respond to a friend who is skeptical about trusting Christ?
- Verse 46: How did Philip respond to Nathanael’s skepticism? What did Philip NOT do? What DID he say? What is the lesson about witnessing?
- An important truth: No one was ever won to Christ at the end of an argument. We just have to say “come and see.” In other words, share what Jesus has done for us, our salvation story, and point them to Him.
- Jesus wasn’t offended by Nathanael’s skepticism or Nazareth comment.
- Listen to the Message paraphrase: **John 1:47–51 (The Message) — 47** When Jesus saw him coming he said, “There’s a real Israelite, not a false bone in his body.” **48** Nathanael said, “Where did you get that idea? You don’t know me.” Jesus answered, “One day, long before Philip called you here, I saw you under the fig tree.”
- It reminds us of the Samaritan woman at the well in **John 4:29 (ESV) —** “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”
- If people will “come and see” Jesus, He will reveal Himself as God’s Son.
- **49** Nathanael exclaimed, “Rabbi! You are the Son of God, the King of Israel!” **50** Jesus said, “You’ve become a believer simply because I say I saw you one day sitting under the fig tree? You haven’t seen anything yet! **51** Before this is over you’re going to see heaven open and God’s angels descending to the Son of Man and ascending again.”
- In Genesis 28 Jacob dreamed about a ladder between Heaven and earth.
- Jesus explained that He (the Son of Man – both God and man) is now the “ladder” or the link between Heaven and earth. **John 14:6 (ESV) — 6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- If sharing the good news of the gospel were an online portal, what rating would we give Jesus? What kind of review would we leave? Would we take out our phones and record a video review of God’s Son and what He has done for us?
- Sharing the gospel doesn’t require a degree in theology. We just have to tell our story of what Christ has done for us. In other words, we must invite

them to “come and see” the difference He’s made in us. Sharing that difference begins by living in a way that they can see His love through us.

- Can sharing our faith be intimidating? Sure. Are some people skeptical? Yes. Will some be offended or reject Him and us. Yes, some will.
- In this text we see that when Jesus has prepared their heart through the Holy Spirit, we simply need to say, “come and see” and He will do the rest.
- This week let’s ask God to help us “beggars” to tell other beggars where we found bread – the “bread of life.”

ⁱ <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2016/12/19/online-reviews/>

ⁱⁱ Strong, J. (2009). *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament*

ⁱⁱ Strong, J. (2009). *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Vol. 1, p. 33). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://quotefancy.com/quote/2862846/R-C-Sproul-Evangelism-is-just-one-beggar-telling-another-beggar-where-to-find-bread>

^{iv} Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 288). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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^{vi} <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/645762-god-loves-us-the-way-we-are-but-too-much>