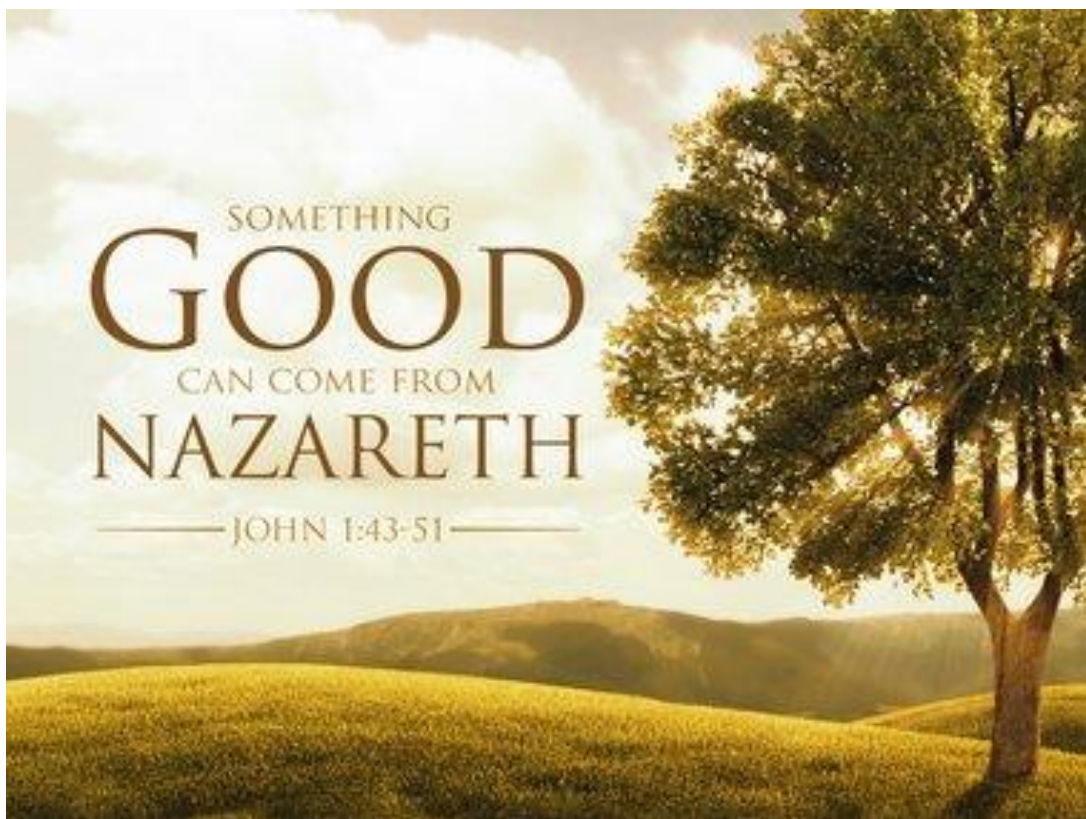


Minster Bethel Congregational Church (MBCC)

30/05/2021 -- Bartholomew/Nathanael - Disciples in Question 6

Bartholomew also known as Nathanael



Today is "Church & Chat"

A short church reflection with a hymn, reading, (children's activity), prayer, "thought for the week" and then a time to chat. If you need help to join please ask any deacon

All lockdown services can be found at: www.mbccs.co.uk

Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them round your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

Proverbs 3:3

Good morning and welcome to this week's thoughts.

Our first hymn for today is: "Sing Hosanna"

[Give me oil in my lamp - YouTube](#)

1. Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning.
Give me oil in my lamp, I pray.
Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning,
Keep me burning till the break of day.

*Chorus- Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,
Sing hosanna to the King of Kings!
Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,
Sing hosanna to the King!*

2. Give me joy in my heart, keep me singing.
Give me joy in my heart, I pray.
Give me joy in my heart, keep me singing,
Keep me singing till the break of day.

Chorus

3. Give me love in my heart, keep me serving.
Give me love in my heart, I pray.
Give me love in my heart, keep me serving,
Keep me serving till the break of day.

Chorus

4. Give me peace in my heart, keep me resting.
Give me peace in my heart, I pray.
Give me peace in my heart, keep me resting,
Keep me resting till the break of day.

Chorus

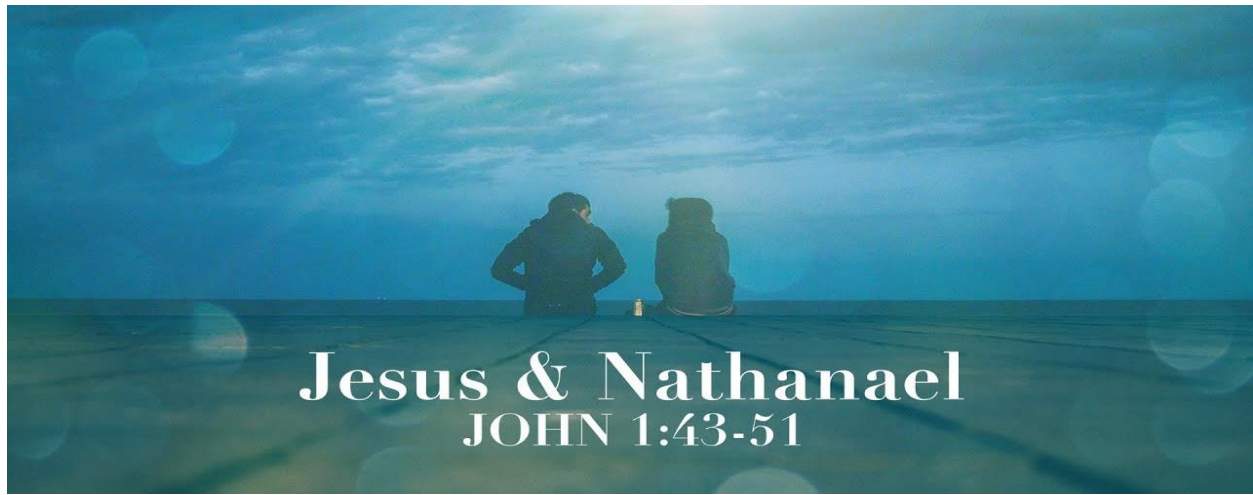
5. Give me faith in my heart, keep me praying.
Give me faith in my heart, I pray.
Give me faith in my heart, keep me praying,
Keep me praying till the break of day.

Chorus



The reading today is John 1:43-51

[John 1:43-51 NIVUK - Jesus calls Philip and Nathanael - The - Bible Gateway](#)



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 truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.'

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^[a] because I told you I saw you under the fig-tree. You will see greater things than that.' ⁵¹ He then added, 'Very truly I tell you,^[b] you^[c] will see "heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on"^[d] the Son of Man.'

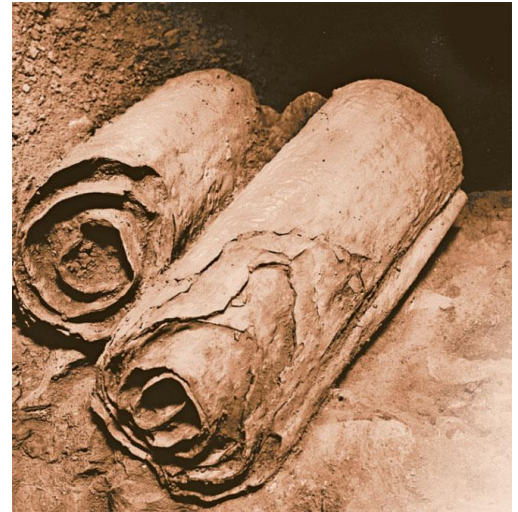
Great things can often be found in the strangest places.

Last time we met at “Church and Chat” we talked about how/what we may learn about the disciples that are less well known. So today we are thinking about Bartholomew also known as Nathanael.

Nathanael is probably best remembered for one line: ‘Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?’

Have heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls. They are a large collection of manuscripts, many of them being copies of Old Testament books, which date back to the first century. Before that time the earliest Old Testament manuscripts could only be dated back to the 10th century. In Biblical scholarship terms it was a hugely significant find.

Do you know where were they found? Well, in the mid 1930’s a shepherd boy was looking for lost sheep in a valley near the Dead Sea. The valley wall had many caves and the boy was throwing rocks into the caves to scare out any hiding sheep. When he threw a stone into one of the caves he heard a pot smash. On investigation he found hundreds of sealed pots with manuscripts well preserved inside. They became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.



It was a great thing that came from a strange place.

Sometimes people think about Jesus in the same way. A great thing from the strangest of places. Even now we see war in that area. It is not only us that may think that, others including some who ended up becoming Jesus’ disciples had the same thought.

In the reading, Nathanael can’t believe what Philip is saying.

Here comes Philip with the best news he has ever carried, “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”.

Nathanael’s response has never been forgotten. Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?

Why is Nathanael so sceptical? It’s because Nazareth was not considered a very significant place.

Nazareth was a relatively isolated village in the time of Jesus with a population less than two hundred. Even with such a small numbers Nazareth was overpopulated. There was a scarcity of natural resources such as water and fertile soil and it was a place of relative poverty. In such a situation, there tended to be a fair amount of sickness and disease.

That is a physical description. Spiritually it was insignificant as well.

Nazareth is not mentioned at all in the Old Testament.

There is no prophecy linking the Messiah with Galilee, much less with Nazareth. It was not known for great minds or great abilities. Nothing special was ever expected to come from Nazareth, certainly not the Messiah.

So when Nathanael gets up to follow Philip he goes to the meeting without expecting anything too special from this so called "Messiah". You can imagine Nathanael's surprise when he rocks up to see Jesus and Jesus immediately says:-

'Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.' 'How do you know me?' Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, 'I saw you while you were still under the fig-tree before Philip called you.'

How does this man know me? Because He is God. And He can see into our hearts.

Now I don't know about you, but the fact that Jesus can see into my heart is a little bit concerning. Because I know what goes on in this heart.

Jesus sees all that and so much more. He notices the smallest details of our lives.

But watch how Jesus uses that information.

When Nathanael walked up to Jesus, Jesus could have said, "I know you. You are the person who thought nothing good can come out of Nazareth! Well I'm sorry to burst your prejudice bubble but here I am ... God in the flesh. Don't you feel a bit silly?"

Jesus could have said that. But he didn't. Instead Jesus focuses on something completely different. He sees a true Israelite, Nathanael didn't just read the Word of God, he lived it. He was a man who feared God, a man of integrity. His heart gave a singular testimony to God.

What a huge compliment, a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false, especially when it comes directly from the mouth of the Son of God.

But it isn't just a huge compliment, it is also a huge encouragement for all would-be disciples. Because the reality is that many of the Lord's disciples are found in the strangest places.

Jesus doesn't focus on what we were or where we came from. He focuses on what we can become.

The background and the current situation are not the issue here. The issue is what Jesus sees in the heart and the fact that he can see a willingness to trust in His sacrifice.

In the days of Jesus the fig-tree symbolised fruitfulness and spiritual fullness. When Jesus says I saw you under the fig-tree he is pointing to the fact that Nathanael was a man who desired a closer walk with the Lord. Are we "under the fig tree" with our hearts exposed showing all our joys, fears, faults, doubts and questions?

We can become disciples in our strange little place all because something great did come out of Nazareth – Jesus the Son of God.



Our second hymn for today “Since Jesus Came Into My Heart”

[SINCE JESUS CAME INTO MY HEART - YouTube](#)

1. What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought
Since Jesus came into my heart;
I have light in my soul for which long I have sought,
Since Jesus came into my heart.

*Since Jesus came into my heart,
Since Jesus came into my heart;
Floods of joy o'er my soul like the sea billows roll,
Since Jesus came into my heart.*

2. I have ceased from my wand'ring and going astray,
Since Jesus came into my heart;
And my sins which were many are all washed away,
Since Jesus came into my heart.
3. I'm possessed of a hope that is steadfast and sure,
Since Jesus came into my heart;
And no dark clouds of doubt now my pathway obscure,
Since Jesus came into my heart.
4. There's a light in the valley of death now for me,
Since Jesus came into my heart;
And the gates of the City beyond I can see,
Since Jesus came into my heart.
5. I shall go there to dwell in that City I know,
Since Jesus came into my heart;
And I'm happy, so happy as onward I go,
Since Jesus came into my heart.

Today's Pray:

Dear God. We thank You that something great came from that strange place of Nazareth. Help us from our own strange places to have hearts full of joy, peace, hope and faith that we can share right where we are.

Amen.

Bible Hero

Nathanael Bartholomew



Jesus knows me

Nathanael realised Jesus really knew him, how do people know you?

How our world views a child

How our God views a child

How does God see you? Use a bible (or New Testament) to look up what God says about you - match the verses.

1 Corinthians 1:30

A Child in God's family

Ephesians 1:4

Chosen by God

Loved by God

A New Creation

Wise and Restored

A Work of Art

John 1:12

2 Corinthians 5:17

1 Thessalonians 1:4

Ephesians 2:10

Getting to know Jesus changed Nathanael's life. Can you spot 10 differences between the older & younger Nathanael?

little extra

