

Epiphany 2, Year B, RCL
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1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20] Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17 1 Corinthians 6:12-10
John 1:43-51

"*Adeste fidelis*. O Come all Ye Faithful" is a beautiful hymn that we sing or hear at Christmas. We might say that the words are the musical version of Philip's words to Nathanael. When Jesus is approaching, heralded as "the one," the savior of Israel, Nathanael quips "Can anything good come out of Greenville/I mean Nazareth?" Philip replies, "Come and see." It might be a stretch to go from Come and See to O Come All Ye Faithful, but not if we hear some thoughts from the late Frederick Buechner.

"*Adeste fidelis*. That is the only answer I know for people who want to find out whether or not this is true. Come all ye faithful, and all ye who would like to be faithful if only you could, all ye who walk in darkness and hunger for light. Have faith enough, hope enough, despair enough, foolishness enough at least to draw near to see for yourselves."

"This" is the saving power of Jesus. "This" is how close God is to us in every moment. "This" is abundance and salvation.

Come all ye faithful

Eli was a high priest and judge at Shiloh; he ruled there for forty years. We might say that Eli was faithful. Samuel was faithful, as was his mother Hanna. Hanna gave her son Samuel to the Lord, so the child was raised at the Temple by Eli.

Paul was faithful to God and to Jesus Christ in his writings to many people in the ancient world. "you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

Philip sure was faithful – Jesus said "follow me" and he did! Then Philip found Nathanael

And all ye who would like to be faithful if only you could

And Nathanael might fall into the "if only you could" part of all those who would like to be faithful. After being seen, really seen and known by Jesus, Nathanael was faithful, too.

Who else might be faithful if only they could? Me, sometimes, and you? Sometimes we want to follow our faith ... and we stay home. This past year many of us wanted to be faithful but couldn't figure out how to follow Jesus in a completely new way. We wanted to be faithful Those in need might want to be faithful if only they could, but the burdens of their lives are so heavy, faith seems impossible.

[Come] all ye who walk in darkness and hunger for light.

Known any darkness in your life? Of course. In times of turmoil, despair, loss, anger, sickness ... we hunger for light and more light. What are we to do?

Have faith enough

To believe that there is one God who is still creating, who has known and loved you forever, and forever will.

Hope enough

Have hope enough to know that God speaks to all of us, in every place. God spoke to the young boy Samuel in Temple; God spoke to Jacob while Jacob's pillow was a rock; God spoke to Philip and Nathanael through Jesus the Christ. Have hope enough to know that God speaks to you.

Despair enough

Have despair enough to know that we cannot make it through a day without God's help. Have despair enough, like Hanna did, to beg God for what you need; God knows; God listens.

Foolishness enough

Have foolishness enough to imagine that Jesus could be real, that God cares about you, that the testaments show us a path to truth ...

At least to draw near to see for yourselves.

Come and see. Draw near.

That, my friends, is our task as Christians, not to convert people – what? Yes, we do not convert people; God does that. Jesus does that. Our faith-filled job is to invite people “to draw near to see for themselves.” From that near place, it is Jesus who then finds us, who sees us and knows us completely.

Paul encourages the people of Corinth to see themselves not as cheap commodities but as holy people/bodies of God. Jesus sees into Nathanael's skeptical heart and

says “here is a person who does not deceive” people. Jesus pulls Nathanael up, does not put ridicule or embarrass him.

Nathanael is forever changed, and we are too. We are the ones who carry Christ’s light into a dark world.

We are held by the eternal promise of Jesus who said: “You will see greater things than these.” We will. We will see heaven open and angels ascending and descending. Do not be afraid. Live boldly into the calling of Epiphany, sharing the light of Christ with the world. The call of Epiphany is that Jesus is the light of the world and that he came for the whole world. Let Jesus’ light shine brightly into the world.

God is near.

God is speaking.