

**WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, January 12, 2021**  
**Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN**

**“Do You Know Me?”**

**READING: John 1:43-46 – The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.” Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 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.” “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.**

Most every time that I have had the privilege and opportunity to preach at my home church of St. Michael’s in Richville, Michigan, the same thing repeats itself. As I stand at the back of the sanctuary and greet the folks as they are leaving after the service, someone will shake my hand and then say to me, “Kenndst mi?” In our local German dialect that means, “Do you know me?” Of course, in many cases I don’t know them anymore. I’ve been mostly away from that congregation nearing 50 years. People have aged. I may recognize their faces, but I can’t recall their names. Usually I respond, “You look very familiar to me, but help me with your name.” And, of course, when they say their name, I know who they are and who they belong to. They may be Bierleins or Bauers, Hubers or Hechts, Kerns or Webers. I remember them or their parents or their grandparents. I know something about them.

When Philip comes running to his friend Nathaniel with the incredible statement, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law and about whom the prophets also wrote...” Nathaniel’s ears most of perked up like a terrier’s ears when he hears a squirrel bark. He knows Philip is talking about Messiah. He knows the prophecies Philip is talking about. He likely has prayed often for that One to come into the world so that Israel could be redeemed. He knows all about it, but then Philip lays an egg, “...Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nazareth? Nazareth! That can’t be right! No way!

You see, Nathaniel knew the prophecy from Micah 5:2, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” So, he knew that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem, not Nazareth. Not only that, but Nazareth was in Galilee, not Judah. And, it appears that the boys from Bethsaida didn’t have a very good opinion of Nazareth. So Nathaniel’s response is, “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”

When Jesus came into the world at Christmas, who knew it? Who had any idea of his birth’s significance? They didn’t KNOW him? Aside from Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, a handful of shepherds and three wise guys, who had a clue about that baby? And, when he’s growing up in Nazareth, how many of the people who saw him nearly every day had any real inkling as to his identity as the Messiah and true Son of God? They probably knew him to be a devout, honest, compassionate, and Godly carpenter and neighbor. They probably noticed his

intense interest in Torah and his knowledge of the Scriptures. But they didn't KNOW him as you and I now know him. They didn't realize his true identity. They hadn't put the pieces together yet, and many of them, sadly, never would.

Philip's response to Nathaniel's skepticism is an instructive one, "Come and see." We have entered into the Epiphany season, and its whole emphasis is about the revelation of this Jesus of Nazareth as THE Messiah to more and more people. They'll come to KNOW him by his words, by his teachings, by his miracles, and by his ministry. More and more of them will come to believe in him and to trust in his Word. And, still, there are multitudes of people around us who don't yet KNOW Jesus. Oh, they may know *of* him. They may even know the *story* of Jesus. But they don't yet KNOW him as their Lord and Savior. To them we can say as Philip did, "Come and see. Come to church or listen to the online services. Check out our website or listen to the Weekly Devotions. Come and see! This is the One!"

When I preach to the home congregation, they never have to ask, "Who are you?" There's only one of me, and they all know and recognize me. I've been there in worship often enough over the years that they've watched me age, slowly but surely. They KNOW me and who I am and what I do. They have an advantage over me in that way.

There's only one Jesus, and you and I KNOW him. We know he is our Redeemer, our Savior, our Lord. We know he died for our sins, and that he rose again on Easter for our vindication. We know he'll come again to take us home eternally. We know all that, but so many do not. Our calling is to be ready to give an account of our faith when an opportunity arises. To be ready to say, "Come and see!" Amen.

#### PRAYER:

#### ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

- 1) **DRIVE THROUGH COMMUNION:** This Sunday, January 17, at 1:00 and at 2:00 PM. Tune your radio to 87.9. Not a whole worship service, but Greetings, Opening Prayer, Confession and Absolution, then the Communion liturgy, the Distribution, and a Blessing. Shouldn't take long, but if it's been a while since you received the Sacrament, come!
- 2) **A NEW "GRIEF SHARE CLASS":** Pastor Woods will conduct a new "GriefShare Class" for anyone, member or not, who are struggling with grief over the loss of a loved one, recently or not so recent. This class has helped a lot of folks find healthy and effective ways to work through their grief and find peace under God's promises. Tell friends who may benefit, too.
- 3) **VOTERS ASSEMBLY** on Sunday, January 24, immediately following the late service. Lunch provided.