

Second Sunday After the Epiphany  
John 1:43-51  
“An Invasion We Are Happy About”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from our Heavenly Father, and from Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Savior, our King. Amen.

Privacy is a pretty valuable thing isn't it? What would we do without it? Every family has its own time to spend with just itself. Every person needs a least a small portion of each day alone. And, it's simply common sense that, uh, well, we don't invade the privacy of others. Everyone needs their time alone and we respect the time others need alone.

Americans, for sure, can become quite sensitive when it comes to privacy. The result of that being, federal investigative agencies, local civil authorities, schools, private businesses, health institutions, and the like have had to exercise much care not to violate personal privacy and confidentiality.

Since this is the case, it's difficult to think that there could actually be such a thing as a fortunate invasion of the private life. Really, while pretty much everyone is at least somewhat respectful of everyone else's privacy, God, on the other hand, knows no boundary when it comes to privacy. Is that a bad thing? Well, depends.

Perhaps that's why so many want nothing to do with God. He sees everything, hears everything, he's everywhere. Can't get away from Him. And, that thing called the conscience, which everyone has, well, gives you a reminder that, hey, there is a God,...and He has rules.

Really, God is entitled to know everything about our lives. Private or public. What we think, what we feel, what's in our hearts. All that God has full access to. And, rightfully so. It's not because He's bigger and stronger than we are. It's not because He is smarter, older, and better than we are. Well, He is these things, but these are not the reason He gets to invade every private area of our lives.

The reason is because,...we wouldn't exist, nothing would exist, if it hadn't been for Him. He is totally, 100%, responsible for the existence of the universe, the earth, all things on the earth, for life. Sounds to me,...He gets to make the rules, He gets to judge according to those rules. Sooner or later all people on earth have to come to this recognition, that He does

rule the earth and the universe. He could be ignored now, maybe, but when Jesus comes His second time, to His name every knee shall bow.

A fortunate invasion of privacy, that's the situation in our Gospel reading. The Lord broke into the lives of both Philip and Nathanael and entered not only their physical locality but the very recesses of their hearts. That's invasion indeed, but paradoxically, it is a happy invasion of privacy.

It was with firm resolve that Jesus proceeded into Galilee. He had some work to do. Part of that work was to find Philip and confront him with that well-known imperative Jesus liked to use, "follow me." In the relationship between Jesus and Philip, Jesus took the initiative. Jesus found Philip and, as it were, invaded his private life.

This is something that is well for any of us to remember. That it is always God who initiates when it comes to matters of faith. Our sinful flesh and the devil himself, are more than ready to suggest that we are the initiators of our faith, that somehow or another, we found Jesus. It is just the opposite in the kingdom of God,...He finds us.

And, once He enters the heart, then you find the desire in the heart to serve Him. Note here even in our Gospel, that Philip, once Jesus had found Him, then proceeded to find Nathanael and was bold to enter, to invade Nathanael's life with a message of life and salvation.

Is there anywhere in this text or even before when Jesus asked Philip to enter his life? Nope. Is that fair? How did Jesus know Philip would want that? Well, whether that's what Philip wanted or not, that's what Jesus knew was best for Philip!

So, Jesus found Philip. Philip, because of what he knew was written about the Messiah in Scripture trusted, had faith, that this was the one foretold by all the prophets. So excited was he that he went to Nathanael and confessed, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Philip readily recognized Jesus as the one of whom his faith was set on. Nathanael, however, a little coaxing was necessary.

For these two men Holy Scripture, which would be our Old Testament, was not an unknown thing. In fact, Philip didn't say, "We have found..." but he declared, "Him on whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote we have found." This confession assures us they both

knew the prophecies of Jesus and they recognized when Jesus came invading their lives.

Here is what is interesting about how Nathanael reacts to all this. Even though he was skeptical he didn't postpone further investigation of this matter. This can be said because of the first thing Jesus says when he saw Nathanael coming toward him. He says, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" Wow! Jesus knew Nathanael before Nathanael knew who this man was!

"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked Jesus. "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Now, this knowledge of the fig tree incident,...(and how our curiosity would like to know what that was all about) assures us that before we recognize who Jesus is, before we realize He has entered our hearts and our lives, He knows who we are, where we are, and what's going on in our hearts. Does Jesus ask permission to do this, no? He just does it!

This whole event reminds us that Jesus had already invaded the sanctuary of these two men's' hearts, an area we all would recognize as private. "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Jesus knew the contents of Nathanael's heart. Jesus knew the faith Nathanael had in God's promise of the Messiah who was to be Jesus Christ.

Jesus knew all this and did all this even before Philip and Nathanael met him that day.

So, let's review. Jesus knew exactly who these two men were, safe to say, before these two men were even born. Jesus knows exactly what is in their hearts, that faith in the Word of God which promised a Messiah, a Savior. And, without asking permission, Jesus invades their lives and takes possession of their hearts and minds.

The result can be found in each of these men's' confessions. Philip says to Nathanael, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And, Nathanael confesses by responding to Jesus, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Question is again, is this fair that Jesus does things this way? Should He have given Philip and Nathanael a chance to make up their own minds and go out and seek Jesus?

Well, put it this way, the only way for either of them to have had a relationship with Jesus is for Jesus to enter their lives, rather, invade their hearts, their minds, and their hearts. And, to take possession of the same and claim them as His own.

This is not how it happened with just Philip and Nathanael. This is the only way anyone, anyone of us, has a relationship with Jesus Christ. What Jesus does then is even more amazing. Jesus doesn't just invade and take over our hearts. He follows up with teaching us how He does what He does and who He is to us. That is why He has given us, friends, the Holy Scriptures. To tell us and confirm to us what He has already done.

Did Jesus ever ask the world if He could be the Savior of the world? How about His way of doing so, suffering under Pontius Pilate and death on the Cross of Calvary? No, He never asked, He just did it that way. Same question can be asked of God creating all things. Did God ask for our permission to create us? No, He just did it. We weren't not even in existence until He did so.

The Lord acts in our behalf and out of extreme love for us, then He informs us and teaches us what it is that He has done. Apostle Peter once urged his readers in II Peter 3:18- "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." On the day Jesus invaded the life of Nathanael he also informed his new disciple that he would see and learn many more things about the man from Nazareth, called Jesus Christ.

Jesus told Nathanael in verse 50, "You will see greater things than these." "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." Obviously, an imagery drawn from Jacob's vision in Genesis 28, known as Jacob's ladder. And, obviously, communication between heaven and earth is Jesus' point of concern in this whole thing.

Jesus, the Son of Man, is the whole world's key to communication with God. Originally, God intended no break in this communication. But, as we recall from the events in the Garden of Eden, sin entered the world, and completely broke the perfect communication, or relationship between God and man. God could have left it at that, however, He did not. Without ever asking anyone God set forth His plan to save the lost, to reestablish this communication. He promises a Savior, and this promised was fulfilled

in Jesus Christ. All without permission. When the Son, the Word became flesh, and entered this world it truly was an invasion. Quite a paradox, I believe. An invasion into our lives, all the way into what we call extremely private, our hearts, but a wonderful invasion at that.

Yes, any time God's Word falls upon the ears of someone God invades the life of that person. Again, as said earlier, perhaps, that's why so many try so hard to stay clear of God, because God can do this and He does. Yet, just as Jesus, as God invaded the lives of Philip and Nathanael that day, He does so with the best interest ever. Interest in that person's temporal and eternal well-being.

Epiphany, a revealing of the truth. Jesus revealing Himself. Revealing who He already is to the world and to us. A Savior, and King. Revealing the pathway of communication between God and man.

Friends, for those who are scared of God, scared of His knowing all things public and private, and all secrets of the heart. Friends, we may, and we certainly have the tools to help those scared of God. That tool is God's Word.

Even though Jesus knows all things of the heart, even if they are bad things, Jesus still loves the person to whom that heart belongs. He loves that person so much that he suffered and died for that person too. So, that those bad things may never be held against that person. That is the good news we share about the same Lord who invaded our lives the day of our baptisms and every day since.

Privacy is a good thing. We all need that certain part of the day alone from others. Yet, even then Jesus is with us, knowing everything that is going on in our hearts and minds. He is there loving us, caring for us, hearing our prayers, answering them. And, forgiving us our sins every time we ask Him. Such a Lord we have.

In no way, would we want to keep our hearts from Him who knocks at the door. We need never close the door. We have nothing to fear with Jesus owning our private time, our private lives. Jesus possessing our private lives, our hearts and our minds, now that's life, true life, the kind of life that was intended to be, the only kind of life there is. Amen.