**Series: God Bent Down to Lift Us Up**

**Jesus Can Re-write the Next Chapter in Your Story: John 1:35-51**

April 17, 2016

Intro:

* In Mumbai, India, they held a re-naming ceremony for 285 girls who had been given the Hindi name, Nakusa or Nakushi, meaning “unwanted.”

1. Jesus calls us to a life of significance (John 1:35-41)

*Andrew: The intrigued become involved.*

A. Following Jesus requires examining your motives.

* V.38 *“What are you seeking?”*

B. Following Jesus involves drawing closer to Him.

* V.39 *“Come and you will see.”*
* V.43 *“Follow me.”*

C. Following Jesus involves inviting others to Him.

* V.41 *He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah”*
* Whenever you see Andrew in John’s Gospel, he is bringing someone to Jesus. e.g. Peter in John 1:41, a boy with five loaves and two fish in John 6:9, Greeks who wanted to see Jesus in John 12:20-21.

Q. Why do you think Jesus asked Andrew and John what they were seeking? How would you answer that same question if Jesus asked you?

Q. Jesus could have given Andrew an address so he was free to check Jesus out on his own terms. But he invited him to come and see. How might you draw nearer to Jesus and his followers?

Q. Andrew probably never thought of a life beyond fishing. But through Jesus, he was used repeatedly to bring people to Jesus. What would need to change in your life for you to bring people to Jesus?

2. Jesus gives us a new identity (John 1:42)

*Peter: The impetuous become anchored.*

A. Jesus replaces a common name with an extraordinary one.

* Simon was a common name in the 1st c. and it had its origin in Leah’s second son, Simeon.
* Cephas is Aramaic and Peter is Greek. Both words mean rock.

B. Peter’s transformation into a rock was a lengthy process.

* Recognizing his sinfulness:
  + Luke 5:8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”
  + Matthew 26:75 And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.
* Receiving rebuke:
  + Matthew 16:23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”
* Experiencing restoration:
  + John 21:15 Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

C. What Jesus did in Peter’s life, He desires to do in all of us.

Q. Why do you think Jesus gave Peter a new name? How do you think it affected him?

Q. Peter didn’t become a rock overnight. What would someone have to do for the process of transformation to break down in their life?

Q. Do you believe that fundamental change in your life is possible? i.e. Do you believe Jesus can really give you a new name?

3. Jesus sees the best in us (John 1:43-51)

*Nathanael: The prejudiced become enlightened.*

A. Many would have rejected Nathanael for his prejudice.

* John 1:46 Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”
* Nazareth was an obscure traditional town of less than two thousand inhabitants.
* Jesus identifies with the downtrodden but can love the prejudiced.

B. Jesus sees the best in Nathanael and can overlook the worst.

* John 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”
* Nathanael was ‘an Israel in whom there was no Jacob.’

C. Jesus invites Nathanael to see His glory.

* John 1:51 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.”
* Genesis 28:12 And [Jacob] dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!
* As the Son of God (v.49) and the Son of Man (v.51) Jesus is the bridge between heaven and earth.
* Jacob only dreamed of what Nathanael and all of us can see with our eyes.

Q. What are some areas where you are still prone to prejudice? i.e. What causes you to avoid certain people?

Q. Do you believe Jesus sees the best in you and is able to overlook the worst? How difficult do you find it to do that with others in your life? Why is this so important?

**Notes:**