

John 1:43-51

Epiphany 2; January 17, 2021

Google knows all. Since Google started over 20 years ago, it has gradually grown to become a giant information sponge of the internet. Whether you know it or not, Google knows a lot about you. If you use the Internet, you know that don't you? There's nothing creepier than doing a quick Google search for vacuum cleaners, then mysteriously finding a Dyson ad on your Facebook page moments later. That's not happening by chance. Google collects a lot of your personal data to improve your online experience, target ads, and entice you to spend more money. So, if you ever get the feeling you're being watched, you're probably right.

If you think that information is only being gathered as you use the Internet, you would be wrong. Even if you have never used or owned a computer, it is amazing how much information about you that is being searched and sold about you every single day. It doesn't take much effort to find out what your property is worth and how much taxes you paid last year. It doesn't take much effort to find out how many children you have and where they live. If anyone has ever had a speeding ticket, it doesn't take all that much work to find that information. Those are only a couple of things that are pretty easy to find. If someone really knows how to find that information, you would be surprised how much it knows about you.

Google did not exist at the time of Jesus. However, there is someone who knows everything about him, even the smallest of details. As Jesus was calling his disciples, Jesus made quite an impression on a man named Nathanael. Phillip had approached his friend, Nathanael. John writes: **"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."**

But Nathanael was skeptical. How does he receive this good news? **"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?"** Nathanael knew the Old Testament. He knew that the Lord had promised that the Savior would come from Bethlehem. Nathanael knew that the Scriptures spoke about the Savior coming from Zion or Jerusalem. But Nazareth? That town is a nowhere town. But Jesus was about to change Nathanael's mind. Can you imagine how Nathanael felt when Jesus said: **"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."**

Jesus caught Nathanael's attention. Perhaps, Nathanael began to think: *"Hmm. If Jesus saw me while I was under the fig tree that also means that he heard all that I said about him. Oh-Oh."* How does that make us feel? Jesus knows everything that you and I have said, thought and done. He knows the sins in our hearts. He knows our fears. He knows the frustrations. He knows the resentments that are in our minds. He knows the times that we try to hurt people around us. He knows our doubts, our deceptions and our lies that we tell. He knows it all. He sees us while we sit under our fig trees.

Yet, what is remarkable about Jesus is that he doesn't just see us with all our sins. He sees us not merely on the basis of who you are. He sees you through the lenses of Grace. He sees all that he has done for you. He sees us as being true and faithful not because of what we have done, but because of what he has done. He sees forgiven children of God. What can we say? We say the same thing that Nathanael said: **"Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."**

Standing in front of Jesus that day, Nathanael didn't have any idea of what he was going to see with Jesus over the next three years. He was going to be with Jesus on the Sea of Galilee with a huge storm going on. He was going to see Jesus speak to the winds and the waves, and those winds and waves would be still. He would see Jesus walking on water. He would see the feeding of the 5000, the healings of oh-so-many people, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. He was going to see Jesus taken captive and hauled away to die. He would know pain, frustration, questions, doubts before Jesus would arise on Easter Sunday.

And then? He would see the risen Savior. He would see the nail marks. He would hear Jesus say: **“Peace be with you.”** He would see it with his own eyes and hear it with his own ears. Would Nathanael understand what Jesus said to him that day that he called him: **“You will see greater things than that.”** Some day he would see **“heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’ the Son of Man.”** He would hear Jesus say: **“Come, you who are blessed by my father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”**

Someday, you and I will see those same things and hear those same words. We live in uncertain times. Just look around us. Coronavirus. Stock markets up and down. Political divides. Crazy winter weather. Snow or no snow. Riots in our nation’s capital. The line between good and right seems more fuzzy all the time. Yet, into this uncertain world, Jesus brings a hope that is greater than anything that we can imagine. He says to you and me: **“You will see greater things.”**

I can hardly imagine what our first impression of heaven will be like. I wonder if God might meet us and say with a smile, *“Remember when I said you’d see greater things than these? Well, what’s your first impression?”* And I can only imagine that we’ll say or think, *“Wow! I’ve never seen anything as great as this!”* When we meet the God who can remember every sinful thought or words we have spoken against him and then he say that he has forgotten them and thrown them away as far as the East is from the West. May God fill you with peace, knowing that you will someday see heaven opened, the greatest sight of all. Amen.