

January 18, 2015

Proof!

John 1: 50 – *Jesus answered [Nathanael], “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”*

Proof! Everyone needs proof these days, and perhaps rightly so. Humans can only be swindled, hoodwinked, tricked, bamboozled and taken advantage of so many times before they have finally had enough and begin to mistrust everyone and everything. Courts need evidence, scientists (even the armchair variety) need tested analyses. Mom even needs to see your clean room with her own eyes before she’ll believe you.

For the world today the proof it seems really is in the proverbial pudding. There is very little faith without, scientific, experiential and historical evidence to justify it. It seems that it was no different in Jesus’ time. In our gospel lesson, we find Nathanael taking a siesta (perhaps) underneath a fig tree when Philip finds him to tell him about Jesus. Nathanael’s response to the exuberant Philip was a little lackluster. “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” He asked, seemingly thinking that Philip had flipped his lid.

But, when he encounters Jesus he changes his own grudging attitude to excitement when the Savior knew exactly where Nathanael had been before Philip found him. In this encounter, it seems it is Jesus’ turn to be less than impressed with Nathanael’s understanding of Jesus as messiah. “You believe after such a simple thing as me knowing you were under a fig tree,” Jesus asks him. Then he promises the new

Roots

believer that he will see greater things than that simple “proof” of Jesus identity. He promises salvation.

For Christians today, proof concerning Jesus doesn’t come through seeing or scientific analysis or historical experience, it comes through hearing the Word of God proclaimed to us. It is there that the Holy Spirit meets us and instills faith for us to know that Jesus is Lord. Jesus’ point to Nathanael and to you is that miracles were not the point, the goal nor should they be the motivation for our faith. Jesus subtly hints in this Gospel lesson that he is the fulfillment of prophecies and the bringer of Salvation.

While the world demands “proof,” such as the miracles Jesus performed (though they won’t even necessarily believe in them), we Christians take Jesus at his word. That is all the proof we need. To those of you who have such faith, Jesus promises greater things. You too will see the heavens opened when Christ returns, and you will also see that he is the stairway to heaven and eternal life just as he promised Nathanael. Your faith will be justified, just as you already are in Christ.

Lord Jesus, Give us ears to hear your truth, hearts to trust in it and voices to carry it to the rest of the world, that with them we will see you rend the heavens and take us to our eternal home with you. Amen.

Pastor Carl J. H.

