

have free will and can shape our relationship with God. Pastor Jack shared his belief that our Creator knows us better than we know ourselves. As a creative person, we know every flaw and blemish on whatever we create and still we have pride in our creations and admire them. Could the same be true of our Creator and God? What do you think about this concept of God knowing us better than we know ourselves? Consider these questions and write your reflections here.

### Thursday, August 24

Read John 1:44-51 and also I Kings 4:25 and Micah 4:4. There is a true cultural significance of the fig tree for the Jewish people. It was a place of meeting, a quiet place for prayer and meditation. Jesus recognized that Nathanael was sincere in his practice of these spiritual disciplines. Christ followers often talk about their “quiet time” with God when they can connect with our Creator and actually enjoy fellowship with the divine. How about you? Do you spend quiet time alone in reading the Bible, prayer and meditation? Do you have a special place for that time with God? Are there other ways in which you connect with God? Think about these questions and write your thoughts here.

### Friday, August 25

Read John 1:44-51. Jesus concludes his conversation with Nathanael saying, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." This is a reference to the story of Jacob's dream (Genesis 28:10-17) in which there is a definite connection between heaven and earth. Making a connection with God is what our faith is about; that and making connections with others on earth. How do you connect with God and others? How does your connection with God affect your connection with others and vice versa? Think about it and write your ideas here.

## Message Notes – August 20, 2023

### *The Twelve- Bartholomew/Nathanael the Guileless\**

- I. “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom \_\_\_\_\_ in the law and also the \_\_\_\_\_ wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from \_\_\_\_\_." (John 1:45)
  - A. Philip's life was forever \_\_\_\_\_ by his encounter with Jesus.
  - B. Philip also did his \_\_\_\_\_.
  - C. Nathanael's seemingly snarky comment: “Can anything \_\_\_\_\_ come out of Nazareth?”
    1. From his study of scripture, Nathanael was quite certain that the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ one of God, would not come from Nazareth.
    2. One thing we can commend Nathanael for is his healthy and \_\_\_\_\_ skepticism.
- II. Our Creator knows us \_\_\_\_\_ than we know ourselves.
  - A. When Nathanael goes with Philip to meet Jesus we're told, “When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, ‘Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no \_\_\_\_\_!’”
    1. \_\_\_\_\_, Nathanael asked Jesus, “Where did you get to know me?”
    2. Jesus answered, "I saw you under the \_\_\_\_\_ before Philip called you."
  - B. We really need to know the \_\_\_\_\_ significance of the fig tree.

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\*John 1:44-51

- III. What little we know of Nathanael comes from John's gospel and in fact Nathanael is \_\_\_\_\_ mentioned in John's gospel.
- In the other three Gospels, there is an Apostle mentioned that is not mentioned in John's Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Most Biblical Scholars believe that Nathanael and Bartholomew is the \_\_\_\_\_ person.
  - Nathanael stands as a symbol of those who \_\_\_\_\_ God through contemplative practices of meditation, \_\_\_\_\_ and scripture reading.
- IV. To Nathanael's proclamation of Jesus as the Son of God and King of Israel, Jesus responded, "Do you \_\_\_\_\_ because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree?"
- The last part of Jesus' comment seems a bit \_\_\_\_\_, the vision of angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.
    - Jesus is referring to the story of Jacob's dream of the ladder that connects \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
    - Here is the point: heaven isn't a \_\_\_\_\_ unseen hope but rather a call upon our lives to change this world \_\_\_\_\_.
  - When you think about Nathanael who followed Jesus, against a great deal of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, they continued to make that connection between heaven and earth

## *Daily Devotional Guide*

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

### **Monday, August 21**

Read John 1:44-51. The two verses just before this passage are when Philip was found by Jesus and called to follow Him. It

seems that Philip immediately went to find his friend, Nathanael, to tell him about meeting Jesus. Philip was so impacted by his experience of Jesus that he wanted to share that experience. Have you ever met someone or read a book or listened to a TED talk that you were so motivated to share that experience with others? What person or experience has come into your mind? Was that person a revered person in your profession? Was she or he an entertainer or a motivational speaker? What impressed you about that experience? What was the message communicated by that person? How did you share that experience with others? Think about a particular circumstance in your life, reflect on these questions and write your thoughts here.

### **Tuesday, August 22**

Read John 1:44-51. Philip believed that he had met the Messiah, the Anointed One of God, to which Nathanael responded, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael was not being snarky or insincere in this response; he just knew that the Messiah was not likely to come from Nazareth. Perhaps he was assuming that Philip's words involved the Messiah being born in Nazareth. Nathanael's response was not insincere or snarky rather it exhibited a bit of honest skepticism. He challenged Philip's belief and Philip was wise not to argue with his friend, rather he invited Nathanael to "Come and see." No one has ever been coerced into a trusting faith. Coercion was not Jesus' method of inspiring faith and it was the disciple's method; and it shouldn't be our method either. Skepticism can be healthy and can open us to a conversation about important elements of our lives. How do you view skepticism? Has skepticism helped your faith in any way? Consider these thoughts and write your response here.

### **Wednesday, August 23**

Read Genesis 1:26-31. We are an important part of creation, made in God's image. While we are created in God's image, we