

Setting out - John 1:1-51

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The story of God, as recorded in the Gospel of John, is incredible. I love the way it begins, with God himself, and the Word [Jesus], and there they were, the Godhead, and they were enough, on their own. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.” [John 1:1-2]

It’s amazing – the holy, triune God... enough.

But then, very quickly, the story moves to include everything and everyone – all of time, all of space, all of humanity. “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” [John 1:3]

There is nothing outside of their story. And somehow, for us as the readers, we want it to be like that... because even in our highly insignificant way, we want the story to include us. We want to be on the page, somewhere, anywhere. We need the story to include us. And it does!

God spoke the world into being, and thousands of years later – years that included every kind of pain and brokenness, and rebellion – God said he was about to speak again, and this time he would speak through his own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would come into the world, and give light and life, and save us. And that grand story, with all its vastness of the opening lines, narrowed down to a single moment in time and included every single one of us.

One day, at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan River, Jesus came – the Lamb of God,

the Chosen One, who would take away the sins of the world [John 1:29]. John knew who he was, and the people knew who he was. The Spirit came down and revealed it. And the very next day, in response, the people followed him.

It began with Andrew. He wanted to find out more. Then he called his brother Simon, and he joined in as well. Then there was Phillip and Nathanael. Nathanael hesitated at first. He wasn’t sure whether anything good could come from Nazareth... probably not [John 1:46].

And Jesus’ reply is the point at which I pause... because his answer includes all of us. Jesus knew Nathanael. He knew him. Nathanael wanted to know how Jesus knew him, and Jesus said, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree.” [John 1:48]. In response, Nathanael immediately bowed down. “You are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.” He couldn’t do anything else.

I think for all of us, wherever we are in the timeline of history, or wherever we are in the atlas of the world, when we stop and consider how deeply we are known by God, and loved by him, and called by him, our only response is to kneel, to acknowledge him as Lord, and to get up and follow him.

Let’s do that this week, in the lead up to Easter, in a hundred different ways, as we support the work in Nepal, as we serve in Nepal, as we respond to Jesus wherever we are... with the firm assurance that we are known by God, and part of his magnificent story.