

Summer Series: Week Two –

Theme: Come and See

Call to Worship: StF 822 Psalm 100 (read responsively)

Song: StF 24 Come, now is the time to worship

Song 88: Praise to the Lord the Almighty

Testimony Time

(Inviting someone to share their experience of exploring and finding faith)

Prayers of Praise

Our God, we give you thanks that you invite us to come and see.

You invite us to meet you, to get to know you,
to share all that is on our hearts with you.

We thank you for your interest in us, your desire to know us.

We thank you for Jesus, who came to make you known to us,
who, in his body, links heaven to earth and earth to heaven.

We lift our hearts, and minds and voices in praise
for love and grace that we do not deserve,
but which is lavished on us.

As we come together this morning in your presence to worship,
fill our hearts afresh with wonder at your love for us,
and your call to each of us to know you.

Open our minds to deeper knowledge, our hearts to deeper love
and our spirits to a fuller response

that we may live lives that resound with and reflect your grace.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen**

Song 443: Come let us sing

Reading: John 1:35-46

Song 270: Come and see

Sermon:

'Come and see.' Those words of invitation began a relationship which was to change the lives of Andrew and Peter and Nathanael, who went on to become some of Jesus' closest friends and disciples. The following three years were to be a journey of discovery and learning which prepared them to be founding members of a movement which would change the world. Their lives would never be the same again.

'Come and see'. They are words of invitation, not of compulsion. We can imagine those two disciples going along with Jesus (Andrew finding out where the place was and then hurrying off to find Simon and bring him along), going into the house where he was staying and we are told that they stayed for the rest of that day – the late afternoon and evening, no doubt sharing a meal, talking, finding out about one another, listening to what Jesus had to say, weighing up his words, feeling inspired, challenged, excited, warming to this man and his message, wanting to know more.

'Come and see'. They are words that open up possibilities, that call us away from other activities, preoccupations, to turn aside and give our attention, prepared to be

surprised, to discover something as yet unrevealed. It can make us think of Moses, seeing the burning bush, stopping and turning aside to look closer – he could have walked on by, too busy with the sheep to bother – but he didn't. No doubt Andrew, Simon and Nathanael could have decided they had work to do, homes to run, people to see – maybe they were tempted to leave it till tomorrow – but they didn't.

'Come and see.' Three small words of invitation. I wonder if there are times we can think of in our lives when we have heard those words, times which have offered us the opportunity to discover and learn something new for ourselves

The invitation was not just for the first disciples all those years ago. It is an invitation that has been heard and responded to by every follower of Jesus through the centuries since then. It is an invitation that comes to each of us - there is a time when we hear Jesus say to us, 'Come and see'. It may be through the words of a preacher, or someone we trust, as Andrew and Philip trusted the word of John the Baptist, or a family member, as for Simon, or a friend, as Philip for Nathanael. At some point in our lives we all hear the invitation to 'come and see'. It may be through something we see or read. And it doesn't just occur once, but there are different stages at which we can hear that invitation, the invitation to go deeper, to grow and to give more of our time, our commitment, ourselves.

There are different ways in which we can respond. If we wish to say we are too busy, there are too many other things we want to do, there will be no pressure on us, but the opportunity may be lost and we may miss out on discovering what God wishes to reveal to us, what he wishes to show us we are capable of. We may go to church from time to time, when we can, or we may pray when we feel the need, but we don't let God take any really significant place in our lives – we don't want him to disrupt our lives or challenge us. People may say, 'I believe in God', but don't seek ways to find out more about who God is and what he offers.

We can decide to follow, but from more of a distance – to remain more of an onlooker, keeping our options open, listening to the message as one of the crowd, but not getting too involved, not letting him get too close. We see our faith as something established in our lives but very personal, not something to talk to others about, or that needs to grow or develop.

We can also decide to embrace the opportunity to go with Jesus, to spend time with him, to take the opportunity to grow in understanding and knowledge of the message he came to proclaim, to be touched and inspired by the wonder of the love and grace it expresses. He invites us to explore and discover more of what he longs to give us and to unfold the fullness of the gifts and the potential that God has given each of us. Then he encourages us to share what we know with others, to grow the church as the disciples did before us that the life and invitation of Jesus can be made known to others as it was to us.

'Come and see.' Still the invitation stands. Jesus beckons each of us to know him better, to have our lives blessed and enriched by an ever deepening relationship with him. His prayer and longing for us, expressed in his prayer in John 17, is that people may see in us the reflection of his love and grace; in other words, that we may become the people who have been so inspired and challenged and excited by being with Jesus that we may, in our turn, offer the invitation to others, 'Come and see.'

Song 662: Have you heard God's voice

Response: Everyone is given a card and a pencil/pen

After a moment of quiet for people to be aware of God's presence, they are invited to think of people who enabled them to come to Christ and to write their names on the cards and give thanks for them, praying for them if they are still alive.

Then, invite them to think of the people that they come into contact with in the week, whom they might be able to invite to 'come and see'. Write names on the other side of the card. Pray for them and commit to continuing to pray for them and look for opportunities to share something with them or invite them to something at church.

Prayer

Lord our God, we thank you for you call to each of us and that you have invited us to come and see. We pray for all those we come into contact with through the week who have little knowledge of you. We pray that you will encourage and enable us, by your Spirit, to speak of you as opportunities arise, and give us the appropriate words. May we not be afraid to share what you mean to us.

We lift to you those known to us who are going through difficult times at the moment, who are in need to a sense of your presence and love. Help us to be channels of your grace, making your strength and comfort real.

And we pray for your wisdom and grace for world leaders and all in authority. Lifting to you our troubled world, we pray that those who bear the responsibility of leadership in all parts of the world, may recognise their responsibility to serve all those they lead, and to respond to your call, through all faiths, to care for those most vulnerable and in need.

We offer these prayers to you, thanking you for the gift of prayer and for the promise that you always hear our prayers and will answer. Give us faith, Lord, when the mountain seems too high; give us strength when the road seems too long; teach us love, Lord, let it blaze in our hearts, and shine to your glory.

We draw our prayers together in the words of the Lord's prayer

Offertory

Song 663: I the Lord of sea and sky

Blessing

May the love of the Lord Jesus draw us to himself;
May the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen us in his service;
May the joy of the Lord Jesus fill our hearts
and overflow into the lives of others whose lives we touch;
and may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us, with those we love and with those for whom we have prayed,
this day, this week and always.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen