

Come See

John 1:35-51 • John 4:7-42 • John 1:14

New Collective Church • Sunday, August 30, 2026

The Big Idea

Most of us assume we need to get something sorted out before we come to Jesus, and that we need better answers before we could invite anybody else. So we wait, and the invitation stays in our pocket. In John 1, Jesus hands out no curriculum and no checklist. He says three words, 'come and see', and the first thing a brand new follower does is go get his brother. So we are asking two honest questions this week: what changes if you are already fully known and still fully wanted, and who has been waiting on an invitation you have been holding back until you felt more qualified to give it?

LEADER NOTE

The whole sermon runs on one claim: the invitation comes before the qualification. Every movement is another example of it. Keep returning there and the session holds together.

LEADER NOTE

RUNNING THE HOUR. There are six movements here and an hour does not hold all six well. Pick a lane before you start. Sixty minutes: run movements 2, 4 and 6, which carry the argument on their own, and read the rest aloud as setup. Seventy-five minutes: add movement 3. Ninety minutes or a group that talks fast: run all six. Each movement has an a question to discuss aloud and a b question with writing lines. If you are behind, drop the a and keep the b, since the b is where it gets personal. Question 2b, who is your Simon, is the one to protect no matter what you cut.

Opening Prayer

Thank God that the invitation came before we had anything figured out. Ask him to make this group honest for the next hour rather than impressive.

LEADER NOTE

Two minutes. Somebody may admit a real objection out loud tonight, and they will only do that if the room felt safe from the start.

Icebreaker

When was the last time somebody said you have to see this to you, and it was worth it?

LEADER NOTE

Five minutes, and let it be funny. Pastor Mark opened on this exact phrase and the mixed feeling it gives a parent, where you should see this means either a milestone or a disaster. You are establishing that an invitation is something a person gives because they actually saw something. That is the engine of the series.

Read Together

Open your Bible or app. Read John 1:35-51 out loud together, then keep these handy as the discussion moves.

John 1:35-39 The first invitation. Two words.
John 1:40-42 Andrew goes and gets his brother. Simon is renamed.
John 1:43-46 Nathanael objects. Philip does not argue.
John 1:47-51 The fig tree, and the ladder.
John 4:7-30 The woman at the well, and the water jar she left.
John 1:14 Full of grace and truth. Both.

LEADER NOTE

Count the invitations as you read. John points and two follow. Jesus invites. Andrew fetches Simon. Jesus calls Philip. Philip fetches Nathanael. Five people in seventeen verses and not one lecture. That observation does more work than any question you could ask about it.

Discussion

1. The Invitation Is to Be With Him

John 1:35-39

Look, the Lamb of God, is Exodus language, and Pastor Mark took it back to the blood on the doorpost and a people going free. Preserve all three layers of what these two were about to get: they thought they were seeing where he stayed, they were about to see where their lives were going, and above all they were going to see him.

The invitation is all about Jesus, coming to see him. Not to get something from him.

- a. Jesus asks what do you want before he asks anything else. If he asked you that today, what would you honestly answer?**
- b. Is there a way you have been treating Jesus as a means to something rather than as the point?**

LEADER NOTE

The first question is diagnostic, not rhetorical, and it is the first thing Jesus says to anyone in John. Expect spiritually correct answers first and real ones second. On b, keep it descriptive rather than confessional. Everyone comes to Jesus wanting something, including these two, and he does not scold them for it.

2. Invited People Invite People

John 1:40-42

Andrew's first move is his brother. Keep Pastor Mark's full list of what we assume must come first, because the specificity is what lands: answers to every question, fourteen Bible studies, membership, a serving team, giving.

Invited people invite people.

- a. What do you think you would need before you could invite someone, and where did that requirement actually come from?
- b. Who is your Simon? Say the name out loud if you are willing.

LEADER NOTE

Nobody was told those prerequisites out loud. They were absorbed, and naming where one came from is usually the moment it loses its grip. Question b is the hinge into next week, so write the names down yourself. Andrew did not bring Simon an argument, he brought him to Jesus. Keep the ask that small, and if someone is not ready to say a name aloud, let that be fine and follow up privately.

3. You Are Simon, and You Will Be Called Peter

John 1:42

Present identity named honestly, future identity spoken over him before there is any evidence for it. Pastor Mark was careful that this is not self-discovery and not an upgrade to the existing model. It is new creation. He then named what most of us attempt instead: working, freeing, or forgiving ourselves into a new self while leaving Jesus out.

Where he finds you is not where he leaves you. Your present identity is not your future identity.

There is a builder version of you that you haven't met yet.

- a. What is the difference between becoming a better version of yourself and being made new? Why does that difference matter?
- b. What name are you living under right now, and what would it mean if Jesus called you something else?

LEADER NOTE

The distinction is real, not rhetorical. Self-improvement leaves the old self in charge of the renovation, while 2 Corinthians 5:17 says the new creation has come and the old is gone. Say plainly that God is against earning, not against effort, since effort follows the new identity rather than producing it. On b, someone may name a painful label from a parent or an ex or their own head. Do not rush to fix it. Let the group speak the other half over them, which is what Jesus did for Simon before Simon had earned a word of it.

4. When the Answer to an Objection Is an Invitation

John 1:43-46

Pastor Mark treated Nathanael generously rather than as a problem. The objection is reasonable. The hinge is what Philip does not do: he does not argue, marshal evidence, or win. He hands back the same three words Jesus used on him.

Come and see.

- a. Why do you think an invitation works on an objection better than an argument does?
- b. What is the thing you still do not see? Say it honestly. Nobody here is going to fix it for you tonight.

LEADER NOTE

This is the practical center of the series. An argument asks someone to concede before they have seen anything, while an invitation only asks for a look. Most of your group believes they need apologetics training before they can talk about Jesus, and Philip had none. On b, say that last sentence out loud and mean it. Pastor Mark specifically welcomed the Nathanaels in the room. If someone voices real doubt and the group rushes to solve it, you have taught the room that doubt is unwelcome. Thank them, and follow up later in the week.

5. I Saw You Before You Saw Me

John 1:47-51

One sentence about a fig tree moves Nathanael to you are the Son of God. Pastor Mark went into what he called Bible geek mode twice here, and both moves are worth carrying.

I saw you before you saw me. I was aware of you before you were aware of me.

He is the ladder you do not have to climb.

- a. What changes about being fully seen if the one seeing you is also the one covering you?
- b. Where have you been trying to cover something yourself instead of letting him cover it?

LEADER NOTE

The fig tree: Genesis 3:7 has shame sewing fig leaves into a covering, and sitting under your own vine and fig tree becomes a picture of peace in a coming age in Micah 4:4, Zechariah 3:10 and 1 Kings 4:25. Pastor Mark's point is that Jesus is saying stop stitching leaves. Know for yourself that John never says why Nathanael was under the tree, so this is a preacher's synthesis of real biblical imagery rather than a claim the passage makes. It preaches well. It is not something to defend as though the text says it.

LEADER NOTE

The ladder: John 1:51 quotes Genesis 28:12, Jacob's vision at Bethel. Jacob saw a stairway. Jesus puts himself where the stairway was, so the angels ascend and descend on the Son of Man. This is solid ground and one of the clearest claims in the Gospel that Jesus is where heaven and earth meet. Pastor Mark's line that God is not a God who stays at the top of the ladder is exactly right.

6. Grace and Truth, Both

John 4:7-30 • John 1:14

Nathanael is not everybody, which is why Pastor Mark went to John 4. Jesus crosses a national line and a gender line to speak to her, then names the thing she came at noon to avoid. Hold both halves of what he said next, because this is the sub-claim most likely to get flattened: Jesus did name the sin, and in that culture a woman had almost no power to end a marriage, so five times something happened to her rather than simply because of her.

He'll be better to you than you deserve and you're uncomfortable, and he'll call you out on your stuff and you're uncomfortable. There is not a comfortable path forward.

If you try to dodge truth, you will also dodge grace.

- a. She ran toward the man who knew everything about her. Why, when most of us would run the other way?**
- b. What is the water jar you have been carrying to the well, and what would it take to leave it?**

LEADER NOTE

Everything converges here on John 1:14, grace and truth, both, in one person at the same time. Groups almost always keep one and drop the other. A group that keeps only grace stops telling anyone the truth. A group that keeps only truth becomes a place nobody brings anything real. Name that out loud if you watch it happen. On b, John 4:28 notes the jar without explaining it, and reading it as her laying down everything she arrived with is homiletical rather than stated. It is a good reading. Give people quiet here instead of filling it.

Application: Pick One

Pick the one you would rather avoid.

- Notice the gate you built. Catch the moment you think I am not ready enough, or they are not ready enough. Write down what qualification you were quietly requiring.
- Carry a verse. Take John 1:14 with you this week. Grace and truth, both, in the same person.
- Sit with the objection. What is the thing you do not see, the way Nathanael did not see Nazareth? Write it out honestly instead of arguing yourself out of it.
- Name one person. Write down one name today and invite them before the group meets again. Not a case. An invitation.

LEADER NOTE

The fourth is the series. Everything else this week is preparation for a person actually inviting a person. Write down the names, set a reminder, and open next week by asking how those conversations went, including the ones that did not happen. If you only follow up on the successes you will teach the group not to try.

Closing Prayer

Thank Jesus that he came looking first, and knew everything before anybody explained anything to him.

Ask him for the honesty to stop dodging the truth about ourselves, since dodging truth is how we end up dodging grace.

Pray by name for the people this group is going to invite.

LEADER NOTE

Slow down on the second one. Dodging truth is how we end up dodging grace was the sharpest line of the morning, and a closing prayer is a natural place for someone to quietly stop dodging. Leave silence between the prompts.

“Come and see Jesus. Come and see who he will make you into. Come and see the new you.”

Pastor Mark

Going Deeper

- Read John 4:1-42 and watch the woman move from sinner to prophet to Messiah in one conversation.
- Read Genesis 28:10-22, the vision at Bethel that Jesus quotes in John 1:51, and notice what he changes about it.
- What are the objections or the things you do not see, and how do those land on the people you might invite?

Read This Before You Meet, Not During

Everything from here on is preparation for you as the leader.

Sermon Arc and Key Moves

A text-walk through John 1:35-51 in five encounters, then a turn to John 4, converging on John 1:14.

- 1. Look, the Lamb of God. Exodus lands on one man, and two disciples follow.
- 2. Come and see. The invitation is to be with him.
- 3. Invited people invite people. Andrew, with none of the prerequisites we assume.
- 4. You are Simon, you will be called Peter. New creation, not self-improvement.
- 5. Nathanael objects. Philip repeats the invitation instead of arguing.
- 6. I saw you under the fig tree. Seen before seeing, and a covering we stopped having to sew.
- 7. Jacob's ladder, with Jesus standing where the stairway was. Heaven comes down.
- 8. The woman at the well. Grace and truth arrive together and the outcast becomes the first witness.
- 9. Full of grace and truth. Dodge the truth and you dodge the grace with it.
- 10. Invited people invite people, again. A whole church saying you should see this.

LEADER NOTE

Pastor Mark closed by saying we are about to see God do immeasurably more in and through us. That is Ephesians 3:20, our vision verse, reached for without announcing it. Church on Fire closed on that verse and this series opened on it. Pointing that out helps the year feel like one story.

Key Cross-References

- Exodus 12:13. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. The Passover scene behind Lamb of God.
- Isaiah 53:7. Led like a lamb to the slaughter. The second stream feeding the title, if someone asks why lamb and not king.
- Genesis 3:7. They sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.
- Zechariah 3:9-10. God removes the sin of the land in a single day, and then each person invites their neighbor to sit under their vine and fig tree. Sin removed, then invitation, under a fig tree. For a series called The Invite this is the strongest verse on the page.
- Micah 4:4. Everyone will sit under their own vine and fig tree, and no one will make them afraid.
- Genesis 28:12-17. Jacob at Bethel and the stairway, quoted directly in John 1:51.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17. The new creation has come, the old has gone. Underwrites the Simon to Peter movement.
- Matthew 16:16-18. On this rock I will build my church. See the note below.
- Luke 24:27. He explained what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Supports Philip in John 1:45.
- Ephesians 3:20-21. Immeasurably more, according to his power at work within us. Our vision verse, and the note the message ended on.

Series Alignment

Part	Title / Focus	Core Scripture
Part 1 ← HERE	Come See	John 1:35-51; John 4:7-42; John 1:14

LEADER NOTE

What Part 1 established, which the rest will build on: the invitation comes before the qualification, invited people invite people, Jesus knows everything before the conversation starts, and he is full of grace and truth at the same time.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide was drafted with AI assistance from the sermon transcript and Pastor Mark's own message notes, then reviewed by a group leader for scriptural accuracy and faithfulness to the message before it was shared. Scripture references follow the NIV. It is a supplement to the sermon, not a replacement for it. If you spot an error or something that does not sound like the message you heard, please say so.