

“The Guileless”

(Philip & Nathanael)

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I. Introduction

A. Balboa Park in San Diego

1. Describe its beauty
2. The one place we always visited....the fig tree
3. Describe the fig tree
4. Used to be able to climb it

B. A young man and his fig tree

1. His favorite place to contemplate life
2. Obsessed with the coming of the Lord
3. Would pore over prophecies
4. Would pray for understanding
5. Was it time?

C. The interruption by his friend

1. His friend shared a most amazing story
 - a. The Messiah has already come!
 - b. Let me take you to him
2. He had some serious doubts
 - a. “You’ve got to be kidding me”

3. “Come and see for yourself!”

D. Today, the tale of two of the twelve Apostles

1. And why one of them was called “a man without guile”
2. And what does it mean to be without guile

E. Calling of the Twelve....Luke 6:12-16

(12) One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. (13) When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: (14) Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, (15) Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, (16) Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

II. The Tale of Two Friends

A. The first is Philip

Name: Philip

1. Philip is Greek for “lover of horses”
2. Not the “Philip” who led the Ethiopian to Christ in Acts 6

Family: From Bethsaida

1. Near the Sea of Galilee
2. Same as Peter and Andrew
3. Appeared to have four daughters who were greatly involved in ministry also

Occupation: Fisherman

1. Good biblical evidence that he was a fisherman
2. After the resurrection Peter says “I’m going fishing” (John 21:3)
 - a. The rest of the group (which included Thomas, Nathanael and Philip...as well as James and John) said “So are we”

Personality:

1. What people have said about Philip

It seems that he was a facts-and-figures guy...a by the book, practical-minded, non-visionary type of individual, he was the kind who tends to be a killjoy, pessimistic, narrowly focused, sometimes missing the big picture, often obsessed with indentifying reasons things can't be done rather than finding ways to do them. He was predisposed to be a pragmatist and a cynic—and sometimes a defeatist—rather than a visionary

2. Feeding the 5,000 (John 6:7)

(7) Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

3. Questioned Jesus (John 14:8)

(5) Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (6) Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (7) If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. (8) Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." (9) Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time: Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

Ministry:

1. Tradition suggests that Philip lived and preached in what is now the Ukraine (Scythia) as well as in Turkey

Death:

1. By most accounts he was put to death by stoning at Heliopolis, in Phrygia (Turkey), eight years after the martyrdom of James.
2. Others say he was crucified upside down in 90 AD
 - a. 87 years old
3. By all accounts, before his death, multitudes came to Christ under his preaching.

B. The second is Bartholomew

Name: Nathanael Bartholomew

1. Most likely the same person called Nathanael
 - a. Matthew, Mark and Luke all refer to him as Bartholomew
 - b. John refers to him as Nathanael
2. Family name was Bar tholomew
 - a. “Bar” is Hebrew for “Son of”
 - a. “Son of Tolmai” (Ptolemy)
3. Given name was Nathanael
 - a. Means “God has given”

Family: From Cana of Galilee**Occupation: Fisherman**

1. Hints that he too was a fisherman

Personality:

1. Arthur Pink

Nathanael, of whom least is known, was, evidently of a meditative and retiring disposition, whose life was lived in the background, but of an open and frank nature, one “in who was no guile.”

Ministry:

1. Iran
2. Northern India
 - a. Mumbai (Bombay)

Death:

1. One tradition says he was tied up in a sack and cast into the sea. Another tradition says he was crucified.

2. Michelangelo's "Last Judgment"

- a. Beaten...skinned alive...beheaded
- b. Holding his skin in one hand and the knife in the other

III. Their Story...John 1

A. The Invitation (v. 43-44)

(43) The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." (44) Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida.

1. "The next day"

- a. Day after Andrew brought Peter to Jesus

2. "Follow me"

- a. Make a choice
- b. Do you believe He is who He says He is?

B. The Declaration (v. 45)

(45) Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

1. "Philip found Nathanael"....v.45

- a. Ran and found his friend first

2. We've found "The One!"

"We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

3. "The law and the prophets"

- a. Common NT term for the OT
- b. Likely that Nathanael was studying them
- c. Serious students often meditated and read under fig trees

4. “We’ve found the Messiah”

C. The Problem (v. 46)

(46) “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.

1. “Wait a minute. Did you say he was from Nazareth?”

- a. Must have shocked Nathanael
- b. ***“Can anything good come from Nazareth?”***

2. Three possible problems with “Nazareth”

a. Rivalry

1. Ohio State vs. Michigan
 - a. Bo Schembechler and Woody Hayes
2. Rivalry between Cana and Nazareth
 - a. Ten miles away
 - b. Nathanael was from Cana

b. Disgust

1. Nazareth wasn’t a pretty sight
 - a. Judeans looked down on the Galileans and the Galileans looked down on Nazareth
2. He was prejudiced...but honest

c. The OT never mentioned Nazareth in regard to the Messiah

1. Likely he was pondering Messianic Scriptures
2. Was looking for something else
 - a. From Bethlehem or Jerusalem
 - b. A mighty conqueror

3. The Solution to his doubts (v. 46)
 - a. ***“Come and see”***.....v. 46
 - b. Took him to see Jesus
 1. See for yourself
4. Next week.... “Doubting Thomas”
 - a. Common areas of doubt for unsaved
 - b. Common doubts for Christians
 - c. Coming to grips with your doubts

D. The Fig Tree (v. 47-48)

(47) When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false (no guile).”

1. A “true” Israelite
 1. *“alethos”*
 2. Genuine...Sincere
 3. Not a hypocrite
 4. How the world hates hypocrisy
2. ***“In whom there is nothing false” (no guile)”***
 - a. An “honest doubter”
 - b. *Nathanael’s blunt, honest reply to Philip revealed his lack of duplicity and eagerness to examine Jesus’ claims for himself*
3. What is “guile?”
 - a. “untruthful, deceptive, hypocritical, deceitful”
4. To be “without guile” is quite a compliment
5. In other words...an honest and trustworthy person

(48) “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

6. What was he doing under the fig tree?
 - a. Fig trees are leafy and shady
 - b. Where philosophers and Rabbis sat
 1. It was the custom to sit and meditate under the roof of its branches.
 - c. Where Nathanael studied and meditated on the Old Testament Scriptures.
 1. Tradition records his commitment to prayer and study
7. But here’s what shocked Nathanael
 - a. It appears Jesus knew what Nathanael was thinking about while under the fig tree
 1. And what he was praying about
 2. The prophecies about the coming Son of God
 - b. He saw his heart
8. That’s why he believed

E. The Believer (v. 49-51)

(49) Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”

1. He was convinced
 - a. “Rabbi”
 - b. “Son of God”
 - c. “King of Israel”
2. The prophecy

(50) Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.” (51) He then added, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

IV. Summary

A. Tiger Woods at the airport

1. The whole world stopped
2. Everybody had an opinion
3. He needs our prayers

B. The comfort of being a teller of truth

1. Nothing to hide...no guile...no deceit
 - a. “untruthful, deceptive, hypocritical, deceitful”
2. Proverbs 12:22

(22) The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.
3. *The truth fears no question*
4. *No man has a good enough memory to make a successful liar* (Lincoln)

C. How to get the guile out of your life

1. *Strive for authenticity....Flee from hypocrisy*
 - a. I Timothy 4:2 refers to “*hypocritical liars*”
 - b. Hypocrites deceive by pretending to be what they are not
 - c. They lack authenticity
 - d. And most of their friends see right through them
2. *Be quick to correct misunderstandings*
 - a. Untruths spoken about another person
 - b. *The cruelest lies are often told in silence* (Adlai Stevenson)
3. *Invest in building trust*
 - a. Trust is your most valuable asset

1. Trust must be earned
2. Doing business in Grand Rapids
- b. Trust is easily lost
 1. ***Get caught in one lie and a thousand truths will be doubted***
 2. You don't trust people that have deceived you
- c. Rich DeVos "10 Powerful Phrases"
 1. "I trust you"
 2. Building the Amway Grand
 - a. Dan Vos
 - b. The handshake....cost plus 10%
- d. Is your word "trusted?"

4. Never use truth as a weapon

- a. We are told to "***speak the truth in love***" (Ephesians 4:15)
 1. Can't choose between truth and love
 2. Must have both
- b. Speaking the truth with the intent to hurt
 1. "Let me be brutally honest"
 2. ***People that are brutally honest get more satisfaction out of the brutality than out of the honesty*** (Richard J. Needham)
 3. ***A truth told with bad intent beats all the lies you can invent***
(William Blake)

5. Beware of slicing the truth

- a. How to hit a slice
 1. The smallest deviation in a golf swing....just keeps moving further away

- b. Small deceits lead to big slices
- c. *The most dangerous deceptions are truths moderately distorted*
- d. Examples
 - 1. Exaggeration
 - 2. “Technically right” may be “ethically wrong”
 - a. *Often the surest way to convey misinformation is to tell the strict (technical) truth* (Mark Twain)
 - 3. “Half-truths”
 - a. *A half truth is a whole lie* (Yiddish Proverb)
 - 4. Statements designed to mislead

6. *Avoid “self-deception”*

- a. I John 1:8
 - (8) *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*
- b. One of the most destructive deceptions is self-deception
- c. Areas of self-deception
 - 1. Things are okay
 - 2. “I’m worthless”
 - 3. I can get away with it
 - a. Tiger
 - b. You?
 - 4. It won’t hurt anybody

7. *Don’t think you can deceive God*

Jeremiah 17:10

(10) “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind...”

- a. He knows the truth about you
- b. Don't try to cover it up with God
- c. God sees the inside
- d. Where change must take place

8. Spend time under the fig tree

Psalm 1:1-3

(1) Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. (2) But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. (3) He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.