

John 1:35-51
Jesus Himself Unites Us

Main idea: True unity comes because Jesus calls us to Himself.

There's an old urban legend, about two towns that spent months arguing over where to build a bridge.

- They both wanted a bridge to connect their towns, so that they could come and go.
 - But they couldn't compromise on where to put it.
 - Eventually, they built two bridges right next to each other so no one had to compromise.
- We humans can turn even unity projects into division projects.¹

We live in a world marked by division.²

- We divide over things like race, wealth, politics, and even preferences.³
- But the church, on the other hand, is to be different.
 - We're united not by what we have in common, but by the One who called us.⁴
 - Unity begins not with our sameness, but with His call.⁵

Read John 1:35-51

I get a lot of spam calls. It's crazy.

- It's so bad that most of the time, if I don't recognize the number, I don't even answer anymore. [photo]
 - But if I get a call from Abby, it pops up on my phone as My Sweetie, and I take the call. [photo]
 - She's the most important person in the world to me!
- That's how we're to treat Jesus when He calls us.

Jesus calls and invites us to follow Him. (v. 35-39)

- In a survey from 2023, the Pew Research Center US adults about religion and spirituality. [graph]
- These two men were already searching. They were following John the Baptist, seeking truth.
 - When He said, "Come and see," their search found its answer.
 - That same invitation unites every believer. We've all responded to Jesus' call.⁶
- Unity begins when we stop following others and start following Jesus together.⁷

As we do that, Jesus changes who we are. (v. 40-42)

- "Amazing Grace" is the most popular hymn to ever be written.
 - But did you know that John Newton, the author of the hymn, was once a slave trader?
 - After becoming a Christian, he eventually adamantly opposed slavery, and his story shows that no one is too far gone for transformation.
- When Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus, Jesus immediately gave him a new name.
 - When Jesus calls us, He doesn't just invite us; He transforms us.⁸
 - In Jesus, we all receive a new identity: beloved, forgiven, and made new.⁹

¹ Galatians 5:15, James 4:1

² James 3:16

³ 1 Corinthians 1:10

⁴ Galatians 3:28

⁵ John 10:3

⁶ Romans 10:13

⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:13

⁸ 2 Corinthians 5:17

⁹ Ephesians 1:7

- Our unity is built not on our old labels, but on who we've become and are becoming in Christ.¹⁰

Because Jesus calls all kinds of people to Himself. (v. 43-46)

- As Jesus called Philip and Nathanael, His group of followers grew more diverse.
 - There were fishermen, truth-seekers, and even skeptics.
 - Jesus calls all kinds of people to follow Him, and that's at least one of the things that makes His church beautiful. [Revelation 7:9]
- Unity doesn't erase our differences; it makes something truly awesome out of them. [Romans 12:4-5]
 - Think about it like a potluck dinner: everyone brings something different, but together it makes one great meal. [photo]
 - That's how God calls us to be.
- And if Jesus welcomes all kinds of people, so must we.¹¹

As we do that, together we'll see how Jesus reveals His glory. (v. 47-51)

- Nathanael began as a skeptic, but ended in worship, declaring, "You are the Son of God!"
- Jesus promised they would see even greater things.
 - When astronauts see Earth from space, they often say it changes how they view everything. [photo]
 - It's so common that there's even a name for it: "Overview Effect." [quote] [quote] [quote]
- As we keep following Jesus together, our unity grows deeper, centered not on ourselves, but on the glory of Christ.¹²

So the invitation to know Jesus isn't just an invitation to be personally saved, but to be a witness of His glory coming down from heaven.¹³

- The first disciples came from different towns and backgrounds, yet they became one because they all heard the same words: "Come and see."
- That invitation still unites every believer today.
- No matter who you are or where you've come from, Jesus' call is the same: Come and see.
- Being a church is all about saying yes to Jesus, and walking with others who have said yes, too.

¹⁰ Ephesians 2:14-15

¹¹ Romans 15:7, Matthew 28:19-20

¹² Ephesians 4:15-16

¹³ Philippians 1:27