

January 7, 2024

**Encounters:  
A Skeptical Student**

**Scripture:** John 1:43-51

**Big Idea:** Skepticism morphs to belief through a genuine encounter with Jesus.

**The Challenge:** The Western world has gone from belief to disbelief; from awareness of God to a skepticism to His existence. The plausibility structures, or what we determine to be true, have changed. Is there still room for belief in God in a secular world? What do we do with our skepticism? How do we interact with those in our sphere of influence who have significant hostility or questions?

**Pastoral Prayer for this Message:**

Our church would be a place where people are free to be curious, ask, seek, and “come and see” Jesus through the ministry of KAC.

**Questions for Discussion:**

1. What was your first encounter with Jesus Christ like? How did this shape or change your life?
2. **The Question vs. 46a**
  - Nazareth was on “the wrong side of the tracks” and this fueled Nathanael’s disbelief. In what way do you hear and experience people’s skepticism or disbelief of Jesus?
  - What questions or hesitations do you have towards Christianity?
3. **The Invitation vs. 46b**
  - How does Phillip interact with Nathanael’s question and sneering disbelief?
  - How does Phillip’s response shape our response to those in our lives who do not believe?
4. **The Response vs. 47-48**
  - Jesus responds to Nathanael’s skepticism with gentleness. How does Jesus’ response help us to approach God with our questions and uncertainty?
  - Jesus responds to Nathanael’s skepticism with affirmation. There is a temptation when people disagree with us to be defensive. How would a positive remark or encouragement to someone who believes differently than you, change the nature of your relationship or interaction?
5. **The Conclusion vs. 49**
  - Nathanael goes from “Can anything good...?” to “You are the Son of God....” How does this happen in Nathanael’s life? What does he realize about Jesus (see vs. 48b)?
  - How do people encounter Jesus like this in today’s world? What part do you play?
6. **The Correction vs. 50-51**
  - Jesus corrects Nathanael and points him to the larger story of redemption through abolishing the barrier between God and man. How does forgiveness and redemption from Jesus, change the human heart and life?

**Application:**

- Let’s make risk normative at KAC. This means that as we follow Jesus, we are taking calculated and prayerful risks with people in our lives who do not know Jesus. What does risky discipleship look like for you this week?
- Go around your group and pray for those in your life who you know and love, and are hesitant, skeptical, or even hostile to Jesus.