Come and See

 Young children are quite amazing. Not only do they have a tendency to speak exactly what is on their mind, but observing a child and watching them learn the simple things is quite amazing. When we are young we are confronted with so much information that is so basic that it eventually becomes second nature. Elementary school is often a time where interaction with peers begins. Mild amounts of responsibility are also added but who doesn’t want to go back to the days of addition and subtraction homework being the most stressful part of your life. One of the many things that I remember learning in elementary school was about fads. One of the biggest fads of the time were Pokemon cards. They were imaginary monsters that had abilities and other information displayed about them. Now the important part to remember is that as a 4th grader I didn’t know anyone who actually knew how to play the actual card game. Yeah there were rules and what not but the one rule that we knew for sure was that some of the cards were far more valuable and more rare than others. In the bottom corner there was a dot that represented common cards, a diamond that represented uncommon cards, and a star that represented rare cards. Now the rarest of all were cards that were known as foil cards because they were shinier than the others. Now thse didn’t come in every pack, but when they did come their discovery was met with cries of jubiliation. “Look look look at what I got!” as if our parents had any idea what a pokemon was. Honestly the most exciting part was showing your friends at school. If you had that pokemon card that everyone wanted you were the most popular person at lunch, especially if you brought the card in from home. Throughout the morning the word would slowly spread that so and so brought in the card and they were only showing it to 10 people at recess. This is where the true drama was folks. In whether or not you would be able to see the Moby Dick of pokemon cards. The rarest of the rare. If I’m being honest I don’t even know where my collection of cards are anymore. Lost in a move or accidentally thrown away I’m sure. But it’s funny how sometimes you long for the nostalgia. Even though these cards probably would just be something neat to look at for me now, back when they were brand new they were everything to me. The thing is that I remember the tension of opening up a pack of new cards but I’d have to go on the internet to look up what some of them looked like. Sometimes there are other things in life that represent this.

Our faith for example. Our faith is constantly changing and being formed whether in a good way or a bad way. But it too rides the ups and downs of the roller coaster we call life with us. There are times when our faith is very important to us, such as a religious family event or perhaps conformation. But sometimes, when those events are over, there is a lull. We feel as though we’ve paid the bill. I’m not going to lie to you I was much like this. I was not very good at attending church while I was in college. Part of it is excuses like “I didn’t have a car” but mostly I didn’t put the effort in. But God’s word has a funny way of drawing us in sometimes. It has a different means of reaching out to us. Obviously this is different for each of us. We have a great example right in front of us. Samuel lived in the temple. He was a servant of Eli. He didn’t even know that God was calling until Eli helped him figure it out. God’s word often times can help us figure out a difficult situation because the truth is that there is not a lot that has changed. People have been figuring out ways to destroy each other and God for thousands of years. Philip is another example of God’s word working in a more direct way. Jesus simply says to him, “Follow me” and he goes and tells Nathanael. Sometimes God’s word can be a hammer. It can tell us that there are many and various ways in which we have fallen short of what God desires for us. The one thing that God’s word does is that it may beat us down, but it always builds us back up. We may feel as though God is judging us and you know what? He is. He is judging us in the same way that Nathanael initially judged Jesus. Philip comes up to him and does this fantastic confession and Nathanael simply replies, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Now this is the part of God’s word that I think a lot of people can really relate to, a faith that has doubt. That is what Nathanael initially has, doubts about whether or not Nazareth was a place that had the blood of the ancient Jewish kings. That is where his doubt is. But then Jesus speaks to him. He tells him of a time while he was sitting under the fig tree. Now perhaps this was a time in which Nathanael was contemplating something. Perhaps it was just him having a nap. Whatever the case is it is clear that there is a serious importance to this statement because Nathanael’s doubts are all erased as he confesses Jesus to be the Christ. Sometimes God’s word speaks to us from the depth of our woe. After all that is what the bible is, it is God speaking to us. It tells us of a story that humanity has gone on since the beginning. And constantly humanity has needed God to set them on the right track.

Yes God’s word can beat us down. But it always builds us back up. Yes God is judging us but in a way he already has. The judgement that he reserves for sinners he gave to Christ. He put it on his shoulders. You see there are a lot of people who I think find church to be a place for hypocrites. And my answer to that is, “Where else would we go?” But the one thing that I tell people when they ask me what a normal Sunday service is is “Come and see.” Come and look and hear what God’s word has to say. You know one of the other lessons that I learned on the pokemon playground is that proof is an important aspect of believing someone. If someone said they had a particular card but refused to show it to anyone certainly doubt crept in as to whether or not these fantastic claims were real. Nathanael had his doubts and he expressed them. Come and see Philip said. God’s word works in different ways for all of us. Heed the call, come and see the gifts that God has prepared for you. Amen. Now may the peace of God which surpasses our understanding keep and guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus now and forever. Amen.