

“Fishers of Men”

October 29th 2006

Introduction

What did you leave behind when you decided to follow Jesus?

- Friends? Family? Habits?

What important things has someone called on you to do in the past?

The call of Jesus for us to be disciples is by far the most significant calling we will ever receive. It is more important than becoming president of a major company or even of a country.

What makes Christ's call on our lives the most important call we will ever receive?

- It is a call to an eternal identity and to be who we were created to be.
- The results last far longer than any position we can be called to here on earth.

This lesson we will look at the calling of some of Jesus' disciples to learn about how he calls and how we are to respond.

Text

Mark 1:16-20

Here Jesus calls his first four disciples. Peter is referred to as Simon until Mark 3:16 when Jesus gives him the name Peter. This passage has two primary focuses. The first is about the call. The second focus is their response to the call.

Which three of these men became part of Jesus' inner circle of friends?

- Peter, James, and John

Jesus' First Call

Notice that before Jesus can call them, he has to go and meet them where they are at. Jesus doesn't expect for them to seek him out but goes to them, in their everyday life and calls them to be his disciples.

What were the two things Jesus told them to do?

- “Come” and “follow me”

What did he say would be their mission once they followed Jesus?

- They would fish for people instead of for fish.

The call does not stop at the disciples. Their mission will be to present others with the calling of God. Fishing for people is a powerful meta-

phor. It was used multiple times in the Old Testament (Jer 16:14-16, Ezek 29:4, Amos 4:2, Hab 1:14-17). When a fish is hooked or caught in a net, its life will never be the same again. The same holds true for people whose lives come into contact with the call of Christ through the mission of these disciples and now through our mission.

Christ's call came with authority. It came with authority because of who he was as God's son.

First Response

How did Peter and Andrew respond to Jesus' invitation to follow him?

- It was immediate and obedient.

How does following someone else's lead put us in a humbling position?

- Many people don't like following someone else's rules. We like to do things our way.

How much did they know about who Jesus was?

- We don't exactly know but Peter is not certain he is the messiah until Mark 8:29
- They didn't have to know everything about him before they followed him.

What lesson in faith can we learn from the obedience of these men who had only known Jesus for such a short time?

- You don't have to have your life all together to start following Jesus.
- You don't have to know everything about the Bible or Jesus or God to start following.
- You just have to be willing to come and to follow and the rest will grow from there.

Christ's Second Call

In verse 19, Jesus calls James and John to follow him. *How long did Jesus hesitate before he called them to be his disciples?*

- Mark says it was "without delay"

What can we learn from verse 19 for when we feel the need to invite others to follow Jesus?

- We cannot delay. We need to make the move.

When we first felt the need to respond to Christ, what pulled at our heart the most that got us to follow him?

Second Response

Matthew 4:23 says they "immediately" left everything to follow Christ. There are things in our life that if we hold onto them they can prevent us from following Christ. What if they stayed with the boat or with their father. What if they rejected Jesus' call for friends or vocation?

Application

What have you let go of because you knew it would keep you from following Jesus?

What are you holding on to in your life that keeps you from following Jesus like you should?

Who in your life would benefit from the call of Christ and how can you go about being a “fisher of men” in their life?

This second calling shows that sometimes following Christ is more than giving up certain things but can also mean leaving behind relationships. This doesn't mean we leave behind our obligations as later we see Peter still has a house and mother-in-law (Mark 1:29) and Paul remarks that Peter took his wife with him (1 Cor 9:5).

While we were not sitting in a boat on the sea and had Jesus personally invite us from the shore, we all have received a calling from him. Revelation 3:20 says, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me.”

What a wonderful picture of invitation. Christ is doing his part to knock on the door and to give the offer of life. Our obligation is to answer his call, open the door, and give our lives to him starting with baptism. It is in our baptism that we allow him to enter in, remove the old man of sin, raise us to walk a new life, and from that point on we have fellowship with him around his table. But it all starts with a call.

Leaders: Take a moment to pray with your group about being the kind of disciples he wants us to be. This is a prayer that the group members can let go of what hinders them from following Christ and that they would grow in their efforts to be “fishers of men.”

Put it into Practice

Take inventory this week of the people, habits, or things that keep you from walking with Jesus as you should. Pick two of those things and find godly replacements for them to fill in the gap with righteous things.