

THE CALLS OF JESUS

1. COME and SEE

Those who are curious about following Jesus are invited to come and see what he and his ministry are all about. Jesus is looking for a few persons who will make a more serious commitment to being trained by Him.

At the baptism of Jesus, John the Baptist announced that he had seen the Son of God. The next day John was standing with two of his disciples. When Jesus passed by, John exclaimed; 'Look, the Lamb of God.' When the disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. He turned around and saw them and asked them 'What do you want?'. They answered, 'Teacher, where are you staying?' Jesus replied, '**Come and See.**' They then went and spent the day with Jesus. One of those two was Andrew and about 4 PM that afternoon he went to find his brother Simon Peter and told him that they had found the Messiah (Christ). He then brought Peter to Jesus, who promptly prophesied a blessing over him via a name change (Simon meant 'reed' and Peter meant 'rock'.) The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee and finding Philip he spoke to him, '**Follow Me**'. It so happened that Philip, Andrew and Peter were all from the town of Bethsaida which was located at the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee. Philip found Nathaniel and told him that they had found the Messiah, the one that Moses and the prophets had written about. However, when Philip told him it was Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, he responded with cynicism; 'Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?' Philip then told him, '**Come and See.**' - John 1:38-39

Nazareth was a tiny village with terraced hill sides used as vineyards. It was located far from main access roads and trade routes and was settled by Jews who had originally been in Babylon. Nazareth, known as the 'town of the Branch' (Isaiah 11:1) was formed by a clan from the tribe of Judah from the line of David. When they had returned to Israel about 100 B.C., they could have gone to Jerusalem or even settled in Bethlehem, but they sought safety and decided to settle in an isolated place like Nazareth.

God's sovereign hand is evident in history through times and places. Israel's future king would not come from the aristocracy in Jerusalem but from the unlikely place of Nazareth. However, he would not be readily accepted by his hometown relatives during his public ministry. It is likely that Jesus got many of his parable illustrations from his home region.

Jesus often gave demonstrations of kingdom compassion, authority and power which attracted the crowds to draw near, at least for awhile. However, Jesus looks for a few persons who will make a more serious commitment to being trained by Him. Although Jesus ministered to the multitudes, he gave himself to a few. One can impress a crowd, but greater long term impact is made through more personal dedicated discipleship. Jesus had 70 disciples that followed him around but he was closer to the 12 and even had an inner circle of Peter, James and John. (more info on the S.T.A.R.T principle is in the Kingdom Principle section)

2. COME and FOLLOW Matthew 4:18-20, Mark 1:16-18

Jesus seeks disciples who are willing to forsake personal success in order to follow him into a life of submission, sacrifice and obedience to the will of God. (Jesus already had done that himself when he left heaven to come to earth - Philippians 2). Many people claim to be Christians, but they are not disciples.

True disciples are those who are willing to forsake all to follow Jesus.

Five Different Meanings of Follow in the New Testament

- A. **A Soldier** following his captain. Soldiers of that day were used to long marches, extended battle campaigns in strange lands, eating simple meals of only bread and water at times. They endured hardship for the sake of the kingdom of Caesar. The apostle Paul was a good soldier for the cause of Christ's Kingdom. He endured hardship as a good soldier of Jesus. - 2 Timothy 2:3-4.
- B. **A Slave** accompanying his master wherever he goes and waits on him joyfully. Paul was an example of a bondservant; one who volunteers to give up their own rights to serve their master. Romans 1:1, Philippians 1:1, Titus 1:1
- C. **Listening and Following** a wise counselor's opinion Jesus often said: 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear.' Jesus is full of wisdom and a great teacher. We should listen carefully.
- D. **Obedience** to the laws of a city or state in order to be a useful citizen. In the Bible, trust or belief is always meant to include obedience to the Lord's commands.
- E. **Following** a teacher's line of argument or the gist of someone's speech.

Insight: Some people are not ready to follow Jesus immediately. Jesus gives people the opportunity to see what he and his ministry are all about. The first miracle he shows his disciples is turning water into wine at a wedding. This is a divine foreshadow of what God is going to do to them, through them and for them in the future. Their lives would be transformed from the mundane to miraculous and the world would experience its enjoyable effects. Their lifetime commitment to Jesus was a betrothal of marriage, which will be totally fulfilled at the marriage supper of the Lamb. The same is also true for anyone who responds to the calls of Jesus - 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, Revelation 19:6-9. A grand royal wedding of the ages awaits them.

Note: John the Baptist was willing to let his two disciples leave him and follow Jesus, for he knew that his purpose was not to build a ministry for himself but to lead people to Jesus. People we disciple are not ours, they are bought and paid for by Jesus. In real estate, a property can have 1 of 3 signs in front of it: For Sale, Sale Pending, and SOLD. Many people in the world are wandering around and for sale to whoever or whatever seems to meet their desires. Others are sale pending, nearly ready to make a decision as they count the cost. Jesus looks for those who are totally committed and SOLD OUT to Him and His kingdom cause. They are worldchangers!

A Promise for those who Follow Jesus

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Jesus said: Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. At once they left their nets and followed him. - Matthew 4:16-18

Who is to follow Jesus? Galilee had lots of fisherman, but Jesus chose certain ones. We do not know why he chose them over others, but he could see they were hard working men and not lazy. He saw them for what they could become. His first disciples were uneducated and not entrenched in religion but were open to new ideas and ways. They were also young, for Jesus wanted disciples who would carry on his ministry for another generation and pass it on to others. However, today Jesus is looking for disciples of all ages to share in his great work.

Follow

1. **A challenge** and a call with divine authority, not a suggestion
2. **Alertness** To follow someone requires close attention to the leader
3. **A Choice** The disciples did not follow through mere emotion but it was a clear decision of their mind and will which led to forward action
4. **Humility** To follow someone is to submit to their leading. Jesus said **I am the Way**, the Truth and the Life. True followers trust in Him.

Me Jesus is the Son of God, the Promised Messiah, the Lord, Supreme Teacher, Evangelist, Faithful One, Savior, Healer etc. We have the benefit of knowing all that and more. Those first disciples knew little about Jesus, yet, they left all to follow him. Not all are willing to follow Jesus all the way. - John 6:65-68

And This is a hinge or pivot point. If you follow Jesus, he will do something. This requires a partnership and relationship.

I Will Jesus provides the power to influence the process for his chosen purpose. Jesus is resolute about its accomplishment. The job is too big for us, but Jesus promises to help us through the process. - Luke 5:1-11

Make Jesus can do anything...create planets, turn water into wine, multiply food, or make fearful fishermen from Galilee into powerful witnesses and leaders for Jesus in His global kingdom mission. Many of the miracles of Jesus were done instantly, but **to make disciples is a process**, as put clearly in a different version, 'I will make you to become fishers of men.' -NIV The Jews only saw Matthew's past as a corrupt tax collector. Jesus did not look at Matthew's past, he saw him in the present as man, ready to make a new beginning and as a leader in the future for the advancement of God's kingdom. Matthew had collected money from the people to pay the Roman Empire. In contrast, he would go on to collect stories about Jesus and his disciples' kingdom adventures. He would write the book of Matthew, which has inspired millions of persons around the world to love and follow the same Jesus that changed his life.

Near Detroit, Michigan is an amazing manufacturing plant. At one end is a Great Lake where the ships unload chunks of rock in the form of iron ore. It is then taken through the plant of 1.5 miles where it goes through many processes; smelting, molding, stamping etc. At the other end it comes out the in the form of a brand new automobile! God takes human beings in their rawest form and transforms them into beautiful persons who are conformed into his image. - Romans 8:29, Luke 6:40

You Jesus is personal and calls individuals by name and for specific purposes. He has faith in those he has called to be his followers.

FISHERS OF MEN

Insight: Jesus takes men from the mundane (men who catch live fish which then die.) to the miraculous (to fish for men who are dead and see them come alive). They go from just making a living for themselves to bringing new life to others.

Qualities of Fishermen

1. They know about HARD WORK and how to persevere despite adversity. Fishermen face all kinds of weather conditions. Sometimes they can work all night and catch nothing, but they come back again another day to go fishing. Disciples of Jesus need to have such perseverance in fishing for people who need to know Jesus.
 2. Smell of fish. Fishermen have the smell of fish and the sea because of their close contact. Jesus was known as a friend of sinners. He was more interested in reaching the lost, the thirsty, the dirty, the poor and the possessed than to impress the powerful, the proud, the prominent, the privileged and the prosperous.
 3. Faithfulness in learning and practicing various skills. Catching fish is exciting and rewarding, but there are various skills to learn that precede successful fishing, such as: casting nets - Matthew 1:18, mending nets - Matthew 4:21, washing nets - Luke 5:2. How many Christians take much time to learn about evangelism and winning souls for Jesus? In my 30's I had a strong evangelist anointing to teach and practice aggressive evangelism on the streets and at bars etc. Although God has led me more into a teaching ministry the last few decades, I know that God wants to rekindle personal evangelism to be more prominent in my life.
 4. Lifetime work. Most fishermen do it all their life as it is often carried on by family from one generation to another. It becomes a natural way of life and an instinct. Peter slipped back to fishing for awhile after Jesus died - John 21:3, but Jesus called him back for a commitment to fish for men the rest of his life. One way to start is to be a witness as we share about God in our life or others. We will have more extensive teaching on evangelism in other messages.
3. **COME and DIE** As Jesus gets closer to the Cross, his teachings become even more challenging. Jesus wants strong and steadfast soldiers who will not melt like chocolate soldiers in the heat of the battle.

I tell you the truth, unless a **kernel of wheat** falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But **if it dies**, it **produces many seeds**. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me. - John 12:24-26a NIV

*He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.
- Jim Eliot*

*God, I pray thee - light these idle sticks of my life and may I burn up for
for Thee. Consume my life God - for it is Thine. I seek not a long life but
a full one like you Lord Jesus. - Jim Eliot*

Jim Eliot spoke those words and lived them. God answered that prayer.

He went to Ecuador as a missionary to the Auca Indians. He and four others were killed by the Aucas in 1955 along a river bank. Their deaths were not in vain. Hundreds around the world heard the call to missions for Christ because of them. The Aucas were later saved and met Jim's family.

Your status? ___ For Sale ___ Sale Pending ___ SOLD **Bought by Jesus**

4. COME and DINE *John 21:12, Revelation 3:20; 19:9*

After a hard weeks work, it is pleasant to sit down with close friends for a relaxing evening with fine food and warm fellowship. Jesus and his disciples ate together every day. The day meals would be light while evening meals would usually include more food and time to sit and 'sup' with one another. It was a time for fellowship and sharing. Jesus wants us to spend time with him each day. Once a week it would be good to take more time to do so. Everyone needs a sabbath rest where worldly cares are left behind and time is given to have fellowship with God and fellow disciples.

A glorious day is coming when we will sit down with Jesus and his vast family from all of tribes, nations and all generations for the greatest meal ever. All eyes will be on Jesus. Jesus will receive the reward for his suffering, the adulation and praise for His great victory to set the captives free and bring them back to Father's Great Heavenly Home to be with Him forever! Follow us on our website to get ready for that day. Thanks!

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