

Leave and Follow

Matthew 4:18 – 22

I. Intro

- A. Couple weeks ago, many different ideas about what a Christian is; Christian because country live in, born into a Christian family, not of any other religion, or specific denomination
- B. Very first followers of Christ didn't call themselves "Christians", term given to them in a mocking, ridicule fashion; referred to themselves as disciples (followers) of Christ
- C. Interesting fact: Word *Christian* mentioned only 3 times in scripture; word "disciple" mentioned 281 times; **Question:** What term has the most significance – being known as a "Christian" or being known as a "Disciple" of Jesus Christ
- D. Background to shed more light on terms:
 - i. In OT times, and in Jesus' day, all Hebrew boys went to Torah school (Torah – law of God given to Moses, specifically first 5 books of OT; Torah school to learn, study the Law); in Torah school until age 17
 - ii. At age 17, there was a cut – to continue in religious studies had to find yourself a rabbi to follow, and one that would accept you, willing to take you as one of their students, or "disciple" (actual word was Talmid); to request to learn under that rabbi, the potential talmid would go sit at the rabbi's feet
 - iii. Rabbi would then ask the candidate questions and put them through series of tests to see if they were worthy to be their talmid (disciple)
 - iv. To be a rabbi's talmid was a very coveted, sought after position by Hebrew young men; rabbi's were extremely picky on who they chose – choose only the smartest and most intellectual – they chose who they believed had the best ability to become just like them
 - v. Several years, the talmid (disciple) would follow their rabbi around, literally in many ways step for step, imitating their rabbi in every way
 - vi. Rabbi's with greatest authority were called *smicha* rabbi (name Gamaliel) – were master authorities on the Torah
- E. **READ Matthew 4:18 – 22**
- F. Just before choosing Peter and Andrew as disciples, Jesus has been in wilderness and comes to where John the Baptist is preaching the coming of God's kingdom and baptizing
- G. **READ Matthew 3:13 – 16;** everybody there, their *smicha* radar goes off – a man named Jesus whose covered in *smicha*
- H. Now, this man, this new rabbi with all kinds of *smicha* comes to Peter and Andrew and says, *Come, follow me*; the rabbi's asking them to be His

disciple (talmid), they didn't have to go to the rabbi or prove their worthiness (very likely that sometime earlier Peter and Andrew didn't make the talmid cut of another rabbi)

I. Couple points about becoming a disciple (talmid) of Jesus Christ

II. **1 - Jesus Doesn't Choose the Best, He Chooses the Willing**

A. When Jesus chose His disciples He didn't choose Gamaliel or Caiaphus (the High Priest); He didn't choose Herodotus, the historian; didn't choose Socrates, the great thinker; didn't choose Julius Caesar the great ruler

B. Jesus chose as His talmid such plain, ordinary men that it was almost comical – half fished for a living

C. He didn't choose men based on their status, prestige, or even abilities; He chose men for what He could do through them

D. Jesus says about John the Baptist: Matthew 11:11 (NIV)

¹¹ I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ; might say JB was Jesus' all-time favorite preacher yet as great as he was Jesus says ... *he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*

E. Least in the kingdom of heaven means one who has the least abilities, least talent, least knowledge of scripture, but is greater because of the willingness to be completely surrendered and sold out for Jesus and follows him so closely that they've picked up the "smell" of Jesus

i. **Illustration:** Picking up restaurant smell

F. **Question:** Wouldn't it be something if more people sitting in churches today had the "smell" of Jesus because they had that close of a relationship with Him?

G. We have something John the Baptist didn't have – presence of the Holy Spirit in us

H. God didn't choose you because you were awesome, He wanted to make you awesome so He chose you; your awesomeness comes from the power of His Spirit in you

III. **2 – God Chose Us, We Didn't Choose Him**

A. Peter and Andrew's day, if you were the best of the best, then you applied to the rabbi and he may or may not accept you; Hebrew young men chose what rabbi they wanted to be their teacher, the rabbi decided whether or not you were worthy enough to be accepted

B. But God chooses us; even further, God chooses us even before we're looking for Him; Jesus sought after Peter and Andrew while they're just

going about their everyday, normal routine – they had no clue Jesus would call them out that day

- C. **Question:** Can you imagine the boost, the confidence that instilled in Peter and Andrew? Does knowing that Jesus chose you long before you were seeking Him instill a boost and confidence in you? Not because you're worthy but because He truly loves you and desires for you to follow Him
- D. **Not only did God choose us, but He chose each of us for a purpose – ultimately our purpose is to honor, glorify Him in our lives; but - John 15:16 (NIV)** ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. **(Not only producing, bearing fruit in our own lives but planting seed in the lives of others so they too will produce and bear fruit of righteousness and godliness)**
- E. **When our confidence falters, it's not because Jesus is failing us in some way or the Holy Spirit is no longer working in our lives – it's because we've lost confidence that Jesus is able to do through us what's He's promised**
- F. **Our confidence doesn't need to be in ourselves (that will always lead to disappointment), our confidence needs to be in Christ and His power and what He is able to do in us**
- G. **Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)** ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

IV. **3** – Our Primary Calling, to be with Him

- A. **Jesus tells Peter and Andrew, ... *Come, follow me*; ... come be with me, come let's hang out together, come let's do life together, come let's minister together ... and all along the way I'll instruct you, teach you, demonstrate for you, be an example for you**
- B. **Jesus doesn't tell them where they're going, doesn't tell them what their assignment will be other than He will make them *fishermen of men* (v. 19)**
- C. **But Jesus' primary calling for you is not for you to do something, but to follow Him so that you can become like Him; to become like Him you have to know Him; to know Him you have to spend time with Him; to spend time with Him is soaking in every single word that comes out of His mouth – those words are found here (hold up Bible)**
- D. **Yes, it's good to spend time alone in His Word, but it's also good to spend time in His Word with other believers – why we have services, Sunday School, Brotherhood Men's Bible Study, AWANA for children, discipleship groups for our Youth**

- E. **BTW, it's another way for "smell" of Jesus to get all over you – digging deep into His Word until it becomes a part of you and dominates your thinking and totally transforms your behavior**

V. **4 – To Follow Him, We Have to Leave**

- A. **Question:** What do we have to leave? Everything that's keeping us from being fully devoted to following Him
- B. **Question:** How long did Peter and Andrew have to think about following Jesus after He asked them? Not even a split second; **REFER v. 20**
- C. Two very significant things Peter and Andrew left behind to follow Jesus – *their nets* and their father, their family
 - i. Their nets – their career, their livelihood
 - ii. Their family – their most important relationships
- D. If there's two very difficult things for people to leave in order to be fully surrendered and devoted disciples (followers) of Christ it's their livelihood (that's where they find the comfort, security) and their most important relationships (because that's where they find their worth)
- E. Jesus wants you to follow Him so that He will be your security, so that your worth is found in your relationship with Him
- F. One thing learned in life is that human beings, no matter how close they may be to you, will always disappoint; but Jesus will never disappoint you
- G. The Lord may never call any of you to literally leave your jobs or leave your family for Him, but there will be times where you will have to decide what's most important in your life – job, family, church, power, recognition, wealth or material possessions – or your relationship with your rabbi – Jesus Christ

VI. **5 – He Commands Us to Spiritually Reproduce**

- A. Touched on earlier – Jesus told Peter and Andrew *follow me* and we're going fishing – men, women, and children fishing
- B. **John 15:8 (NIV)** ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.
 - i. Not only bearing fruit in our own life, but leading others to also bear spiritual fruit by the seed of the Gospel that's been planted in their hearts by us
- C. Quote from book "The Master Plan of Evangelism" by Robert Coleman: *When will the church learn this lesson? Preaching to the masses, although necessary, will never suffice in the work of preparing leaders for evangelism. Nor can occasional prayer meetings and training classes for Christian workers do this job... Individual women and men are God's method. God's plan for discipleship is not something, but someone.*

VII. **Close**

- A. **Our focus the next few weeks – WE ARE GOD’S METHOD (All Repeat)**
- B. **Just as Jesus calls us to be His disciple (to follow Him), He also calls us to make disciples (to find people to follow Christ)**
- C. **Leave with one challenge: Ask the Lord to help you identify one person that you, with the help and power of the Holy Spirit in your life, that you can lead to become a disciple of Christ this year – just one person**
- D. **I personally need to be more serious about this, and I want all of us as well to be more serious about this; if WE all committed to this, by the end of the year these pews will be full**
- E. **Invitation: If you’re not already, to leave and follow Christ today; maybe some of you have already made choice to follow Christ but still some things you haven’t left behind, let go of**
- F. **Jesus isn’t looking for the best, He’s just looking for the willing**
- G. **He’s already chosen you, will you accept and receive His invitation**
- H. **Will you leave all behind to be with Him today**
- I. **Will you commit today to be a disciple and a disciple maker**