



Mark 1:16-20

The first thing Christ did in the period of what His public ministry was to declare the arrival of God's Kingdom (Mark 1:14-15)

His second act was to **call** people to follow Him and be partners in His mission (Mark 1:16-20)

The first and the second phase of discipleship

- They had met Jesus before and believed Him to be the Messiah (See [John 1](#))
 - It appears that they had spent some time with Him and accompanied Him at some events (Ex. [The wedding at Cana](#)¹; [Passover in Jerusalem](#)²; [John the Baptist's ministry](#)³)
- The first phase is to salvation—believing
- The second phase is to **participation—mission**
 - We often speak of this in terms of '**our call**'

What is God's **call** on your life?

- We can talk about it in generic terms
- We can talk about it in specific terms

Do you know?

- Are you fulfilling that call, or failing in that call? (Because you are called)

We are all called

- 1 Peter 2:9
*But you are a **chosen race**, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, **so that** you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*
- Cf. 1 Peter 4:10

As a Christian, as the Church, you are a chosen instrument of God for mission

- *The people of God, called to God, and sent by God, for the glory of God, to meet the needs of the world with God*

God always chooses His partners

- He chose Noah and Abraham, Moses and David, the prophets, Israel, and You!

What is interesting is whom God chooses to be on mission with Him

¹ John 2:1

² John 2:13, 17, 22

³ John 3:22

- Look at Scripture carefully and you will see the raw truth that:
 - Noah had a drinking problem
 - Abraham struggled with doubt
 - Moses couldn't speak well
 - David was an adulterer and a murderer
 - As far as the prophets go:
 - Elijah was suicidal
 - Jeremiah was depressed
 - Isaiah preached naked
 - Jonah ran from God
 - As far as His chosen people:
 - Israel was a stiff-necked and obstinate people

For the life of me I do not know why people feel proud when God calls them!

- 1 Corinthians 1:26-29
 - 26 For consider **your calling**, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;
 - 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,
 - 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,
 - 29 **so that no man may boast before God.**

We learn something of the nature of the Kingdom when we observe whom Christ **calls**

- The Kingdom does not conform to conventional standards of importance and power and influence
 - In our text: He doesn't recruit the influential, the politically potent, or the Jerusalem elite
 - But rather, seemingly **socially insignificant people in an unnoticed corner of Galilee**

And if you look at the Gospels carefully (and even the epistles) you will find that the disciples were not necessarily the most amazing of men

"They were often self-centered and inhospitable. When the multitude who had walked a long way around the Sea of Galilee to be with Jesus became hungry the disciples thought only of sending them away on their own to find food (Mt 14:15). When some little children were brought to Jesus for blessing, the disciples rebuked those who brought them (Mt 19:13). Peter thought he would be extremely generous to forgive someone 'up to seven times' (Mt 18:21). Even on the night of Jesus' betrayal, as their Lord agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter, James, and John could not stay awake with Him (Mt 26:40, 45). The disciples were selfish, proud, weak and cowardly. They showed little potential even for dependability, much less for greatness. Yet Jesus chose them for disciples, even to be His inner circle of twelve. They were raw material that He would make into useful instruments."⁴ (MacArthur)

"They may, and often will, fail him and disappoint him, but their role is crucial to the achievement of his mission, for it is through this flawed and vulnerable group of people that God's kingship will be established."⁵ (France)

Even though this call does not necessarily always come to the powerful, it is a powerful call

In verse 17 Jesus says, "**Follow me**"

⁴ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Matthew 1-7)* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 117.

⁵ R. T. France, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary (The Gospel of Mark)*, I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 94.

It doesn't come out in the English text, but in the Greek it's a very strong statement

- “Come here, behind me!”
- It was somewhat idiomatic, and not that strong, but it was certainly more than just follow me

What is clear is that they are being called to follow Jesus as their leader in a **relationship** that goes beyond mere leaning and is more like a full-time ‘apprenticeship’⁶

- It has often been compared to Rabbis during the time and their disciples
 - But Rabbis did not call their followers, rather the pupil adopted the teacher⁷ (Cf. Jn 15:16)
 - But here, Jesus is doing the adopting—choosing
 - John 15:16^a
You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit...

Part of the mission of Christ is to get us on mission with Him, and to make our lives fruitful for His glory

As we unfold the details of this text, one thing that must not escape us is that **this call is radical**. It requires a radical response.

One thing we must then ask as the Church is, “Where are all the radicals?”

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And though the call of Christ itself is radical, notice that all of these guys were just doing what they did when Jesus called them

- Peter and Andrew were casting a net
- James and John were cleaning their nets
 - Everyday stuff—and Jesus steps into their world
 - Jesus shows up on ‘their turf’ He calls them to be about ‘His business’
 - Tuesday @ RVTA prayer (“God you are already at work at work—help me to join you”)

The call of God often comes to us in very normal circumstances

- Examples: Me and surf contests, Marty and camping

They are at the point of crisis/decision (and so are those moments in our lives)

- It would be a costly decision—left all they had and knew
- Not all calls will look like this (most of you are called to stay—but become intentional)

Something that bears mentioning is the obvious pull of money/material things on someone that is walking away from their source of income

At one point Peter voices what may have been some frustration at this reality when he says, “We have left everything and followed you” (Mk 10:28)

It must have been very real for Peter, because he does go back to fishing (Luke 5)

- And in His kindness, Jesus demonstrates His mastery over money/matter/income
 - Peter had worked hard and caught nothing that night (Lk 5:5)
- Jesus has everything Peter worked so hard for at His fingertips—and doesn't want it
 - **Peter sees the futility and inadequacy of his own values and priorities**⁸

⁶ France, 96.

⁷ France, 96.

⁸ Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books, 2008), 146.

- Jesus offers Him the opportunity to be part of **something bigger**
- The chance to labor for something of greater value—people
 - Fisher of men

What Jesus always challenges us with is **the value of people**

- When the Pharisees complained about Jesus' habit of hanging out with sinners
 - He replies with stories of a shepherd who has lost a sheep and a woman who has lost a coin (Lk 15:1-10)
 - And the Jesus talks about the lost son (Lk 15:11-31)
 - When attacked for healing a man on the Sabbath Jesus asks his accusers which one of them would not rescue a donkey or an ox that had fallen in a pit on the Sabbath—how much more a person (Lk 14:1-6)
 - In each of these cases Jesus starts by discussing things everyone understood the value of (coins, livestock, fish)
 - And then turns the discussion to **people**—and their far greater value

"On Monday it was cold and wet. And our friends in the streets felt it. One of them died from it. Freedom was a paraplegic, and a Vietnam vet. I met him on Veteran's Day, and when I met him he was crying for all the boys who had died and continued to die in the wars of our nation. Then, he told me about his life, how his wife and children had died, and how much he missed them. And then, he praised God for his goodness and love. I was at a complete loss as what to do with this man, with his life, the tragedy, and pain of it, and his joy and perspective on it. And on Monday he died because it was cold and wet, and he had no shelter. I have to confess that I used to think that because we lived in sunny Southern California, that homeless people would not die from the elements. I was wrong. And Freedom was the 28th person to die on our streets this year."⁹

Matthew 9:36-37 (NIV)

36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few..."

The call is a call to the Mission of God which is the mission of helping and saving people

- To be fishers of men—and the call is radical
- Jesus was asking for **total commitment** to His cause

Verse 18

- They left the nets and followed Him
- Maybe a more potent translation is they forsook their nets (KJV)
- The Greek word means to send from one's self, to yield up, to leave¹⁰
- The construction of the word (the prefixed preposition) **implies a separation**
 - Here it is a separation from the fishing business to the business of preaching the Gospel
 - **What are you being called to forsake—to separate from?**
 - The participle is in the **aorist tense** which means **it was to be a once and for all action**
 - **It was a complete and permanent break with their former life**¹¹
 - the sense of radical departure and a new beginning¹²

What is Jesus calling you to (and from)?

It is a mistake to think that every follower of Jesus will have a call that looks like this

- But, every follower is called

⁹ <http://missiochristi.net/your-story/post/962931?lastPage=true>

¹⁰ Kenneth Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament (Volume One)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 29.

¹¹ Wuest, 29.

¹² France, 98.

- And we are all called (perhaps constantly) to forsake something

And the call to mission is always **radical**
And the call to mission is always **relational**

They left their nets **and followed Him** (v. 18)

- ακολουθεω
- It implies fellowship, joint-participation, a side-by-side walking with another
- “To cleave steadfastly to one and conform wholly to his example in living and if need be in dying”¹³
 - And the would!

It is relational—with Jesus and each other

And notice that he called them in pairs—and later in the Gospels when He sends them out He sends them on pairs

The joy of church planters...

"Nobody should ever go to the field for God, or to any service for God, alone. He must have those who will pray, who are with him in spirit at his side constantly, for the man who goes **in answer to God's call** will face many shattering disillusionments. He will be subject to perils he has never known. He will have to face loneliness that he had never imagined and homesickness from which he thought he delivered when he was a little boy at school. But in that man who has left everything in life which he might hold dear is entitled to spiritual protection and to expect it from men who know how to pray and write, and above all who know how to enter into his needs and share them at the throne of grace."¹⁴ (Alan Redpath)

The Missio Christi always goes forth in togetherness

- That is what Jesus did

From now on in the Gospels, anytime we see Jesus the disciples are **with Him**

- They were to “**follow**”-- fellowship, joint-participation, a side-by-side walking with another
- To be “**with Him**”
 - That is the call
- Then we go out and preach (Cf. **Mk 3:13-14**)
 - Ministry flows from intimacy
- Being on mission comes from being with Him
 - They would be called to be His witnesses and represent Him in and to the world
 - To put forth a “**just image of His character and a true reflection of His spirit**”¹⁵
 - The way to be most adept at doing this is by having first been with Jesus
 - The more we are with Jesus the more we are like Jesus
 - **Acts 4:13**
 - **Illustration:** 2 different people I spoke with this week about God's call on their lives
 - We can see through the rest of the Gospels that the disciples had so much to learn (in understanding and character)
 - They were not particularly holy men, at lest they did not see themselves that way (**Peter in Luke 5:8; Cf. Isaiah 6:1-5**)
 - Those who see God as most Holy are those who see Him most clearly and nearly
 - As a pastor I have many people approach me and I approach many people about ministry

¹³ Wuest, 29.

¹⁴ Alan Redpath, *Victorious Christian Service*, 34.

¹⁵ A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988), 12.

- Those I dismiss (Telling me of their qualifications)
- Those I pursue (because these are the types Jesus pursued)
 - Where there was selfish ambition Jesus dealt with it

What is Jesus wanting you to follow Him into?

- Where is he moving/going and calling you to fall in behind Him>
- Jonathan Edwards

Jesus is on mission... are you?