

Marked: Called to Follow - Matthew 4:18-22

True disciples are believing and following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and living on mission with Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

How would you explain what it means to be a disciple to someone? What words or phrases would you make sure to include?

Who in your personal experience has best exemplified what you believe it means to follow Jesus? What particular traits about his or her life made you pick them? What similar traits do you see in your own life?

Describe one talent or ability you learned from watching someone else (fishing, playing bagpipes, rebuilding an engine, etc). How long did it take for you to learn to do it yourself? How much does your technique reflect the person's technique that you learned from?

Matthew recounted the manner in which Jesus called His first disciples. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were engaged with a concise invitation to follow Jesus, with very little additional detail. Remarkably, even with many unanswered questions, they obediently chose to follow Christ. Their lives were reshaped and their priorities reset forever as a result.

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 4:18, 20.

Consider when Jesus first called you to be His disciple. How did He interrupt “normal” to get your attention? In what ways can you demonstrate Christ’s love with others you meet in your normal day? What in your life has changed the most significantly since you first encountered Jesus? What are the “nets” that you left behind? Reading Matthew’s account along with John’s Gospel reveals that Peter and Andrew had met Jesus previously, while Andrew was still a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35-41). When Jesus found them, Peter and Andrew were in the midst of a normal day’s activity—fishing. Matthew was careful to point out the ordinariness of the day up until the point that Jesus interjected.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 4:19.

What has been the greatest change in the way you understand “success” since you responded to Jesus’ call to follow Him?

How would you list your top five priorities in your life right now? How has that list changed from five years ago? One year ago? What were the crucial life events that led to those changes?

“Follow Me” meant severing attachments to whatever authority their lives had been following. That authority could be something as simple as the current economic system in which fishing was a viable way of providing for one’s family. Certainly, Peter and Andrew did not consciously think in such deliberate terms. However, the reality of their decision was definitely that pressing. Following Jesus’ calling meant separating themselves from what the world they lived in viewed as normal—being good providers, excelling commercially, and positively contributing to their culture. Instead, following Jesus would come with a new identity and a new mission.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 4:21-22.

How would you describe the priority that family occupies in our culture? What about in your life specifically? How does that priority compare with following Christ in all of life?

What has been the most difficult relationship that you have had to distance yourself from in favor of following Christ? How did you make that delicate transition? What about following Christ led you to do so?

While there was some difference in the wording of the response of James and John, the greater importance remained in their similarity with Peter and Andrew’s response. Specifically, like Peter and Andrew, James and John responded immediately and without hesitation. They departed from their entire way of life to embrace what they clearly esteemed to be a greater way of life in following Jesus.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How would you describe the difference between being a hearer of the Word and a doer of the Word? Which of those would you currently use to describe yourself?

Think back over the last five years of your life. How have you seen your thoughts, desires, passions, etc., change to reflect the work of Christ in your life? What has been the most surprising change?

Whose life are you investing in for the cause of making disciples right now? How would you like that answer to change in the coming months? What is one thing you could do this week to move in that direction?

PRAYER

Pray that God would enable you to follow Jesus without reserve. Ask the Father to reveal the areas you are holding back, that you might submit those to Him. Pray that you would be used to encourage other followers of Jesus as you follow Him yourself. Pray that your group would be made up of disciples who make disciples.