

## Follow Me, Part 2; Mark 1:16-20 0272

*The disciple must have the world look at them, and look past them, and see Jesus. That's the whole point. That's the whole key.*

Casting their net, verse 17, Jesus said to them, follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men. So, it's at this point that we pause and just recognize just the incredible oddity of the people whom Jesus has chosen, with whom to build His kingdom.

So, he chooses these four fishermen. And as we said before, that doesn't mean he was choosing these, sort-of day laborer or ditch digger type of people. He was choosing successful business people. But nonetheless, he was choosing fishermen. So, why would Jesus choose such people to start his kingdom here on earth? I mean, these people, they are going to become the foundation of the church. Why would he choose such people?

If we were writing this story, if we were creating this story, don't you think that we would have Jesus to choosing--hey, Jesus. Don't you think you'll lend some credibility to yourself if you choose some other religious leaders from Jerusalem? Don't you think you'll learn this movement, some credibility, if you have a few of the leading Pharisees, maybe a few of the leading Sadducees, maybe even the Chief Priest, maybe some scribes. Won't that lend some believability, some credibility to this movement that you're starting? If you want to change the world, Jesus, then, I mean, we need to have people following you that others can see and recognize and say, look, that person sees in Jesus, someone worthy to follow. So, let's pay attention to this.

If we were writing the story, certainly, we would have had, at the very least, some of Jesus's followers to have been people of clout, people of political standing people of social standing. But in particular people of religious standing. Instead, Jesus, as we see here, in this door is going to choose for fishermen, he's going to go on to choose, perhaps, for more fishermen, maybe as many as six more fishermen. So, perhaps as many as 10, of the disciples were fishermen, or at least had fishing in the background. He's also going to have a zealot, a tax collector. He is going to surround himself with the most unlikely of candidates.

But not only that, the people that Jesus is going to surround himself with in order to initiate this kingdom, this kingdom that is going to oust the false ruler, Jesus is going to surround himself with those people who are the, seemingly, the least spiritually astute people that he could have chosen.

And so we're familiar with just sort-of the disciples sort-of fumbling through their way of following Jesus, we've talked before about how Mark is going to treat the disciples. But in this instance, of course, Jesus issues this call. He says, follow me, and they respond, and they follow Him, right? And that gives us at least a positive feeling about the disciples, doesn't it? Doesn't that make it kind of feel good about the disciples, that they listened to Jesus, and they obeyed him when they followed--well, that's the last time. That's the last time this is the last instance, in the entire Gospel of Mark, that we're given an entirely positive account of anything that the disciples do. Because from this point on, Mark is going to show us just how spiritually dull they are. He's going to show us just how, how much they lack understanding and spiritual perception.

Chapter four, verse 13, Jesus is going to say, do not understand this parable that how are you going to understand any of the others other ones I'm going to tell? You see the other references there. Or he's

going to talk about their lack of sympathy, and their lack of care for people. We all are familiar with the story in chapter 10, of when Jesus calls the little children to himself and the disciples rebuked them. And Jesus has to rebuke the disciples for rebuking the people for bringing the children to him. And Jesus says, Let the children come to Me. So, they have this lack of sympathy, lack of concern even for children.

Mark is going to tell us abundantly about their lack of humility. From chapter nine, we remember the story of when they're arguing on the way about which one of them is going to be the greatest in the kingdom. Mark's going to tell us about their lack of a forgiving spirit. Instead, they have this, seemingly, this unforgiving type of spirit. So, when the 10 heard it from chapter 10, they were indignant at James and John.

Mark is going to tell us about their lack of prayerfulness. Mark chapter nine, remember the story of the father, who has the demon possessed boy and the disciples can't cast the demon out. And so, Jesus says, well, this can only be cast out by prayer--meaning that you are obviously not men of prayer. Or who can forget the instance in the garden, when they're asleep, they were asked to pray, but yet they can't stay awake--their prayer, their lack of prayerfulness.

He also marks their lack of courage. When Jesus is arrested and Mark is--we talked about this before--how Mark is certain to tell us here, not only of the apostles' lack of courage, but his own lack of courage as they all fled.

And so Jesus here is surrounding himself with a group of people that just seem to lack all spiritual astuteness, all spiritual sharpness, they just seem to be people that just have such a hard time getting any of these spiritual truths that Jesus is here to teach them.

And so the lesson that we must leave with is--the success of this kingdom does not depend upon the competence of the subjects of the kingdom. The success of this kingdom will depend upon God and God alone, the success of the kingdom will not depend on the competence of those whom Jesus is calling. Because instead of calling those who are apparently spiritually competent, Jesus will call on those who need to--in Mark's words--become fishers of men. Mark is the only one who uses that phrasing. Matthew will say that Jesus says, follow me and I will make you fishers of men--Mark is the only one who says that Jesus says, follow me and I will make you become fishers of men. In other words, Jesus will make the disciples to become that which they are not. He will make them to be that which they are not.

Now, Mark chapter four and verse 25, Jesus says this, for the one who has more will be given and from the one who has not even what he has will be taken away. So, what Jesus is getting at there is the requirement that disciples have to have. The disciples do not need to be spiritually astute, they do not need to be spiritually compassionate, they do not need to have this prayerful spirit. Instead, what they need to have is a teachable heart. That's what Jesus is talking about. For the one who has even more will be given. And for the one who has not even what he thinks he's has will be taken. In other words, what Jesus is saying is, My followers need a teachable heart. That is the most critical component for the disciple, that they have a teachable heart, that they have a heart that says, I want to learn, I am willing to put on the altar, what I believe to be true, I'm willing to subject what I believe to be true to the authority of the Word of God. I'm willing to subject what I have always held as tradition, and what I've always held his truth to the authority of God's Word. I'm willing to subject that to his authority, because I have a teachable heart. My heart's desire is to know the father, my heart's desire is to know His truth. And to put that truth into place in my life. That's the heart that Jesus seeks.

And so he chooses these disciples, not because they are spiritually 'all there,' but because they have this teachable heart. And he's going to take that heart, and he's going to use that heart, and he's going to grow that heart. And these people, they're going to be developed by the Spirit of God, and they are going to become the foundation of the church.

You see, we have this misconception today that we somehow think, in the church, that if we want to change the world, what we need to do is we need to convince the world that we are all that smart, and we're all that clever, and we've got our lives all that much together, and we are all that attractive, and we're all that successful, so that the world will see us, and so the world will say, I want to be like them. Isn't that a misconception that just won't die. That somehow we think the world will see followers of Christ and think, wow, those people have got it together. I want to be like them.

When Jesus' calling here shows us--I'm not calling people that have it together. I'm calling people that don't have it together. Because the disciple of Christ must have the world look to him and see something behind him. That's so crucial to grasp. The true disciple must have the world look at them, and say to themselves, this person can't--this can't be all. That can't be the whole story. The disciple of Christ must have the world look at them and say, there's got to be something else I'm not seeing there. There's got to be something beyond that. There's got to be something that's making that person have the joy that they have and have the peace that they have. Because on the outside, they don't seem to have it all together. They don't seem to be the cream of the crop. There's got to be something else there. The disciple must have the world look at them, and look past them and see Jesus. That's the whole point. That's the whole key.

Jesus is surrounding himself with those to whom the world will look and they're going to say, Peter? Peter?--there's got to be something else there. James and John, those quick-tempered guys, there's got to be something else there. And they've got to look beyond that. And they got to see Jesus.

That's a Paul's going to say to the Corinthians, in his first letter to the Corinthians, not many of you were wise by human standards, not many of you were accomplished by worldly standards. Not many of you were leaders by human standards. Nevertheless, you are whom in God has placed His kingdom.

Or what Paul said of the Corinthians in his second letter to Corinthians chapter four, verse seven, God has placed this treasure in jars of clay, so that the worth won't be seen as the jar. But the worth will be seen what's in the jar.

The disciple must have the world look at them and see something behind them, something beyond them. Jesus said to them, follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.

Verse 18, and immediately, they left their nets and follow Him. And going a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were in their boat mending their nets. So, here they are not casting the net, but they're mending it. You can imagine that the nets probably suffer some loss, some tears, some rips, that they need to be mended. Of course, you don't need any holes in the net for the fish to escape through. So, they want the net to be mended. So, that's what they're, they're engaged in this mending of their nets. And they are said to be James and his brother, John, the sons of Zebedee, and they were in their boat mending their nets and verse 20, and immediately called them and they left their father's Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

So, here we come across James and John, two sets of brothers; James and John are brothers, Peter and Andrew brothers. James and John were told to the sons of Zebedee and Zebedee is actually here, he's still

engaged or engaged in the fishing business himself. Perhaps he was the founder of it. Perhaps his father was the founder, but it's his boat. His sons are here working along with the hired servants, Jesus calls to them, they likewise immediately leave their nets and follow Him.

So, the way the Mark relates to story here, he intentionally relates it in such a way that the reader is given the impression that Jesus just speaks and they follow. Now we know that the disciples have met Jesus before, and in fact, they have believed upon Jesus prior to this. John chapter one tells us if when these disciples were introduced to John, (I'm sorry) to Jesus. They were introduced to Jesus by John the Baptizer, when John the Baptizer--they were his disciples, Peter, Andrew, James, and John, all of them were John does the Baptizer's disciples--John, the baptizer says to them, Look, there's the Messiah. There's the one that I'm here to proclaim. He's the one.

So, they were there for his, this baptism. They have believed upon Jesus, but they have not yet been called to follow him full-time. But the way that Mark tells a story here, he wants to tell the story in such a way that the reader is just left with the impression--Jesus just shows up, speaks, and they follow because that's Mark's point. Mark's point here is the absolute sovereignty of the call of Jesus upon their life.