

Mark 1:16-20
Calling
Disciples

1

Introduction

In our passage today, Mark records the calling of the first disciples. We want to see what kind of people Jesus called to follow Him, for Jesus is still calling people to “follow Him” and be His disciples.

2

Mark 1:16-20

And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

¹⁹ When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets. ²⁰ And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

3

Calling Disciples

Mark 1:16

And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

Jesus was going along the shore by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon. Jesus already knew these men. We will mention later that some of these had been out listening to John the Baptist and saw him point out Jesus as the "Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world." Some time had passed from that introductory meeting. Jesus pursued these men and called them to abandon their earthly work and follow Him to share His eternal work.

4

Calling Disciples

Mark 1:16

And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

Simon and Andrew were busy working in their family business. They were fishermen. This would have been a prosperous business. All this to say that they were ordinary working-class people.

This is surprising from the human viewpoint. It was not what was expected. Jesus did not call the rich, powerful, or political men of the Sanhedrin to be His disciples. He did not choose priests, or the religious leaders, or the professionally trained theological teachers of His day. He chose working-class fisherman.

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Calling Disciples

Mark 1:19

When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets.

When Jesus had gone a little farther, He saw James and John. They were also fishermen.

There is a difference between salvation and discipleship. Salvation is the initial act of receiving forgiveness for sins and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. Discipleship is the ongoing process of following Jesus, learning from him, and actively living out one's faith. While salvation is a one-time event, discipleship is a lifelong journey of growth and transformation.

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Hardworking

Mark 1:19

When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets.

All these men were hardworking. Some were busy catching fish and others were taking care of their equipment by mending their nets.

Being a disciple takes works. Jesus continues to call believers into a deeper relationship with Him. Being a disciple requires a person to take the commitment of being a Christian seriously. It involves a careful inspection of one's life to see the weaknesses and failures and to tend to and mend those areas through the help of the Holy Spirit.

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Visionaries

Mark 1:19

When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets.

These men saw a bigger picture than just the day to day issues of life. According to John 1:35–42, Andrew was with John the Baptist when John pointed to Jesus and declared, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” (John 1:36). John also records that there was another with Andrew. Since John never mentions himself directly in his gospel, many scholars believe that John was there as well. After spending the day with Jesus, Andrew went and found his brother Simon Peter, who also came to see the Lord (vv. 40–42).

Their going out to see John the Baptist shows that they were looking for the Messiah and His Kingdom of Righteousness.

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Followers

Mark 1:17-18

Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

When Jesus called these men, He told them to "**Follow Me.**" Jesus' statement was a command, not a request. Unlike the rabbis, who instructed the people to follow their legalistic traditions, Jesus commanded these Galilean fishermen to follow Him. And He did so with ultimate authority. The implications of His command were extreme and unmistakable: Abandon everything, including your careers as fishermen, and follow Me.

9

Followers

Mark 1:17-18

Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

Jesus would later echo that same kind of call in spiritual terms to all who come to Him. He said in Mark 8:34: "**Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**" That first call to the disciples was an illustration of the comprehensive call our Lord gives to all who would enter His kingdom. It is not the abandonment of an earthly career but of all other masters!

10

Trainable

Mark 1:17-18

Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

Jesus said that He would make them "**become fishers of men.**" They may not have fully understood what this meant, but they were willing to follow and commit themselves to it. They understood how to catch fish, and later they would be involved in preaching and spreading the Gospel of Salvation. This takes training, and Jesus will spend the next 3 years teaching and training them how to fish for men.

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Trainable

Mark 1:17-18

Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

Today's disciples also fish from men. The command to the church and all believers is that we should share the Gospel message. Not all will bite, but that is not our responsibility. Our duty is to share God's Truth with those who are willing to listen. Some may reject, but they are not rejecting us but Jesus. Some may not be ready as they need time to evaluate the things they have heard. Some plant, some water, and sometimes one will be able to gather the harvest.

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Without Hesitancy

Mark 1:17-18

¹⁸ They immediately left their nets and followed Him. ... ²⁰ And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

For all these men, their response to Jesus' call was met with an immediate response. They did not debate between or within themselves. They did not procrastinate or produce an excuse. They stopped what they were doing and immediately turned and followed Jesus.

When God reveals His will to us, we must respond immediately. It is easy to procrastinate, or come up with excuses, but in reality, these are forms of rebellion and saying No to God's will for us.

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Sacrificially

Mark 1:17-18

¹⁸ They immediately left their nets and followed Him. ... ²⁰ And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

When these men heard Jesus call, they left what they had and went after Him. They left their business and all that it afforded them and turned to follow Jesus with all its uncertainty. They understood that what Jesus was offering, was of greater value than what they possessed.

Today's disciples need to remember that what this world offers is temporal and passing away. However, what Jesus offers is eternal and will not pass away.

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Sacrificially

Mark 1:17-18

¹⁸ They immediately left their nets and followed Him. ... ²⁰ And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

Simon who we better know as Peter recorded it this way in his epistle.

1 Peter 1:3-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

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So What ...

The question you need to ask yourself is this: Are you a Disciple of Jesus Christ?

Many believers want to go to heaven, but they also want the things that this world has to offer. I am not saying that you have to take a vow of poverty, but I am asking you to evaluate what you are living for. Who or what is your master?

We need to learn to listen for the voice of God in our hearts and minds and then to be willing to follow in immediate obedience.

In Sunday School we are going to look at how to learn to listen and discern the voice of God. I hope you stay.

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