

Follow Me

1.22.17

Matthew 4:12-23 New Living Translation (NLT)

12 When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee. 13 He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14 This fulfilled what God said through the prophet Isaiah:

15 "In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali, beside the sea, beyond the Jordan River, in Galilee where so many Gentiles live, 16 the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow, a light has shined."

17 From then on Jesus began to preach, "*Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.*"

18 One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. 19 Jesus called out to them, "*Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!*" 20 And they left their nets at once and followed him.

21 A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. 22 They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

23 Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness.

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

Follow Me

Story behind the song

Jesus calls us: o'er the tumult of our life's wild, restless sea;
Day by day his sweet voice soundeth, saying, "*Christian, follow me.*"

In our joys and in our sorrows, days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures, "*Christian, love me more than these.*"

(*"Jesus Calls Us"* - Cecil Frances Alexander)

Are we willing and ready to follow Jesus completely?

During this series called "*The Great Invitation,*" we are considering why we said YES to Jesus and what difference that makes; we've also been challenged to share our faith stories with others as well as inviting someone to worship with us.

But we know that before we can invite others, we first must understand what it means to follow Jesus.

So after passing the tests in the wilderness, Jesus began His public ministry (preaching, teaching, healing). "*REPENT! Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the Kingdom!*" Jesus proclaimed. (v. 17)

Along the way, He invited people to follow Him - to be His Disciples (students, learners).

'Come, be My disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!'

And they left their nets at once and went with Him.

They left their boat, their nets, their father and followed Him.' (Matthew 4. 18-22)

When Jesus called the fishermen, they immediately dropped everything (job, family, security) and followed Him. No time to think about it. No time to discuss this with anyone. No negotiating a contract. It was ALL or NOTHING. Or so it seemed.

Following Jesus means changing one's life, changing direction. Taking another path, letting go of familiarity. Leaving security behind. Stepping into the unknown. Bidding farewell to loved ones. Beginning a new life.

FISHING In Jesus' day, fishermen were peasants. Didn't have much. Lived simply. This was their life. The first four disciples were fishermen. Peter, Andrew, James and John. (4.18-22) (Common English Bible Study Bible, Joel Green; © 2013 Common English Bible; Matthew; pp.NT 11 - NT 12)

Myron Augsburger describes what he believes Jesus was doing by calling the disciples.

"Jesus' strategy was to develop a disciple community, to call a group of associates who would be with Him and learn from Him."

A disciple *"identifies with and learns from his/her master."*

When Jesus invited the fishermen to follow Him, *"He was moving these men from their occupations as fishermen to... the vocation (of) being disciples."*

He called them *"not to be scholars, but to be heralds of the good news of the kingdom."*

"Jesus was discipling people by being with them, modeling His truth rather than simply teaching them the law."

"Jesus called disciples who would disciple others." that is, Fish for people.

Their mission was *"to invite others to become disciples."* (Communicator's Commentary, Matthew, © 1982 Myron Augsburger, NT Vol 1; ch. 1 "The Person of the King" pp. 21 -58)

FISHING FOR PEOPLE suggests that they would be involved in reaching out to others. A sort of "missionary activity." (4.19,22) (Common English Bible Study Bible, Joel Green; © 2013 Common English Bible; Matthew; pp.NT 11 - NT 12)

Fishing for people might also mean - *If we follow or practice the teachings of Jesus and share the good news of God's love with others, we will naturally draw others to Christ.* (NRSV Life Application Bible, © 1990 Tyndale House Publishers; Matthew 4; pp. 1606 -1608)

There is something appealing about someone who is deeply devoted to a person or a cause.

Where do you hear God calling you to join Jesus in the adventure of being his disciple? How is Jesus calling you? *How will you respond? Are you willing to drop everything and follow Jesus?*

Responding to Jesus' call to Follow Him may not lead us to a big and dramatic life change. For some of us, our response to God's call may lead us to serve others. It may be practicing acts of love, justice and kindness each day. (Chesser)

Some of us may be called to the mission field in a faraway land.

Others may be called to serve closer to home. There are so many ways for God's people to follow Jesus into the adventure of serving." (Chesser)

Maybe there are things in our community that are waiting to be birthed? How might God be calling us to live out our discipleship?

"The Summons" John L. Bell & Graham Maule

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown?

Will you let my name be known,

will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Lord your summons echoes true when you but call my name.

Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.

In Your company I'll go where Your love and footsteps show.

Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Come and See. Come and follow. Answer Jesus' call to follow by proclaiming the Good News, serving others, being the presence of Christ wherever you go. Be a disciple who makes disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Amen.