

Come, Follow Me

Matthew 4:18-20 (David Yeh)

Joke on gas men

Jesus came to earth not just to save people but to make disciples. Jesus' heart is not just to save you and leave it as that – hoping you survive, struggling on your own through your Christian life, and living a miserable life.

No! He wants you to be a disciple. He wants you to have the strength to live your life victoriously and to influence other people. He wants you to grow in faith.

The Lord commissions us as his disciples, his followers, to go out and make disciples. It should be the vision of every believer, while we have life and breath, to make disciples, to bring others to know Jesus Christ and like us to become his followers. If you have not got that inside your spiritual DNA, you won't know your true calling and purpose as a Christian.

God left you here on earth so that you can bring more people to God. If your main purpose was to simply enjoy your life on earth, why stay here? Isn't being in heaven much better than being on earth?

1. Jesus sees your potential

Mt 4:18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

Jesus was looking for disciples. Who is fit to be the King's disciple?
This was not the first time that Jesus met Peter and Andrew.

Jn 1:40-42 ⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.⁴¹The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

They have met before but this time Jesus saw Andrew and Peter doing their fishing work. The two brothers didn't realise that Jesus already had plans for them. Even before that day by the lake, Jesus had his eyes on Andrew and Peter. Jesus already saw it in his spiritual eyes, just like he saw Nathanael while he was under the fig tree (John 1:48)

Jesus never did things accidentally. He knew why he needed to be at the beach that morning. It was to call Peter and Andrew to follow him. And he is here this morning and he sees you. Jesus knows what you have been going through. He knows the struggles you are experiencing. He knows how dry you feel.

Peter was nobody special. He was just a fisherman, but Jesus saw the potential in Peter's life. Jesus was able to use Peter's skill for the kingdom of God. And this is how Jesus sees you today. You may think, "I am nothing, I am just a farmer, a businessman, a shop keeper, a house wife..." But dear friend, the truth is, Jesus can use what we have and turn the world upside down. Jesus sees your potential. Maybe he has given you a musical talent and wants you to serve in worship, or a teaching or speaking talent that can be used in leading a life group. Maybe Jesus can see your friendly character or caring character. He can see your willingness to give, or help others, and he is going to use that for his kingdom.

So then, Jesus sees your potential. Now secondly,

2. Jesus is calling you

a) to follow him

Mt 4:19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."

"Come, follow me" What does that mean? Come as you are, come even though you think you are not good enough. It is what Jesus will make you, that is important. He will use what you have and who you are. You will be changed as you follow Him.

E.g. My Calling to follow him at a camp. I didn't want to be a normal Christian, I want to live for him.

E.g. Set free from money in a university conference, willing to live by faith,

E.g. Mission ship Doulos called me to the full-time ministry.

I may have asked myself: "*Why should I give up a good future? Why should I risk being able to make a good living?*" However, I know God will take care of all my needs. God might not be asking you to give up your job or livelihood but he wants you to learn to depend upon him not upon yourself. And you may think that you are not good at anything. But Jesus says, "**I will make you....**" – it is a process. We are a 'work in progress'. He is working in us, changing us, molding us. Jesus doesn't call us to follow him because we are perfect or able or qualified now, rather he calls us because of what he knows we can become.

What about you? Have you ever made any significant changes in your life in order to follow Jesus? He is calling you to be His disciple today.

b) He will use what you have

Those who know Him follow Him. Those who don't know Him do their own thing. It's natural to do your own thing but it is supernatural to follow Jesus. So, are you flowing in the supernatural power of God, or just doing what you do because you don't know any better?

Javier Hernandez kneels in prayer in the centre circle before games.

Played for Mexico in 2010, 2014 FIFA World Cup, Manchester United,

'Javier has been phenomenal,' said Ferdinand his team mate. 'It is not just his goals, but his movement, his all-round work ethic, his desire to be in the right positions and work hard.'

These people followed Jesus in their work. God wants to use what you have for his glory. He wants to use your musical talent or dancing talent. Jesus wants to use your speaking talent or friendly personality. He wants to use your artistic talent and your creativity for his kingdom.

So then, our first point was, "Jesus sees your potential" and our second point was "Jesus is calling you." Now thirdly and finally:

3. Jesus knows what it will cost you to follow him

²⁰ **At once they left their nets and followed him.**

Being a disciple will cost us something. When the first disciples were called by Jesus to follow Him, they left everything behind, their livelihood, their provision for their life. They had to leave their nets, their fishing business, in order to follow Jesus. It was a drastic decision, but one that was necessary if they were going to follow the Messiah. Am I willing to have my life changed to reflect God's agenda for me, or do I expect God to fit into my agenda? It really boils down to "the nets" doesn't it? Those plans and those works which we consider to be so important. But what if God calls you to drop that work for something better?

To follow Jesus, we need to put aside...

a. What we are doing.

Peter and Andrew put aside the work on their fishing nets and followed Jesus. Whatever they were doing, it did not hold them back from following Jesus.

b. What we are depending on.

Do you think preparing the nets was important for Peter and Andrew? Of course, they depended on the nets to make their living. I am not talking about extra cash in their pockets. Those nets were essential for their livelihood. If they did not catch any fish, they wouldn't have any income. They wouldn't have money to buy food or other daily provisions.

It is like saying I will leave my job, my work. It is like leaving the university course or school in order to enter so-called full time ministry. But of course, I am not asking you to do that today. Jesus may not be asking you to do that either. However following Jesus will cost you something. What are you depending on? Your school marks? Your work? Your friends?

I believe we as Christians should do well in our job. We should work hard at school or university. We should do our best. But are you willing to invest time in getting to know Jesus better? Are you eager to spend time with Jesus, allowing his word to fill your heart? Are you seeking direction from him and are you willing to obey?

c. What we want to spend our time on.

You may need to adjust your lifestyle, to leave your comfort zone. In following Jesus, you may need to step out and do things that you are not used to. You may need to get up earlier than usual to read his word. You may need to spend time with those you are discipling or to spend time with those who are discipling you. You will need to do what is right, to care for people in need, to protect the weak. He is not asking you to physically leave your work or school. Jesus wants to use you with the skill that you have. He is not taking you away from what you have but he wants you to invest what you have in his service, for his kingdom.

You may ask, "Is it worth all the time and effort I have put in?" "I sacrificed my study time, my leisure, my plan, to be trained and train others – is it worth it?" Jesus knows how we feel.

Mark 10:28 ²⁸ **Then Peter spoke up, "We have left everything to follow you!"**

Peter is asking Jesus, what do I get from leaving my livelihood and following you. Is it worth it? All this sacrifice, is it worth it? There will be times when we feel tired and weak. There will be times when we fail, when we let the Lord down – just like Peter. Do you remember, because of his doubt and fear he denied Jesus three times. Do you think Jesus would not have known that when He called Peter? Would he not have known that one day Peter would deny him 3 times? Yes, he would have known, yet he invited Peter "come and follow me". Jesus knows our weakness. He knows our future failures. He knows there will be times in our Christian walk when we have little faith or when our spiritual life is weak, yet he calls us "come and follow me".

After Peter denied Jesus three times, in anguish of spirit, I wonder if he thought to himself, "*Lord Jesus you called the wrong man. If only I had not met you that day at that lake, I would not be here denying you, and bringing shame to you.*"

In those times when you are struggling spiritually I wonder if you ever think such thoughts – "*If only I had not served in this ministry, I would not be in this condition. If only I had not got involved in church, I would not be in this condition.*"

After Jesus resurrected from the dead, he met Peter at the sea of Galilee and Jesus asked Peter "do you love me" 3 times.

John 21:15-17 ¹⁵When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."¹⁶Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep. ¹⁷"The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.

Jesus gave Peter the opportunity to express his love for him. Have you ever been in a situation where you wished you had the opportunity to make up for the wrong things you had done. You wish you could say something to make up for the wrong words you had spoken or do something to make up the wrong things you had done. Each time when Peter responded to the Lord, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you", it was like washing away the failure and shame of denial. And when Jesus told Peter to feed His sheep, it was as if Jesus was saying, "Peter even though you denied me, even though you failed me, I know you Peter, you love me. I don't look at your past failures, past weaknesses but what you are to be." Every time Jesus said, "Feed my sheep" Jesus' forgiving love would flow into Peter's spirit.

I believe God is saying to you today, even if you feel tired and weak, even if you feel like giving up, don't see your life from your past weaknesses, or past failures. He wants to use you because he sees what you will be.

At the same time, I believe Jesus was also teaching Peter, to be a shepherd of God's people there must be love. To be a disciple of Jesus and to minister to God's sheep, we need love, God's love, otherwise our journey will not go far. We will just get tired and dry. We will have nothing to give.

Three years earlier by the Sea of Galilee Jesus called Andrew and Peter. Now three years later, at the very same place, beside the same Sea of Galilee, Jesus was calling Peter to feed his sheep. In the past, Peter did the ministry in his own strength, but he failed miserably. But now he is to serve with the power of God's love. It is only when we have love for Jesus that our ministry can keep on going. No matter how difficult it might be, no matter how low we are, the key question to ask is: "Do we love Jesus?" This love can only come by being loved by God. After he failed Peter realized that in himself he was nothing. It was not his gifts or strength that mattered. No, it was the love and acceptance of his Master and Lord. The commission of Jesus to Peter flowed from love. In the same way, we need to be filled with his love to follow him and serve him.

How? "Follow me". Who is me? The Word. Follow God's word, have a QT, spend time with Jesus, do what the Bible says and your life will be changed.

Why was Peter willing to lay down his work and follow Jesus?

Luke 5:1-11 The miracle of many fishes. Peter came face to face with Jesus' supernatural power. After Peter met Jesus his name was changed. He encountered God. He didn't blindly just lay down his net. He knew what he was doing. He wanted to follow the man who changed his life.

Are you willing to follow Jesus Christ, the One who has changed your life?