

## The Calling of the Disciples

Jesus started his preaching ministry with the message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 4:17 **Repent** means to change one's mind or purpose, to change one's state of being. This is what Jesus was calling people to do. They had been living life one way, they had their own particular worldview, they saw and believed in things one way but Jesus was telling them that they needed to change their life, their worldview needed to change. But why?

**Because the kingdom of heaven is at hand.** God was unfolding redemptive history. God had revealed himself to the world in one way in the Old Testament, God's Spirit had worked in one way in the Old Testament but now God would begin to reveal himself and his kingdom in a different way. God had actually come to earth in the flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ. The kingdom of heaven is now here, God has showed up in person, in Jesus. God has stepped out of heaven and into the earth through Jesus Christ. What this means for the disciple of Jesus is that they need to change their minds about what they believed to be true about the world, God, the Messiah and life in general.

**Believe in the gospel.**(from Mark The gospel is the good news of the fulfillment of God's promises. In the OT the good news is connected with the saving intervention of God to help his people. Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT promises of God. Jesus has come to save his people. Again, Jesus is the embodiment of the gospel (the good news).

Jesus' first calling of disciples happens with Simon Peter and his brother Andrew and then James and John. They were fishermen but Jesus wants them to follow him so they can be fishermen of men. This would be a change in their lifestyle.

### **Not just saved but Sent [Missional lifestyle]**

Jesus tells them their mission from the very beginning: you will be fishers of men. Not on their own to begin with, but as they follow Jesus that is what they will do. So Jesus is on a mission to "catch men."

It is quite amazing that the first four men that Jesus calls to follow him, do so "immediately". They left their fishing business on the spot, they left their nets, they left their father in the boat. According to Luke it seems as though they knew Jesus beforehand and had even gone fishing with him. In Luke 5:10-11, Jesus assures James, John, Peter and Andrew that they would be no longer catching fish but men. It says "they left everything and followed him." So it seems after a period of getting to know Jesus, these four men decided to answer Jesus' call and follow him full-time.

Luke also records the calling of Levi (Matthew), a tax collector who was a notorious "sinner" and kept the company of other "sinners" (according to the Pharisees).

Outside the twelve apostles there were many people who followed Jesus, some were curious and some wanted to really be his disciple. The Pharisees must have been following Jesus to keep an eye on him and to refute some of his teachings. Luke also tells us that some women were with Jesus and the twelve. They seem to have been providing for the needs of Jesus and the twelve "out of their own means." These women came from a variety of backgrounds; from the highest social status of being Herod's household manager to Mary Magdalene who had been demon possessed and therefore an outcast (Luke 8:1-3).

## The Disciples ate Soul Food

Intro: Lunch downtown with Darren

### The disciples heard Jesus' teaching and watched him heal people.

- Jesus fulfills Scripture through his teaching and healing as it says in Matt. 8:17
- Jesus taught with authority not as the scribes. Mark 1:21-28
- The miracles accompany Jesus' teachings. He backed up his words with miraculous actions to show he is the Son of God.

### Why does the passion of a disciple include studying the Scriptures?

- It is our identity now. You need to make the transition in your thinking and studying the Scriptures from "Don't do that...to...that is not who I am anymore."
- It reveals to us God's redemptive plan for life, past, present and future.(II Tim. 3:16-17; Joshua 1:8)
- God wants us to know him deeply and intimately.
- God wants to constantly, daily, feed our souls. (1 Peter 2:24-25)
- Jesus says his purpose is to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, we should be extremely interested in what he was teaching and we have that in the Bible. This does not mean we are limited to the New Testament red letter edition. But Jesus taught out of the Old Testament, explaining it, teaching it, applying it, and fulfilling it.

**Jesus taught the disciples by example.** How did Jesus treat others, interact with different types of people, deal with interruptions, critics, etc.

"Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace, and your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace."

**Studying the Scriptures should not be thought of as a duty but rather as caring for your souls** (and your family's souls). Ways you can study the Scriptures (be mindful of this is our *identity* not how we gain favor with God)

- Read Psalm 119
- Quiet times/devotions and various materials
- Listen and take notes during the sermons, show them the "notes" insert of bulletin
- Have devotions with your kids/read and pray with them before bed
- In Community Groups
- Faith & Life/Sunday School classes
- Get into a regular Bible study group
- Watch sermons/messages on youtube instead of stupid tv shows
- Memorize Scripture – if your kids can do it, why can't you? Challenge yourself (this is how Jesus defended himself against temptation)
- Read Scripture saturated authors (John Piper)

*"he[Moses] said to them, "Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law."<sup>47</sup> For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess."*  
ESV Deuteronomy 32:46

## The Disciples had a Passion for Mission

The disciples were “**sent disciples**”. Their lives were to be characterized as “**missional**”. They were to expect persecution, hardship and spiritual warfare. See Matt. 10.

The gospel changes us to live **missionally**. The gospel tells us that we have a mission and purpose in life. That mission and purpose is to make disciples of all nations (see Matt. 28:19-20). God is sending us to be missionaries in our own community and culture.

*<sup>ESV</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? <sup>2</sup> You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. <sup>3</sup> And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.*

God has put the gospel of grace into our hearts and **we are to live “sent lives.”** Jesus says in John 20:21, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” So, we are being sent, like letters, by Jesus, to the world around us.

- we avoid an “us” vs. “them” mentality
- we embrace public life and work
- we live authentic lives
- we tell the gospel story in the language of the culture
- we believe we are a part of God’s mission to redeem the world back to Himself
- There is no greater mission or purpose in life, therefore it affects the very core of our being

**Jesus tells his disciples to pray for more “harvesters”,** more disciples to go out and share the gospel.

**You are a Witness** Acts 1:8

**Are you passionate about living missionally?**

- What areas of the culture are you seeing God use you?
- What risks are you taking as a disciple?

## The Disciples had a Passion for Prayer

### Prayer Characterized their Daily Life:

**Acts 1:14** All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

**Acts 2:42** And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

**Acts 3:1** Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

**Acts 6:4** But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

**Acts 10:1** At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, <sup>2</sup> a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.

❓ Does Prayer characterize your DAILY life? How?

### Prayer was what the Disciples relied on in desperate times:

**Acts 12:5** So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

**Acts 16:25** About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,

### Prayer is what the Disciples relied on to make decisions:

**Acts 1:24** And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen..."

**Acts 14:23** And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

### Prayer is what accompanied the Disciples as they went on Mission:

**Acts 16:13** And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.

**Acts 16:16** As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling.

**Acts 13:3** Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

**Acts 21:5** When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed

The Disciples were Transformed by Prayer:

**Acts 4:31** And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

- ❓ How have you been transformed by prayer?

Prayer is a struggle:

- ❓ What things keep you from praying?
- ❓ How can you overcome these obstacles?

“Life is war. That’s not all it is. But it is always that. Our weakness in prayer is owing largely to our neglect of this truth. Prayer is primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the church as it advances against the powers of darkness and unbelief. It is not surprising that prayer malfunctions when we try to make it a domestic intercom to call upstairs for more comforts in the den. God has given us prayer as a wartime walkie-talkie so that we can call headquarters for everything we need as the Kingdom of Christ advances in the world. Prayer gives us the significance of frontline forces and gives God the glory of a limitless Provider. The one who gives the power gets the glory. Thus, prayer safeguards the supremacy of God in missions while linking us with endless grace for every need.”

John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, p.45