



Following Jesus: Following

February 14, 2016

Matt 4:18-22

Our "Compelling Life" sermon series described how Jesus lived such a compelling life. He had a compelling purpose for life, and He gave us provisions (the Holy Spirit/church) and proof. This story of the calling of his disciples is such a great illustration of His compelling life.

Jesus says 11 words. Let's look at what He said:

1.) **COME, FOLLOW ME** This is the 1st time Jesus said: "Follow me" but it's certainly not the last!

Matthew 9:9 *As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named **Matthew** sitting at the tax collector's booth. "**Follow me,**" he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.*

John 1:43 *The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding **Philip**, he said to him, "**Follow me.**"*

"COME" = the invitation.

"FOLLOW" = we will all follow someone or something.

"ME" = Jesus.

This invitation seems like Jesus was walking along the shoreline, saw 2 guys in the boat and told them to come follow him. That's what Matthew says. But Luke begins the story with Jesus in the home of Simon's mother-in-law who was sick. Jesus healed her. Then Jesus cast out demons. Then he preached. This wasn't the 1st time these 4 men met Jesus – they already knew him. THEN Luke tells this story:

Luke 5:1-11 *One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one*

belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Jesus asks for a BIG commitment from them. While these 4 did so, not everyone would follow:

Matthew 19:20-21 "All these I have kept," **the young man** said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, **follow me**." (There's a cost of discipleship – this young man was unwilling)

Luke 9:57-62 As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He said to another man, "**Follow me**." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Luke 14:25-27 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and

*mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not **carry his cross** and **follow me** cannot be my disciple. (Large crowds...but not everyone is a disciple. There is a cost involved)*

John 21:19 *Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which **Peter** would glorify God. Then he said to him, "**Follow me!**" (It's a lasting, continual association not a one-and-done thing. Perseverance.)*

John 21:22 *Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? **You must follow me.**" (Don't worry about the other guy)*

2.) AND I WILL MAKE YOU "Making" means they were going to become something new and different. It also means continuous action. They would be continual works in progress. They were quite imperfect. Peter was impulsive and cowardly; James and John were competitive; others were proud and completely misunderstood was following Jesus was about. The thing is, these never reached perfection, but they were always in the process of being made.

While perfection IS the goal (God says: "Be Holy for I am Holy"), the reality is that we will always have problems, needs and dysfunction. Solve one thing and another thing pops up. I feel like I'm "in the process of being made." I'm not perfect. I don't pretend to be. The Bible is a list of flawed people. God is holy and calls us to that. But it's a lifelong pursuit.

3.) FISHERS OF MEN Look at the last word of each of these phrases: ME, YOU, MEN. Jesus invites us to follow him for the purpose of reaching others. Following Jesus IS about me and Jesus. However, it's easy to forget that we've been commissioned to reach others. A lot of us want to BE a disciple but we forget about MAKING disciples. Jesus asked them to follow him. That begs the question: "**What's in it for them?**" "**Why** should they men give up the only life they knew to follow an itinerant preacher? How would they make a living? What would they be doing with their time? What result would follow?" Jesus

quickly and succinctly addressed the implicit “What’s in it for me?” question by saying that He would give them the opportunity to make a life by “fishing for men,” instead of simply spending their time making a living catching fish. He would give them a **compelling purpose** for life. This was a great promise. Catching “fish” was one thing; catching “men” was something far greater. Their purpose that wasn’t just about making a living or obtaining stuff; Jesus was giving them the opportunity to have significance and meaning. They weren’t just going to be pulling fish out of a lake, they were going to be pulling people up out of the depths of sin and despair and helping them be caught by the net of God.

Their question: “Why should I follow Jesus?” His answer: “because of who YOU will become if you follow me.” His appeal was that they would benefit from having a larger purpose in life.

But they would also benefit from knowing the most compelling person who ever lived. Why should you follow me? “Because of Who I Am.” I am Messiah. The Christ. The Son of the Living God. And you won’t ever have a better opportunity than this to do something great with your life and to know the Son of God. Why should you follow me? Because you’ll have a cause worth living/dying for.

Application:

1.) Invitation:

Jesus asked for a lot! It was not an easy call. He didn’t ask the 4 men to discuss among themselves what it could mean to follow Him – Jesus asked them: NOW – get up, get out of your boat, give up your comfortable way of life – and follow me. Before they could be disciples they had to DO SOMETHING. They had to respond.

Are you following Jesus? I didn’t know when I was a kid that I was supposed to DO anything. But when we are invited, we either accept/reject. Not to decide IS to decide. The invitation is to allow the most compelling person that’s ever lived to give you a reason to live and to give you a purpose in life. The invitation is to follow Jesus. It begins with repentance. “I’m sorry, Lord. I realize I’ve not done what I

needed to do with my life. I've not done this right. I ask your forgiveness. Come into my life."

"Follow ME" means to follow another, not ourselves. It is doing things very differently than I've done before. It means I will trust another and put my life under that authority, not my own.

The core matter: "Will I let Jesus be the Lord, the governor of my life OR will I just do my own thing. Will follow Jesus and live as His obedient disciple or follow my own impulses and desires and please myself?"

If we're asking the same 2 questions: "Why should I follow Jesus" and "How am I going to do that?" I think the first answer may be easier than the second. When Jesus invited those 4 men to become His followers, they didn't know then what we know now about Jesus. They didn't know "the rest of the story" like we do (teachings, miracles, opposition, crucifixion, resurrection). They'd only heard about some of the things he was doing. We know much more about Jesus in an intellectual way. However, Jesus gave those 4 men a far easier "How" than we can provide. "How can I follow Jesus?" If Jesus appeared to you today in the flesh and said: "Come, follow me" that would be more engaging than reading a story about Him talking to 4 guys at a lake you've never been to 2,000 years ago. I think we more easily "connect" with Jesus as Lord than we do: "How do I enlist? What's He want me to do?"

2.) **Challenge:** Maybe you've prayed this prayer before. I'd like to ask you as a disciple of Jesus are you inviting others to follow Him, too?

This is Lent – these next weeks. Pick up a practice. Pray with your family every day.

What is Jesus calling you to? Let's look at the words of Jesus. What is His call to follow?

Possibilities: Cleanses are a big deal right now – like a 40 day cleanse. A cleanse is getting rid of certain things but also adding nutrients. Would you read the Gospels over the next 40 days? Would you pray with your family or a friend every day? Would you be quiet and let Jesus speak to you? Would you turn off the TV? Would you invite a friend to church – maybe for Easter? Would you just DO SOMETHING?

Would you be intentional about something? **Prayer, presence, gifts, service & witness.**

I want you to DO something. This is both an inward/outward call. They had a call they had to answer from Jesus. But they also did something – they left their nets.