

November 13, 2022

“Jesus’ Desire for His Disciples” Mark 1:16-20

FCF: Not knowing what we’re here for

PROPOSITION: (magnet) This is Jesus’ desire for us.

(anchor) It should be ours as well.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

I spoke a couple of weeks ago of the exhaustion that comes from not knowing who we are and why we’re here. We’re hard-wired to ask such questions and need answers. It can be disturbing not to have them. And draining to try and make them up. Beyond even that, beyond the fatigue of searching, there can be anxiety and futility, wondering if there are any answers at all. This is not a new phenomenon or something unique to our culture. It’s a very human thing.

Into all this, we hear the voice of Jesus speaking with words of invitation. This is the fourth in a short series on the basics of discipleship, seen through the lens of the Gospel of Mark.

SCRIPTURE READING: Mark 1:16-20

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

There are several character arcs that can be traced through J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*. Frodo, Sam, and Aragorn quickly come to mind. But Boromir should be mentioned as well. Heir to the steward of Gondor, Boromir joins the Fellowship of the Ring only to fall to the lure of the Ring. After trying to steal it from Frodo, he repents and sacrifices his life in defending Merry and Pippin. Aragorn finds him moments before he takes his final breath, and Boromir confesses that he tried to take the Ring and relays what happened to Merry and Pippin. In the book, his final words are ([READ](#)), “Farewell, Aragorn! Go to Minas Tirith and save my people! I have failed.” To which Aragorn replies, “No! You have conquered. Few have gained such a victory. Be at peace! Minas Tirith shall not fall!” Boromir smiles and breathes his last.

But in the film, he says ([READ](#)), “I would have followed you, my brother, my captain, my king.” He had finally accepted Aragorn not as a rival to power but as his rightful ruler.

Love for and loyalty to a king is a powerful motivation and source of direction. It can set your course like a rudder and propel you forward like wind in the sails. The king’s purposes become yours. You adopt his priorities for yourself. His desires begin to transform your own.

What of King Jesus? What are His purposes for His followers? What are His priorities for His disciples? ([READ Mark 1:17](#)). This is Jesus’ desire for us. It should be ours as well.

What do we learn about this desire of Jesus for His disciples from this text? It’s worth knowing. Three things. First, the initiative. Second, the progression. And third, the intention.

I. THE INITIATIVE

First, the initiative. Where does all this start? Where does it begin? ([READ Mark 1:17](#)).

A) Where It Lies

1. Not with them

It does not lie with these men. This was counter to the customs of the day. You were supposed to shop around, weigh options, and choose. You chose your rabbi. The rabbi didn't choose you.

2. But with Him

But we see the opposite here. This was the call of Jesus at work in their hearts. At the start of everything, He is the agent of creation. And, through the Spirit, He is the agent of re-creation.

B) That It Exists

But there's something else - not just where the initiative lies but the fact it exists at all.

1. Not an add on

Following Jesus is not an add-on. He is not an advisor whose words can be accepted or rejected.

2. But all encompassing

He is the King. His authority is all encompassing. Ours is not to weigh but to hear and obey.

For we are His. And it is all of Him. Our becoming His is all of His initiative.

Application:

Before we go any further, is that how you regard Jesus and His authority over your life? And does your life bear the marks of that? To what degree do we think ourselves to be self-made and self-directing? "O, come on. I'm here, aren't I?" Fair. But do you know yourself to be but a steward, not an owner - of every breath you breathe, every ounce of strength, every step you take, every word you speak, every bit of talent, every dollar in the bank? Who is your king?

([READ Mark 1:17](#)) Jesus is our king. This is His desire for us. It should be ours as well.

II. THE PROGRESSION

First, the initiative. Second, the progression. How does this unfold? ([READ Mark 1:17](#))

A) Not All at Once

However we might want it to play out, this does not happen all at once.

1. A change of direction

There is a change of direction. Remember the definition of a disciple - "someone who has heard the call of Jesus and has responded by repenting, believing the gospel, and following Him."

2. Not an instant transformation

So there's certainly a change of direction. But there is no instant transformation.

Illustration:

It's not like the super serum that turned Steve Rogers into Captain America. It's not like the radioactive spider bite that turned Peter Parker into Spider-Man. It's just not that simple.

B) But Over Time

Note Jesus' words. He will make us "become" fishers of men. This is a work over time.

1. Surely but slowly

It unfolds surely but slowly. He brings changes within that can be hard to perceive. There will be fruit. There will be external signs of this inward work. But often with an ebb and a flow.

2. At different paces

And it comes at different paces. Meaning that the rate of change is not the same for all of us.

Our becoming fishers of men comes about as a progression, an unfolding.

Application:

Let me come back to its coming differently for each of us. This “becoming” comes one way in one person’s life and another way in someone else’s. That makes community, doing life together, interesting at times. Think about the tension and friction of the last few years. The problem comes when we start comparing ourselves to one another, holding others to a personal standard. Then it becomes a bit less interesting and whole lot more painful. What’s at the root of all that? As one of my seminary professors would say, “Humble people tend to get along.” That’s true. But so too is its corollary. Humble people get along. But proud people don’t.

([READ Mark 1:17](#)) This progression is Jesus’ desire for us. It should be ours as well.

III. THE INTENTION

Third, the intention. What does Jesus have in mind in all of this? ([READ Mark 1:17](#))

A) What Is Required

Let’s start with this. What is required of these new recruits?

1. A surprising pool

It’s a surprising pool. This was not the elite. Fishermen were not the prime cut of society. They could be profane. But there was little pretense, little patience with folks who tried to put on airs.

2. To simply follow

But it’s a surprising pool. And so what was required? To follow Jesus. To hear His call, drop their nets, leave their boats, and follow Him. That’s it. That was true then and it is true now.

B) What It Involves

Okay, but what does it involve? We follow Him and then what happens next?

1. The former calling

Let’s think about their former calling as fishermen. What was it like in those days? ([READ](#)):

The method of fishing characteristic of NT times was the dragnet. After a boat had put out into the deep (Lk 5:4) a large net would be thrown out from it and then dragged toward shore by the rowers in the boat, possibly with the help of a crew in another boat. The catch was sorted out on shore (Mt 13:47, 48). Fishing was usually carried out at night when the coolness of the water brought fish closer to the surface and when they could not see the approaching nets.

2. The new calling

That was their old calling. Now carry that image over to their new calling. They were to draw others into the kingdom. Fishing meant going out to where the fish were, pulling the fish from darkness to light. In the Jewish mind, the sea was a place of chaos, disorder, and judgment. Now they were to go, not out into the water, but the world. Again, going where the fish are, bringing men and women from one realm into another, from darkness to light, from chaos to life.

C) What It Demands

What would this demand? Who was involved? Fishing in that culture was not usually a solo affair, something you did on your own at your leisure. It was done together with others.

1. With each other

It's the same here. (**READ Mark 6:7a**) There's something we need to consider here. Jesus sent them paired with partners, with co-laborers. Leaning into one another, praying for one another.

2. With Jesus Himself

But even more important is the need to know this was to be done not just with one another but with Jesus Himself (**READ Mark 3:13-14**). Again, there's something here to consider. Or think of Paul's words (**READ 1 Corinthians 3:9a**). Listen to what Paul is saying here. Jesus does the work. He brings in the catch, so to speak. But how does He do it? Through us. Through us.

This is Jesus' intention for us - to become fishers of men. And this is how it is done.

Illustration:

But let's think a bit more about how Jesus does this work through us. The holidays are coming and, with that, the preparation of food. So here's the scene. Imagine a grandmother and her grandchild making cookies together. In the end, who does the work? How does it get done? She buys the ingredients. It's her refrigerator, mixer, oven, and kitchen space. Yes, the child slaps on some icing and throws down a few sprinkles. But what does the grandmother say when it's all done? "We made these." But we all know, right? It's the child's privilege to be included.

Application:

It's the same thing here. It's a privilege for the child to be in the kitchen. And it's a privilege to be in Jesus' boat, shoulder to shoulder with Him, pulling on the nets. We watch Him. We learn from Him. We lean into Him. We listen to Him. We look to Him. We ask for His help, for His work - before, during, and after every cast of the net. Whatever form that casting may take. Whatever lake or boat He has us in. Whatever season, station, or setting that may be.

(**READ Mark 1:17**) This is His intention, His desire, for us. It should be ours as well.

CONCLUSION:

But let me end with this. All this is fine, you may say, in terms of clarifying what Jesus wants. But why is that so important? What makes His desires so significant for our lives? I've alluded to this before. The significance of what Jesus wants is tied to the reality of who Jesus is.

Think of it this way. Imagine someone came into your home and starts moving furniture, hanging pictures, repainting, pulling up carpet, even knocking down walls. Who is this? Who gets to do that? The owner or a guest? The owner. A guest has to ask permission. An owner just does what needs doing. Jesus is the owner, not a guest, not just of our homes but our lives.

The significance of what Jesus wants is tied to the reality of who Jesus is. (**READ Mark 1:17**) This is His desire for us - a new purpose, a new orientation. It should be ours as well.

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(anchor) It should be ours as well.