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When Jesus Calls; Matthew 4:18-22  
GPBC  
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Introduction – This is a really exciting passage! We have the privilege this morning to see amazing grace at work, the power of God to salvation. As believers, studying how Jesus calls His disciples helps us understand how Jesus called us to follow Him. And the more we understand the miracle of our new birth, the more we rejoice in the grace of God and the more we love our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now you may be thinking that there is a vast difference between being a disciple in Jesus' day and being a follower of Christ today. Sometimes we drift into this thinking that to be a disciple means to be a super-Christian, to be a step above the normal believer. It is interesting that the word disciple in the NT simply means follower of Jesus, so there are no levels of Christianity. All believers are all disciples. We all follow the Lord. Acts 11:26 says, "And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. Christian means Christ follower. Disciple means Jesus follower. They are synonymous terms in the NT. Which means we have far more in common with the disciples than we may have previously thought, and one place of common ground is the call of Jesus to follow Him.

If you are without Christ this morning, learning how He calls His followers opens a new channel for Jesus to call you. As you learn how Jesus called His first disciples, you just may hear Jesus call you to be His disciple! This is a really exciting text.

- I. The Calling of Jesus to Follow Him is a Personal, Transforming-Laden Command
  - a. First note how personal and specific Jesus calls His disciples. He was there by the Sea of Galilee. No doubt there were many people by the sea that day. These four were not the only fishermen. And yet the Bible says Jesus saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew, and He saw two other brothers, James and John. Now for sure He saw other people by the Sea, but He saw these 4 brothers in a special, particular purpose of calling them to Himself.
    - i. If you are in Christ, you've experienced that personal calling haven't you? You remember that day that instead of hearing

about Jesus, you knew in your heart of hearts that Jesus was calling you to Himself, Jesus was pinpointing His call to you. Maybe you were in a crowd of people like this morning, and yet you knew Jesus was speaking directly to you. Maybe you were alone, maybe someone was sharing the gospel with you, and you knew Jesus was dealing directly, individually with you.

- ii. God is a personal God, and He calls individuals by grace to salvation in Christ.
  - iii. Ill. I was fifteen years old and I had heard the general call hundreds of times at church and in my home to follow Jesus. But then there was that special call, that personal call, I heard. It was as if Jesus said to me, "Wil, follow me."
- b. Note also Jesus' call is a transforming-laden call. When Jesus calls us to follow Him, His call always involves great transformation. They were fishermen, and Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men." I will make you – I will change you, I will transform you. Life with me will take on a new look, a new direction, a new focus, a new meaning. Jesus calls us just as we are, but by His grace and mercy, He does not leave us as we are – He makes us new, He makes us different.
- i. Instead of catching fish, you will join me in catching men and women.
  - ii. If you are in Christ today, you know when Jesus calls, He changes our lives into something new, and we say, "Amen! Thanks be to God!" Where would I be? What would I be? Would I be? If Jesus had not called me!
  - iii. 2 Cor 5:17-18 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God."
  - iv. Oh for the one who thinks I don't know if I want to change, he still remains under the delusion and deception of sin. He still believes his own way will bring him happiness, and satisfaction, and life, and salvation. He still hasn't seen Jesus. He still hasn't heard Jesus.
  - v. But for those who have heard Jesus call, they know that only in Jesus do we find life and everlasting joy.

- vi. C.S. Lewis writes in his classic *The Weight of Glory*, “It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”
    - c. Note also that Jesus’ call to follow Him is a command. “Follow me” is in the imperative mood – it’s a command. Just like “repent” is a command. Just like “believe” is a command. When Jesus says, “Come to me, drink of me, eat of my flesh” those are commands.
      - i. It’s not a suggestion. Jesus is not saying, “Now here’s an option for you guys. Think this over. See if you like this. Hopefully, you’ll do the right thing.”
      - ii. No, Jesus stood on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and He looked at Simon, and he looked at Andrew, and He looked at James, and He looked at John, and He said, “Follow me”
      - iii. Yes, it is an invitation, but it is more than just an invitation; it’s a command.
- II. The Calling of Jesus to Follow Him Produces a Miraculous, Life-Changing, Obedient Response
- a. There is. No other explanation than God is at work.
  - b. The command of Jesus to follow Him carries with it the energizing, motivating, sin-freeing grace to obey.
    - i. It’s the same way the word of God acted in creation. When God looked out upon nothing and commanded, “Let there be light” with that command for light to appear out of nowhere came the power of God to create it. It was a command to a void, “let there be” and there was!
    - ii. Listen to the words of Paul in 2 Cor 4:6 – “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”
  - c. There is no other explanation when someone follows Jesus than God has done a great work – Look at our text.

- i. V20 -Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Now by this time, they already knew about Jesus, they knew John the Baptist had pointed Jesus out as the coming Messiah. They knew He had worked a few miracles. But that still does not fully explain this remarkable response. Jesus was not popular. He was not wealthy. He was a just a man standing on the shore in a pair of sandals saying, "Follow me", and they dropped everything they knew, the only thing they knew, and followed Him. Miraculous, life-changing, obedience – God at work.
  - ii. James and John not only left their boat, they left their father standing in the boat. Immediately they left everything and everyone behind them, they walked away from the only life they knew, they left it all, and embraced Jesus as the greatest treasure in this life. As the One worthy. When Jesus called then they found something in Jesus that meant more than anything else could ever mean.
  - iii. In two weeks, Lord willing, we'll take a look at vv23-5:2. And the number of miracles listed in these verses are too many to count. V24. And yet, you can take all those miraculous healings together and they in no way compare to the four miracles of our text today. It's a miracle to make someone physically whole, it's beyond words to make someone eternally, spiritually whole.
- d. Now imagine if your one of these guys' neighbors and you happen to be on the shore and see what takes place. You go home that day and tell your family, "Simon and Andrew, and James, and John have lost their minds. That religious guy was on the shore today and He called out to them to follow Him, and they did. I couldn't believe it. How foolish can they be? They left their nets and their boat, and even poor old Zebedee. What's gotten into them?"
- i. Christ is foolishness to the world. It doesn't make sense to the world to prefer Christ above your vocation, above your status and notoriety, above your own family, above your lifestyle and comfort, above your plans, above your money, above your home. To leave behind sex, drugs, fame, friends, family, and self just to have Him.

- ii. But to those who are being saved, to those whom Jesus has called, it is the power of God to salvation – It is life, full, abundant, free, forgiven, forever!
  - e. As Chris Tomlin sings, “My chains are gone, I’ve been set free, My God, my Savior, has ransomed me, and like a flood His mercy rains, unending love, amazing grace.
  - f. Charles Wesley’s hymn says it so well, “Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature’s night, Thine eye diffused a quick’ning ray – I woke, the dungeon flamed with light, my chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
- III. Following Jesus Involves a Faith in Jesus that Prizes Him Above Everything and Everyone Else
- a. When Jesus walked out on the shore that day and called to Simon, Andrew, James, and John, they looked down at their nets, at their boat, at their father, and they looked at that man on the shore, and they saw in Him life eternal. And they left it all.
  - b. The thing about following Jesus though is that what you gain far surpasses what you leave. Over in Luke 18 Peter tells Jesus, “See, we have left our homes and followed you.” Jesus replies, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”
  - c. I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold, I’d rather be His than have riches untold, I’d rather have Jesus than houses or lands, I’d rather be led by His nail-pierced hands. Than to be the king of a vast domain or be held in sin’s dread sway. I’d rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.
  - d. That’s what happens when Jesus calls.

Conclusion