

First Things First

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[0 : 0 0] The Scripture lesson this morning comes from the Gospel according to Mark, chapter 1, verses 14 through 20. Mark 1, 14 through 20. If you are able, would you please stand for the reading of the Gospel?

Hear the Word of God. And after John the Baptist had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God and saying, The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe this good news.

And as He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men and women.

And they immediately left their nets and followed Him. And going on a little farther, He saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were also in the boat, mending the nets. And immediately He called them.

And they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and went away to follow Him. Spirit of the living God, these are familiar words to us.

[1 : 1 1] Perhaps too familiar. We believe that you inspired Mark to write them down years ago. And I pray now that in your mercy and grace, you will make them come alive in our lives as never before.

For we pray this in the name of Jesus Christ and for His glory. Amen. Please be seated. Of all the books that I read this past summer, the one that has impacted me the most is the book First Things First by Stephen Covey.

Stephen Covey is the author of the best-selling book, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. Now, I read First Things First on recommendation from Dick Kling.

If you've been around GPC for a while, you know who Dick Kling is. And I said I read it on recommendation. I should have said I read it on orders from Dick Kling.

Dick has been mentoring me in management issues over the past few months, and one of my assignments was to read First Things First. First Things First. Graciously, he gave me 45 days to read the book before we got together to discuss and implement the insights.

[2 : 2 2] Stephen Covey writes with precision and with fluidity, so it's easy to follow his line of thought. I was taken in very quickly, and as each page turned, I stayed with what he was trying to develop.

As I kept moving through the book, I actually felt that a major paradigm shift was beginning to take place in me. And then I got to page 88. On page 88 of First Things First, Dr. Covey tells of an experience that one of his colleagues had and likes to share with people, and I'd like to read it for you now.

Listen. Listen. I attended a seminar once where the instructor was lecturing on time. At one point he said, okay, it's time for a quiz. He reached under the table and pulled out a wide-mouthed gallon jar.

He set it on the table next to a platter with some fist-sized rocks on it. How many of these rocks do you think we can get in the jar, he asked. After we made our guesses, he said, okay, let's find out.

So he put one rock in the jar, then another, then another, then another. I don't remember how many he got in, but he got the jar full. Then he asked, is that jar full? Everyone looked at the rocks and said yes.

[3 : 28] Then he said, ah. He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he dumped some gravel in and shook the jar, and the gravel went in all the little spaces left by the big rocks.

Then he grinned and once again asked, is the jar full? By this time we were on to him and said, probably not. Good, he replied. And he reached under the table and he brought out a bucket of sand.

And he started pumping the sand in, and it went in all the little spaces left by the rocks and the gravel. Once more he looked at us and said, is the jar full? No, we roared. Good. He said, good.

And he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in. He got something like a quart of water in that jar. Then he said, well, what's the point? Everybody said, the point is there are gaps, and if you work at it, you can always fit more into your life.

No, he said, that's not the point. The point is this. If you hadn't put those big rocks in first, you would have never gotten any in the jar.

[4 : 32] Now, when I read that, I literally gasped. It was like someone had awakened me from a groggy nap. And I said in the library where I was reading, I said out loud, where have I been all my life?

That's my problem. I have been trying to squeeze and stuff the really important rocks of my life into a jar already full of gravel, sand, and water.

The gravel, the sand, and the water are not bad. In fact, it's because they're good that I even allow them to get into the jar. But in the process, there is little or no room at all for the rocks, for God's very best for me.

And I have lived with a lot of frustration because I've not put the rocks in the jar first. Now, what is true of my life, I think is true of the Church of Jesus Christ in America.

It seems to me that we have allowed a lot of gravel and sand and water to fill the jar first. And then we've tried to put the really important rocks in the jar.

[5 : 35] And we have been frustrated, constantly frustrated with getting the work done. I hear the Lord Jesus saying to us, it is time to get first things first. It is time to make sure that the really important rocks are in the jar first, and then you can let the gravel, the sand, and the water find their appropriate places.

Now, what I've been holding before us these past two weeks is one of Jesus' first things first rocks. And it is making disciple-making disciples.

I hear the Lord Jesus saying to us that it is time to be much more intentional about being and making disciples.

Not just converts who may or may not mature in Christ. Not just church members who may or may not mature in Christ. But disciples. People who are attached to Jesus.

People who are moving in ever deeper intimacy with Jesus and the Father. People who are submitting to the Lordship of Jesus in every aspect of their life. People whose world vision is being expanded.

[6 : 41] People who are being given a new name and who are being transformed into His likeness. I hear the Lord Jesus saying to us, Ask of everything you are doing, Does this help build disciples who can build disciples?

Does this help build up people in me who can build up people in me who can build up people in me? Now, why is this making disciple-making disciples a rock that needs to be put in the jar first?

Why is it not gravel or sand or water? For two reasons. First of all, it is His command. He has commanded us to do this. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore, make disciples. It's a command. The second reason, though, why this is a first things first rock is developed in the text before us today. Being and making disciples is the top priority because of the new situation caused by the coming of Jesus Christ.

He comes on the scene and His first public word out of His mouth is, The time is fulfilled. The time is fulfilled. The kairos has arrived.

[7 : 52] History has reached a major crisis point. It is time for God's fulfillment of His purposes. And what's going to happen? The kingdom of God is at hand.

Or the kingdom of God has come near. That is the truly radical thing that comes about as a result of Jesus coming into the world. The arrival and the in-breaking of the long-awaited kingdom of God.

We could paraphrase Jesus that day saying it this way. The appointed time has arrived. It is now time for God's new world order to invade and transform human society.

In me and because of me, a whole new order of existence is breaking in upon the world. Which, by the way, finally explains the turmoil in the world today.

The turmoil in the world today is not simply due to the powers of sin and evil. It's not simply due to different human ideologies that are conflicting. The turmoil in the world today is due to the pressure created by the nearness of the kingdom of God.

[8 : 58] On the one hand, it's due to people who are responding to that pressure and changing. And it's due, on the other hand, to people who are resisting that pressure.

Ever since Jesus came upon the scene, there's something new. There is this nearness of the kingdom. He has stirred up the waters. This something cataclysmic in the air that Richard Halverson keeps speaking about is the nearness of the kingdom of God.

And it calls for a radical response. The radical response of becoming and making disciples of Jesus Christ. That explains, by the way, why Jesus, right out of the chute, so to speak, uses this phrase, fishers of men and women.

He does not employ this analogy or this language simply because the first people He called were fishermen. I used to think that. I used to think that He walked along and He goes, okay, I need to speak their language, so I'm going to talk about fishermen.

That's not the point. I used to then go on and say that had these men been farmers, Jesus would have come and said, come, follow me, and I will cause you to bring a great harvest of men and women. But I had missed the point.

[10 : 07] Because you see, this image of fishers of men and women has a rich background in the Old Testament. The prophets, particularly Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Amos and Habakkuk, speak of one day God coming and intervening in history.

God comes and He brings salvation and judgment, but He comes as a fisherman who's going to put hooks in people's jaws in order to draw them into His new order.

Ezekiel 29, 4. I will put hooks in your jaws and I will lift you out of many waters. The prophets also speak then of God then raising up fishermen and fisherwomen who can help Him with this catch.

Jeremiah 16, 16. Behold, I'm going to send for many fishermen and they will fish for my fish. What Mark is saying is that it's because God has now come into the world, the time is fulfilled, God has come into the world as Jesus, that fishing becomes necessary.

There's an inherent connection between Mark 1, 15. The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God has come near. And Mark 1, 17. Follow me and I will make you fishers of men and women.

[11 : 16] It is now time for God to gather a people out of the world to enjoy the kingdom. Follow me and I will make you fishers of men and women. Literally, Jesus says, here, behind me.

And it's not just an invitation. It's a command. He is, after all, the king. As Brendan Manning said, this is not the Avon lady who's arrived at the door. This is the king.

Here, behind me. And immediately, Mark stresses that word, immediately, Peter and Andrew left their fishing nets, James and John left their boats and their father and their hired servants, and they followed Jesus down the road.

Immediately. Why this immediately? Partly because of the inherent power of Jesus' word. I've said on other occasions, Jesus' word not only informs, it performs.

His word brings into being what it speaks. His word performs what he utters. When Jesus speaks, no one can just sit there. Let there be light, and there was light.

[12 : 20] Hush, be still, and the waves are calm. Lazarus, you come out of the tomb, and a dead man comes out of the tomb. Here, behind me. And four fishermen have to get up and follow. But this immediately is also due to the wonderfully incredible privilege Jesus is offering these men.

Come, follow me, is the call to become his disciple. Disciple. These four fishermen would immediately have understood what Jesus had in his mind. As one scholar puts it, every Jewish teacher worth his salt had a circle of disciples, a circle of followers, who literally followed him as he walked down the road.

In first century speech, this phrase, follow me, meant, become my student, be apprenticed to me, join my school, come and live with me. And here's the thing that really startled or actually shocked those four fishermen.

In that day, rabbis did not choose their disciples. Say that again. A rabbi did not choose his disciples. Would-be students, would-be disciples, would go around the community, and they'd ask about the various rabbis who were available, and they'd find a rabbi who would be, would service their particular desires and their particular agendas.

Jesus turns the tables. He is the one who does the choosing. He is the one who goes through the community looking for those who will be able to fit into his agenda. Imagine how those four men felt that day when Jesus chose them.

[13 : 50] Imagine how Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Martha felt that day when Jesus, a male, chose them to follow him. He would later express the wonder of it when he said, you did not choose me, but I chose you to be a disciple.

Disciple. Please don't let that word turn you off. I know it bothers people. But don't let it turn you off because everyone is a disciple. Every human being in any part of the world is a disciple of someone or of some way or of some ideology.

The question, therefore, is never will I be a disciple. The question is always, whose disciple will I be? If not Jesus, whose? Seems to me that one of the deepest longings of our time is the longing for someone to be my master, for someone to be my mentor.

That's the only thing in my mind that can explain why thousands of people will pay hundreds of dollars to spend a Saturday with Shirley MacLaine or with Maharishi Yogi. It's what explains why Fortune 500 corporations now send their executives to Earhart Seminar Training or Silva Mind Control or Peck Performance Institute.

People are longing for a mentor. Here, behind me, says the Lord of the universe. It's an incredible privilege to be mentored by Him who is the way, the truth, and the life, to become an apprentice of the Lord of the universe.

[15 : 17] The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God has come near. Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men and women. Those four fishermen knew a good thing when they saw it, and they immediately got up and walked down the road with Him.

Now, in this encounter by the Sea of Galilee, we discover four essential dimensions of discipleship. Four essential dimensions of discipleship. If we miss these, we lose our way.

If we don't grasp these, there will always be the sense that there's something missing in my discipleship. Miss these, and the Christian life is very frustrating. To change the analogy, in this text, Jesus is telling us the four main rocks that need to get in the jar before the gravel, the sand, and the water, and they are, me, follow, fisher's eye.

Me, follow, fisher's eye. Follow me. Follow me. And I will make you become fishers of men and women. I will make you become.

Me, follow, fisher's eye. I'm going to focus on the first two and go quickly by the last two for today. First rock, first dimension of discipleship, me.

[16 : 32] That little pronoun makes all the difference in the world. Jesus does not say, follow the law, although following Him causes us to end up obeying God's law.

Jesus does not say, follow the principles, although following Him does open up certain inviolable principles which enrich our lives. Jesus does not say, follow love, although following Him teaches us how to live in a very, love in a very costly way.

Jesus does not even say, live for the kingdom, although following Him ends up in embracing God's new world order. Jesus says, follow me. Now, I cannot over-stress this.

I cannot over-stress it. This pronoun is what distinguishes Jesus' call to discipleship from the rabbis on the one hand and the philosophers on the other hand.

The rabbis attach people to the Torah, to the law. The philosophers, both Greek and Roman, attach people to ideas, to visions, to paradigms, to some grand unifying truth.

[17 : 36] In contrast to both of those, Jesus attaches disciples exclusively to Himself. Follow me, me, me. Yes, Jesus has a new law.

Love one another as I have loved you. And yes, Jesus has a grand unifying truth. It's the in-breaking of the kingdom, the creation healed and restored. But Jesus never calls people to this law and He never calls people to that grand unifying truth.

He calls people to Himself. To Himself. To Himself. The essence of discipleship is relationship. Follow me. Now, it's this pronoun that makes discipleship so dynamic.

It's also the pronoun that makes discipleship so threatening. It's threatening because most people would be more comfortable following a set of rules and principles or following a system of doctrines and ideas or following some step-by-step how-to manual.

That's because you can master a set of rules. You can manipulate a system of doctrines. You can maneuver around a step-by-step manual, but you cannot master Jesus. You cannot manipulate Jesus.

[18 : 50] You cannot maneuver around Jesus. Follow me. Now, we miss or lose touch with this first dimension of discipleship and it all goes haywire.

It doesn't work. I submit to you that when discipleship becomes burdensome or when it becomes boring, we've lost touch with this first rock with the pronoun me.

Come to me, all who are weary and overburdened. If you are thirsty, come to me and drink. I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me and eat will never be hungry. I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness. I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will not die. I am the vine and you are the branches. Abide in me and I in you for apart from me you can do nothing.

Me, me, me, me. Have I got that rock in the jar there yet? But the pronoun is the key to then the ministry of making disciples.

[19 : 48] What we're fundamentally about is attaching people to a person. To a person. Not to doctrine. Not to an institution. Not to mechanisms.

But to a person. You know, many of us grieve the fact that it appears that we have lost an entire generation to the church. The generation from my age will be 47 next month.

My age and down to the mid-30s. It feels like we've lost a whole group of people there. And I submit to you that part of the reason we lost that generation is that we gave them Christian values but we did not attach them to the only one who can make the values work.

The Christian life is more than values. The Christian life is more than a way of life. It's more than principles. It's a person. And the way and the values and the principles don't work unless people are attached to the person.

Follow me. Robert Spear who is the great Presbyterian missionary used to point out that no Jew ever sings My Moses I love thee. No Muslim ever sings to Mohammed I need thee every hour.

[21 : 01] But disciples of Jesus sing both of those songs because we need him every hour. It is impossible without him. It will not work without him. Follow me. Me. Me. Me. Me.

Rock right in the middle of the jar. Got it? I'll do it again if we didn't get it. Person.

I better move on. Second rock. Second dimension of discipleship. Follow. It's an active word. It suggests adventure. It suggests change.

There's no way to be a disciple apart from change. There's just no way. As I said earlier Jesus' word follow me is literally here behind me.

Behind. Behind. I got in trouble years ago for preaching this word behind because we want to think of Jesus alongside us and with us. Well he does come alongside us to be with us.

[22 : 01] After all his nickname is Emmanuel God with us. But what he's saying is that we experience the benefits of him being with us by getting behind him.

He comes alongside us to be with us to lead us into the kingdom and we're not going to get into the kingdom unless we get behind him and stay behind him. Imagine tomorrow morning if a thick marine layer settles over the city and imagine the fog becoming so dense that you can't even see your hand in front of your face and imagine that you have to go to work but you have to take another route you've never traveled and it's a treacherous road and imagine that there's a car in front of you and you know that that person knows this road he or she has driven it many times and has volunteered to lead you out but has said you've got to stay right on my bumper.

The only way you're going to get safely through that road is staying right there as close as you can. That's what Jesus is saying. Here, right behind me get up there behind me and stay behind me.

Which says to me that as we mature in discipleship we will be able to say I am where I am I am doing what I am doing because I follow Jesus there.

I am in this relationship because I saw Jesus go into it and I followed him there. I teach because I follow Jesus there. I'm a clinical psychologist I'm a lawyer I'm a chemical engineer I'm a plumber I'm a homemaker because I follow Jesus here.

[23 : 27] Follow behind me behind me right up there behind me. You with me? Now, by necessity following behind means leaving behind.

Right? How could it be otherwise? How can I stay right on his heels unless I leave behind the things that I was following before he came into my life?

It seems to me that this addresses one of the major problems in evangelical Christianity of our time and why evangelical Christianity is not transforming the American scene. It's because we have this picture that we are walking down a road it's a road of our own choosing Jesus Christ comes into our life walks alongside us and offers us all these benefits and we think then that he intends to keep walking down this road with us.

He does not. the picture is instead that we come walking down this road of our own choosing he comes into our life he promises all the benefits and blessings of the kingdom and then tells us that the blessings and benefits are on a different road.

You can keep walking down this road if you want but the blessings will not be there. You've got to leave. There's no way to stay behind Jesus. Wait, he's not on this road.

[24 : 44] Whoa! He's over here. There's no staying behind without leaving behind. Now in this text these four fishermen have to leave their nets and their boats and their father and their hired men.

Does that mean that every disciple is supposed to do that? Well the question to ask would be what do these nets and boats and fathers and hired men represent? Seems to me what they do they represent these fishermen's sources of identity and security.

This is where they get their identity this is where they get their security and in order to follow Jesus they have to shift their source of security and identity and so do we.

No way we're going to follow unless we do that. He will become the source of our identity he will become our security. Now Jesus tried to teach this in many different ways.

For instance he says whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother wife and children brother and sisters yes even life itself cannot be my disciple. Now Jesus is hardly saying there that we are supposed to literally hate our loved ones.

[25 : 55] Rather he means that they are not going to have the defining authority in our lives. He's saying that his claim upon our lives is going to take precedent over anyone else's claim including our family.

Now Jesus is not in the business of breaking up families here. In fact disciples become better husbands and wives and better parents and children. It's just that he's saying that family cannot now determine the pattern of my living.

He will determine the pattern of my living. People of course are not the only source of security and identity. He also said in another place none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

The word translated give up literally means say goodbye to part with renounce. Our possessions put mighty claims upon our lives do they not?

How many people keep jobs they don't like? How many of you have a job you don't like simply because you're trying to prop up possessions? If we are going to freely follow behind Jesus we are going to have to tell our possessions that they no longer have a claim for our allegiance.

[27 : 07] Somewhere along the line somewhere along the line in discipleship you and I have to turn to our possessions and say I'm thankful for you but you are not going to determine how I live my life.

Now this the claims on our lives go deeper than this. I think here of the deeper claims that we call cultural values and cultural presuppositions. Six times in his sermon on the mount Jesus says I you have heard it was said but I say to you you have heard it was said but I say to you you have heard it was said but I say to you you have heard it was said but I say to you follow me is the call to come and learn new values and new presuppositions and I think he's teaching us that if we are going to stay on his heels if we're going to stay behind him one day we're going to have to leave behind cultural values and cultural presuppositions that get in the way of obedience.

As far as I'm concerned that's where the real action is in discipleship it's in the mind it's a battle for the mind Romans 12:2 do not let the world around you squeeze you into its mold but be transformed by the renewal of your mind discipleship requires alert minds and discerning spirits especially in our time when half truths cast their spell over the world this leave behind goes deeper than that though doesn't it in order for me to stay behind I'm going to have to leave behind the reins of my life I'm going to have to let go of the reins I'm going to have to move out of the driver's seat Luke tells us that Jesus called a certain man to follow the man responded permit me first to go bury my father Jesus said let the dead bury their dead you come and proclaim the kingdom it sounds cruel doesn't it I mean Jesus obviously could have let the man go bury his dead father but there was a principle at stake this fellow was laying down the terms of discipleship

I will follow you when it's convenient to me okay Jesus and Jesus had to make clear who's in charge here another would-be disciple said to Jesus I will follow you Lord but first permit me to say goodbye to my relatives what would really be wrong with Jesus letting him go do that in and of itself nothing but again here was a disciple laying down the terms of discipleship Lord but Lord but the words don't go together and this leave behind goes even deeper in order to follow in order to stay behind him there is going to have to be a death there's going to have to be death to self will living how many times did Jesus try to get the first bunch of disciples to understand this if you want to follow behind me you have to deny yourself and take up your cross daily deny yourself it doesn't mean deny yourself all the good things that you want it goes so much deeper than that it means deny yourself the role of master

Daryl you are no longer in charge here take up your cross it does not mean be prepared to simply mean be prepared to suffer it means it goes so much deeper in the first century the only people who anyone who carried a cross was in fact dead British scholar R.T.

[30 : 33] France puts it this way becoming a disciple of Jesus means entering a funeral procession only to discover that it is your own that's why Dietrich Bonhoeffer said when Christ bids a man come and follow he bids him come and die deny yourself lordship over your life take up your cross and allow the lordship of Daryl to be crucified the rule of Daryl is over and unless I say that I will not follow him down into the kingdom Keith Phillips who is president of World Impact a ministry in the inner city says it this way Christ cannot be lord of my life if I am lord of my life in order for Christ to be in control I have to die those are hard words aren't they someone said to me you know if you preach those words people are going to go away maybe but

I don't think so because those hard words are liberating words they're liberating come and die is liberating yes because you and I were never intended to be our own masters autonomy is a myth self rule is a myth it is a perversion of our humanity the essence of sin is wanting to be our own master all human brokenness all human bondage is traced to that wanting to be our own master and when we take off the crown and lay it at Jesus feet this horrendous burden we were never intended to carry is lifted off our shoulders and we are reborn it's good news to come and die to that Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me get behind me and leave behind it involves a huge risk the risk is does Jesus know what he's talking about is he telling the truth if

I abdicate the throne am I going to find freedom does he know where is it better this way than that way discipleship is risking that he's right it's wagering that Jesus is all that he claimed to be and that he will do all he claimed to do it's the second rock follow the third rock real quickly fishers follow me and I will make you fishers of men and women this tells me that the call to discipleship is never for myself alone but always also for others my friend Dale Bruner I think says it right when he writes this addresses the core of our being Dale Bruner says more central than the sex drive is the desire to influence others we we were socially constituted to make a mark on the world and Jesus promises that mark I will make you fishers of people surprise it's the get behinders leave behinders those who have died to their own lordship who make the mark on the world it's they who influence the world

Jesus is promising in this text that following him following on his heels makes us contagious people people who then can catch others for him and his kingdom he's certainly not saying that disciples have got their act together it's that disciples are in touch with something bigger than themselves Richard Foster says that superficiality is the curse of our time would you agree with that superficiality is the curse of our time and he says that what is needed is not more intellectual people or more gifted people what's needed is more deep people disciples are deep people disciples are people who are rooted in a greater source of identity and security than ever before they're people who have their feet on the ground yet they're in touch with the kingdom of God and it shows does this mean that if we are not catching other people we are not following yes it does

I may be Jesus fan I like you I may be his advocate go Jesus I like what you're saying but am I his disciple am I following disciples catch following produces contagious people it's a promise now here's where we can go wrong we can go wrong by saying oh boy I better work on making myself a little more contagious here but you know how that works it doesn't work and it doesn't catch anybody at best you can come up with that smile that makes you look like you've been weaned on a lemon so we come to the fourth rock then the fourth essential dimension of discipleship I I will make you fishers of men and women it's his job to make me contagious make you contagious not mine he draws disciples to himself and then his magnetic life runs off on them he draws disciples to himself and through the holy spirit who indwells disciples he lives his contagious life out in us

[35 : 57] I will make you catch people again a little pronoun makes all the difference in the world Jesus means to win the world to himself and he means to use you and me in the process but he never commands us to do the winning you realize that he does not command us to do the winning nowhere in the new testament does he say go win others rather he makes a promise I'm going to do something in you and as a result of what I do in you you will end up catching others just before ascending to the throne of the universe Jesus said to the eleven disciples go be my witnesses in the world right wrong he didn't say that he didn't say go be my witnesses what he said was you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will become my witnesses being a witness is not a command it's a promise I'm going to do something in you I'm going to take up residence in you

I'm going to fill you with my life I'm going to fill you with my spirit and as a result of it you will be contagious evidence that the kingdom of God is breaking into the world the command is not be fishers the command is here behind me it's by being behind that we become contagious stay close to me live in me let me live in you and I will make you broken people into contagious people who will catch other broken people for me and my kingdom me follow fisher's eye you see the lesson is not that there's always more room in the jar for gravel sand and water the lesson is that unless you put the rocks in first you'll never get them in because the gravel the sand and the water will have taken the place me follow fisher's eye the of god has come near follow me follow me i will make you become fishers of men and women i will make you become me follow fisher's eye it's a whole lot less frustrating and much more rewarding if we just keep first things first i'll take two minutes or three for any kind of response any questions i anywhere i can clarify or um anyone want to challenge me on something can i help in any way to make something clearer judy where does ministry come in ministry to the church in the church in the city too where does ministry fit in that i think ministry is a result of the following as i stay behind him now this would be the text we'd have to go on down the road he then begins to give me gifts right and as i follow him into ministry into different parts of the world then he he says now i've given you these abilities now use these i've empowered you to use these he this is a better way to say that we're not following jesus out of the world that's what jack chelmers was trying to say when we were singing that i've decided to follow jesus follow jesus he's always in right back in the world so to stay right behind him i'm going to move in to start doing the things he's doing and he's going to empower me to continue those oh

I get what you okay okay it's in the third rock fishers fishers is the whole image of relating to other people right so that's where the ministry would fit but I think that where the mistake we make is that that rock gets to be number one rock when someone burns out on ministry and all of us have probably done that I know the problem the problem was not the ministry the problem was the first rock wasn't there you will never get burned out hanging on to Jesus you will get burned out doing church work you can I mean you will unless it's connected to that first rock me so I guess there's an order there isn't there me follow then we get into ministry and by the way even then it's I pronoun beginning and the end

I'm the beginning the end I'm going to make even ministry happen am I relating to your question at all what happens in a growing church like us is that we can get so focused on ministry down the road we forgot me and I will make you but I don't know how to follow at that point and you don't know how because you're afraid or it's not clear where the road is which of us well my quick counsel on that would simply be to say to the Lord it's not clear to me Lord I don't get it yet he wants you and me to go down the right road more than we ever would so to say I I'm hearing but Lord can you turn the volume up just a tad it's not clear to me I think that's valid to say now as we grow in sensitivity and this is my experience

I can I times have heard him say it's clear you're just afraid then yes I am I'm very afraid of that will you help me so I think you just take one little step and tell it's real clear preparation time for for fishing good Sharon pointed that out to me the other day fishing takes a lot of patience doesn't it yeah and so Tim Gallagher is going to preach on October 9th and expand on this and that's probably one of the ways he'll go with that it takes a lot of time nursing the fish along and often you got to change the worms right to make this inviting to hold out the carrot to mix analogies but what

[42 : 52] I was trying to point out from this text is Jesus brings in the fishing analogy not simply because they're fishermen but the fishing analogy has an Old Testament precedent fishing would take place when the kingdom breaks in got to go get those people because the kingdom is breaking in so the note that's being struck in the text is urgency versus patience patience you can see in John 4 when Jesus works with the woman at the well alright kept you long let's respond to God's word by singing that wonderful hymn make it our prayer I surrender all love I love love thank you how Angela 1000

N you I Ron I