

Follow Me

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Preacher: Jared Blankenship

- [0 : 0 0] The following sermon is made available by Lakeside Bible Church in Cornelius, North Carolina.
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- We left our study last Sunday after having examined the way in which Mark records the transition of ministry from John the Baptizer or John the Baptist to the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.
- And the baptism of Jesus that is recorded for us in verses 9 through 11, and then the temptation of Jesus in verses 12 and 13, are monumentally important to Mark's stated purpose, which is found in verse 1.
- [1 : 0 9] And that purpose in writing this letter, this gospel, is that he might declare and proclaim that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Messiah and the Son of God.
- Jesus' baptism involved an extraordinary revelation in which the skies opened and the Holy Spirit visibly descended and rested upon him.
- And then God the Father spoke audibly, a voice from heaven that said, you are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. An extraordinary revelation.
- And then this revelation was immediately put to the test through a 40-day fast in the desert in which Jesus was tempted by Satan.
- In the most extreme of circumstances, he resisted that temptation and gave proof that he is indeed the Savior who could conquer sin and death on our behalf.
- [2 : 1 4] And so Mark's emphasis on these events is such that it demands a response from the reader. After acknowledging the revelation of who Jesus is in his baptism, and then seeing his power over temptation, one must give now serious consideration to his message.
- And his message, as recorded for us in verse 15, is simple. Repent and believe the gospel. What is this gospel that he has demanded that we believe?
- The gospel is that God became a man in order to die for the sins of mankind, that he rose from the dead on the third day, and that anyone who will believe and follow him will receive eternal life.
- And so this transition takes place where there's the preaching and the baptism of John the Baptist. It transitions over in Mark's narrative to the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.
- And he shows first that in Jesus' baptism that there was this extraordinary revelation that we see that he is indeed the Son of God and the Messiah. And then he proves that fact as he goes through 40 days of wilderness temptation, proving that he indeed has the power over sin, Satan, and ultimately over death.
- [3 : 3 9] And we're reminded of Jesus' words here in John chapter 10. He said, What was this gospel he was declaring that we believe?

That he is the door. He's the door to the kingdom. He's the door to eternal life. And anyone that will come through him will receive that life. He's the good shepherd.

He had come in order that he might lay down his life for our sins, the sin of his sheep. Well, that's where we pick up in Mark chapter 1 today. Look with me at verse 16.

Now, as he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers.

And Jesus said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets and followed him.

[5 : 03] And when he had gone a little further, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who also were in the ship, mending their nets. And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants and went after him.

Well, after recording these two monumental events, the baptism and temptation of Jesus, Mark skips ahead here to summarize Jesus' public ministry, which began in Galilee after John the Baptist had been arrested and imprisoned.

We see that in verse 14. We looked at it closely last week. Now, after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. Now, our text tells us of an event that took place several months after Jesus' wilderness temptation.

And here it's needful for us to remember that neither of the gospel authors set out to write a strictly chronological timeline of Jesus' ministry.

These books are gospels, not biographies. They're not stories that are there to entertain us, but they are eyewitness accounts meant to proclaim the objective facts of who Jesus is and what his purpose was on this earth.

[6 : 29] And if we think about it, we think these men, these eyewitness accounts, Mark and Peter, Mark writing on behalf of Peter, and we see the other gospel authors, Matthew the disciple and John the apostle, and we see Luke who partnered with Paul and all of these other men.

And even unbelieving scholars say that these were real historical men that really did live in Palestine in the days of Jesus, that they really did believe that Jesus was Messiah, that they really did believe that Jesus rose from the dead, and that they really did give their lives preaching that message.

And so as we study these books, it's important for us to understand exactly what they are. They're not stories to entertain. They're not meant to be chronological timelines that we might just study intellectually.

They are proclamations that Jesus is the Messiah, that he died for the sins of man, and that he rose on the third day. And all of these men, including Mark, literally gave their lives preaching that message.

And each author has organized his material with a unique audience and purpose in mind. It's just not a problem for us that Mark jumps ahead and omits material here that Matthew, Luke, and John might have included in their gospels.

[7 : 49] That being said, it is helpful for us to study the four gospels together in order that we might have the best possible understanding of the movements of Jesus throughout his life and ministry.

For instance, the gospel of John tells us much more about the early nature of Jesus' ministry that would fit chronologically in between verses 13 and 14 of Mark chapter 1.

So if you'll look with me there from verse number 13, Mark is dealing with the temptation of Jesus. Then he automatically skips to verse 14 when John had been put in prison. Well, John in his gospel takes several chapters actually to fill in the gaps of what Jesus was doing in between verses 13 and verse 14.

So it's helpful for us to go there and study and see exactly what Jesus was doing and how all of this came to be. Also, Luke's account of our text gives a much more detailed look at what actually took place when Jesus called for these men to follow him.

It shouldn't cause doubt in your mind that Mark doesn't put all that detail in there. It's just to tell us that Mark, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, didn't feel it necessary to include those details in the way that Luke and John had included them.

[9 : 10] And as we go, we'll make note of how those other passages can help our understanding. But as we get to verse 16, the concise nature of Mark's gospel becomes increasingly apparent.

In fact, it took Matthew four chapters and Luke five chapters to deal with what Mark dealt with in just 20 verses. And so though Mark isn't as detailed, he is just as purposeful in his writing.

What is his purpose in telling us this story and writing these four or five verses? His purpose is this. Now that he has introduced us to the king, he's giving us a look as to how Jesus will build his kingdom.

And by introducing us to these four fishermen that Jesus would call to follow him, Mark's intention is to show that Jesus calls people to himself, that he transforms those he calls by his power, and then he commissions them to accomplish his work.

And then in addition to that, he shows us in this passage that to truly follow Christ is a life of total and complete abandonment of self and of sin.

[10 : 29] Well, let's look at these verses together, specifically at verse 17. And if you're keeping notes with this, if you have one of those scripture journals maybe, I would encourage you to write this down first.

Jesus calls us to himself. Jesus calls us to himself. And we're going to zero in here on verse 17. Jesus said to them, Follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

And as Jesus went about ministering in Galilee, he often did so near this freshwater lake that we often refer to most commonly as the Sea of Galilee.

Now, the staple protein in Mediterranean diet was fish. And so there were all these fishing villages that surrounded the lake at the time at least. And it was in these villages and in these towns like Bethsaida and Capernaum where Jesus often carried out his ministry.

And as the crowds began to gather and grow, as Jesus was healing and teaching, he would often use the open areas around the Sea of Galilee to carry out his work and to accomplish his teaching.

[11 : 41] Now, Luke's account tells us that Jesus had led the crowd to the shore of the Sea of Galilee in the vicinity where Simon, who we know often as Peter, and his brother Andrew, and then James and John were wrapping up a long night of fishing out on the lake.

And this is the scene in which Jesus made this call for the men to follow him. And there's three facets of this call that I think are worth us noting.

Number one, it was an unusual call. It was an unusual call. Now, it wasn't unusual for rabbis to have disciples that would follow their teaching.

But this was always on the basis and initiative of the student, not the teacher. Furthermore, the chief allegiance of rabbinical students was to the Old Testament law, not to a specific rabbi.

But Jesus does something unusual here. He calls these four men to himself. They didn't choose him. He chose them.

[12 : 51] And he said as much. In John chapter 15 and verse 16, he told the men, you did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit.

So the custom of the day is if someone wanted to learn more and follow a particular rabbi, they were dedicated more to the teaching than they were the teacher. And it was all the initiative of the student to do so.

But Jesus does something unusual here. He doesn't wait for them to come to him. He goes to them. And he calls them to himself.

This introduces us once again to the heart of Jesus. He pursues us even though we are not pursuing him.

And he does not call us merely to his teaching, but he calls us to a personal, intimate relationship with him. It's an unusual call.

[13 : 51] These men weren't looking for Jesus. They were wrapping up a busy day out on the lake. Jesus called them. And significant to this call is the fact that he didn't say, come and follow this set of teaching that I'm expounding.

He says, follow me. Hear me. Be with me. Love me. He doesn't call them to teaching. He calls them to himself in this moment.

It's unusual. The truth is that no one ever pursues Jesus on their own. The natural tendency of our heart is to pursue selfish gain and sinful pleasure, not the eternal grace of God.

The scripture spells this out for us. Consider for a moment Romans chapter three. Quoting the Old Testament, Paul writes, none is righteous. No, not one.

No one understands, he goes on to say. No one seeks for God. No one pursues God. All have actually turned aside. And together they have become worthless.

[14 : 55] No one does good. Not even one, Paul wrote. This is what makes the call of Christ not only astounding, but really unusual. He calls people to himself who apart from his work of grace have no desire for him.

It's a radical love. You'll find in no other person. Listen, Jesus pursued people that weren't pursuing him. And he proves this in Romans five.

Paul writes again, God demonstrates his love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. You catch the significance of that statement? That Jesus left the throne of heaven to come and humble himself on earth, to give his life for us when we didn't want him to.

While we were yet sinners, while we were rejecting him, he was pursuing us. While we were left in our sin, he was trying to rescue us from our sin.

It's a radical love. If you have any desire to know and follow Christ today, it's not because you put it there, but it's because he is calling you to it. And the question for you this morning is, will you answer his call?

[16 : 18] Will you follow? So it's an unusual call. Secondly, it's an unconditional call. An unconditional call. Now, if we were to imagine that a king was going to choose a people with which he would build a kingdom, we might tend to think that he would choose the brightest and the strongest and the most talented to do so.

Jesus actually called those whom no one else would have likely chosen. Now, we sometimes get this idea that the disciples were a group of boneheaded ignoramuses that could barely get their way through life.

But that's really not the picture that the scripture paints for us of these men. These four men on the shore of Galilee were very likely successful businessmen.

Think about it. They were partners in a small fleet of fishing vessels. They even had enough money and enough capital in their business that they were hiring other laborers to actually help them.

Even other disciples, such as Matthew, would have been particularly skilled at their occupation. No, these weren't the highest and the most elite of society, but they weren't chumps either.

[17 : 30] They were successful men. James Edwards helps us here. He says, the fishermen whom Jesus called were scarcely indignant day laborers.

In order to survive in the market league, they needed to be, and doubtlessly were, shrewd and successful businessmen. Now, here's the point. The point is not that Jesus called the base of society and rejected the skilled in society.

The point is that there was no human condition that excluded an individual from God's grace. There's no condition that excludes a person from God's grace.

There's no condition that automatically brings a person into God's grace. That's the point. It's an unconditional call. There's no ability that made an individual accepted by Jesus.

His call was unconditional and based solely on his divine grace. And his call is just as unconditional today. Jesus will not accept you because of your efforts and skills.

[18 : 39] Neither will he refuse you because of your unworthiness. All who come to Jesus do so understanding that it is only by his loving grace that they will be accepted.

And Jesus made it clear that anyone who comes to him in this way, he will never turn them away. John told us specifically that Jesus said in John chapter 6 and verse 37, Whoever comes to me, I will never cast out.

There's no prerequisite for salvation. None of us are actually worthy of it. And the point of Jesus' call here, I think, is not to say that he accepts those who are less worthy and rejects those who are more worthy.

The point is that we're all unworthy. And if any of us know Christ, it's because of his divine grace that's been extended to us. There's no condition on that. All of us that come to him, no matter who you are, no matter how great I may think you are, no matter how awful I may think you are, anyone who comes to Jesus in this way, he said, I will never cast out.

What a wonderful love that is. If you think that you've received eternal life because of your own merit, you're sorely mistaken. But if you will not come to Christ because you think he will not accept you, you are just as mistaken.

[20 : 00] There's no condition to be met here. And we see that based on the men that he called. So it's an unusual call. It's an unconditional call. Thirdly, it was an authoritative call.

An authoritative call. Jesus clearly just says, follow me. It was not a casual request. He didn't ask them to follow him if they felt like it was the right thing to do.

There was no question here. Did you notice? Look again, verse 17. Jesus didn't ask them. Jesus said to them, follow me. Follow me. He left no room for indifference here.

This was the authoritative command from the king of kings, not the hopeless request from an aspiring teacher. This was a demand of Jesus.

It was all or nothing. Jesus is not content to have us only halfway follow him. And the call of Christ is one of total abandonment of self and submission to his lordship.

[21 : 06] Consider Matthew chapter 10. I had the opportunity to speak on this passage this past Wednesday at our sister church in Charlotte. Here's what Jesus said. Whoever loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me.

And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it.

And whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. It was an authoritative call. It was an all or nothing call. It wasn't a request that they try to figure some things out and then maybe if they've got some time to come and follow Jesus.

No, he demanded, follow me. It's a command. This is why so many people followed Jesus when he was healing but abandoned him when he preached the gospel of repentance.

Think of all of those thousands of people that flocked to Jesus to see him do these mighty miracles. The 5,000 people that sat and was fed by Jesus in this miraculous way.

[22 : 09] And then see how every single one of them abandoned him when he actually preached the gospel of repentance and lordship. Plenty of people want a Jesus that brings extravagant blessing and extraordinary demonstrations of power.

But very few are willing to follow the Jesus that demands a denial of self and a total submission to his will and his way. And the truth is you can't experience the blessing of Jesus without wholeheartedly following the demand of Jesus.

And what is that demand? Follow me. Follow me wholly. Follow me completely. Leave everything else behind and follow me, Jesus says.

So we see here, Jesus calls us to himself. It's fantastic. Secondly, Jesus transforms us by his power.

He transforms us by his power. Now the call that Jesus gave was accompanied by a wonderful promise. That he would do this transformational work in their lives.

[23 : 17] And notice he didn't say, follow me and get your act together. And he didn't say, follow me and prove that you have what it takes. No. He said, follow me.

And then what's those next three words? I will make you into what I would have you to be. He was making a promise here. Follow me and I'm going to do something in your life, men, that you didn't think was possible.

That you probably have never even imagined you needed. The truth is there's no prerequisite skills. For coming to faith in Christ. There's no fine print that will exclude you if you fall short.

He already knows that you can't do it on your own. So what does he do? He promises to do this work for you. If you will but come to him in faith and submission.

That's fantastic. You say, my problem is my sinfulness. My problem is the fact that I've got all these problems. And that I keep falling short. And that I keep disobeying. And you're saying that I don't have to clean it up myself.

[24 : 22] That Jesus is going to do that for me. All I've got to do is come and believe him and follow him. Yes. He said, follow me. And I will do this work in your life.

Again, Edwards wrote, unlike rabbinic aspirants, the fishermen are not required to do anything before they become disciples. They need not exhibit knowledge of the Torah or pass a qualifying examination in theology.

What they needed to learn and do could only be learned and done as they followed Jesus. And you say, but how is it exactly that Jesus is going to transform my life if I come to him?

Well, consider with me just a few passages here. If you're keeping notes, these would be good things to write down. Number one, Jesus brings us from death to life. That's transformational. He brings us from death to life.

Our sins condemn us to eternal death. Jesus gives us eternal life through his sacrifice on the cross. Let me show you in the scripture. Think of Ephesians chapter 2 in verse 1.

[25 : 30] And you were dead in your trespasses and sins. Not dying, you were dead. In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world. According to the prince of the power of the air.

Of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. And then he says in verse 4. But God being rich in mercy. Because of his great love with which he loved us.

Even when we were dead in our transgressions. Made us alive together with Christ. By grace you are saved. And he has raised us up with him.

And seated us with him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. So that in the ages to come. He might show the surpassing riches of his grace. And kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

What's Paul saying? Before salvation you are dead in your sins. But what God does in this transformational work. Is he brings you from death to life. And that life that he gives.

[26 : 30] Is a never ending life. You say well I don't know about that. Consider Colossians 2. When you were dead in your transgressions. And the uncircumcision of your flesh.

He made you alive together with him. Having forgiven us all transgressions. Having canceled out the certificate of debt. Consisting of decrees against us.

Which was hostile to us. And he is taking it out of the way. How? By nailing it to his cross. He's brought us from death to life. How has he done that?

By taking our death. They say I'm still not real sure. Well consider Jesus' words. John chapter 10. My sheep hear my voice.

And I know them. And they follow me. And then he says. And I give to them eternal life. And they will never perish.

[27 : 27] And no one can snatch them out of my hand. What a wonderful promise that is. That not only do I not have to earn my way. There's no prerequisite for salvation for me.

It's all of God's grace. The grace of Jesus that I'm saying. It's all of Jesus' grace that I'm kept. And what does he do in this transformational work? He takes us from death to life.

Secondly. He sanctifies us in righteousness. This is a transformational work. He sanctifies us in righteousness. What does that mean? After he saves us.

He does a continual work in our lives. To make us righteous and holy. That's this continual daily work that Jesus does. It's amazing.

Let me show you. Philippians chapter 2. In verse 13. Paul wrote. It is God who is at work in you. And here's the work he's doing. Both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

[28 : 30] Now consider that statement. Think about what our life is characterized by before we're saved. What is our will towards? Our will is not towards God. It's not towards righteousness.

It's not towards worship. It's not towards those things. It's towards self. It's towards sin. It's towards everything that I want in this life. So what is this work that God does after salvation? Well he affects our wills.

And he affects our wills. That it's not pursuing our selfish game. But it's pursuing him. And then what else does he do? He affects our work. What is our work characterized by before salvation?

Sin. What is this transformational work God does after salvation? He affects our will. But he affects our work. Our work in righteousness. Consider 2 Corinthians 5.17.

Therefore if any is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold all things are become new. How about Colossians 3? Do not lie one to another since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.

[29 : 34] And have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge. According to the image of the one who created him. And who's the one who created him?

Paul wrote to the Colossians in chapter 1 that it is Jesus Christ who has created us. And it is to his image that he is radically transforming us after salvation.

It's amazing. Jesus transforms us from life to death. He transforms us from sin to righteousness. And then thirdly, Jesus empowers us for work in his service.

He empowers us for work in his service. He promised that when he went back to heaven, he would send the Holy Spirit to empower us to do his will and to serve his church.

He said this clearly in John 14. He said, And then he said in Acts chapter 1 in verse 8, 1 Peter 4 in verse 10.

[30 : 49] As each one of you has received a gift, a special gift of the Holy Spirit, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

All of these things are promises. What does Jesus mean when he says, follow me and I will make you? He means follow me and I'm going to do the work in your life that you cannot do. I'm going to bring you from death to life.

I'm going to affect your will. I'm going to affect your work. And then I'm going to empower you to do my service on this earth. It's amazing. And then thirdly, Jesus commissions us to do his work.

He calls us to himself. He transforms us by his power. And then he commissions us to do his work. Look at verse 17 again. Follow me and I will make you to become fishers of men.

Jesus had a particular mission for these four men to follow. They, along with the other disciples, would become Jesus' apostles in spreading the gospel through the world.

[31 : 52] They would be used of God to write much of the New Testament scriptures. And they would ultimately give their lives for their faith, every one of them. Jesus has not called us to be apostles.

That time has passed. It ended when John the apostle died. He was the last of them. But we are to carry on the mission of sharing the gospel. That's our task.

When we consider Jesus' call to be fishers of men, no doubt this is a familiar passage to you. Maybe if you grew up in church, you probably heard it a lot as a kid in Sunday school maybe. When we think about this, we often draw the comparison to how we fish, right?

We get our rod and our reel and we bait it up with something really attractive to the fish. And we cast it and we fish for one at a time, right? Usually, unless you're just a really skilled one that puts lots of hooks in at one time.

And if that's you, you can ignore what I'm saying right now. Often, that's how we picture Jesus turning us into fishers of men, right? We fish for one at a time and then we develop our most attractive and well-meaning apologetic argument.

[32 : 57] We use that as debate in order to attract and persuade people to believe. But that's not exactly what Jesus had in mind here. The nets that these men were using as they were fishing, this was an illustration for them to understand.

And they're fishing with nets here. The nets they were using were these large circular nets. They could get up to about 20 feet in diameter. And they had weighted edges with pieces of iron or rock or other things.

And they would literally cast it out flat onto the lake, onto the surface. And then it would sink to the bottom. And as it sank to the bottom, it would collect any groups of fish that might have been in that particular location.

It would sink and it would trap them at the bottom of the lake. They dive into the water, singe the net from the bottom as tightly as they could. And then they would pull it up to the edge of the boat. And they would either pull it in or they would drag it along the boat, the side of the boat.

This is the picture that Jesus means for us to see here as he says he's going to make us fishers of men. Now, this is important for us to understand. C.H. Spurgeon, great preacher and puritan, probably my favorite to study and to read after.

[34 : 07] He said this when preaching on this passage. Our business is not to entice a fish to swallow the bait, but to cast the net all around us and lift sinners out of the element in which they lie into the boat where Christ is.

That's an amazing statement. I'm going to repeat it so that you get it, okay? Our business as Christians, as the church, is not to entice a fish to swallow the bait, but to cast the net all around us and lift sinners out of the element in which they lie into the boat where Christ is.

Now, we need to look at Luke's record of this now. Luke tells us that Jesus actually performed a miracle in the midst of this call. Jesus had led this crowd out to the shore of Galilee in the vicinity where Peter and Andrew and James and John were fishing or at least cleaning up their nets after a night of fishing.

And he gets into Peter and Andrew's boat and they let him teach from the boat as all the people are out on the shore. And after he was finished, he asked the men to push out a little further into the water and cast their net one more time.

And they resisted this at first. You know what happened. They resisted this at first and ultimately obeyed and they went out. This was against all reasonable practice by these fishermen.

[35 : 32] The fishing was done in the shallows. It was done at night. This is not what they were accustomed to doing. They had fished all night and hadn't caught one fish. Jesus says, launch out into the deep, not the shallows where they typically would catch their fish.

Launch out into the deep and do it one more time in the daytime. And so that's what they did. And what's amazing is that on that cast, they had the catch of their career. So many fish gathered into the net in that one cast that the nets began to break, the Bible tells us.

Luke records this for us. And that it's so heavy that they call perhaps James and John and their boat over. And together they're trying to lift it into the boat or drag it behind the boat. And both boats are beginning to sink.

It's this amazing miracle that Jesus does for these men. It's astounding. Like can you imagine that? You fished all night long. There's not one fish. You do everything against what you know to be true.

They were professional men. And you do the thing that you never do. And in that moment you catch an inordinate amount of fish like you've never caught before.

[36 : 39] And Peter's response to that according to Luke is he gets out of the boat and he goes to Jesus and he bows before Jesus. And he makes this great confession of his sin before Jesus in this moment.

And then Jesus says, Mark 1, follow me. Follow me. And I will make you to be a fisher of men. Now, the miracle is a needed illustration for us here.

However, it's not for us to control the fish. We can't do that no matter how hard you try. No matter how skilled you are in apologetics. No matter how fanciful you are with your words when you're trying to convince people of the truth of the Bible.

There is no power in you to actually accomplish this task. You can't control the fish. Only God can change the heart of a person. Only God can save a person.

You can't do that. It is Jesus who will bring the fish. We need only to cast the net. That's our job.

[37 : 45] To cast the net. Let Jesus bring the fish. We're responsible to be faithful to the call. Jesus will be fruitful in his time.

So trust him to be fruitful. So what does Jesus do? He calls these men to himself. He transforms them by his power. And then he commissions them. He says, I'm going to make you into fishers of men.

He just said, what did they do after Jesus left? They just kept casting the net. Peter just a couple of years after this is going to have another massive catch of fish.

Except it's people this time. It's on the day of Pentecost. 3,000 people get saved. What was Peter doing? It wasn't because he was skilled at teaching. It wasn't because there was any power in him.

He just cast the net. And on that day, God brought a great harvest. Well, it's our job as Lakeside Bible Church. As we move on from year number one, our job is to cast the net.

[38 : 43] And trust the Lord to bring the fish. In closing, did you notice how these men responded to Jesus' call?

Let's read it one more time. As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

And he said, follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And immediately, they forsook their nets and followed him.

And then he went a little further, and he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were also in the ship, mending their nets. And immediately, he called them.

He said, follow me. And they left their father, Zebedee, with the hired servants and went after them. Immediately, these men left everything behind in order that they might know and follow Jesus.

[39 : 46] The Gospel of John tells us that these men weren't strangers to Jesus, and Jesus wasn't a stranger to them. They had actually participated in his ministry before this moment. Andrew and John the Apostle, the disciple, were disciples of John the Baptist at one point.

And throughout John's preaching, after Jesus had gone through his wilderness temptation, Jesus is walking through Galilee one day. And John points out Jesus to these two men, and they began to literally follow behind him on the road.

And Jesus turns around and basically says, can I help you guys? And they asked, where are you staying? We want to talk to you. We want to get to know you a little bit. Andrew immediately goes and gets Peter. And they come back, and they spend the day with Jesus.

And then throughout that first year of ministry, there are periodic times when they are with Jesus in Judea. Up to this point, they had followed the teaching of Jesus.

He was their teacher. But at this point in Mark chapter 1, Jesus is calling to follow him as Lord, not as teacher. There's a distinction here.

[40 : 53] Perhaps you've spent your life following Jesus as a teacher. You've been greatly impacted by maybe the things that he said on the Sermon on the Mount, for instance. If you follow Ben Shapiro at all, you'll know that a couple of years ago, he did an interview with John MacArthur.

Ben Shapiro is an Orthodox Jew. And, of course, John MacArthur, a faithful evangelical pastor. And they had this conversation. And on that conversation, Ben Shapiro went on and on about how, yeah, I really respect Jesus, especially this teaching on the Sermon on the Mount.

I love the morality. I love what he's doing with it. But I love Jesus as Lord. And if Ben Shapiro were to go into eternity today, he would go into eternity with Jesus as his teacher, but he would go to hell.

Why? Because the call to salvation is not merely a call for you to follow intellectually the teaching of Jesus. It is a call for you to abandon everything to follow him as Lord.

And if you're not willing to follow him as Lord, you won't be able to follow him as Savior. What did these men do? They left everything. They determined in this moment that there was nothing at all in this life that would keep them from following Jesus wholeheartedly.

[42 : 11] MacArthur actually wrote, It's not that Jesus is calling you to leave your job today.

He may do that, but he's not calling you to do that for salvation. He's just calling you to leave behind all other masters in your life and follow him wholeheartedly as Lord and Savior. The gospel is a call to totally abandon the cares of this life in order to embrace at all cost the person and work of Jesus Christ.

We're searching for Lakeside Bible NC. If you live in the Charlotte or Lake Norman area, we'd love for you to attend one of our worship services. We meet every Sunday morning at 10 a.m. We'd love to meet you.