

# Mark 1:16-17

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- [ 0 : 00 ] If you would turn back with me please to that portion of scripture that we read in Mark chapter 1.
- Mark chapter 1. And we'll take us our verses 16 and 17. Mark 1 and verses 16 and 17.
- I think it would be fair to say that social media, that is Twitter and Facebook, and Google and all the rest of it have changed the world in so many different ways.
- Popular. Everybody wants to be popular. and all of these celebrities and all of these politicians, they say to you and they say to me every day, they say, you follow me.
- [ 2 : 17 ] And if you follow me, I will give your life value. If you follow me, I will give your life self-esteem and worth.
- And when we pause and when we think about it, there is only one man who ever walked on this earth who had the complete authority to say to you and to me this evening, you follow me.
- And here in our text, we have the Lord Jesus Christ passing by and saying, you follow me. I will give your life value.
- I will give your life worth. I will save your life. I will change your life. You see, each time we come to the Gospels and we see the Lord Jesus passing by, things happen.
- Things are never the same again. lives are changed. Some will follow after Jesus. Some will reject Jesus.
- [ 3 : 40 ] And they will walk the other way. The Lord Jesus Christ in our text this evening says to these four fishermen and says to you and I, you follow me.
- You follow me. Verse 16, Jesus is passing by, passing alongside the Sea of Galilee. He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.
- He was passing by. The Lord Jesus now, as we read in the text leading up to these verses, the Lord Jesus now, he's now equipped for his ministry that his father has given to him.
- He is filled to the uttermost with the Holy Spirit. And he is heading through Galilee. And he is preaching the Gospel of God.
- The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand. He says, repent and believe in the Gospel. You'll see that in verses 14 and 15.
- [ 4 : 52 ] A short and a succinct and a to-the-point sermon. His full identity in Mark chapter 1 has been fully disclosed as none other than the Son of God, the Eternal One.
- The one God's people were waiting for. The one who was clouded in mystery. How would he come? When would he come? Well, he has come and he has arrived and he preaches that the time is now fulfilled.
- And the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel. You follow me, he is saying. And what does he do?

The Lord Jesus, what does he do in the first chapter of Mark's Gospel? He identifies himself with sinners. That is what he does. He identifies himself with sinners in his baptism and in his temptations.

And now he is passing by the Sea of Galilee. And these four fishermen, they are about to meet the Saviour of the world.

[ 6 : 02 ] And their lives would never, ever, ever be the same again. Jesus preached a very short sermon here.

Follow me, follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men. You see, there was real power in the Lord Jesus' word.

And his word accomplished something. These four fishermen, they obeyed him, and they followed him. You see what the Lord Jesus does here?

He meets them personally. As he is passing by. He meets them personally. So the question this evening is, how do we know?

And is it legitimate for a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to legitimately say, is Jesus passing by today? Is Jesus passing by this evening?

[ 7 : 08 ] Was the Lord Jesus passing by as you sat under the word of God this morning? Well, the Lord Jesus is saying the very same thing today.

You follow me. You see, we meet Jesus in his word, in the Bible, in the scriptures. Not only that, but the preaching of this word is also where we hear the voice of the Son of God saying, follow me.

In the reading and in the preaching of the word, we can legitimately say that the Lord Jesus is passing by and saying, follow me. You see, the word of God is alive because the Son of God is alive.

It's because Jesus is alive. The Lord Jesus is risen and he is ruling and he is reigning in glory and he is seated at his Father's right hand and he is alive.

Therefore, his word is alive as we read it and as it is preached. Listen to the writer to the Hebrews say this.

[ 8 : 23 ] For the word of God is living and active. It's words you know very well. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit between joint and marrow.

And listen to the next part. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. There are times we come to read the word of God and we realize that the word of God is actually a reading us.

We have just sung it in Psalm 139. You have searched me and you have known me. For the word of God is living and active and the Lord God's glorious Holy Spirit working in partnership with this word is active and living because the Lord Jesus is living and ruling and reigning.

This evening, this evening, Paul knew it well when he says in Ephesians, what does he say? He says, Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

Mysterious, yes. Mysterious, yes. But we live by faith and not by sight.

[ 9 : 48 ] So is it legitimate for me to say this evening as God's word has been read and as God's word has been preached that the Lord Jesus is passing by?

Yes, yes and yes. Absolutely. You see, one of the most forgotten truths that was rediscovered during the time of the Reformation was the presence of Christ not only at the Lord's table but in the preaching of the word surrounding the Lord's table.

Now we all know, those of us, those of you that know a little bit about church history, we know all about the debates concerning how the Lord Jesus was present with his people at the sacrament.

That is how the Reformed and the Lutheran churches parted their ways was over this one subject. But one often overlooked issue was the Lord's presence in the preaching and in the reading of his word.

You know, and with today's diluting of the importance of preaching in so many churches, I think it is a good idea to rediscover what the Reformers rediscovered and the Puritans rediscovered in their day.

[ 11 : 11 ] You know, if you went into any church in continental Europe or in the United Kingdom in the 16th century, you would have walked in and the first thing you would have seen would have been the altar.

It would have been centre stage in any church. And then came the Reformation and the rediscovery of the word of God as paramount. And what they did was they built pulpits not to elevate the preacher, not to elevate the minister, but to elevate the word of the living God.

To elevate the word. The word was to be primary. The word was to be fundamental in any worship service. And the Reformers and the Puritans realised that the Lord was present with his people in the reading and in the preaching of that word.

Because that word that is active and living changes lives. Martin Luther believed in the real presence of Christ in proclamation.

As long as that was in full accord with the scriptures, yes. As one commentator said, in the sermon one actually encounters God.

[ 12 : 28 ] We encounter God in the acts of speaking and listening. You see, the power of God is in the word of God. Paul knew this when he says, I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God and salvation to everyone who believes.

You'll see that in Romans 1 and at verse 16. And of course, later on in the book of Romans, he would clarify this by saying, your faith comes from hearing.

And hearing through the word of Christ. Christ. We live in a visual age. We have televisions in almost every room in our house.

We have little machines, little iPads that show us visual things all the time. But the preaching of the word is a hearing thing. Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.

You see, our Lord deals with sinners through the word and through the preaching of that word. You see, these four fishermen on the shore of Galilee, they heard the word of Christ and they obeyed the word of Christ.

[ 13 : 58 ] Christ. So is it legitimate to say this evening that Jesus is passing by? Yes. Yes.

By the power of the spirit and the preaching of the word. Listen to John Calvin who understood very well that the words spoken in a sermon they were human words, yes.

But if the message conveyed by those words is the message of the gospel then this is what he says. Listen to what he says. It's very interesting. For God wanted his word to be always received from the mouth of men no less than as if he had himself openly appeared from heaven he says.

It is a sure and infallible sign that God is near at hand to us that he seeks our salvation that he calls us to himself as though he spoke with open mouth and that we see him personally before us in the act of preaching Jesus calls us to himself he holds out his arms to receive us that's incredible as Jesus is passing by the question that only you can answer in your heart today is have you responded to this Jesus who is passing by have you responded to the call of the gospel Jesus is passing by the Lord

Jesus himself said in John's gospel he said sanctify them father by the truth your word is truth you see there is power in this word there is power in the word of God there was Thomas Watson who said concerning the reading of the scriptures in your own personal devotion time he says think in every line that God is speaking to you personally think in every line you read God is speaking to you Jesus is passing by secondly Jesus in passing by he not only sees you he knows you we must remember who is passing by here this is God's son this is the eternal son of God the one whose hand was in the creation of the whole of the universe he saw the text tells us verse 16 and verse 19 he saw

[ 16 : 59 ] Simon and Andrew verse 19 he saw James and John you see the Lord Jesus knew all about these four fishermen long before they met him he knew all their fears he knew all their ambitions he knew all about their sin also he came close as he approached them he was not aloof and standoffish he came close and he met them personally as he was passing by he knew all about their past and he knew all about their future the story is told of Charles Spurgeon and after he had preached a sermon he went to the door to shake hands with the congregation as they left and this eager man came up to him this eager young man came up to him and the young man was speaking to him and Spurgeon didn't know him and the young man couldn't wait to tell

Spurgeon who he was couldn't wait to tell the great preacher of what family he came from of what stock he had come from and Spurgeon turned to him and he says young man I don't care where you came from I don't care where you came from I'm only interested where you are going that was the question that was the question doesn't matter where we come from good stock bad stock we are all sinners and we all need grace and we all need the Lord Jesus Christ you see that cross that you heard preached about this morning that cross where they crucified him you see it's a level ground it's level ground we are all sinners in need of grace at that level ground beneath the cross I don't care where you have come from

I am more interested in where you are going you see Jesus in passing by he not only sees us but he knows us and he knows us intimately and he knows us better than we know ourselves you have searched me and you have known me oh Lord because their future is what was important to the Lord Jesus they were to become his friends they were to become his friends this is the ones who would walk with the Lord Jesus for these three years this is the one the Lord Jesus would get strength from this is the ones who would abandon the Lord Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane when he needed them most of all they were fickle they were afraid they were full of fear you see the

Lord knows us he knows our weaknesses he knows all about us you see these fishermen probably thought they were rather tough they probably thought they were rather fearless and having been a fisherman for a number of years they were probably very impatient possibly bad tempered the Lord Jesus would later call them men of thunder because of their temperament because of their character and this day where they meet the Lord Jesus on the shore of Galilee time was money for Simon who would become Peter and his brother Andrew and James and John and as they were fishing and as they were mending their nets you see these four fishermen they were in their zone this was their world this is where they belonged this is where they thought they were the boss and you know when you are mending your fishing gear at the harbour and you're halfway through your wick and you've ripped your net in half and you're mending the net as quickly as you can because you know that if you do not fix this net you will not have a wage at the end of the wick you start the week with such high hopes on a

Monday morning by Wednesday evening your net is in bits this was their world this was their world they're mending their nets they've had a set back providence has said that you are going to be on the shore on this day because the Lord Jesus is going to be passing by and so they were you know and when you're mending the gear and when you're mending your nets the mood is sometimes not very good the mood is one of we need to get something out of this wick or we're not going to have a wage the boat is not earning you're not earning but the Lord Jesus knew all of this he knew everything about them you see Jesus knew that some of these men they in time would turn the world upside down because they would go out into this world with the good news that this

[ 22 : 39 ] Jesus would be crucified and that he would be raised and that he would ascend oh Lord you have searched me and known me you know when I sit down and when I rise up you discern my thoughts from afar it was no different for these four fishermen that day that Jesus passed by and called them and it is no different for you and I the Lord knows absolutely everything about us and what does the Lord Jesus do he calls them into his kingdom verse 17 and Jesus said to them follow me and I will make you become fishers of men the Lord has already said that in his coming and coming to earth that the kingdom of God is near he says to them it was near all right these fishermen that day saw the kingdom of

God in Jesus the kingdom of God had arrived in God's son the Lord Jesus and of course Jesus would later tell Pilate my kingdom is not of this world it is a spiritual kingdom and these four fishermen were granted grace from the Lord to see that here was a spiritual man before them the God man in and of themselves they would have never recognized who Jesus was but by grace they saw who he was you see naturally these four fishermen they belong to somebody else's kingdom they belong to Satan's kingdom and throughout Mark's gospel we see that great battle between Jesus the son of God and Satan and his demons and we see that battle all the way through all the way through to

Calvary where the devil himself thought he had won Jesus passing by the sea of Galilee is going to call these fishermen into his kingdom and he's going to take them from the kingdom of darkness you see by nature each and every one of us belong to the kingdom of darkness John in his gospel recounts Jesus his own words about people preferring to remain in the kingdom of darkness rather than follow him and this is the judgment the Lord Jesus says in John 3 19 the light has come into the world himself he is the light the light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than light because their works were evil you see these four fishermen belong to the kingdom of darkness until they met the

Lord Jesus on the shore of the sea of Galilee why remain in the darkness when the light is passing by today the Lord Jesus this evening is calling you into his kingdom of light you very well may have rejected Jesus this morning and not sat at the table as you are commanded to do but yet even this evening he still calls you into his kingdom you see the secret of the kingdom has been given to you the Lord Jesus would say in Luke's account and that's what the Lord does with his people as the spirit of God comes into the heart of our repentant sinner secrets are revealed to that sinner secrets are revealed to all of

God's people we are given spiritual discernment to see that this Jesus who is passing by that this Jesus that we meet in our text who was passing by the shore of Galilee this is none other than the son of God this is none other than the only one who can help us the only one who can take us from that kingdom of darkness and transfer us into that kingdom of light it's only by the grace and by the illumination of the Holy Spirit of God in our lives can we see who Jesus is is it legitimate for me this evening to say that Jesus is passing by yes yes and he not only sees you but he knows you you know for those that follow football you will see all the transfers that take place in football you will see men being sold for and transferred for hundreds of millions of pounds to you you know as

[ 28 : 12 ] Christians and as the Lord's people we have been involved in a transfer as well we too have been involved in a transfer because the Lord God says in Colossians 1 13 He that is the Lord God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and he has transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

You see, as the Lord's people, we've been transferred from that kingdom of darkness into that kingdom of light and it was not a free transfer.

The price was the blood and the death of God's son Jesus.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians that we have been bought with a price. The price is the blood of Jesus, the blood of God's son.

Do you know how much it costs us? Absolutely nothing. Nothing.

[ 29 : 37 ] Even if we could pay, how could we? The price has been paid.

Jesus is passing by and he calls you again into his kingdom. And he not only knows you, but he sees you.

And do you know that he expects a favorable response? Verse 18. And immediately they left their nets and they followed him.

Verse 20. And immediately he called them. They left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him. They did not say, oh, wait till I fix my nets.

No. They followed him. And do you know when we follow after this Jesus, there is a final destination.

[ 30 : 42 ] There is an end point. Because the Lord Jesus will return. Not as a child in a manger.

But with all his angels. In glory. And he will call his people. The ones who are involved in that transfer.

He call them unto himself. And there the Lord's people will spend eternity with this Jesus.

And for those that reject this Jesus, there's only a hell that awaits them.

Jesus says, you follow me. And I will make you become fishers of men.

[ 31 : 47 ] You follow me. And I will change your life forever. And for eternity. The story is told of a man who did not like flying.

And he was going from one city in the United States to another city in the United States. And as he went up into the sky in the plane, it was one of the worst storms that he had ever been in in a plane.

He flew very regularly. He did not like flying. And the plane was all over the place with a turbulence back and forth. There was stuff falling out of the lockers. And he was sweating.

And he thought his end had come. And the journey went on for a number of hours. And he looked over and he saw a little girl. A little girl sitting, reading a book.

She didn't seem troubled. She didn't seem concerned. She just read her book in perfect peace. And when the plane landed, eventually, with a terrible landing, he just had to ask the little girl how come she was so peaceful.

[ 32 : 58 ] And he went up to the little girl and he said, Little girl, weren't you afraid when we were all the way up there in the sky? And the little girl looked at him and shook her head and said, No, no, I wasn't afraid.

And she pointed over to the cockpit and the door was open and she pointed to the pilot. And she says, No, you see, that's my daddy. And he's taking me home.

Trust. Faith. You follow me. The Lord Jesus says. And I will make you become fishers of men.

Let us pray. Eternal God. Tell us.

Let us pray. Let us pray.