

A Lesson on Beginning

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[0:00] I'm a mechanic by trade. I love fixing things. I love getting my hands dirty.! There's just something about actually accomplishing something sometimes that just makes a difference.

But you know what? God set for me an ability to be a mechanic, just as he did Peter and Simon to be fishermen. But then he called me to a different purpose.

And the question is, will you be obedient to it? Will you do? Because what you do in life is important, but how you follow Christ and what he has for you is more important.

Because Christ ought to be your identity. Your work ought not to be your identity. You know, sadly today, many people find work as their identity.

And when Peter is confronted by Jesus, we see Jesus making a personal call on Peter. And Peter's response to that call sets a course for the rest of his life.

[1:05] Because I want you to understand, this was not the call to be an apostle. It was a call to be a follower. Now, I believe God calls every believer to follow him.

You'll find that theme throughout the scripture. That you ought to be a follower. That God has called you to follow. Just like you and I, if we accept what God asks and we see he comes and says, follow me, we'll experience some of the greater things than we could even imagine.

You know, what higher calling could you have than to follow the Savior? Now, I want you to understand the calling God has on your life and what you are to do may not be a pastor or a missionary. It very well could be.

But I want you to understand, he builds Peter to that point. He doesn't call him to be apostle from the beginning. He says, Peter, are you willing to follow me?

To step away from those things. For my purpose. You know, when we understand what Christ's calling is and what his purpose is, because I want you to understand, we're not called by God for our glory and our honor.

[2:23] To understand that it's not for us. It's for him. You know, look over to Revelation chapter four for a moment. Revelation chapter four.

We'll get somebody to get that one for me. How about first Corinthians 10 31? You got that one, Lou? Yeah, do Revelation four 11, first Corinthians 10 31.

Who's got that one, Matt? You got that one. Now I need a Romans 11 29. Who's got that one, Joe? We'll get over to you, James. I got a few more coming.

All right. What's Revelation four 11. Tell us. You know, I want you to understand the picture is, is for his pleasure.

We're all things that are and were created. How about first Corinthians 10 31? Whether they're for you, eat or drink. For whatsoever you do, do all the glory of God.

[3:31] Okay. You know, what thing about that overall purpose in our lives, all the way from the beginning, God has set forth a purpose in those that follow him.

You know, think about Romans 11 29. What's that tell us? Okay.

In other words, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. In other words, when what God has gifted you and called you to do, God hasn't changed his mind. Our job is to follow because I want you to understand that the dynamic, the calling on Peter's life, because Peter wasn't saved.

He didn't recognize Jesus as the Messiah to sit around or even just to fish. Now I want you to understand if Peter was going to fish the rest of his life, he ought to do it all for the glory of God.

Because sometimes God gives us a vocation that we ought to do, but we ought to do that vocation, not for the glory of men, but because we're doing it to honor the Lord by doing what we ought to do.

[4:43] To look at what you do, not for yourself, but for what God can use it for. Because you're saved not to sit, you're saved to serve. Christ is continually calling his followers to do certain thing.

And Jesus calls us to love, to give, to be a witness. Each of us has a responsibility of what we're going to do with that call, whether we're going to hear and heed what Christ has said. Just as Peter and Simon this day had a choice. But you know, oftentimes we miss what God is saying.

Because think about Jesus came to Simon and Andrew and said, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. He didn't look at Peter and Andrew and say, guys, get over here.

He said, you know, I'm the Messiah. I'm the one that's going to provide salvation. What are you going to do in response to what I ask you to do?

[5:46] Follow me. You know, Jesus tells us this in John 10, 27, he says this, my sheep hear my will, and I know them and they follow me.

You know, if you're one of Christ's sheep, you'll listen and follow the shepherd. You know, part of the problem is, is that oftentimes believers we hear, but don't follow.

We hear, but say, not now. We need to understand the importance of following him. You know, Christ's call is there.

You know, he tells us what we ought to do, hearing the word and not responding. Look over to James chapter one. We'll let James look this one up. James one. Can you read 22 through 25 for me?

Yep. Nope. James one. 22. Okay. Yep. Sorry. But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

[6:57] Okay. Okay.

Okay. James is the practical application of faith and following. He says, you can't say you follow or you trust Christ if you're not willing to do.

If you're not willing to accomplish what he wants. You know, let's take a look at that call on Peter's life. You know, I want you to understand that this was first personal.

Look at verse 18. He saw two brethren. Simon called Peter and Andrew, his brother, casting in it. And they were fishers. And he saith unto them.

It was a person, personal call by the person that was specific. It was from Jesus, the person of the call. You know, everywhere we turn, there are calls upon our life.

[8:12] You know? Well, I want you to understand, the Bible tells us that there's a lot of things competing for our attention. Can we all agree there's a lot of things in life competing for your attention?

Paul in Corinthians says this, they are, it may be also, many kinds of voices in the world. You know, the world has a lot of things saying, hey, this, this, this, this, this is important.

You know, we live in a generation of advertising. What's an advertisement? This ought to be your priority. You know, that's the purpose of advertising, to say you ought to move this up your priority scale.

This is something you have to have. It's a voice. But we have to discern, is it the right voice? Is it the voice we ought to be hearing and listening to?

Because sometimes we allow the world to drown out the things of God. But the call of the Lord Jesus on our life is one of the preeminence importance because he's God.

[9:14] He's the one who specifically called Peter that day. He says, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. He said, follow me and I have a task for you.

I want you to understand, look what it tells us here. Verse 20, and they straightway left their nets and followed him. You know what?

We'll talk about that in a little bit. They had a decision to make of the voice that they heard to say, what am I going to do with it? When we understand that what Jesus did there for Peter, and Peter had to call or to trust God's call because it'll lead us to what's best in our lives.

You know, when we consider that call that God gives to us. Oftentimes we think, well, God, I can't do that. You know what we're saying?

We're saying the thing as Moses did when God called him to go back to Israel. But God, don't you know about this in my life? Don't you know about this or that? Don't you know I stutter and I'm thinking, well, think about God's response to Moses.

[10:35] What did he say? Who made man's mouth? You know what he's really telling Moses? Tell me something I don't know. You know, you're throwing things up that he already knew before he even asked you.

But how often are we like Moses and make excuses? Lord, don't you know? Because oftentimes I think we hinder what God wants for us because we don't think it's in our best interest.

Who can look up Jeremiah 29 11 for me? Jeremiah 29 11. Got that, Lou? And then 2 Corinthians 5 15, if you would, Jared.

Yep. Jeremiah 29 11 for me. I know the cost of nothing. You're saying the Lord. You know, let me ask you a question.

As a believer, what's our expected end? Everlasting life with him. Heaven's going to be a place of beauty, a place of peace.

[12 : 02] You know why? It's not because it's heaven. It's because it's with him. You'll be in the one that's perfect. You'll be in his presence.

What's 2 Corinthians 5 15 say? And that he died for all, and that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose.

Okay. Think about that for a moment. When we understand the dynamic of the person of the call, it's the one who saved you, because God extends that because you've accepted him by faith.

We see that picture. That's the priority first is faith in Christ for salvation, and then God gives you and gifts you to be able to do what he would have for you to do.

You know, we think about also the purpose of the call. You know, to the Lord Jesus, the purpose of his own life had a specific purpose to it.

[13 : 16] You know, Luke 19 tells us, For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. That was Jesus' purpose when he came. To seek and to save that which was lost.

To provide a way and means of salvation for us. You know, when Jesus called Peter, he gave him a new purpose to become fishers of men.

You know, the purpose for the call on Peter's life was simply for him to bring people to the Savior. As Peter had sought fish, he now sought to seek souls, to seek God's purpose, God's will for his life.

You know, I want you to understand that God has a purpose for you. The problem with many believers today, I think, is we're not willing to step out by faith to trust him.

Because there's areas of obedience that here's, Lord, you're tasking me to step outside my comfort zone. Hey, preacher, you're making me uncomfortable.

[14 : 24] Well, yeah, I'll take you outside your comfort zone because God takes us outside our comfort zone. If God calls you to do something, if God gives that, he gives what's needed.

But you know what? God will never give what's needed if you're not willing to trust him. You know, we can make a lot of excuses. I remember when I finally surrendered to God's call for ministry, and one of the things in my mind, Lord, we were struggling financially.

And I'm like, Lord, where in the world are we going to get that covered? You know, right after I committed to go, we had a man in our church with a trucking company that came up to me and says, don't worry about moving.

I got a truck. We'll be there. When do you want to move? Where do you want it dropped? You know what?

God didn't need to supply until there was a need for the supply. Sometimes we want to wait. Lord, you supply this, then I'll do. And God says, do, and I'll supply.

[15 : 37] When we understand that dynamic, you know, just like we talked about this morning when Jesus was talking to the apostles, ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you in our danger that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.

You know, you think about it. Even before Jesus left that last time, ascended up into heaven after the resurrection, he gives them instruction of their purpose. He tells them in Matthew 28, it tells him this, all power is given unto me in heaven and earth.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I'm with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Do you know what he's saying? Hey, here's the purpose. Here's the direction. I've set you to be an example as a foundation of the churches that I'm going to build and to keep that doctrine pure, to teach people, not just win them, but to teach them the truth.

You know, one of the problems I think we've had in America, this is my opinion, is that we've had a lot of churches that are focused a lot on just outreach, but you know, outreach is step one and they

miss the other steps.

[16:52] Because you're to win souls and disciple them. Teach them. What part of discipling is teaching sound doctrine?

You know, I did this years ago. Maybe I need to do that again. Hand out a little survey, a doctrinal survey, to see what people understand. Because if you're sitting in the pew under sound teaching, if you're paying attention, there's a lot of doctrinal questions you ought to be able to answer.

The problem is, we've had people that have been saved for 30 years and can't answer simple doctrinal questions about who Jesus is. Or how those things fit together in Scripture.

They have no clue because, well, God loves me and I love Him, so we're good. Then they go about and listen to all the voices and everything else going on. You know, Jesus called Peter to bring people to the table, to be fishers of men.

He gave them a practical example so he could understand. Peter understood fishing. Peter understood what God was calling him to do.

[18:21] Peter was a commercial fisherman. He needed that to provide both the sustenance, the food, but the income, which were both temporary.

But he understood the fruit of a fisherman would be truly lasting for eternity, for fishing for men. You know, to understand the importance that God placed upon it.

You know, when we understand that, think about Jonah. You know, the book of Jonah, when I read the book of Jonah, I think of Jonah as the grumpy prophet.

He really was. He's the guy who says, Lord, I love you. And now that you've beat me around and got my attention, I'll do what you asked me to do, but I'm not going to do it willingly.

You know, Jonah's kind of like the little kid, you know, that you discipline and they finally do what they're supposed to do. It's kind of like the little boy. I might be sitting on the outside, but I'm standing on the inside.

[19:33] But you know, at the end of the book of Jonah, Jonah, even though he saw a great revival in Nineveh, he gets upset because God withers the gourd up.

Jonah missed the fact of how many souls were spared. God used him.

I want you to understand, God can use grumpy people. Why? Because Jonah still obeyed. But you know what?

Jonah could have had a lot better experience of following if his spirit and attitude would have been right about it. Oftentimes, we're more like Jonah.

Well, if I have to. But we ought to be more like Peter and Simon Lord, you called, I want to. To do those things, to understand the importance because a decision to answer God's call also involves leaving.

[20:49] To truly follow Christ, we're going to have to leave certain things behind. You know, there's things in life that anchor you. And the devil's going to put things that are going to anchor you.

The question is, what are you going to allow that anchor to be? Is it going to be the things of this world or is it going to be the anchor of Jesus Christ in whom our hope is? But something's going to hold you.

There's going to be offers and opportunities. But if it's not what God wants you to do, you're going to miss the greatest things God has.

To truly follow Christ's call, we're going to have to leave things. You think about even in marriage, you know, one of the problems we have in marriage is people don't understand the leave and cleave thing. You know, the leaving is important.

Genesis chapter 2 says, therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh. You know, before a husband can truly become one with his bride, he has to emotionally leave his father and mother.

[22:14] Let me put that also, the wife needs to emotionally leave mom and dad also to a point. You know, mom and dad's caused a lot of problems in marriages.

But when you're married, you have to leave, make a choice, I'm going to leave something because this is more important than the other. Leaving and cleaving, that concept is important before we can serve our master, the Lord Jesus Christ, there are things we need to leave behind.

You know, when you understand that principle, you know, you think about 1 Kings chapter 19. You know, we find here Elijah and Elisha.

Elijah sets forth a call to Elisha and it says this, and he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother and then I will follow thee.

And he said unto him, go back again for what have I done to thee? And he returned back from him and took a yoke of oxen and slew them and boiled their flesh and the instrument of the oxen and gave it unto the people and they did eat.

[23 : 32] Then he arose and he went after Elijah and ministered unto him. I want you to understand Elisha gave up something to follow.

He's another individual. He had servants. His father was prosperous but he said, Lord, he even slew the oxen that he was plowing with. In other words, he says, Lord, I've made a choice. I'm going to follow. I'm going to leave certain things behind to go forth. To understand that dynamic. Think about Abraham. You ever thought that God's call on Abraham's life, there was some important leaving?

It says, the Lord said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land I will show thee. Let me put it to you another way.

He told Abraham, get out from where you're comfortable and trust me. Abraham obeyed and God blessed him greatly.

[24 : 51] You know, a little later in Luke 18, Jesus, it says, now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, yet lackest thou one thing. You know, he's talking to the rich man, he says, sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor and thou shalt have treasure to heaven.

Come, follow me. Now the principle that Jesus is bringing forth here has nothing to do with the money but has everything to do with the heart attachment. Because the man said, I have too much responsibility to follow you.

And you know what Jesus said? If you're going to follow me, there's going to be some leaving. There's going to have to be some letting loose. You know, sometimes one of the things that keeps us from following Christ is our pride.

To let loose of our pride is sometimes the hardest thing to do. But pride keeps us from following him.

It talks about leaving earthly pursuits. You know, Peter was called to leave his comfort zone. It was his occupation. It was a family tradition. He had his own boat, his own nets, his own people.

[26 : 06] It was his professional occupation. Yet he received a higher call and he was willing to leave these behind. You know, sometimes we get caught up in laying up the wrong places.

The reason Jesus tells us in Matthew 6 is lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and wrath does corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor wrath does corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

For where your treasure is there will your heart be also. Now, I want you to understand, Jesus isn't talking about that you can't have resources in this life.

I believe God blesses people with resources for his purpose. The difference is, do you own the resources for God's glory or do the resources own you?

You know what the problem is today? We live in such a materialistic society. Oftentimes the resources you have own you instead of you owning them and say, how can I use these for God's glory?

[27 : 14] How can I do those things? Because it involves leaving those things. It involves leaving personal ties. You know? Sometimes this is the hardest thing.

Look at verse 20. It says, and they straightway left their nets and followed him. You know what? Sometimes your personal connection is harder to leave than the financial connections.

To say, who do I trust? God's asking me to get outside of myself and what I want and what I hang on to.

You know? Sometimes it's leaving people we love. You know, Peter and Andrew were not only asked to leave their profession, they also had also to leave their lifetime friends and co-laborers in that to serve what God would have.

And it says straightway or immediately they did. You know, every missionary we have through, have you ever considered they gave up a lot of personal family ties to go serve the Lord?

[28 : 20] You know, missionaries when they go to the field surrender a lot of things. But you know what?

That same dynamic doesn't apply just for a missionary. Sometimes it applies exactly to us. Because sometimes we let tradition and family dynamic hold us instead of letting go of it and say, Lord, I'm going to obey you first.

I'm going to hold on to you. When we think of that, it doesn't, it sometimes makes us uncomfortable. But I want you to understand the moment you're saved, you're different, you're transformed.

2 Corinthians tells us, Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. You know, leaving loved ones whether to travel thousands of miles across the sea or to suffer spiritual separation here at home won't be easy. You know what I find a lot of times? I've talked to a lot of people who I really believe are saved but you know because of family ties they won't follow the Lord. Yeah. Because of tradition they won't follow the Lord.

[29 : 46] Everybody in our family is this. It'll make my family uncomfortable if we do this. But you know what?

Who ought to please more should you please your Savior or what makes other people feel comfortable? You know, there's often times that people allow history, tradition, and family to hinder them from doing what God's called them to do.

What God says, take this step of obedience and I think it just stops a lot of people. And the devil uses for them to put down roots of resistance against the things of God because they're unwilling to be obedient in one area of their life.

To say, Lord, I surrender my pride and my thinking about I surrender what everybody else thinks about to say, Lord, I want to follow you and to be faithful no matter what area that is.

To be obedient unto the Lord to say, I'm going to step out by faith and I'm going to be a member of a church that obeys the truth of the word of God. You know, there's a lot of things that hinder people and they sit on the sideline because of pride.

[31 : 02] God but Jesus says to follow him to leave those things. You know, Jesus in Mark 10 says this, he says, and Jesus answered, verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house or brethren or sister or father or mother or wife or children or land for my sake in the gospel but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time houses and brethren and sisters and children and lands with persecutions and in this world to come eternal life.

You know, there's a missionary by the name of David Livingstone. If you've never read his biography, I'd encourage you to, but he was an avid reader and he loved books.

When he went to Africa, he went into the heart of Africa to preach the gospel. There was a point in his journey, all the books that he was bringing with him because he wanted to have them, he had to leave them.

But you know, that's the way it is. Sometimes God allows us, we're stepping out but we're still dragging things with us. You know, just like Abraham brought his uncle and his nephew with him when God said to leave him.

But God brought him to a point where it's okay, you're leaving him? Okay, you still got that, we'll deal with that. And Abraham eventually parted ways with Lot. You know what, that's when he fully obeyed God to leave behind his family and to trust God.

[32 : 49] to trust him. He understood that his most treasured books weren't worth what God called him to do.

You know, Christ is working in our life but look here quickly, look at the following. You know, and they followed him to recognize how we ought to serve.

That's a challenge to us. If we have recognized the calling of God and determined to step out and follow him, we need to go forth in faith. It says, and they straightway left their nets and followed him. I want you to understand following requires faith. Moses forsook Pharaoh's palace to go into the wilderness. witness. It took faith for Gideon to take on the mighty Midianite army with just 300 men carrying trumpets and lamps.

It took faith for Daniel to reject the king's law and follow God's. It took faith for Joseph to believe God and not separate himself from Mary after finding she was expecting a child.

[34 : 07] It took faith for Philip to leave a revival to go witness to an Ethiopian eunuch. It took faith for Paul to forsake his plans to heed the Macedonian call when God sent him a different direction from what he wanted.

That's reason Hebrews tells us that without faith it's impossible to please him. You know? Peter chose faith. But I want you to understand the picture here we find is faith replaces fear. You know fear keeps us from a lot of things. Pride and fear are two big stumbling blocks. And sometimes they're interconnected.

We see here the day of Peter's calling and all the thoughts that were surely running through his mind as he stood up and accepted what God had offered. There was no guarantee of comfort or safety.

Matter of fact Jesus tells him this in Matthew 16. He says then Jesus said unto his disciples if any man come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

[35:30] to deny yourself you know what that is that's saying my pride is less important than what the Savior has.

To understand that important you know Jesus challenges in Mark 4:40 and he says why are you so fearful how do you have no faith?

Peter later or excuse me Paul later tells Timothy in 2nd Timothy he says for God hath not given us the spirit of fear but of power and love and of a sound mind. If we're going to follow him we have to understand there's going to be times that things are going to shake us.

Think about Psalms 56 matter of fact turn over there quick Psalm 56 We'll close out here think about this verse for a moment if you're going to answer the call there's going to be things that are going to challenge you and sometimes put you in situations where you're not comfortable look at verse 3 it says what time I am afraid you know what I'm not going to tell you that following Christ is always going to be easy there's going to be times it's going to feel unsure you're going to feel nervous there's going to be things happen that you don't understand but notice what it says what time I am afraid when I have those feelings of the unknown it says I will trust in thee in

God I will praise his word in God I put my trust I will not fear what flesh can do unto me you know I want you to understand Peter's willingness to follow Christ wasn't a promise of everything being on the mountain top he said there's going to be a lot of valleys and challenges too and as we study Peter's life you're going to see all those from the mount of transfiguration to standing by a fire and denying the Savior Peter's life entails a lot of things but the choice in response to this call will determine your future will you listen to the right person will you purpose to leave things that weigh us down and will you choose to conquer our fears and step out in faith that's the first education that [38:26] Peter received was who are you going to trust faith or fear let's pray heavenly