

**Mark | The Making of Christ Followers**

06 “Follow Me”

September 17, 2017

**I. Introduction**

When we first started this series on Mark, I emphasized the book’s focus on following Jesus. Yes, the Gospel of Mark is a narrative of the life of Jesus, but undoubtedly it was intended to instruct those who are disciples of Jesus; then and now. It offers insight into the “what” and “how” of following Jesus. Now, we are not strangers to following something. We have deep devotion to many things.

For instances, when someone says they follow a particular sports team; they mean that they rarely miss a game, matter of fact they might rearrange their weekend to be sure to catch the game, they keep up with player’s injuries, check the standings daily, keep tabs on other teams that pose a threat to their teams success, they get frustrated when their team blows a lead because of poor pitching in the bottom of the ninth or a 63 yard TD pass in the final seconds, but on the flip side become filled with joy at the come from behind win from that 63 yard pass, follow a team means as the season winds down they feel anxiety at the possibility of their team not making the playoffs...they follow their team at all cost, through thick and thin. I know this to be true because I just described myself.

But I know I am not alone in this, even if it is not sports, you follow something! You are devoted to something, there is something that captures your attention and keeps it. Perhaps tabloids strike your interest—what’s the latest story on so and so, or the latest news on foreign affairs, or even social media. So the question has to be, to what are you devoted? Is it in the end going to last. Is it something that will benefit you? This

seems like a logical question. We are prone and bent towards following things, this is not bad in and of itself, but is what you are devoted to, worth the cost?

## **Read Mark 1:16-20**

The beginning of Jesus ministry, according to Mark's gospel, is to build a team of rag tag individuals to bear witness to the Kingdom of God. From this point forward the disciples will play a predominant role in Mark's gospel.

Jesus will be interacting, instructing, and correcting them throughout. Mark's portrayal of the disciples is to instruct future disciples of Jesus. There is both a positive and negative elements to his raw retelling of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He is not afraid to pull back the curtain to show the reality of following Jesus. Here we have the first 4 of the 12 that Jesus will gather around himself to change the world, to bear witness to the king who uses his authority to lay down his own life for his people.

Mark sets the stage for what it looks like to follow Jesus, to be about Jesus' work, to bear witness to the kingdom of God by giving us a window into the first call of 4 disciples.

Now I use this language because in Jesus' summary statement last week He used it to clarify what he has come to do and will surely accomplish; bringing the Kingship of God. So lets examine the call placed upon these individuals lives.

## **II. The Call**

A. Nature (basic, inherent features) of the call

1. *Nothing inherently special about these men.* Ordinary men asked to join an extraordinary task. Simon and

Andrew are presumably on the shore casting their net. A circular net with weights all around the edges that they tossed into the water repeatedly.

Then a little further James and John are just a short ways off the shoreline in their boat doing the regular task of a fisherman, mending their nets to keep them in good shape. Ordinary men doing ordinary things in the region of Galilee. Much like you and I.

2. *Nothing noteworthy in terms of pedigree.* Fishermen of low estate with little training in catching people and perhaps unaware of who is calling them; therefore, they have no real special understanding of Jesus' divine nature.

Don't seem to be the upper echelon of society, but hardworking and successful fisherman. There is nothing that we can pinpoint to adequately say, "This is why Jesus called them." They are fishermen doing their job. A normal day at work.

Mark's account of the first call Jesus offers to his disciples has nothing to do with the individual whom is being called. We need not make too much of anything in regards to these men other than they are ordinary men. But one thing is certain about the call of Jesus to these men...

3. *It will require much from them.* They are fisherman trained to fish for their livelihood. It was their business, their work. James and John are successful enough to hire workers. But this is not only their business but their father's as well.

They paid the bills, made ends meet from this work. Now, Jesus, calls them to a different work. There is no indication they fully stop fishing forever, but for now it is clear they must stop...their fishing will be very different.

Their focus of what their lives were about from this point forward is radically different, they for the next few years are focused on Jesus work. To follow Jesus will be costly, it will require much from them. They must leave behind all the success, comfort, familiarity of fishing, their routine, the certainty of a days wage, control, did I mention comfort...to the complete unknown!

Following Jesus will be costly...following Jesus is costly. But that is exactly what they are called to...

B. They are called to...

1. *Follow Jesus*...there is movement from the place they currently are to another place determined by the one whom they are going to follow. Follow ME Jesus says! Set your gaze on ME and come after ME, focus on ME, exchange your current pursuits for MINE.

This is not a click on a button, a check mark on a survey, a line item on their resumé, but a rearranging of their lives to let Him, Jesus, set the course; surrender to his leading. They are being called to follow an individual who will make them into...

2. *Fishers of men*...lets not just reserve this as a crafty way Jesus intersects their world by using an analogy that is relevant to them. But Jesus has in mind a work

that has men/women as its aim; to bring men/women into the kingdom.

A fishing of sorts with a compelling message that has already been preached by John and Jesus and now these men will pick up that message and cast (remember they used nets not a line and hook) it into the crowds to gather men and women. It was not uncommon to have philosophers, rabbis, or teachers fish with their teaching/message.

Jesus is asking them to cast a net composed of Jesus' teaching to catch men/women. What is the message... well up to this point we have gathered thus far that the message—the preaching (κηρυσσω) of John and Jesus—consist of, namely, repent and believe. Now John adds with his preaching that Jesus is far superior to him and places all emphasis on Jesus as the mighty one.

So these men are to follow that mighty one and help him caring on the task of proclaiming this message. Their called to collect men/women with the gospel of Jesus.

3. \*\*\*An interesting use of fishing for men emerges from the OT. Jeremiah 16:15-17 talks of fishermen who will be sent by God to gather people for judgment. Here the gathering would be to pull them out of judgment by repenting and believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

### III. The Response

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<sup>1</sup> Lane, *Mark: NICTNT*, p 67-68.

- A. Amazingly they respond and chose to follow Jesus...

**WHY?** This has bothered me greatly over the years trying to develop compelling reasons why four fisherman with very little knowledge of this man would leave everything to follow him.

I found myself needing a nice neat clean package to present to you this morning in hopes to compel you to follow; even for my own thinking, my own pursuit of Jesus. I am so American, so westernized that I need logical conclusions that make sense so then I could rest easy and say, “Oh yea, that is why they followed? That makes sense for them! My situation is different!”

I looked over the other gospel accounts that do give me some insight into their previous knowledge of Jesus but if I am to read Mark on his own terms then I am left with—Jesus called, they respond with complete obedience.

Mark is walking us down the path of what following Jesus looks like. What being a part of God’s kingdom means to us. So far the only thing we know about following Jesus is that John got arrested and these fishermen leave everything to follow Jesus.

- B. They left their nets! I just can’t help but see them holding those nets looking at Jesus, looking back at their nets, looking back at Jesus, and then deciding to follow.

*Brothers and Sisters, if you are waiting for a calculated neat and clean response to following Jesus, you will not get it!*

The emphasis here in Mark's gospel is on Jesus, not your circumstance. He, Jesus, has drawn them in, he alone is compelling. Jesus is no ordinary man, their response is to indicate his power, his work in a man's heart.<sup>2</sup> How else can we account for such obedience on their part. He, Jesus, is the focus of the following. Not our abilities, pedigree, background, or squeaking clean lives but Jesus is the focus. 1 Kings 19:19-21

#### IV. Therefore...

To follow Jesus will be costly but it is empowered by the work of Jesus in our lives.

- A. To follow Jesus is to be empowered by the work of Jesus... We are not left alone when Jesus calls from the shore to follow. He is banking on his work, his power in our lives to enable us to faithfully follow. His vision always has the cross in mind. He does not see our failures but the miraculous work of redemption brought about through his obedience.
- B. To follow Jesus will be costly...I cannot overstate this reality of following Jesus, of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters it will be costly. If you think adding Jesus to your somewhat difficult life is what he is asking, you are wrong. His call requires complete obedience, complete surrender, Jesus is not added to our lives, he is our lives.

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<sup>2</sup> France, *Mark: NIGTC*, p 97 develops this thought well.