

Discipleship the Jesus Way: Calling People to God

Matthew 4:18–22; 28:18-20

September 14, 2025

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I grew up in the church. I was blessed that my parents made me go to church every Sunday. In this way I was discipled before I chose to follow Jesus. Not everyone has had that opportunity. I think this gave me a head start on what God wanted to do in my life. Having parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles who were Christians was like having a dozen mentors.

Today we are looking at Jesus calling Peter and Andrew, James and John to follow Him. This is a significant event. It is a powerful moment. These four men left what they were doing to follow Jesus. I don't want to take anything away from their decision or our wonder of that choice.

When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist a voice from heaven said, this is my Son in whom I am well pleased. John the Baptist gave testimony to his disciples that Jesus was the Lamb of God. Two of his disciples were Andrew, Peter's brother, and John, the brother of James. These men had met Jesus at least once. It's important for us to be aware that Jesus had become acquainted with them.

Matthew 4:18 (NLT) One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living.

Jesus set the pattern for us to call people to salvation. Most of the time when look at scripture we identify with people in the story. Today I want us to identify with Jesus. Let's walk in Jesus' sandals along the shore. He calls out to four men to follow Him, to become disciple makers, and they leave behind their jobs and family.

That makes a great point that we should leave everything to follow Jesus. But, let's put ourselves in Jesus' place. Jesus chose people He already met. In order to make them into disciples who make disciples Jesus chose four men He met at least once. Over the next three years Jesus was going to pour Himself into these men. Three of these men would be part of His inner circle. They would see and hear things that others would hear about second and third hand. Jesus would make these men into His disciples. These first disciples would make disciples. The church of Jesus, His body, would grow making more disciples. These men had met Jesus, been introduced to Him. John the Baptist had placed his blessing upon Jesus. These four men had a little insight into this man.

There are people that we know who need to be discipled. Making disciples doesn't need to happen just or first with strangers. Being like Jesus we can do Kingdom of God work by making disciples who make disciples. I believe that God has placed us in relationship with others to help disciple them for Jesus.

Jesus way of making disciples was to look at their potential. Forget for a minute that Jesus is God and He knew, He created them with skills, the capacity, the potential to be disciples who make disciples who make disciples. Jesus called men He had already met because He could see their potential. Each man had potential beyond being fishermen. Each one of them struggled in life and their relationship with God. Jesus the disciple maker saw something in each person.

There are men, women, and children around us who have potential. That is spiritual potential, Kingdom potential to be disciples for Jesus. We don't need to see that they would be bold leaders or great evangelist or powerful servants. We need to see the people we already know as people who have potential. Their potential is to be disciples who makes disciples.

As Jesus made disciples who made disciples He considered their willingness to follow Him. I suppose willingness may not be the perfect word, but neither is preparedness, or inclination. There is something intuitive about calling people to be disciples who make disciples. Many people aren't prepared. There are those who have no inclination toward being a disciple maker. So many people have good reasons when it comes to taking on one more thing.

Jesus, having met these men and seeing their potential called them to follow Him. He had a spiritual insight into who they were. That insight isn't reserved for those who are the Son of God. Spiritual insight is given to every person who has the Holy Spirit. You and I have the Holy Spirit. We may not have been paying attention, but the Holy Spirit is revealing great things to us. The Holy Spirit will give us insight into who we can help become a disciple for Jesus.

Matthew 4:21 (NLT) A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets.

We can be so busy that we might not be looking for potential disciples. Jesus was on a mission and we forget that we are also on a mission. He was on a mission to save the world from sin: dying on the cross and rising from the dead. This is God's grace, mercy, love, and power. This is Kingdom of God work. He was on a mission to make disciples who would share the grace, mercy, love, and power of God. This is Kingdom of God work.

Jesus was looking for people who would become His disciples. He knew these men. He saw their potential. He knew it was the right time.

We can be looking for people who need a deeper relationship with Him. Oh, that could be anyone. It could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker. Who else do you hang out with? That's where it starts, the people we are around. Don't get caught up in talking to strangers. Most people don't talk to strangers. Most people don't walk down the street, through the store, or at the gas station to have conversations with strangers.

In our busyness we forget to carryout our mission. Unlike Jesus we get focused on our stuff and fail to see people who might need Jesus. Everyone of us can tell the tale of missing an opportunity to talk to someone about Jesus. We've walked away and then realized what we could have said. We were so intent upon getting to where we needed to go, or do what we needed to do that we forget we're on a mission for Jesus.

We can see people in need of discipleship, but unlike Jesus we make excuses for them. We might say their so busy. We all know someone who is busy. We hesitate to invite them to join us for some activity. We see their potential but, we don't think they'll be able to squeeze more of Jesus into their lives.

Matthew 4:21, 22 (NLT) Jesus called them to come, too. They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

People who have been disciplined are more willing to leave everything and follow Jesus. Being a disciple of Jesus means we have cultivated our relationship with Him. Jesus had cultivated His relationship with the Father in heaven.

As we wear Jesus' sandals and walk along the shore with Him, we are confident in our mission from God. Jesus knew what he was doing. He knew that for three years He would be working with Peter, Andrew, James and John. He had no problem speaking to them, calling them to come along with Him.

See how your life changes when you see your life through the eyes of Jesus. It's a completely different perspective. You and I have been cultivating our relationship with Jesus. We gather to worship Him, to share with other disciples, and to be challenged to be more than we are right now. We want more from our relationship with Jesus. We want more for the people we know and love. We want them to receive His grace, mercy, love, and power.

You were born again into a new life, a Kingdom of God life, to live like Jesus and share His grace. There are all around you opportunities provided by Jesus to for us to be disciple makers. It starts with an invitation that comes in the middle of a conversation.

You and I because we been cultivating our relationship with Jesus we have a better understanding of ourselves and God's mission for our lives. Everyone of you knows what you are good at doing. Likewise you know what you can't do. I'm not an artist, but give me a four inch paint brush and I can paint the trim around a window. I'm not very good with little babies, but I'm better than average at picking on Junior High boys. I can't roller skate, ice skate, or water ski, but I can listen to people talk about their problems. One more: money, numbers, math, accounting just spin around in my head, but I can imagine what ten disciples of Jesus can do in their work place.

You're not so good at telling people what to do, but you can sing praises to God. You may not be able stand in front of a crowd, but one to one you can talk about Jesus all day. Praying out loud hasn't always been comfortable for you, but you are the most welcoming host in the country. If thinking up ways to fix the building was your job you'd be in trouble, but when it comes to talking someone through a crisis you're the one.

All of this is because we have been cultivating our relationship with Jesus. We have allowed Him to show us who we are and what we can do. Now, He's asking you to be a disciple maker. What do you do? You do the human thing. You start adding up the list of ways you can't do it. You look at all the other tasks that are unfinished in your life. You quickly answer, not now. Jesus, remembers that. He's asking now and He will give you the opportunity soon to say yes. He'll be speaking to you again, soon about your choice.

Matthew 28:19–20 (NLT) Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Whether saints or sinners look for people you can disciple for Jesus. Be like Jesus and consider the people you know who have potential and who may be willing. Jesus walked along the shore. He saw Peter and Andrew in their boat fixing their nets.

Peter and Andrew may not have known that they were ready and willing to follow Jesus. Jesus knew them. He had planted a seed of faith in their lives. When they recognized who called them, they got out of the boat and followed Jesus.

James and John were also seen by Jesus. He had met them at least once before. These two sons of Zebedee may not have known that they were ready and willing to follow Jesus. Jesus knew them. He had planted a seed of faith in their lives. When they recognized who called them, they got out of the boat and followed Jesus.

Peter and Andrew, James and John were men of faith. They were seeking to live their lives according to the Law given to Moses. They struggled. Peter's struggles are well documented in scripture. James and John made their share of mistakes. Andrew didn't always understand. Jesus saw their potential because He knew them. He knew this was the moment to call them to follow Him.

These four men didn't get up that morning saying, I'm ready today Jesus call me to serve in your Kingdom. They were busy with daily life. Jesus knew that the day had arrived for each one of them to take a step of faith and begin doing Kingdom work.

Be like Jesus and carry out your Kingdom mission. You were saved, redeemed, and delivered from the power and the punishment of sin. You know that your life is more than being saved. You believe that Jesus died to take away your sins. You believe that Jesus rose from the dead to give you a new life with power over sin.

You are ready to be like Jesus looking to make disciples. You aren't content with your life as it is, you want more. You aren't satisfied with how you have served Jesus in the past, you want more. You are ready to take step of faith for the people in your life.

Wherever you are in your relationship with Jesus, you can bring someone else along to that place. You don't have to be the perfect disciple to disciple someone else. Start together, help one another along.

They need more of Jesus. They need someone to walk with them through the spiritual side of life. They want someone to teach them more about Jesus. They aren't satisfied where they are. They want the abundant life Jesus offers. They want to know how to find greater peace, more hope, and more joy.

Jesus has put you where you are to do kingdom work. Your mission is to make disciples.