

Mark 1:16- 18 (19-20)
A Fisher of People

What does it take to be a faithful disciple of Jesus? That is, to be with him, become him and do as he did. It begins with letting go. Letting go of what's necessary so that we can fully embrace the faith disciplines that shape us into fishers of people. Contrary to popular belief, every disciple of Jesus is called to disciple others. Whether directly or indirectly, we all play a role in bringing others to Christ. Of course, salvation is God's work alone—we cannot save anyone through our own efforts. But in His grace, God/Jesus chooses to use us, His apprentices, as instruments to share His saving message. Today, we look at a moment when four men began their own apprenticeship under Jesus. Focusing on verses 17-18, I want to share three key observations that can guide us as we seek to follow Jesus faithfully.

First observation, following Jesus may or may not change what you do but it will change how you do it. V17-18 ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him." You may not have to vacate your job/profession like these men to follow Jesus, but how you go about your job/profession will change. An apprentice of Christ will never do his or her work the same once he or she has been fully trained. He or she will see his work as an opportunity for ministry and the place he lives, works, and plays his mission field, because he/she has become a fisher of people. See, the concern of the disciple moves from self-witness to Christ's witness, and this will become evident in his/her work. Whatever it may be.

Col 3:18-25 “¹⁸Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²²Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters,^[a] not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.”

1 Cor 10:31-33 “³¹So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³²Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, ³³just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.”

Second, following Jesus will change why you do what you do. V17-18 “¹⁷And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” ¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him.” The disciple of Jesus develops a burden for those who do not believe. **Once you become an apprentice of Christ the goal in life is no longer accomplishment or the accumulation of things but the gathering of souls unto Christ.** And though every soul will not be won, the apprentice commits himself/herself to that work and in doing so, he or she commits himself/herself to the ways of Christ in order that souls may be won. Though the work we do here may make us feel good and may even change the plight of others, this is not the goal. The goal is the discipling of others. The salvation of souls. This is our measure of success.

1 Cor 9:19-23 “¹⁹ For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. ²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. ²¹ To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. ²³ I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”

Phil 3:8-11 “⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith — ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

Final observation, success is guaranteed. V 17-18 ““¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him.” There is a rub here, and it is an uncomfortable one. **If I/we are not seeing success. That is, individuals coming to faith in Christ and joining us in this work. Then, what are we to assume regarding our apprenticeship?**

Matt 25:14-30 “¹⁴ “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵ To one he

gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷ So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' ²¹ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' ²³ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' ²⁶ But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the

worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

A fisher of people. That what we are or are becoming. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**