

Jesus Said...

**“Come Ye
After Me
and I will make you to
become fishers of men.”
Mark 1:16**

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild, restless sea,
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,
Saying, "Christian, follow Me."

Jesus calls us; by Thy mercies,
Saviour, may we hear Thy call,
Give our hearts to Thy obedience,
Serve and love Thee best of all.

—Cecil F. Alexander

Jesus, the Son of God, calls busy people to work for Him. There are many people mentioned in God's Word, the Bible, who were called to a special work for Him while they were busy at other tasks. In Mark 1:16 we read that when Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Andrew and his brother Peter fishing with their nets. They made their living as fishermen on the large Sea of Galilee.

Jesus' call to Andrew and Peter was a call to take them away from their present work and responsibilities. They would not look at life as "making a living." As workmen for Jesus, they would depend on Him for their needs. They would not catch fish anymore but would catch men and bring them to Jesus.

At this time Jesus was starting His ministry by calling men to work with Him. The twelve men that Jesus chose were a varied group. We do not know the occupations of all of them, but we know from the Bible that they were chosen from tax collectors, fishermen, and other duties.

Jesus came down from His home in heaven to be a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. This was His Father's plan. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17).

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in a stable, and laid in a manger. He lived as any other person in the early years of his life. The Bible says He grew "and increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

When Jesus was about thirty years of age, He went to the Jordan River where John the Baptist was baptizing other people, and asked to be baptized Himself. He did this to show that as a man He wanted to do what God requires. Matthew 3: 13-15.

Jesus came to provide a way for sinful mankind to be brought back into right standing with God. Baptism is the outward sign of a right relationship with God. This relationship is accomplished only by what Jesus did for us. His dying on the cross and shedding of His blood was a sacrifice to God for our sins.

Jesus began His teaching soon after this by changing water into wine at a wedding in Cana. John 2:1-11. In doing this, Jesus was showing those at the wedding that He was from God.

When Jesus came by the seashore and told Andrew and Peter to follow Him, they already knew who He was. Andrew had been a disciple of John the Baptist and had met Jesus and talked with Him. John 1:35-39. Then Andrew went to find his brother Peter and brought him to meet Jesus. Andrew told Peter that Jesus was the Messiah, the Anointed One that the Jews had been looking for. John 1:41.

When Jesus called Andrew and Peter, and the other disciples, He wanted a group of men to follow Him and listen to His teaching and see His mighty works. Then after His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, the disciples could carry on with Jesus' work. They could do this by the power of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus had promised would be with them.

The Bible tells us that in answer to Jesus' call to follow Him, Andrew and Peter left their nets and fishing business and followed Him right away.

Jesus is still calling mankind to come and follow Him. He wants all to learn about Him, to experience salvation them-

selves, then teach others and bring them to Him. It was a great privilege for disciples to receive Jesus' personal call. But, today Jesus does not walk in our towns and highways and byways. He is in heaven with God His Father again. Before He died on the cross, He promised that He would send the Holy Spirit to continue His work here. John 14:15-26. So, in our day the call to accept Jesus comes by the Holy Spirit. And it is our joy to answer the Holy Spirit's call, knowing that God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are one. The call of the Holy Spirit comes by the hearing and reading of the good news of the Gospel. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Our response to the call must be the same as the disciples' response was. We must leave and forsake everything that would hinder our fellowship and working for Jesus. We must say with the Apostle Paul, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord" (Philippians 3:8).

Jesus told Andrew and Peter that He would make them "*to become fishers of men.*" This call is made to us, too. In our work of fishing for men we do not attempt to catch them by sly or tricky methods. (Read II Corinthians 4: 1-10). But we cast a Gospel net of truth and love around those who are lost in a dark sea of sin. This Gospel net is the invitation to rescue them from lives that are leading them to an eternity of torment in hell.

Just as it takes knowledge, patience, and skill to catch fish, it takes the same to

catch men for Jesus. We must know Jesus for who He is, our Saviour and Lord. We must be saved and have our sins taken away by the power of Jesus' blood. "In whom we have redemption (set free from our sins) through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

After we know Jesus, it will come naturally for us to throw the Gospel net around others and try to bring them to Jesus, too. In Proverbs 11:30, it says, "He that winneth souls is wise." Daniel 12:3 tells us, "and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." We must show the love of Jesus to all mankind to draw them by the Gospel net to Jesus.

When we succeed in winning souls to Jesus and bringing them to a soul-satisfying experience with Him, we are obeying our Lord's command and doing a big favor for those whom we have won to Christ. Acts 26:18.

If you have already answered Jesus' call to follow Him and you are growing in your Christian life, thank God. Then you are able to carry out the second part of His call to fish with the Gospel net and bring others to a saving knowledge of Him. We must answer yes to the first part of the call before we can fulfill the second part.

If you are not following Jesus, then bow your head and pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, I am coming to you as a sinner. I am sorry for my sins and want to have them taken away by the power of Jesus' blood. I want to answer Jesus' call

to follow Him, and I want to bring others to Him, too. Help me to be faithful to you and to grow to be more like Jesus. In His name I pray, Amen.

If you have any questions, or if you need any Gospel help, please feel free to contact the person whose name appears below.

—Raymond P. Brunk

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