



Jesus Calls His Disciples

Luke 5:1-11



Jesus attracted many people. Crowds came from all around to hear this Man who taught with authority. Would all those who heard Him listen to His call? Who would leave everything behind to become His disciple?

Day #1: True Disciples

What is the definition of a disciple? Our modern dictionary says, "A disciple is a person who believes in and helps spread the teachings of another person." The original Greek word for disciple is **Mathetes**. It simply means "learner, or pupil." This seems pretty cut and dry. We might think a disciple of Jesus is anyone who sat and listened to Jesus teach. It might seem that anyone could wander up to where Jesus was teaching, listen for a little while, and then go about his day. Would this make someone a disciple? For the answer to this question, we must look at what Jesus taught about being a disciple.

Jesus said a disciple:

- should be like salt (Matthew 5:13) - pure, different from the world around us, and potent.
- should be the light of the world - willing to shine God's truth in front of everyone (Matthew 5:14-16).
- must be willing to give up everything to follow Him (Luke 14:26).
- must follow His commands (Luke 6:46).
- must be willing to suffer hardship (Luke 14:27).
- must love and take care of others (John 21:16).

After John the Baptist called Jesus, "the Lamb of God," people began to follow Jesus. Many people were curious. They wanted to see miracles and be where the action was. But not all of these people would become true disciples of Christ. From His disciples, Jesus chose twelve men to be His apostles (Luke 6:12-16). An apostle is one who is chosen to be a messenger, to go and tell the truth of God's kingdom (Acts 1:8).

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, He called his disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also designated apostles. - Luke 6:12-15 (NIV)

The men Jesus chose were not perfect. They were not superstars in their day. They were simply men whom Jesus chose - not because of their strengths, but in spite of their weaknesses. They were men who would give up everything to follow Him, for that is what Jesus asked of them. Tomorrow we will look more closely at the moment some of these men were called to follow.

Jesus **called** His disciples (John 4:18-22). It is interesting to note that Jesus said no one could come to Him on their own.

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. - John 6:44 (NIV)

We love because He loved us first. - 1 John 4:19

The next time you hear someone asking a question about Jesus, know that God is at work in that person's life! In the same way, understand that it is not up to you to "talk someone into" following Jesus. God must draw the person to Jesus. It is always right to pray for God to draw unbelievers to Jesus.

Day #2: The Miracle

Have you ever been fishing? It is a great thrill to feel that tug on your line and begin to reel in what you hope will be a huge catch. On the other hand, fishing when the fish aren't biting is very discouraging. Most of us go fishing just for fun. In Jesus' day, fishing was more than a hobby. For the fishermen we will read about in Luke, fishing was their full-time job. If they didn't catch fish, their families would not eat. They had just had a very discouraging night when Jesus came to teach nearby.

One day, Jesus was teaching crowds of people near the Lake of Gennesaret where Simon had been fishing. Jesus had already met Simon (Luke 4:38), and Jesus told Simon his name would change to Peter, which means "rock" (John 1:42). Simon Peter, his brother Andrew (Mark 1:16), and their fishing partners had been fishing all night, and were washing out their nets. Jesus climbed into Simon Peter's boat and asked him to move the boat just off shore. Jesus taught the people right from the boat!

When He finished speaking, He turned to Simon. He said, "Go out into deep water. Let the nets down so you can catch some fish."

Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

When they had done so, they caught a large number of fish. There were so many that their nets began to break. So they motioned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. - Luke 5:4-7

Wow! Two boats, so full of fish that they both began to sink! And this happened after they had fished all night without catching anything. What do you think Peter's response would be? Would he thank Jesus for the great catch and run to market to sell them for a month's wages? No.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees. "Go away from me, Lord!" he said. "I am a sinful man!" - Luke 5:8

Once Peter realized whom he was standing next to, all the things that seemed so important hours before seemed terribly unimportant. All night he worried about being able to catch enough fish to earn a living, but suddenly, when Peter realized the power of Jesus, he fell to his knees in reverence. And he confessed his own sinfulness. Peter did not bow down in amazement at the fish. He bowed down to Jesus. He did not worship the miracle, but the Miracle-Maker.

Notice Peter's obedience to Jesus. Peter had fished all night and failed. He had spent the morning washing out his nets. If he put them back into the sea, he would have to start all over again. It might not have made sense to Peter, but when we follow Jesus, we must be willing to do things *His* way. Because of Peter's obedience, Peter received much more than a load of fish. He received a greater knowledge of who Jesus was! We should always obey Jesus, even if it does not make sense to us. His ways are FAR above our ways (Isaiah 55:9)!

Day #3: Fishers of Men

Remember the first words that Simon Peter said after Jesus provided the huge catch of fish :

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees. "Go away from me, Lord!" he said. "I am a sinful man!" - Luke 5:8

Why would Simon Peter tell Jesus to go away from him? He was afraid. We are not sure if Simon Peter knew Jesus was the Messiah at that point. But,

Day #3 continued:

at that moment, he realized that Jesus was at the very least, sent from God. The Jewish people knew that being in the presence of God and His messengers was serious business. When God met with Moses on Mt. Sinai, the Israelites were not even allowed to touch the foot of the mountain (Exodus 19:12). And, when God's presence filled the tabernacle, no one but the high priest was ever allowed to enter. He could only enter one time a year, and only while carrying a sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 9:7). Peter saw Jesus' Godliness, and it shined a light on Peter's sinfulness. (See also, Isaiah 6:5.)



He (the Lord) will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. - 1 Corinthians 4:5b (NIV)

All the people that saw what happened were astonished. Peter's fishing partners, James and John, were also amazed.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed Him. - Luke 5:10b-11 (NIV)

Jesus, full of compassion, did not leave Simon Peter cowering on his knees. Jesus told Simon Peter not to be afraid. And then He told Simon Peter something amazing: "From now on you will catch men." This meant from that point on, Peter would tell others about Jesus, the one true Way to gain eternal life. Peter's life would be spent going after something much more valuable than fish. He would pursue the souls of men and women. And notice Peter's response, along with his fishing partners. They left **everything** and followed Jesus. They even left two boats overflowing with fish! They didn't go sell the fish first. They didn't take a vote. **They listened and obeyed.** Peter and his partners realized that Jesus could provide everything they would ever need. And Jesus could provide far more abundantly than they could ever provide for themselves.



We sometimes dream of how God might use the talents we have for His kingdom. We may even think of people we know and imagine how God could use their talents. But we must remember, God does not **need** our talent, our time, or our money. **He** is the supplier of all good things. Sometimes God will ask us to give up the very thing we think we have to offer Him, to show us that we are dependant on Him, not on our own abilities. Are you willing to give up anything God asks you to give up in order to receive what He has for you?

Day #4: Count the Cost

Jesus was not interested in having a **large** group of followers. What He wanted was a **committed** group of followers. If He had wanted a large following, He would have told them that everything would always be wonderful if they would be His disciples. But, instead, He told them that times might be difficult and they would face hardships (Matthew 10:38), and they would have to be willing to give up anything Jesus asked them to give up (Luke 14:33). He also said that a true follower would put Jesus first, before anything else in their life.



Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. Anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. - Matthew 10:37

We know Jesus is **not** telling His followers not to love their families. Jesus taught people to honor their parents (Matthew 15:4), and Jesus loved children (Mark 10:14). He is saying that even though we love and respect our family members, we should love Him **more**. You may know of a missionary who left their own country to tell people in a foreign land about Jesus. That missionary left his or her family to be an apostle, and they will be greatly rewarded. Jesus put it this way:

And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit eternal life. - Matthew 19:29 (NLT)

Even though Jesus requires a great commitment from His followers, there is extraordinary reward in following Him. When we follow Jesus, we have the guidebook for how to live. The Bible is the very Word of Jesus! It gives us all of the principles we need to make wise decisions, how to treat others, and how to avoid things that are bad. When we follow Jesus, He is with us everyday. When we pray to Him, He will guide us step by step. He is

Day #4 continued:

"The Way" (John 14:6). Knowing Jesus is better than having a roadmap for our life. **He IS** the map, and He travels with us! And perhaps most importantly, Jesus died on the cross to take away our sin. All who believe in Him will have eternal life in heaven (John 3:16).

While the cost of being a disciple may seem high in this life, actually, the cost is **much higher** when we do not follow Jesus. Those who choose not to follow Jesus do not have His guidance because they do not allow Him to guide their steps. And, they do not have the assurance that He will help them when they need it. And, sadly, they will not inherit eternal life in heaven, but will receive what they deserve - eternal punishment (Revelation 20:15).

Jesus told a large crowd that was traveling with Him that they must "count the cost" before saying they were His disciples (Luke 14:25-35). That means, just as a man would determine exactly how much money he would have to spend to build a tower before he hammered in the first nail, we should think carefully about everything that is involved in being a disciple.



The most amazing part is that God doesn't expect us to be able to do anything that He asks without His divine help! He knows we can't. God fills His children with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13), and pours out His grace to help us live the life of a true disciple (Titus 2:11-12).

Day #5: Will You Follow?

How can you follow Jesus today? Before you can be a disciple, you must be a true believer.

First, just as Peter did, you must **REALIZE** that you are a sinner who cannot help yourself. In our human nature, we don't want to think that we are that bad. We often compare ourselves to others and think we aren't as bad as someone else is. Be certain, God is not comparing one person to another! He compares only to His own perfection. Who can measure up to perfection? No one but Jesus (Hebrews 4:15)! Even the very best thing you have ever done is like a filthy rag compared to God's holiness (Isaiah 64:6).



If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. - 1 John 1:8 (NIV)

Next, place your **TRUST** in Jesus. Jesus showed the disciples that He could provide for their physical needs. Even more so, everyone needs forgiveness from their sins. As John the Baptist testified, Jesus was, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) Jesus came to earth to lay down his life to meet God's requirement for the forgiveness of sins.

For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time. - Hebrews 10:10b (NLT)

Once you are a believer, you can follow Jesus.

Following Jesus means we **SPEND TIME** with Him. When two people get married, the relationship does not end there. They want to spend time together. Spending time together is how they learn about each other. When Jesus was on earth, His true followers left everything to spend time with Him. In the same way, we must spend time in the Bible, which is the very word of Jesus (John 1:14). And we must follow Jesus' example to pray often to our heavenly Father (Luke 18:1). Prayer is how we confess, ask, learn, and hear from God.

Following Jesus means we **LISTEN** and **OBEY**. Following Jesus means doing things **HIS** way! As Peter saw with his own eyes, Jesus does not do things the way we do them. He is the Beginning and the End. He always was and He always will be (Revelation 1:8). And He wants nothing less than what is **best** for you (Romans 8:28). We should trust that the One who knows everything, and loves us enough to die for us, can be trusted with every move we make!

Following Jesus means we **TELL OTHERS** about Him. Jesus called out men who would go and tell everyone about Him. He enabled them to proclaim God's truth to their families, neighbors, and even to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).



There is no greater decision anyone can make than to follow Jesus. Will you follow Peter's example? Do you know that you are a sinner; do you know that Jesus died as your substitution; and will you now follow Jesus? If you are a disciple, pray for God's grace to follow Jesus faithfully and to tell others about Him (Titus 2:11-12).