

THE GREAT INVITATION

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Mark 1:16-20, Luke 5:1-11

1. We know from previous studies that several men had identified with Jesus and had been witnesses to the early signs that He had performed—like turning water into wine and cleansing the Temple just to mention two.
 2. Three of those mentioned in the passages we just read were part of that group—Peter, Andrew, and John.
 3. The other two were Philip and Nathaniel.
 4. At some point they had returned to their families and professions.
 5. Here we find Jesus extending a more definite invitation that involved a totally new direction for their lives.
 - a. In Mark’s account we see the invitation extended when Jesus said, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”
 - b. In Luke’s account we see the invitation accepted, “When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.”
- NOTE: It is important to notice that at the point of their greatest professional accomplishment they walked away from that profession. Luke 14:33
- “So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”
6. Jesus does not call everyone to full-time Christian vocations, but He does call everyone to be full-time Christians and fishers of men.
 7. So let’s look at the implications of these two passages under three headings.
 - a. The promise.
 - b. The problem.
 - c. The priority.

I. The promise.

A. “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”

NOTE: Here we have a clear example of cause and effect.

B. The invitation to follow and the fulfillment of the promise are interdependent.

C. In Luke 5:10 Jesus told Peter, in the presence of James, John, and probably Andrew, “Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.”

D. Catching people for Jesus Christ is the byproduct and outgrowth of faithfully following and obeying Him.

E. Jesus demonstrated this truth in a practical way on the Sea of Galilee.

1. Peter and his partners had toiled all night and caught nothing.

2. Jesus told them where to cast their nets and promised them “a catch.”

3. Peter was skeptical, but he agreed to obey.

4. The catch almost sunk the two boats, and Peter confessed his failure to fully trust and believe the Lord.

F. Many profess to have responded to the invitation, but is the promise being fulfilled?

G. If we are following Jesus our lives will be impacting others on some level.

II. The problem. Luke 9:57-62

As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." 59 And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." 60 But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." 61 Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

A. Whenever I deal with this passage I always reference John 2:23-25.

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. 24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, 25 and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.

B. Jesus dealt with the three men mentioned here based on His knowledge of where they were spiritually and on what was motivating them.

C. Each of these men illustrate a problem related to fully following Jesus.

1. Selfish motives and preconceived ideas.
2. Conditional or postponed obedience.
3. Misguided love and loyalty. Luke 14:26-27

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

D. No one is going to fully follow Jesus until they come to love Him supremely, follow Him unconditionally, and trust Him totally. See Luke 14:25-33

III. The priority. John 21:18-23

"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." 19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!" 20 Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 So Peter seeing him said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!" 23 Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?"

A. Here we have another problem we sometimes run into; the tendency to question the Lord's treatment of us based on His dealings with others.

B. Jesus had just dealt with Peter's denial of Him prior to His crucifixion, but having done so He reissued His call to Peter with the words, "Follow Me."

C. He also shared a prophetic insight related to Peter's future.

D. In response Peter turned around and saw John coming towards them and asked, "Lord, what about this man?"

E. Jesus' response could be paraphrased this way, "Peter, what I choose to do with, for, through, and to John is none of your business. You focus on following Me!"

F. We are to love, encourage, pray for, and support one another, but first and foremost we must focus on following Jesus related to His will for our life.

APPLICATION

1. God has, “Rescued us from the Domain of Darkness, and transferred us to the Kingdom of His Beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:13-14
2. Jesus have extended to all of us the great invitation, “Follow Me.”
3. If we are following Him spiritual progress is taking place and we are becoming fishers of men.
4. The question is are we following Jesus based on His definition of what that means, or are we following Jesus based on our own understanding of what that means?
5. If we want to catch men we have to do it Jesus’ way, and we have to be attractive bait.